



## Eurostar train security:

### Danger in Gare du Nord station? The authorities' response is a 30% cut in the Customs' staff!



**Paris-Nord train station:  
a strategic site subject to risks.**

On Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup> of January, a serious assault occurred in the hall of Gare du Nord station.

A tragedy on a much broader scale was narrowly avoided. The place where the attack occurred is highly symbolic, just a few metres away from the stairs leading up to the Eurostar trains check in counters.

SOLIDAIRES Douanes union deplores this unprovoked attack. Several days later, many questions remain unanswered about the individual in question, about his motives and possible accomplices.



**A dogmatic Customs Directorate: the privatisation of the rail security = a 30 percent cut in the Customs' staff at Gare du Nord!**

In the past weeks, despite opposition from customs unions<sup>1</sup>, the DGDDI senior administration persists and signs. On December 12<sup>th</sup>, while visiting for the second time the Brigade Intérieure du Transmanche (BSITM) customs staff in their premises at Gare du Nord, Isabelle Braun-Lemaire, Director General of Customs, confirms a future headcount reduction of 30% compared to 2020: 125 customs officer jobs (before Brexit) → 87 (after Brexit, with two more customs tasks: taxation on imports and tax refund)!



### 2024 Olympic Games: the Court of Auditors shares our opinion!

Customs and government authorities couldn't be more wrong. Thus, in its latest report, on the 11<sup>th</sup> of January<sup>2</sup>, the Court of Auditors clearly raises two concerns about the organisation of the 2024 Olympic Games: transport and security.

#### Government's Olympics security commitments (Court of Auditors report, pages 70-73)

Carrying out rail security by a public authority in a secure way is a necessity!

Page 70: "*Several commitments have been undertaken by the State and the host communities about, among others, public safety and security, transports*"

Page 73: "*From then on, human and technological means must be identified in order to optimise the flow management and the security*".

In this context, there is one thing for sure : the authorities need to provide adequate means to ensure the safety and security of the public in the first train station in Europe, and third in the world in terms of passenger numbers!

This is why SOLIDAIRES Douanes reiterates that the rail security proposed privatisation as wanted by the top hierarchy of the French Customs (Direction générale des Douanes et Droits Indirects – DGDDI), together with the French government, is utterly cynical and unwise.

Even worse, on that day, the head of the French Customs behaved thoughtlessly.

To the officers, the guarantee of a customs presence at a border can lead to a reorganisation of their unit: a Brigade de Surveillance Extérieure (BSE), which is a customs' border unit, or a Brigade de Surveillance Intérieure (BSI), located elsewhere nationwide?

The Director General of Customs answers abruptly: "*Well, to me, honk honk BSI or BSE...*".

Everyone can assess the relevance of this answer and the sense of responsibility of its author.

#### The importance of Gare du Nord (Court of Auditors report, page 72)

It is important to maintain and strengthen the customs presence there, it has been proven for 30 years!

"*The redevelopment of Gare du Nord station is also important regarding the Olympic Games. Indeed, this station is an entry point for European and international travellers thanks to its direct connection with Charles De Gaulle airport via RER B and Eurostar. The station is also the centre of the passenger flows going to the Olympic sites.*"

**The January 11<sup>th</sup> attack proves us right. The customs headcount reduction of 30% at Gare du Nord, with full knowledge of the facts, is criminal. In order to provide a better protection to the public, SOLIDAIRES Douanes demands the withdrawal of the rail security mission privatisation project.**

Paris, Tuesday, January 17<sup>th</sup> 2023

1 Reference: <https://www.solidaires-douanes.org/surete-ferroviaire>

2 Reference: <https://www.ccomptes.fr/fr/publications/lorganisation-des-jeux-olympiques-et-paralympiques-de-paris-2024>

