

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000343/25
to the Commission**

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(27 January 2025)

Subject: Environmental, social and economic problems with the Strait of Messina bridge project

There are concerns that the bridge due to be built over the Strait of Messina, included in the TEN-T network, does not comply with EU legislation, in particular Directive 2011/92/EU on environmental impact assessments and Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats. Issues include a lack of technical studies on seismic risks, coastal erosion and disruptions in Natura 2000 areas, the need for derogating authorisations, and doubts over the project's economic viability.

The local authorities point to the risk of the bridge not being completed, the socioeconomic impacts on communities and the lack of transparency. The phased construction could result in public resources being frittered away and give rise to territorial imbalances, contrary to the EU's strategy of territorial continuity.

In view of the above:

1. Given the presence of seismic faults, especially the active 'Cannitello' fault, and the absence of any specific studies on coastal erosion, has the Commission verified whether the project complies with the EU directives?
2. Do the environmental impact assessment/strategic environmental assessment requirements ensure compliance with environmental laws, and what steps will it take to monitor transparency, the involvement of local communities and protection of the rights of the citizens involved, including expropriated citizens?
3. Has it been consulted regarding the use of EU funds, and what is its view of the project's cost-effectiveness in comparison to other options that could better ensure both territorial continuity and compatibility with the objectives of the Green Deal?

Submitted: 27.1.2025

**Answer given by Commissioner Tzitzikostas on behalf of the European Commission
(28 March 2025)**

1. On 13 November 2024 the Italian Ministry of Environment and Energy Security issued the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the project, with several recommendations. The Commission is currently in contact with the Italian authorities to assess how the provisions of EU law applicable to the present case, in particular Directive 2011/92/EU ⁽¹⁾ on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment and Directive 92/43/EEC ⁽²⁾ on the conservation of natural habitats and species, are being implemented. Overall, it is the responsibility of the authorities and expert bodies in Italy to assess the technical feasibility of the project considering the regional environmental conditions.
2. The above assessment concerns also provisions on the consultation of the public. On the contrary, questions regarding expropriations are not in the scope of the directives.
3. The Commission adopted on 7 October 2024 its decision on the selection of projects following the 2023 calls for proposals under the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) ⁽³⁾. The decision includes EUR 24.75 million CEF funding (50% of the project's total eligible costs) for a study on the executive design of the railway link between Calabria and Sicily and its connections with the existing network. Only once the final design documents are available cost-benefit considerations can be made. The project's Grant Agreement between the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency and the beneficiary (Stretto di Messina S.P.A), entered into force on 10 October 2024. The beneficiary needs to ensure that all procurement rules and other applicable legislation are duly respected.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32011L0092>

⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:31992L0043>

⁽³⁾ Commission Implementing Decision C(2024)6940 final of 7.10.2024: https://transport.ec.europa.eu/document/download/744ad3f3-22e7-411f-9f04-65b20170a1c0_en?filename=C%282024%296940.pdf