

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000789/26
to the Commission
Katri Kulmuni (Renew)
(25 February 2026)**

Subject: Competitive tendering for the public procurement of passenger rail services

In Finland, the Public Service Obligations (PSO) Regulation (European Parliament and Council Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007) on the competitive tendering of passenger rail services has been the subject of public debate. In Northern Finland in particular there are concerns that competition rules could pose a threat to the region's direct rail connections. Passengers would have to change trains in Oulu or Kuopio, and journeys in the north would be on local trains, rather than well-equipped long-distance trains.

It is very important for the accessibility of Northern Finland, as well as for the development of the conditions for tourism in the region, that the existing rail connections between the south and the north are not weakened, but further developed. It is also environmentally friendly to favour rail transport.

When it is possible for trains in Central Europe to pass through several countries in a matter of hours, Finns would find it difficult to understand why it would not be possible to stay on the same train to travel north from Oulu and Kuopio, as they have done until now, and instead be forced to change trains as a result of competitive tendering.

In Finland, the current government has made it clear that public support will not be allocated to routes operating under market conditions where at least one operator can operate profitably.

With the above in mind:

Under the PSO Regulation, is it the case that market-based transport services that are subject to competitive tendering cannot be operated using the same rolling stock as subsidised services, and if so, is the Commission planning to amend the legislation in this regard, or is this something the Member States decide upon internally?

Submitted: 25.2.2026

**Answer given by Mr Tzitzikostas on behalf of the European Commission
(5 May 2026)**

Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007 on public passenger transport services by rail and by road ⁽¹⁾ does not preclude the use of the same rail rolling stock in the performance of commercial activities and public services.

However, when rail passenger transport operators carry out commercial activities as well as services under public service obligations, they should respect the obligation of accounting separation between transport services subject to compensation for public service obligations and other activities (point 5 of Annex to Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007 ⁽²⁾).

In addition, Article 6(3) of Directive 2012/34/EU ⁽³⁾ prohibits the transfer of public funds paid for activities relating to the provision of transport services as public-service remits to activities relating to the provision of other transport services or any other business.

If these two conditions are respected, the rail rolling stock used under a public service contract could be used also for commercial operations.

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2007 on public passenger transport services by rail and by road and repealing Council Regulations (EEC) Nos 1191/69 and 1107/70 (OJ L 315, 3.12.2007, p. 1).

⁽²⁾ See also Commission notice on interpretative guidelines concerning Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007 on public passenger transport services by rail and by road (OJ C 222, 26.6.2023, p. 1), point 2.6.5.

⁽³⁾ Directive 2012/34/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 November 2012 establishing a single European railway area (recast) (OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 32).