



## Parliamentary questions

16 October 2012


E-009409-12

**Question for written answer  
to the Commission**

**Rule 117**

**Charles Tannock (ECR) , Ashley Fox (ECR)**

### ► **Subject: Problems at the border between Gibraltar and Spain**

 **Answer(s)**

A UK resident of Gibraltar origin has alleged in writing that the Spanish Government has recently stepped up local border go-slow measures against residents of Gibraltar. Current delays at the frontier exceed five or six hours and would, if deliberately imposed, constitute a breach by Spain of the EU principle of freedom of movement of persons, with potentially serious ramifications. Gibraltar's roads are being blocked by these queues, which are clogging up the territory's already limited road network. This means, for instance, that emergency services are unable to move as freely as before these restrictions were applied, which could unnecessarily put people's lives at risk in the case of a fire or accident. A gridlocked road system will also inevitably have longer-term implications for the economy.

Around 8 000-12 000 people (many of them Spanish citizens) cross into Gibraltar every day to work and these people are being forced to endure hours of queuing both into and out of Gibraltar. As well as economic consequences, there will be environmental and air quality consequences due to static or slow-flowing traffic.

Is the Commission aware of any recent downturn in relations between Spain and Gibraltar? Can it investigate whether these allegations are a deliberate attempt by Spain to make life more difficult for Gibraltarians and therefore constitute economic sanctions against the territory of another Member State (the UK)? Will it raise these concerns with the Government of the Kingdom of Spain?

OJ C 329 E, 13/11/2013

Last updated: 5 December 2012

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## Parliamentary questions

19 December 2012

E-009409/2012

### Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission

Gibraltar is neither part of the area without internal border controls nor of the customs territory of the European Union. Checks on people and goods are therefore carried out at its border with Spain. Under the Schengen Borders Code, all people entering and exiting the Schengen area, including those enjoying the Union right of free movement, should undergo a minimum check to establish their identities on the basis of the production or presentation of their travel documents. This should normally consist of a rapid and straightforward verification.

On entering and exiting the Schengen area, third-country nationals, who are likely to be among those crossing between Spain and Gibraltar, should be subject to thorough checks, involving a detailed examination verifying that they fulfil all entry conditions.

While efficient border management should allow for the smooth flow of legitimate trade and movement of people, border checks may involve delays affecting traffic and travellers.

The Commission has no indications that Spain is deliberately carrying out undue checks on those crossing the border for work, which would restrict their right to free movement.

OJ C 329 E, 13/11/2013

Last updated: 21 February 2013

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