Question for written answer E-003503/2014
to the Commission
Rule 117
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Subject: Privatisation of public transport in Lisbon and Oporto

The Portuguese press has reported the existence of a memorandum signed between the Portuguese Government and the Troika as part of the tenth review of the adjustment programme, providing for 'the sale to private operators, through the concession of public services' of Lisbon's Carris bus and tram system, Metro de Lisboa, Transtejo and Soflusa ferry service and Oporto's STCP and Metro do Porto, by the end of March 2014.

According to these reports, 'the restructuring of Lisbon and Oporto's public transport services is underway and five concessions are expected to be launched by the end of March 2014'. The expansion of the privatisation programme to include the sale or concession of further assets is also said to be under consideration.

Apparently 'no figures are available for the enterprises, but the operation, which will reduce the deficit, is not thought to have been included in this year's public accounts plan'.

It is important to note that public transport services have been viciously attacked since the start of the EU and IMF-sponsored intervention. Prices have risen dramatically and quality of service has deteriorated. Most notably, Carris and the Lisbon metro have respectively lost 32% and 24% of their passengers over the last three years.

In light of the above, can the Commission answer the following:

1. Can it confirm the existence of the above-mentioned memorandum providing for the sale to private operators through public service concessions of Carris, Metro de Lisboa, and Transtejo/Soflusa? How does it justify this?

2. Was any pressure exerted by the Commission on the Portuguese Government to impose this solution? If so, how does it justify exerting such pressure, when the terms of the Treaty guarantee the EU's 'neutrality' concerning the ownership – whether public or private – of enterprises?

3. How does this downturn in the use of public transport, as a result of drastic price hikes and declining quality caused by EU and IMF intervention, fit in with the Commission's rhetoric on sustainable mobility, combating climate change and suchlike, which pervades countless EU documents and strategies?