

ORAL QUESTION H-0377/08

for Question Time at the part-session in June 2008
pursuant to Rule 109 of the Rules of Procedure
by Jacky Hénin
to the Commission

Subject: Compliance with EU legislation concerning the height of lorries

The Bettembourg-Perpignan Rail Highway (BPRH) was inaugurated in 2007. This event constituted a first step towards a future network of rail highways in a transport-oriented EU which is environmentally aware and wishes to break with the 'lorry or nothing' mentality. However, seven months after its entry into service the BPRH is operating at only 30-40% of its capacity. The reason for this under-usage is that EU Directives 96/53/EC¹ and 97/27/EC² (which restrict the maximum height of lorries to 4 metres, with a 1% tolerance) are not being observed. Most semi-trailers operating on EU roads are of a height which exceeds the 4-metre limit by over 30%, which means that they cannot be transported by rail on account of the limited clearance within tunnels and under catenaries. This state of affairs compromises the development and even the existence of rail highways within the EU.

What action does the Commission intend to take in order to ensure that rules on the height of lorries operating within the EU are actually observed?

Tabled: 20.05.2008
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¹ OJ L 235, 17.9.1996, p. 59.

² OJ L 233, 25.8.1997, p. 1.