

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3728/02
by Giacomo Santini (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Withdrawal of train 299

The Belgian rail company SNCB has announced that as from 15 December 2002 the night train No 299 (which also carries vehicles) will no longer run. This decision appears to have been made following the failure of the rail companies of the countries concerned (Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Switzerland and Italy) to agree on how to divide the operating costs. This route is of considerable importance for those EU citizens who are unable to travel by air for geographical, financial or health reasons. The decision runs contrary to the EU's overall transport policy, with its objective of developing rail travel, and is also immediately harmful to the EU institutions, which have a direct interest in a service used by Members, officials and members of the public.

Can the Commission state what measures it will take to obtain an explanation of this decision, and what action it will take to secure an agreement between the countries concerned? Can the Commission also take immediate steps to ensure that this service is in fact not withdrawn, even for a single day?