Comitati NO TAV Valle Susa - Val Sangone - Torino

www.notav.info - www.notav-valsangone.eu - www.notavtorino.org - www.ambientevalsusa.it

Professor
Laurens Jan Brinkhorst
European Coordinator Priority Project n. 6
European Commission
B-1049 BRUSSELS
BELGIUM

from No TAV valleys, November 13th 2009

subject: **1989 - 2009, 20 years of popular opposition to the new railway line Lyon – Turin**

Dear Professor Laurens Jan Brinkhorst,

we have received and appreciated your letter of November 3rd : the arguments and questions in it show the freedom of your vision to include the evaluation of the need to build a new railway between Lyon and Turin (**NLFLT**).

We want to let you know that this year the committees opposing TAV celebrate the twentieth anniversary of popular opposition to the creation of an infrastructure that stands out primarily because of its uselessness and the environmental devastation that it would cause.

We give you an important news for the future of NLFLT: Lower Susa Valley, High Susa Valley and Sangone Valley Mountain Communities have been united and, as can be seen on maps, the territories of that institution (intermediate level between the municipalities and the Province of Turin) are those that could be crossed by NLFLT. Well, on 7 November Mr Sandro Plano was elected by a strong No TAV majority to the Presidency of this institution. This confirms clearly that the populations of these territories and their representatives are opposed to the implementation of NLFLT. Your assertion that "*significant minority groups still oppose the project and those minorities should not be underestimated*", in the light of this news that shows the breadth of No TAV opposition, is now confirmed and re-evaluated in the size of strong and official opposition.

Given your high role in the PP6 project, please accept our invitation to intervene at the “Conference on Europe's role in the development of the Susa and Sangone valleys” that we want to organize in the next future where will take part economists, environmentalists and experts in transport and European MP’s. Your participation as top expert in the PP6 would give an impression of high profile European debate to be held on topics of common interest.

Before responding in detail to your arguments, we would like to clarify some issues concerning the relationship between the technical Observatory and institutions at local, national and European level.

The President of the technical Observatory arch. Mario Virano, who is also extraordinary Commissioner to the Lyon Torino new rail, with an obvious conflict of interest, did believe the various European institutions, with which he came in contact for years, that the agreement with the population is a reality or, more ambiguously, that it is near to be a reality, with the evident aim of influencing the European decision-makers that the new rail will have in Italy a easy and quick feasibility. These words have now become a "*legend*" of which unfortunately there are many traces in reports of national and European institutions and in the press.

We want to be very clear on this point, challenging everyone on this issue in an open and documented comparison: no formal agreement, we repeat, no agreement has ever been signed between the local communities and the Italian Government for the implementation of the new railway line. The technical Observatory[1] does not have the technical task of implementing agreements, but it has to assess the feasibility of the new railway line in environmental, health and economic aspects. The technical Observatory's conclusions respecting that are since a long time known and public: there are no conditions that justify the construction of NLFLT, but on this itinerary is urgent to carry out other railway works to solve the bottleneck of Chambéry and Turin, and to give to the City of Turin a local railway worthy of the name.

The common interest of the European union and No TAV Committees to protect the Alpine infrastructure from interventions at high risk of environmental devastation, and then the people who live there, is pushing us to bring to your attention some of the arguments on this crucial issue.

It has been shown that NLFLT (freight) has not an environmental impact lower than the road, taking also into account that this new railway includes 133,1 km of tunnels [2]. See in this regard the much-argued thesis supported by Professor Mirko Federici, University of Siena [3].

We recall also that in France, an advanced country in this area, the railway infrastructures at high speed are very light and used exclusively to transport passengers, while PP6 in Italy should be devoted to mixed passenger and freight traffic.

---

[1] DPCM -Decree of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers March 1, 2006, Art. 2: "*The technical observatory is the place of respect for all the insights on environmental, health and economic and pursues the precise aim to examine, evaluate and respond to concerns expressed by the people of the Susa Valley*."

[2] The tunnels under the project known are: La Chartreuse 23 km, Belledonne 19 km base tunnel 57.1 kilometers, Orsiera 11 km, San Antonio-Chiusa SM 6 km, Val-Val Susa Sangone 10 km, Corso Marche 7 km.

[3] The NLFLT has environmental impacts compared to individual transport by car and even higher than the road haulage industry. It does not improve the impact due to emissions, and even worse environmental quality with the invasiveness of its infrastructure. Dr. Mirco Federici, Universiy of Siena It has been accounted the entire consumption of energy and matter, and exhaust emissions along the entire lifecycle of systems. This means that was taken account of consumption in the construction of roads and railway lines, the periodic maintenance, construction and maintenance of vehicles, and their annual operating. The impacts were calculated using six different tests, and all have converged. The tests are in order: 1. Mass Flow Accounting locally (recorded direct consumption of materials expressed in kilograms per unit transported), 2. Mass Flow Accounting on a global scale (recorded direct and indirect consumption of raw materials, so-called hidden flows expressed in kilograms per unit transported), 3. Energy Accounting locally (direct consumption of energy, just moving vehicle expressed in MJ / unit transported), 4. Energy Accounting global (direct and indirect consumption of energy infrastructure, construction and operation of vehicles expressed in MJ / unit transported), 5. Exergy Analysis (conceptually a little complicated, it analyzes the inefficiencies of the systems taking into account the human losses of the energy transformations that produce the systems expressed in MJ / unit transported), 6. Emergy Analysis (accounts for the entire consumption of matter and energy in the form of solar energy equivalent (solar emergy joules, sej / unit transported). It is the most comprehensive testing methodology but also the most controversial). The results of the NLFLT are expressed in a range that varies between two types of exercise: a rate equal to the current use of trains (assumptions, the highest value of the indicators), and a utilization rate, assuming that the trains always travel full load (optimistic assumptions, the value of the lowest rates). Generally, different analysis always lead to different results when converge means that the system is characterized by peculiarities so strong (too beautiful or too ugly) to crush the sensitivities of paradigms. In short, the NLFLT has no reason to exist either in terms of supply of transport (too low) or from the point of view of efficiency.

From the environmental point of view we want to remember that one of the biggest concern of the committees opposing TAV refers to the depletion of water sources and to the disruption of mountain hydrology that follows the creation of tunnels whose risks are highlighted in the COWI report.[4]

We believe that on this issue it would also be appropriate to use the precautionary principle [5], to demonstrate that the new railway is not harmfully, does not affecting the health of citizens and has a positive cost-benefit analysis before approving its implementation.

About the current decline in the volume of transported goods, we believe that it is determined only in part by the current economic crisis. In this regard we want to draw your attention to the category of lightness that characterizes our time. This feature of our economies has emerged strongly from the second half of the twentieth century, and continues to this day: the average value per unit weight of goods transported has increased several-fold to over a thousand times for the high-tech goods than raw materials, fuels, semi-finished products and foodstuffs that have characterized the transport by rail. In the near future - where the economic recovery - we'll face, as a result, for no or very limited increases in weight of goods traded worldwide but a substantial increase in term of value of these same goods. See in this regard the effect of *de-linking* the economies of developed countries between GDP growth and transport growth. Hence the need not to increase the infrastructure but rather think for a more rational use of the existing ones.[6] According to the technical Observatory's conclusions, historical railway line Lyon - Turin allows the transit of a quantity of goods (in tonnes) of 3 to 5 times higher than today.

About the issue you called for the need for coordination between Italy and France on this itinerary: you are probably aware that at the end of 2010 France will have finally completed the task of adapting the form of its part of the Mont-Cenis – Fréjus historical tunnel, which however will be different and smaller than in the Italian part of this tunnel. From that day the transportation of goods will take up once again through this itinerary, but in the meantime doubling of the Fréjus motorway tunnel has been approved with enthusiasm by the Italian and French governments: in fact they argue that this is a safety gallery imposed by the EU, however, we note that its size is bigger that the tunnel of Mont Blanc and the second tube will be devoted to the eventual passage of vehicles. [7]

Your question "*why it seems much harder to achieve the implementation of rail infrastructure to build the roads, even in sensitive environments such as the Alps*" is indeed intriguing, but seen it from this side of the Alps has a straightforward answer: the elasticity of passenger transport and freight road vehicle is immeasurably superior to that train, bound for major

---

[4] Analysis of studies conducted by the LTF on the Lyon-Turin (International Section) TREN/05/ADM/S07.54919/2005 revised version 2 page 47: "*LTF has estimated that the two main tunnel (the base tunnel and the tunnel under Bussoleno), the shafts, etc. receive a cumulative flow of groundwater between 1951 and 3973 litre/sec in the case stabilized. This is equivalent to a range of between 60 and 125 million m3/year, comparable to the supply of water to a city of about 1 million inhabitants. The draining of groundwater is not negligible compare to the total mark of groundwater in areas along the tunnel.* "

[5] This principle, contained in Article 15 of the Rio Declaration of 3-14 June 1992, reads as follows: Principle 15 "*In order to protect the environment, the precautionary approach shall be widely applied by States according to their capabilities. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation."* In the Commission Communication of 4.2.2000 on the Precautionary Principle 52000DC0001 (COM/2000/0001) states: "*The Community has constantly pursued the goal of greater protection, particularly for the environment and human health, animals and plants. In most cases, measures that enable to achieve this high level of protection can be determined on a sufficient scientific basis. However, where there are reasonable grounds for concern that potential hazards may affect the environment or health of humans, animals and plants, but available data do not permit a detailed assessment of risk, the precautionary principle is been politically accepted as a strategy of risk management in many areas.* "

[6] Cf. www.notavtorino.org/documenti/italia-lavori-mulino-06-03-07.htm

[7] The Under Secretary for Transport Bartolomeo Giachino is one of the most "authoritative" supporters of full use of transit for the so-called safety gallery of the Fréjus road tunnel safety.

equipment and stiff. Furthermore, the network of roads and highways grows and develops from itineraries through the centuries and millennia have shaped the economies and societies. This development is ensured by a myriad of interventions at different levels, local, regional and national, private and public sectors. Making railways involve a very difficult coordination.

Furthermore strong economic interests intertwined with the mafias are pushing for the creation of great infrastructures.

No TAV Committees are naturally favourable to rail, we are aware that in today's situation, despite our efforts are directed in this sense, in the battle against road transport we are even more alone, if possible, that in the battle against the monumental works (so called by our President of the Republic Giorgio Napolitano) such as the Strait of Messina Bridge.

Finally we wish to recall the criticism that the European Parliament has expressed on the 22nd of April 2009 to the "Green Paper on future policy in the field of trans-European transport"[8] saying "*4. In this respect, does not see the rationale for introducing the vague notion of a TEN-T conceptual pillar, which would overload the list of priorities; believes that, contrary to the expressed goal of the Commission, a pillar expressly displayed as conceptual will not improve the TEN-T policy's credibility, which will rather be achieved by developing concrete projects*." This criticism makes us think that some infrastructure projects - the Lyon - Turin in the first place - are borne by the proponents for their value in itself (so to the direct profits accruing from its implementation) and not for the benefits they might bring to transport within the EU.

In addition to the above considerations, we enclose the open letter sent to the EU at the informal Council of Transport Ministers of the European Union Brdo (Slovenia) on 5th - 6th of May 2008; this letter was also sent to your attention.

Waiting your reply, we greet you with consideration.

No TAV Committees
Valle Susa - Val Sangone - Torino

Attachments:

- DPCM 1st of March 2006, technical Observatory's role and appointment of its chairman Mario Arch Virano
- Summary of thermodynamics integrated transport systems in different territorial levels - University of Siena Department of Chemistry Director Prof. Riccardo Basosi - Ph.D. Chemical Sciences XVI cycle 2000-2001
- Analysis of studies conducted by the LTF on the Lyon-Turin (International Section) TREN/05/ADM/S07.54919/2005 revised version 2
- Open Letter to the European Union of the No TAV Committees, May 2nd, 2008

[8] European Parliament resolution of 22nd of April 2009 on the Green Paper on the future of politics in the field of trans-European transport network (TEN-T) (2008/2218 (INI))