

WRITTEN QUESTION P-1998/07
by Fernand Le Rachinel (ITS)
to the Commission

Subject: The dangers posed in winter by tarpaulins on lorries

More than 40 000 people a year are killed in road accidents in the EU, some of whom as a result of objects hitting their cars as they were driving.

Specifically, blocks of ice can form on the tarpaulins of lorries, and centrifugal forces can then fling this ice off the tarpaulin at great speed. The ice can then smash through the windscreen of a car, meaning near-certain death for the driver, and often all the passengers involved in the accident as well.

Too many accidents are being caused by these dangerous tarpaulins on lorries: water, snow, ice and many other kinds of projectiles can easily build up on them. In view of this, is the Commission intending to take action and to establish specific technical safety rules, such as ensuring that lorry tarpaulins slope slightly, allowing water to run off, or making sure that tarpaulins are coated with substances that would make it impossible for ice to stick?

If so, is the Commission intending to include this action specifically as part of the 'European Road Safety Action Programme – Halving the number of road accident victims in the European Union by 2010: A shared responsibility'? Is it intending to impose penalties for hauliers that fail to check and clean the tarpaulins on their lorries before each journey?