

Brussels, 22nd November 2017

Ms. Violeta Bulc

European Commissioner for Mobility and Transport

Subject: Suspension of EU funds for the new Turin-Lyon High-Speed Rail Project

Dear Commissioner Bulc,

We are writing to you with regard to the mid-term evaluation of the Connecting Europe Facility to be published by December 2017 as foreseen by the article 27 of the Regulation 1316/2013, which mentions: *“No later than 31 December 2017, the Commission, in cooperation with the Member States and beneficiaries concerned, shall prepare an evaluation report to be presented to the European Parliament and the Council by the Commission on the achievement of the objectives of all the measures (at the level of results and impacts), the efficiency of the use of resources and the European added value of the CEF, with a view to deciding on the renewal, modification or suspension of the measures.”*

Therefore, *“The Commission and the Member States, assisted by the other possible beneficiaries, may undertake an evaluation of the methods of carrying out projects as well as the impact of their implementation, in order to assess whether the objectives, including those relating to environmental protection, have been attained”* (art. 27.6 of the CEF Regulation), and *“The Commission may request a Member State concerned by a project of common interest to provide a specific evaluation of the actions and the linked projects financed under this Regulation or, where appropriate, to supply it with the information and assistance required to undertake an evaluation of such projects”* (art. 27.7 of the CEF Regulation).

The new Turin-Lyon High-Speed Rail Project has galvanised for more than a quarter of a century the communities along its intended route and created a huge divide between different stakeholders: citizens, local, provincial and regional councillors, trade associations and the politicians involved in its planning.

Amidst ballooning costs, repeated delays, uncertainty over funding and a succession of political parties in power, the details behind the project have dramatically changed over time.

As you know, it has widely shown that the local communities do not welcome this controversial project, as also clearly mentioned in the [Written Question n. E-000859-17 of the 7th of February 2017](#), which includes 24 resolutions - adopted in 2010 by the local authorities - expressing objections to its construction. The

communities along the Val Susa valley have, as a matter of fact, fought long and hard to protect their area against what they fear would cause disastrous environmental consequences as result of the new high speed-rail construction.

The new Turin-Lyon High-Speed Rail Project does not match the general objectives foreseen by the art. 3 of the CEF Regulation, namely it is clearly not a project with an European added-value. Indeed, neither it removes bottlenecks, nor it enhances current rail interoperability, nor it bridges missing links on the cross-border section, since the existing, and recently renewed, high-capacity railway line is able to provide an up-to-date and adequate freight service.

The current works of excavating are in strong delay and in 2013 the European Commission has significantly reduced the funds allocated to the project by its Decision C(2008)7733, according to the principle "use it or lose it".

Furthermore, the track record of the project is also muddied by various counts of corruption and it has been necessary to sign a protocol by the French President and Italian Prime Minister in order to include provisions to minimise the risk of mafia infiltration.

For all these reasons, and considering that the CEF mid-term evaluation should be carried out with a view to decide on the renewal, suspension or modification of the measures (art. 5.3 and art. 27.1 of the CEF Regulation), we would expect hence that all the aforementioned aspects will be taken into account and the European Commission will provide proper clear clarifications regarding the social, environmental and health impact of the new Turin-Lyon rail link, even considering the decrease of passenger and freight flows on the route in last years.

Consequently, we urge you both to reconsider the financing of the new Turin-Lyon High-Speed Rail Project, since the European Union must not carry out a project with EU citizens' money against their will, and to readdress the EU funds to other projects with a real and proved European added-value.

We would like to thank you in advance for your kind attention to our request.

Kind Regards,

Marco Valli, MEP M5S/EFDD Group

Daniela Aiuto, MEP M5S/EFDD Group

Tiziana Beghin, MEP M5S/EFDD Group

Eleonora Evi, MEP M5S/EFDD Group