

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1170/02

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to the Commission

Subject: Construction of Athens tram system

As part of the operational programme for 'railways, airports and urban transport' under the 3rd CSF, the Greek Ministry of Transport and Communications is pressing ahead with the construction of a tram system consisting of two lines:

- Zappeion - Nea Smyrni (Achilleos) - Palio Faliro - Neo Faliro and
- Neo Faliro - Palio Faliro - Ayios Kosmas - Glyfada.

Transport engineers and other experts have raised objections to the route finally chosen (via Nea Smyrni instead of Syggrou Avenue and via the seafront at Palio Faliro) and to the tight schedule for carrying out the work - forming part of the timetable for works relating to the Olympic Games - which leaves no margin for reviewing any shortcomings in surveying and planning. Moreover, the inhabitants of Nea Smyrni, Alimos, Glyfada and Palio Faliro have protested (the last-mentioned have in fact appealed to the Council of State), while three of the town councils involved have rejected the proposed route on the grounds that it would ruin the seafront, an area of exceptional beauty, without resolving the traffic problem. Traffic lanes would be lost or substantially narrowed and bus routes cut and services reduced.

1. Have a complete transport study and an advisability study duly been carried out to consider other, more cost-effective solutions? What comparative study justifies the choice of route one instead of the route via Syggrou Avenue (our information suggests that there is none)?
2. Has a complete environmental impact assessment been carried out (2000 trees would apparently have to be destroyed) and were the public consulted at the stage when the route and the environmental impact assessment of the works were adopted?
3. Have all the requirements of Community and national law concerning competition and the social value of the project been met?
4. What is the timetable for completion of the project and how realistic is it?
5. How has it come about that, despite its lack of experience in carrying out a project on this scale, TRAM A.E. has been chosen as the most appropriate firm to complete this project?