

Question for written answer E-000619/2023
to the Commission
Rule 138
Marek Belka (S&D)

Subject: High-Speed Rail – EU funding in the face of public protests

Transport exclusion is a growing problem in Poland. In the face of climate challenges, rail investment seems to be the natural way to combat it. For years, rail investment has focused on modernising existing infrastructure, but new connections have been neglected. In this context, the High-Speed Rail project announced by the Polish Government seems interesting. The costs are exorbitant, however. The section between Warsaw and Łódź alone is currently estimated at PLN 20 billion. Another problem is the way in which work on the project has proceeded: social partners and local conditions have often been ignored, and the project has aroused fierce public opposition. The Polish Government has declared its willingness to obtain EU funding for the planned investments. A natural port of call would be the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), which provides up to EUR 25.8 billion for investment in transport, of which no less than 60% is earmarked for the implementation of climate objectives, thus giving preference to rail investment.

1. Can the Commission say to what extent Poland has used the funds from the first call of the Connecting Europe Facility, estimated at over EUR 7 billion, in the new financial perspective?
2. Can the Commission confirm if it is possible to take into account social factors such as protests from residents and concerns from local authorities and NGOs when assessing submitted projects?
3. Can the Commission indicate the impact this could have on decisions to disburse funds in the event of competing applications?

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