

Hitherto, the French authorities have not intervened to put an end to any of the blockades carried out by French lorry drivers, which are regularly accompanied by violent attacks on lorries transporting fruit and vegetables from Spain. But they did promise that they would in any case pay damages to those affected.

Despite this promise, only 737 (26.8%) of the 2 749 British, Spanish, German Portuguese and Belgian claims submitted since last September have been processed, and only 124 of them accepted (4.51%). Of the 500 claims made in the French courts by Spanish citizens, only 1 has been accepted.

Does the Commission intend to take any steps to ensure that the French authorities provide effective and rapid compensation to those who have suffered losses?

(98/C 187/90)

**WRITTEN QUESTION E-3796/97**

**by José García-Margallo y Marfil (PPE) to the Commission**

(26 November 1997)

*Subject:* French road blockades: current initiatives for social legislation

The road blockades set up by French lorry drivers are starting to turn into a regular event, which contravenes the Community rules on competition by preventing the freedom of movement of goods within the European Union. The damage done to intra-European trade is very considerable, and has led to protests from Spain, the UK, Germany and the Netherlands. In concrete terms, Spanish hauliers' organizations calculate that every day of the blockade cost Spanish road-haulage undertakings over PTA 2 500 million.

During the strike begun by French lorry drivers on 3 November 1997, various countries requested the French Government to take effective action to guarantee the free market, by setting up corridors for lorries to cross the country. The French Government, referring to the lack of European harmonization in the field of social legislation, refused.

What stage have the legislative initiatives in the social field, which would prevent obstacles to the freedom of persons or goods, currently reached?

(98/C 187/91)

**WRITTEN QUESTION E-3797/97**

**by José García-Margallo y Marfil (PPE) to the Commission**

(26 November 1997)

*Subject:* French road blockades: a gap in social legislation

The road blockades set up by French lorry drivers are starting to turn into a regular event, which contravenes the Community rules on competition by preventing the freedom of movement of goods within the European Union. The damage done to intra-European trade is very considerable, and has led to protests from Spain, the UK, Germany and the Netherlands. In concrete terms, Spanish hauliers' organizations calculate that every day of the blockade cost Spanish road-haulage undertakings over PTA 2 500 million.

During the strike begun by French lorry drivers on 3 November 1997, various countries requested the French Government to take effective action to guarantee the free market, by setting up corridors for lorries to cross the country. The French Government, referring to the lack of European harmonization in the field of social legislation, refused.

Is there really a legal vacuum in the social field which could constitute an obstacle to the goals of the European Union?

(98/C 187/92)

**WRITTEN QUESTION E-3798/97**

**by José García-Margallo y Marfil (PPE) to the Commission**

(26 November 1997)

*Subject:* French road blockades: measures against the French Government

The road blockades set up by French lorry drivers are starting to turn into a regular event, which contravenes the Community rules on competition by preventing the freedom of movement of goods within the European