

22 MARS 2007

JACQUES BARROT

*Vice-président de la Commission européenne*

Dear Senator,

Thank you for your letter of 8 February 2007 in which you provide me with further information on possible problems concerning three projects in the Czech Republic. These problems concern issues of planning, public consultation on environmental protection aspects on three motorway projects:

- Motorway M1 – Prague bypass;
- Motorway R52 – connection of Brno –Vienna;
- Motorway R43 Brno Agglomeration bypass.

As you know, all three projects are included in the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) and I know that discussions about them have been ongoing within the Czech Republic for some years now.

I would like to emphasise that the determination of the precise alignment is the responsibility of the Member State(s) concerned subject to application of EU legislation. This applies to all projects of common interest included in the Community Guidelines for the development of the TEN-T established with Decisions 1692/96 and 884/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council. When granting support from the TEN-T budget, my Services verify, with the support of other Commission Services, that the cost-benefit analysis – including economic, environmental and social impacts – demonstrates a positive result.

Furthermore, projects have to comply with EU environmental legislation including Directives 85/337/EEC (as amended by D 97/11/EC) on Environmental Impact Assessment and Directive 2001/42/EC on Strategic Environmental Assessment. In case of non compliance, they are not eligible for co-financing from European Funds.

As far as the Operational programme for Transport of the Structural funds is concerned, my colleague Danuta Hübner, Commissioner for Regional policy, has advised that the list of major projects should be regarded as indicative only. As mentioned above, schemes that were subsequently submitted that do not comply with EU legislation will not be supported.

My services will continue to follow development carefully to ensure we find the best possible solution in order to conciliate the need for investment with the respect of environmental legislation.

Yours sincerely,

  
Jacques BARROT

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