

WRITTEN QUESTION P-0654/04
by Reinhold Messner (Verts/ALE)
to the Commission

Subject: Brenner axis

Is the Commission aware that the situation along the Brenner axis between Kufstein and Verona (air and noise pollution and fine dust particles) has become intolerable for the residents of the narrow Alpine valleys? Pollution levels frequently rise far above the permitted limit, resulting in damage to the health of those affected. With the referendum decision in Switzerland not to build a second tube for the Gotthard tunnel and EU enlargement, heavy goods transit traffic will increase even more spectacularly.

In view of these facts, are counter-measures not urgently required?

The real costs provide a key to the short-term solution. To cut down on the volume of empty vehicles and waste transporters, the tolls for all HGVs could be raised in this sensitive area. It is a choice between protecting the health of people living along this stretch of road or unchecked goods traffic.

In the long term, this unjustifiable situation must be rectified using a concept adapted to the future (base tunnel and modern logistics), and an EU ban on transit, to force all heavy goods transit traffic off the Brenner motorway and under the mountain or onto the railway tracks. In this regard, I refer once again to the ATT3 project and ask why the Commission does not immediately announce an exemption for this sensitive area with regard to the toll fee between Kufstein and Verona. Why have some of the profits made north and south of the Brenner Pass not been invested in the planned base tunnel included in the TEN guidelines adopted in 1996, and why is this 21st-century project relying on 19th-century logistics?