

**Question for written answer E-000729/2018
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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Subject: Interconnections Spain-France

In 2015, the Heads of State of France, Spain and Portugal signed the document known as the Madrid Declaration¹ along with the Commission, confirming their willingness to undertake the necessary assessment for the completion of the 'eastern gas axis' between the signatory countries, allowing bidirectional flows between the Iberian peninsula and France through a new interconnection project.

Following this declaration, a High Level Group, chaired by the Commission, was set up and exhaustive work was done, especially by the transmission system operators (TSOs) involved. However, almost three years later no investment decision has been made², and EU consumers in those countries are still 'paying the cost' associated with the lack of needed infrastructure³.

On 13 December 2017 a fresh summit⁴ of the parties who signed the Madrid Declaration was announced for the first half of 2018 in Lisbon. This might be understood as indicating that time is still needed before a final investment decision (FID) is adopted.

What are the reasons for the slow progress in the development of new gas interconnection capacity (STEP Project⁵) between the Iberian peninsula and France?

What is being done to remove any obstacles and ensure delivery of the project?

What role could the Connecting Europe Facility additionally play in the near future to help the STEP project develop?

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/energy/sites/ener/files/documents/Madrid%20declaration.pdf>

² <https://www.dropbox.com/s/p2y2j0c9xae9rv3/Three%20Years%20After%20Madrid%20Declaration.pdf?dl=0>

³ <https://www.dropbox.com/s/imwpqum65f3hiz9/Cost%20of%20Lack%20of%20Infrastructure.pdf?dl=0>

⁴ <https://www.euractiv.com/section/electricity/news/france-portugal-and-spain-to-attend-mini-energy-summit>

⁵ <https://www.dropbox.com/s/19gjov82fp2s4re/STEP%20Project.pdf?dl=0>