

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3229/03

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to the Commission

Subject: Funding for the Turin-Lyon rail link

It would appear that the EU intends not to include the rail link between Turin and Lyon in the 15 projects awarded priority funding, selected from the list of 29 projects previously identified by the European Plan for Growth, which included this railway link.

How can this be possible, given that this action is a strategic project for European integration, and that it has already reached a more advanced stage of planning than a number of the projects that have been selected? It should also be taken into account that the project meets the five criteria laid down by President Prodi on 17 October 2003 (concerning projects that, Prodi requested, could produce results in the short term, that is, within three years). These criteria are: (1) readiness, (2) cross-border status serving the single market, (3) ability to produce impact in the context of enlargement, (4) ecological sustainability and (5) technological innovation potential. The Turin-Lyon project fulfils all five of these criteria.

The President of the EIB recently indicated that the bank would fund projects that were ready to start, that would have a positive economic impact, be profitable (so as to attract private capital) and be capable of satisfying the demands of the countries affected by them, and it would seem that this project fulfils all these criteria. Given that, above all, studies by leading financial institutions (Crédit Agricole, San Paolo, Caisse des Dépôts and Dexia) have indicated that the project can be financed, with 30-35 % private capital, that is, the maximum level allowed for infrastructure projects of this kind, and that postponing funding by a further three years would be a waste of precious time, can the Commission provide information on the matter?