

ORAL QUESTION WITH DEBATE O-0029/04

pursuant to Rule 42 of the Rules of Procedure

by Ilda Figueiredo and Helmuth Markov, on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group
to the Commission

Subject: Announcement of the intention to close down Bombardier Plants in Europe

The Canadian company Bombardier - the world's largest railway rolling stock manufacturer - has announced its intention to close down, wholly or partly, seven plants in Europe, some of which are renowned for high-quality production - affecting at least Portugal, the UK, Germany, Sweden and Switzerland.

If this intention becomes reality, it will directly imperil a minimum of 6 600 jobs, and thus have a profound socio-economic impact on the regions affected, and tragic consequences for the workers and their families.

The situation is all the stranger, given that in these countries there are large-scale projects, some of them enjoying Community support, which, should they be carried through would inevitably step up production in the sector concerned. Furthermore, in some of these countries, namely Portugal, if the closures go ahead, they will result in the shutting down of the only railway rolling stock production plant in the country.

1. What measures does the Commission intend to take in terms of company support, public investment and public competition, inter alia, to guarantee employment and production in these companies, and thus prevent the terrible consequences of closure for the workers and their families, and stimulating the economic development of the regions concerned?
2. Has Bombardier received subsidies under Community programmes, and if so, what subsidies? What measures does the Commission intend to take so that this investment is not thrown away?
3. Does the Commission not believe that this case, amongst so many others, highlights the need for public intervention in companies of fundamental strategic importance, and specifically multinationals, so as to guarantee employment, production and development?

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Deadline for reply: 30.03.2004