

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2220/08

by Joost Lagendijk (Verts/ALE), Bart Staes (Verts/ALE) and Michael Cramer (Verts/ALE)
to the Commission

Subject: Cross-border Environmental Impact Assessment of Iron Rhine

We are worried about the way in which decision-making about the Iron Rhine is taking place at the moment. In our view, it is beyond dispute that an adequate railway connection for transportation of goods between Antwerp and Duisburg is necessary, especially in view of the desired modal shift and sustainable mobility.

However, we believe that the way in which assessment is taking place at the moment does not take due account of the damaging environmental aspects of the connection. So far there have been Environmental Impact Assessments only for some parts of the plan. We would like to see Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands carrying out a joint cross-border Environmental Impact Assessment. It is only by doing this that we and our national and local colleagues will be able to opt for the least damaging route for the Iron Rhine.

1. Does the Commission agree with us that the Iron Rhine is still desirable in view of modal shift and sustainable mobility?
2. Is it willing to investigate the number of lorries by which road transport could be reduced if the Iron Rhine were brought back into service, and the level of CO₂ reduction that would result?
3. What, in the view of the Commission, are the possibilities for reducing noise pollution resulting from the Iron Rhine?
4. Does the Commission agree with us that a cross-border Environmental Impact Assessment is needed for our national and local colleagues, so that they can opt for the least damaging route?
5. Is it willing to start a conversation on this with the governments of Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands?
6. Is it also willing to make the provision of future subsidies for the Iron Rhine project conditional upon the cross-border Environmental Impact Assessment and reducing noise pollution to a minimum?
7. If the Commission agrees with us, when will it start its actions? If the Commission does not agree with us, why not?