

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001868/26
to the Commission
Kristoffer Storm (ECR), Sebastian Tynkkynen (ECR), Dick Erixon (ECR)
(6 May 2026)**

Subject: EU enterprise losing a EUR 320 million EU-funded public transport contract in Dakar to a Chinese state-backed company

EU public funding should not benefit Chinese state-owned enterprises or companies operating under massive state subsidies. The Global Gateway strategy is intended to be Europe's answer to China's Belt and Road Initiative, not a vehicle for indirectly financing it.

This case is particularly concerning in the light of previous experiences involving Chinese contractors in similar projects, where aggressively low bids have subsequently led to significant cost overruns and renegotiations. This raises serious doubt as to whether such offers reflect fair competition or strategic underbidding.

1. Does the Commission not see a fundamental contradiction in presenting Global Gateway as Europe's strategic answer to China while allowing Chinese state-backed companies to secure flagship EU-supported projects?
2. Why should European taxpayers accept EU funds being used to favour Chinese state-backed firms?
3. Will the Commission commit to closing this loophole and ensuring that EU-funded infrastructure projects cannot be awarded to Chinese state-owned or heavily subsidised bidders?

Submitted: 6.5.2026

**Answer given by Mr Sikela on behalf of the European Commission
(23 July 2026)**

The public transport restructuring project aims to cut travel times and pollution by linking Dakar's peripheral areas to the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Electric Regional Train (TER) corridors.

It also seeks to increase ridership of BRT and TER, both operated by European companies (Meridiam and SENTER/SNCF), strengthening the financial sustainability of their concessions while offering affordable, efficient services to the population.

The overall project was approved in 2022 ⁽¹⁾ and combines EUR 354 million in a Team Europe approach: European Investment Bank (EIB) (EUR 167 million loan), Agence Française de Développement (EUR 100 million loan and EUR 3 million grant), Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (EUR 20 million grant) and the EU (EUR 20 million grant). The management of the EU contribution is entrusted to the EIB.

The Senegal-led project follows international rules and covers road infrastructure, depots, rolling stock, and ticketing and passenger information systems via separate tenders.

The tender for gas buses is ongoing and under EIB assessment for compliance with its procurement rules; exclusion of state-backed firms is part of the eligibility criteria and is currently being scrutinised.

The EIB's 2025 Strategic Procurement Roadmap globally reinforces sustainability, Environmental Social and Governance (ESG) and quality criteria and helps ensure a level playing field for EU bidders.

The Commission is now actively working on various streams to ensure a higher presence of EU companies in EU-funded projects, working with Development Finance Institutions to implement strategic procurement principles (e.g. more stringent award criteria, reinforced ESG criteria) or join forces with tied-financing providers such as Export Credit Agencies.

In its proposal for the Global Europe Regulation ⁽²⁾ under the 2028-2034 Multiannual Financial Framework, the Commission has introduced the option to restrict eligibility rules on a case-by-case basis, if justified in light of the concrete project and circumstances, including where such restrictions are in the strategic interest of the EU.

This will allow to increase the participation of European companies in the implementation of EU external action and to restrict competition when needed.

⁽¹⁾ C(2022) 8666 final, Annex 1, Action Document 'Programme de Restructuration du Transport Collectif de Dakar' for a budget of EUR 20 million. https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/document/595457b4-ebf6-4dbc-9d8a-1d054398589d_fr.

⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2025%3A0551%3AFIN>.