

ORAL QUESTION H-0958/05

for Question Time at the part-session in November 2005

pursuant to Rule 109 of the Rules of Procedure

by Inés Ayala Sender

to the Commission

Subject: Traffic problems at the Somport pass between France and Spain

On Sunday 23 October 2005, a rockfall on the French side of the Somport pass blocked a lane of the road for several hours. On 17 October, the French Government began work to strengthen two walls and to widen a 400-metre stretch of national highway 134 leading to the Somport tunnel. These roadworks will cause delays until the end of spring 2006. Although the work is urgently needed, mayors in the Aspe Valley have condemned the fact that there is no overall plan to improve the route once and for all. They have also condemned the adverse effects of the traffic delays both on tourism and on the transport of goods. I am most concerned about the situation, particularly in the light of the events of last winter, when a landslide on the French side blocked the route to heavy traffic for five months. Mindful of the Commission's concern about communications across the Pyrenees, and of the outcome of the Spanish-French Summit of 17 October 2005 – in particular as regards the programming of work on connections across the Pyrenees – what steps is the Commission taking to avoid a repeat of the events of last winter, and to uphold the principles of the free movement of people and goods across the Somport pass between France and Spain?

Tabled: 28.10.2005

es