

WRITTEN QUESTION P-3585/10
by Miroslav Ouzký (ECR)
to the Commission

Subject: Completion of the D8 motorway

My question to the Commission concerns the completion of the final section of the D8 motorway linking Prague with the Federal Republic of Germany. The European Commission has informed the Czech Ministry of Transport that it is suspending its assessment of the project to complete this strategic motorway as a result of complaints from environmentalists. The Commission has given itself a period of up to four months in which to review the project, which is financed by the Operational Programme 'Transport'. As a result, the opening of the motorway will most likely be postponed until 2012. A delay will, however, unavoidably have an impact on the overall cost of the project. In this case it is estimated that the cost may rise by up to hundreds of millions of Czech crowns.

According to reports carried by, for example, the magazine 'Euro', the European Commission is reluctant to fund large road transport infrastructure projects in the Czech Republic, allegedly because it fears intervention by environmental groups. Completion of the D8 motorway around Ústí nad Labem is vital for this major urban centre in Northern Bohemia. The delay in its construction is causing huge problems for the city owing, among other things, to the heavy volume of lorry traffic, which has a significant effect on the overall environmental quality experienced by residents, especially with regard to exhaust emissions, noise and dust. Substituting for the unconstructed section of the D8 motorway, the overloaded I/30 from Ústí nad Labem to Lovosice is clogged with heavy goods vehicles and is, from a traffic safety perspective, one of the most dangerous stretches of road in the Czech Republic.

Another significant reason for my putting this question to the Commission is the fact that the environmentalists' repeated complaints are an attempt at obstruction, a fact which they have acknowledged publicly in the media. The project has been through proper environmental impact assessment procedures and all objections from environmental activists have already been dealt with.

For the above reasons may I ask the Commission whether it can speed up its assessment of the project to complete this section of the D8 motorway and thus ensure that the whole project is completed as rapidly as possible?