

**Question for written answer E-013778/2013
to the Commission**

Rule 117

Lucas Hartong (NI) and Patricia van der Kammen (NI)

Subject: Subsidy for Maastricht-Lanaken rail link

On 30 September 2011 the renovated rail link was opened between Maastricht in the Netherlands and Lanaken in Belgium¹. The total cost of 'revamping' this line was EUR 28 million. This included a contribution from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The subsidy for the Flemish section was EUR 2.1 million and EUR 2.5 million for the section in the Netherlands. In the period between its delivery and now, a total of 12 trains have made return journeys on this route. We have the following questions about this:

1. Is the Commission aware that, since the link was opened, only 12 trains have made return journeys, with 10 in 2011, the year it opened, and two in 2013?
2. What is the Commission's view of these pitifully low usage figures?
3. Does the Commission think that a sum of almost EUR 400 000 from the ERDF per return journey, paid by taxpayers, is a responsible investment?
4. Does the Commission feel that this is a satisfactory return on investment? What was the intended and what is the final European added value shown for this project?
5. Were there specific terms linked to the subsidy granted? If so, please specify. If not, why not?
6. Does the Commission agree with the PVV that the study report produced by Buck Consultants International in 2005² painted an overly rosy picture of the potential offered by this rail link?
7. Can the Commission indicate whether subsidies should be recovered, given that this rail link is the umpteenth example of squandered taxpayers' money?

¹ <http://www.ersvlmburg.be/content/content/record.php?ID=431>

² <http://o.b5z.net/i/u/10008185/i/Spoorstudie.pdf>