

WRITTEN QUESTION P-3722/08  
by Alessandro Battilocchio (PSE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Discontinuation of rail freight car transport on the maritime route between Civitavecchia and Golfo Aranci

As from 1 July 2008, the transportation of rail freight cars on the maritime route between Civitavecchia and Golfo Aranci will cease, following the decision to discontinue the transport of freight to and from Sardinia by Trenitalia, a company belonging to the Italian state railway company (FS).

Freight operators are increasingly having to use lorries on the route concerned, which is exacerbating road traffic considerably and brings with it safety problems as well as the obvious environmental ones. This runs counter to recent public statements made by FS managerial staff and to European directives in this area, which aim to promote the development of rail transport over road transport and target environmentally sustainable economic development.

There is a risk that the many factories and businesses affected, such as Keller and Convesa, will close, which would have an adverse impact on direct and indirect employment in the area.

The fact that goods are only being transported by lorry will lead to a marked increase in their cost, which will be passed on to the consumer.

Substantial financial resources are available under regional programmes for the construction of railway links to improve connections with ports.

In the light of the above, could the Commission state whether:

- it would not consider it appropriate to support and ensure the continued existence of the route, via Community initiatives including financial measures, and in agreement with the regions and local authorities concerned, in order to avoid the serious repercussions in terms of employment, the economy and the environment arising from Trenitalia's decision;
- it does not feel that the increase in freight transport by lorry conflicts with the new guidelines and objectives set out in the latest Community policies?

Trenitalia and RFI are controlled by the holding company Ferrovie dello Stato (FS) S.p.a., which is wholly state owned. It is therefore a company which, despite being quoted on the stock exchange, should in fact, owing to the public capital invested, take due account both of the financial feasibility of providing a service and of the public interest. Will the Commission therefore look into and ascertain the real reasons for the route being discontinued? Can that route be discontinued solely on financial grounds? What action will the Commission take with regard to this matter?