

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2027/99

by Alonso Puerta (GUE/NG) and Laura González Álvarez (GUE/NG)  
to the Commission

Subject: Route of the high-speed rail link between Madrid and Valladolid

The Spanish authorities will shortly finalise the route of the high-speed rail link between Madrid and Valladolid which is part of the Alta Velocidad del Sur project, one of the 14 priority projects supported by the European Union in the context of trans-European transport networks. More specifically, for the section of the route exiting Madrid, the Ministry of Public Works must choose between the corridor which cuts through the towns of Tres Cantos and Soto del Real, which would involve building a large tunnel through the Guadarrama hills, and the Villalba corridor, which, according to the recently published environmental impact assessment, would involve less cost in both economic and environmental terms since it follows the path of the existing Madrid-Segovia line.

In addition, the Spanish government could use the savings resulting from the latter option of improvements to an existing line to increase the accessibility of the north and north-west of the Iberian peninsula through investing in the modernisation of other rail links, such as that between Valladolid and Portugal and the Palencia-La Coruña and León-Gijón lines. This would be the best way to fulfil the criteria and objectives set out in the Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund regulations and derive the maximum economic, social and environmental benefit from the project.

What is the Commission's assessment of the possible routes mentioned for the stretch of track in question?

Could the Commission enter into talks with the Spanish government in the hope of encouraging it to opt for the route along the Villalba corridor?