

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0373/01
by Reinhold Messner (Verts/ALE)
to the Commission

Subject: Extension of the concession granted to Autobrennero and new motorway investment

On 18 January of this year, Autobrennero SpA and ANAS (the Italian roads agency) signed an agreement to extend the motorway concession for a further 30 years. The motorway operating company's investment plan provides, in addition to the ITL 3000 billion of profits set against tax and earmarked for the railway tunnel under the Brenner, for new roads accounting for almost ITL 1000 billion (roughly EUR 516 million), including the Tyrrhenian-Brenner link (the Tibre), on the subject of which I have already tabled questions to the Commission (P- 1535/99¹ and E- 2276/00²).

1. Does the Commission consider that it is permissible to justify such an extension without resorting to public tender on the grounds of a transfer of investment to the construction of new motorway infrastructures?
2. Does the Commission agree that accepting such a policy of transfers involving concession companies and public administrative authorities to promote new road infrastructures undermines the priority objective of redressing the balance between road and rail transport in the European Union?
3. Does the Commission not consider that the tunnel project, which I support, should be put out to public tender and not necessarily 'reserved' for Autobrennero SpA, in order both to ensure the best available project is selected and to prevent the whole project of upgrading the railway line from depending on the extension of the Autobrennero concession?
4. Is the Commission aware that the existing Brenner railway line still has 25-30% surplus capacity? Could the Commission ensure that this surplus capacity is swiftly allocated to rail service operators, including those in the private sector, to enable the policy of curbing the volume of heavy road traffic to make faster headway?

¹ OJ C27E of 29.1.2000, p.117

² OJ C