



16.9.2019

## NOTICE TO MEMBERS

**Subject: Petition No 0216/2019 by F.C.R. (Spanish) on the poor rail connections in the province of Almeria**

### 1. Summary of petition

The petitioner complains about the province of Almeria's poor rail connections, both with the rest of Andalusia and with Madrid. The petitioner is complaining about the slowness of central and regional government, and is also complaining to the European institutions about the slow progress of work on the Mediterranean corridor. The petitioner calls for a reliable, competitive and cost-efficient inter-modal freight and passenger corridor to attract companies, investment and logistics operations, saying that this itinerary is strategic for western Andalusia and for connecting the Iberian Peninsula with the rest of Europe. The petitioner calls for the irrational spending of EU funds on infrastructure to be audited and for priority to be given to the Trans-European Transport core network (TEN-T).

### 2. Admissibility

Declared admissible on 14 June 2019. Information requested from Commission under Rule 227(6).

### 3. Commission reply, received on 16 September 2019

#### The Commission's observations

The Commission understands and agrees with many of the concerns of the petitioner, including the importance of rail freight transport, the necessity of effective freight transport for perishable goods, the importance of logistics platforms, the importance of accessibility of urban areas, environmental concerns etc. All of these are actually at the centre of EU transport policy, including the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) policy, of which the Mediterranean Corridor mentioned by the petitioner forms a part.

According to Article 38(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013<sup>1</sup>, Spain should take the appropriate measures for the core TEN-T network to be developed on its territory by the end of December 2030. According to Article 9(2) of the same Regulation, Spain shall make all possible efforts with the aim of completing the comprehensive network on its territory by the end of December 2050. The high-speed rail line Madrid-Antequera is already completed, the high-speed rail line Antequera-Granada is in use since 25 June 2019 and the high-speed rail lines Granada-Almeria and Antequera-Seville should be completed by the end of 2030. In addition, the line Murcia-Almeria is also under construction and is forecast to receive EU funding. These new lines are for both, passengers and freight whilst the existing conventional lines can continue to be used as needed, especially for regional and freight transport.

Regarding EU funding, funds from the European Fund for Regional Development (ERDF) are managed under the principles of subsidiarity and shared management. This means that the Member State is responsible for the selection of the investment projects which receive ERDF funds in accordance with the operational programmes agreed between Spain and the Commission. Audits are carried out periodically by the national and EU institutions on legality, regularity and performance. Regarding the Connecting Europe Facility, the funds are granted to the project promoters whose applications have been successfully evaluated and selected. The Innovation and Networks Executive Agency (INEA) carefully follows up on the implementation of those projects. Audits are also carried out regularly.

### Conclusion

At this moment in time, the information from the Spanish Government to the European Coordinator for the Mediterranean Corridor and to the Commission is that all the high speed lines listed above will be realised on time. There are no indications that would lead to the conclusion that the rail sections mentioned by the petitioner will not comply with Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013. Effective auditing mechanisms are in place with regard to the use of EU funds.

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network and repealing Decision No 661/2010/EU, OJ L 348, 20.12.2013, p. 1.