

ORAL QUESTION H-0016/07

for Question Time at the part-session in February 2007

pursuant to Rule 109 of the Rules of Procedure

by Peter Skinner

to the Commission

Subject:           Reduction of Eurostar services to Ashford International station

Given the investment of millions of euros of TEN transport funding, as well as EIB funding, for the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL) between south-east England and northern France, and given the fact that Eurostar, a monopoly, has recently announced the closure of its Ashford-Brussels service this November, will the Commission agree with me that other competitors should now be allowed and encouraged to bid for this service?

Also, bearing in mind Eurostar's hasty decision, coupled with a failure to consult all concerned parties, would the Commission agree that there is a need for an investigation into a lack of transparency in Eurostar's decisions, as well as a failure to recognise its monopolistic position as the sole service operating a transport link for foot passengers between southern Kent and Brussels?

This decision will mean the residents of a catchment area of roughly 5 million people being reduced to travelling by plane, or facing an inconvenient journey by car to Ebbsfleet International station. As all these factors go against the interests of an environmentally sustainable transport policy, as well as exposing a lack of economic competition, whilst harming developmental progress in south Kent and East Sussex, would the Commission agree to participate in a hearing in the European Parliament, to which all relevant stakeholders would be invited?

Tabled: 12.01.2007

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