

WRITTEN QUESTION E-6812/08
by Jean-Pierre Audy (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Financing of major European infrastructure projects - task for the EIB

In the conclusions to the symposium held in Clermont-Ferrand (France) on 14 December 2007 which looked at the challenges the European Union faces in financing infrastructure, it was clear that the EU needed a planning and development policy for its territory, built around infrastructure for which funding still needs to be found and set up.

Furthermore, and despite the period of economic difficulty that the EU is experiencing, these issues must be tackled if an ambitious planning and development policy for the whole EU is to be envisaged, a policy that could take in motorways, airports, seaports, high-speed railways and freight transport, waterways, health policy, space, drinking-water production and supply network, research and development, education, etc.

On 22 April 2008, Parliament adopted resolution No P6_TA(2008)0132 by an overwhelming majority. This resolution was based on an own-initiative report for which I had the honour of being the rapporteur. In the resolution, Parliament suggested that, given the quality of the EIB's human resources and its experience of financing major infrastructure, the Commission should give it the task of carrying out a strategic reflection on the funding of infrastructure. This should take into account the need for balanced regional development and should not exclude any possible scenarios: subsidies, payment of sums subscribed by the Member States to the EIB's capital, loans (including EIB loans, for example those financed by special loans from the Member States), innovative instruments such as the RSFF (risk sharing finance facility) and the LGTT (loan guarantee instrument for trans-European transport network projects), financial engineering appropriate to long-term projects that are not immediately profitable, development of guarantee systems, creation of an investment section within the EU budget, financial consortia between European, national and local authorities, public-private partnerships, etc.

In view of the above, I wish to ask whether the person responsible at the Commission intends to give the EIB, as suggested by Parliament in the aforesaid resolution, a specific task in regard to funding of major European infrastructure.