

**Question for written answer E-005787/2011
to the Commission**

Rule 117

Francisco José Millán Mon (PPE) and Luis de Grandes Pascual (PPE)

Subject: Economic impact of the introduction of motorway tolls in northern Portugal

As the Commission is aware, in October 2010, Portugal decided to bring in a new system of motorway tolls, initially in the north of the country. This system is having an adverse economic impact on both sides of the border at a time when many European countries are feeling the pinch of the economic crisis. On 26 May, the Vigo-based European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation in Galicia and Northern Portugal published a report on the economic problems the new toll system is causing.

On 11 May, business representatives from Spain and Portugal held a joint demonstration on the border to draw attention to the major problems being caused by the new toll system, which, they say, has caused a general climate of mistrust, resulting in fewer motorists passing through, and adversely affecting major sectors of the economy, including industry, textiles and tourism. During the demonstration the Chairman of the Pontevedra Chamber of Commerce stated that 'businesspeople in our Euro-Region are losing our competitive edge, as well as losing money, jobs, trade and investment'.

Does the Commission have any information on the impact that the motorway tolls in northern Portugal have had as regards the drop in traffic? Is the Commission aware of the inconvenience that this persistent problem is causing to motorway users and businesses? Does the Commission not think that a clear solution needs to be found as soon as possible to put a stop to the problems being caused? When will the Commission be making an unequivocal statement as to the legality of the measures brought in on 15 October 2010?