

**Question for written answer E-004895/2016
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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Subject: Commission Staff Working Document on rail freight noise reduction SWD(2015) 300

According to information available, the mandatory introduction of composite brake blocks (presented in Staff Working Document SWD(2015) 300) on rail freight noise reduction) would cause safety concerns in Finland because of braking problems in Nordic winter conditions.

Rail noise is not regarded as a problem in Finland, as the country is sparsely populated, and rail freight traffic does not pass through city centres. Only 2-3 % of the population are exposed to railway noise, and rail freight noise has not been the subject of complaints.

The installation of composite brake blocks will also necessitate large-scale investment and generate high costs for railway undertakings (and their customers) and might then have an adverse impact on desirable modal shift.

Bearing in mind that railway undertakings must ensure the safety of operations at all times and in all conditions, what measures does the Commission plan to take in order to ensure the safe operation of railway services in Nordic winter conditions as it plans to introduce mandatory retrofitting of all freight wagons in the EU with composite brake blocks?

How does the Commission justify the mandatory introduction of composite brake blocks in terms of proportionality of measures, acknowledging the fact that rail freight noise is not a problem in Finland?