



President Van Rompuy,
President Barroso,
President Buzek,

November 9th, 2011

As you certainly already know, the issues concerning the construction of the new high speed / capacity railway line Turin-Lyon (i.e. TEN-T Priority Project No. 6) are complicated. The construction of this railway line will involve a financial contribution from the European Union which is estimated at around 672 million of Euros, as well as a number of investments by the Member States concerned (i.e. Italy and France). The first part of the EU contribution was conditioned on the fulfilment of various terms, including the agreement with local communities affected by the project.

This agreement still does not exist because of the strong opposition by the majority of the local population to the project. A number of arguments concerning the usefulness and sustainability of the project support this opposition, as corroborated by studies carried out by authoritative experts. The exclusion from the consultation process of groups opposing the project (including the Comunità Montana Val di Susa and Val Sangone - Italian territories most affected by the new railway line - but also a large number of mayors and local authorities) has prevented dialogue between actors at stake and the requests of the local population have not even been considered. Therefore, a large number of citizens in Val di Susa have decided to resort to peaceful and passive forms of resistance, both by purchasing themselves part of the land where the work should take place, and by occupying for several months the areas designated for excavations. Indeed, all the modifications to the initial project and the continuous delays and postponements in realizing the work are due to this strong opposition from the majority of the local population.

From 27 June 2011, after proceeding to clear the areas occupied by people who always expressed their opposition in a pacific way, more than 2,000 soldiers and police officers occupied an area about 500 meters from the future construction site. The purpose of this military occupation was supposed to ensure the opening of the construction site for the geognostic tunnel in La Maddalena di Chiomonte (a village in the province of Turin) by 30 June. Indeed, this date was the first condition set by the European Commission to confirm the payment of the 671.8 million Euros fund promised to Italy and France. The following protests, attended by thousands of people, have been violently opposed by the police.

As personally ascertained by a number of observers (including two MEPs: Gianni Vattimo and Paul Murphy), to this day the construction site has not been started yet and the ongoing work is limited to the fencing of land currently guarded by hundreds of soldiers and policemen.

Regardless of the validity of the arguments for and against the project, and by strongly reaffirming that any form of violence is always unjustifiable, it is outrageous to respond to popular dissent with a militarisation of the territory, which might be lasting for many years. Moreover, it is unacceptable that such a blatant violation of citizens' rights by a EU Member State stands with the indifference of the European institutions, which are responsible for monitoring projects carried out with European funds.

For these reasons we, as Members of the European Parliament, consider it appropriate:

1) to support the requests of citizens and associations, who for many years have urged the European Union to carry out impartial studies to clarify the cost-benefits (economic, environmental and social) of the project, through a number of ongoing petitions to the European Parliament (accompanied by the delivery of 32,000 signatures on September 25, 2007), 24 resolutions of opposition to the project by 24 municipalities at the end of 2010, and three complaints to OLAF for probable frauds against the EU within the Lyon-Turin project;

2) to organise a formal delegation of the European Parliament to Val di Susa to verify and testify the militarisation of the non-construction site of La Maddalena di Chiomonte, and meet with citizens, representatives of associations and local authorities that have for twenty years opposed the project of a high-speed / capacity railway line Turin - Lyon.

We hope that each of you, within your prerogatives, will take all due steps to promote a fully democratic solution of this situation.

We look forward to hearing from you.

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