

**Question for written answer E-006049/2016
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Tania González Peñas (GUE/NGL)

Subject: Fourth Railway Package and deterioration in public transport services

The objectives of the Fourth Railway Package include promoting travel by train as the means of transport most propitious to reducing CO₂ emissions and as an alternative to – and a way of reducing – traffic congestion on Europe's roads. While our party agrees with those two objectives, we certainly do not feel that a privately-owned railway system run purely along business lines will help achieve them.

We have seen how, in Spain, multi-million investment in high-speed networks is diverting financial resources away from public transport that helps towards social and territorial cohesion (suburban and narrow-gauge trains) in favour of other more expensive (HST) networks, which offer services to a very small section of the population and which will be the first lines to be privatised.

A train service designed to run as a private business will result in higher prices, which will discourage people from using it, and may well also stop serving many rural areas, with the upshot in both cases being that train travel will no longer be a means of transport of choice for the less well-off.

What criteria and studies or points of reference formed the basis for the assumption that privatising national rail passenger services will promote use of the train?