

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1666/06

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to the Commission

Subject: Seine-Scheldt canal

In 2004 thirty priority transport infrastructure projects were identified by the European legislator as being necessary for the completion of the trans-European transport network. One of the thirty priority routes is the Seine-Scheldt canal.

This inland waterway development project, which has been under discussion in France since the early 1990s, would link the Seine-Oise basin to those of the north of France and of Europe. The ports of Rouen and Le Havre would likewise be linked to major northern ports such as Antwerp and Amsterdam. The canal would thus reduce congestion on one of the most crowded and dangerous motorways in northern Europe, the A1 in France. The environmental benefits of this diversification of modes of transport would also be very significant.

In the Picardy region of France large-scale work is planned as part of this project in terms of enlarging the canal and reshaping and redeveloping the port from an industrial and logistical point of view, giving rise to concern among local residents.

Mr Barrot, the Transport Commissioner, recently said that he would be announcing ‘super-priorities’ from among the thirty priorities, given that the 2007-2013 financial perspectives did not look as if they could possibly be sufficient to cover all the priorities.

Does the Commission intend to include the Seine-Scheldt canal among these ‘super-priorities’?

Does the Commission intend to raise the level of funding allocated to the Seine-Nord canal, which is currently totally inadequate?

What attitude does the Commission intend to adopt vis- a-vis local residents in order to avoid a repetition of the situation in the Susa valley in Italy, where the population, which was excluded from the decision-making process, is now violently opposing another trans-European transport network project?