

**Question for written answer E-002386/2023
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Increasing Ukrainian grain exports through neighbouring EU countries by rail to compensate for Russia's Black Sea blockade

Alternatives to exporting grain from Ukraine via the Black Sea must be found in order to compensate for the blockade by Russia. Rail transport is preferable to road freight, as the use of numerous heavy lorries would destroy Ukrainian roads and a focus on rail would be in line with EU transport and environmental priorities.

Crossing points for road traffic along Ukraine's borders with the EU are operating at capacity. However, the rail border crossing points are being underutilised because railway operators cannot handle increased freight volumes owing to a lack of personnel, of rolling stock and of the necessary equipment to load and offload grain.

Moreover, Ukrainian produce is being intensely inspected at the crossing points, slowing down exports, while high tariffs for the use of EU railways to transport Ukrainian goods could reduce exports of grain from Ukraine by rail.

1. What is the Commission doing to coordinate the Member States' efforts to ensure the necessary personnel, rolling stock and equipment?
2. What is it doing to facilitate the exchange of information concerning the purchase of Ukrainian produce in order to streamline customs procedures in countries like Poland and Romania?
3. Is it coordinating efforts to lower rail tariffs for the export of Ukrainian grain to the EU until free passage through the Black Sea is ensured?

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