

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-003094/26
to the Commission
Matteo Ricci (S&D)
(22 July 2026)**

Subject: Compliance with EU air quality requirements and compatibility of Italy's 'Ferrobuss' programme

The EU's sustainable mobility strategy has set the target of growing rail freight transport by 50% by 2030. With a rail modal share of around 11%, Italy is already the subject of adverse judgments and infringement procedures for exceeding the EU limit values for PM₁₀, NO₂ and PM_{2.5}.

Italy's 'Ferrobuss' programme, cited in the national air quality action plan for 2025-2027 as a key measure in the modal shift, implies an 'increase' in resources; yet the national budget shows that what we are really seeing is a repackaging of previously allocated funds rather than a genuine increase. After the programme was suspended and the accounts subsequently adjusted, the actual capacity of the programme for the period October 2025-October 2026 has reportedly been cut by 80%, falling from EUR 50 to 10 million per year.

In light of the above:

1. Is the Commission aware of this cut and the impact it will have on Italy's compliance with Directive 2008/50/EC?
2. How does it check that measures in the national plans are backed by actual financial resources and not legacy funds?
3. In view of ongoing infringement procedures, will it ask Italy for assurances that it has sufficient funds to cover the modal shift to rail transport?

Submitted: 22.7.2026

**Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(11 September 2026)**

The Ambient Air Quality Directive ⁽¹⁾ requires compliance with EU air quality standards, with the aim to protect human health and the environment.

It is for Member States to determine the appropriate measures to achieve them and adopt air quality plans to ensure that any exceedance period can be kept as short as possible.

The Commission has taken enforcement action on air quality in Italy opening several infringement procedures, currently ongoing ⁽²⁾. In two of these, Italy was referred to the Court of Justice of the EU, that found it in breach of the directive ⁽³⁾, ⁽⁴⁾.

In March 2024, the Commission sent a letter of formal notice ⁽⁵⁾ to Italy for continued failure to comply with the judgment in Case C-644/18 regarding the exceedance of particulate matter 10 (PM₁₀) limit values.

Moreover, in December 2025, the Commission sent a letter of formal notice ⁽⁶⁾ to Italy for failure to comply with the limit values set for nitrogen dioxide in the agglomerations of Naples and Palermo. From 2030, stricter limit values for pollutants under the revised Air Quality Directive ⁽⁷⁾ will apply.

Where air quality reporting indicates that limit values are exceeded, the Commission assesses whether air quality plans have been adopted and whether the measures part of air quality plans are appropriate, including their financing.

⁽¹⁾ Directive 2008/50/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 May 2008 on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe OJ L 152, 11.6.2008, pp. 1-44.

⁽²⁾ INFR(2014)2147 ([https://ec.europa.eu/implementing-eu-law/search-infringement-decisions/?langCode=EN&version=v1&typeOfSearch=byDecision&refId=INFR\(2014\)2147&page=1&size=10&order=desc&sortColumns=decisionDate](https://ec.europa.eu/implementing-eu-law/search-infringement-decisions/?langCode=EN&version=v1&typeOfSearch=byDecision&refId=INFR(2014)2147&page=1&size=10&order=desc&sortColumns=decisionDate)), INFR(2015)2043 ([https://ec.europa.eu/implementing-eu-law/search-infringement-decisions/?langCode=EN&version=v1&typeOfSearch=byDecision&refId=INFR\(2015\)2043&page=1&size=10&order=desc&sortColumns=decisionDate](https://ec.europa.eu/implementing-eu-law/search-infringement-decisions/?langCode=EN&version=v1&typeOfSearch=byDecision&refId=INFR(2015)2043&page=1&size=10&order=desc&sortColumns=decisionDate)), INFR(2020)2299 ([https://ec.europa.eu/implementing-eu-law/search-infringement-decisions/?langCode=EN&version=v1&typeOfSearch=byDecision&refId=INFR\(2020\)2299&page=1&size=10&order=desc&sortColumns=decisionDate](https://ec.europa.eu/implementing-eu-law/search-infringement-decisions/?langCode=EN&version=v1&typeOfSearch=byDecision&refId=INFR(2020)2299&page=1&size=10&order=desc&sortColumns=decisionDate)), INFR(2025)2187 ([https://ec.europa.eu/implementing-eu-law/search-infringement-decisions/?langCode=EN&version=v1&typeOfSearch=byDecision&refId=INFR\(2025\)2187&page=1&size=10&order=desc&sortColumns=decisionDate](https://ec.europa.eu/implementing-eu-law/search-infringement-decisions/?langCode=EN&version=v1&typeOfSearch=byDecision&refId=INFR(2025)2187&page=1&size=10&order=desc&sortColumns=decisionDate)).

⁽³⁾ C-644/18, *Commission v. Italy* (2020): https://infocuria.curia.europa.eu/tabs/affair?lang=en&sort=AFF_NUM-DESC&searchTerm=%2522C%252D644%252F18%2522&publishedId=C-644%2F18.

⁽⁴⁾ C-573/19, *Commission v. Italy* (2022): https://infocuria.curia.europa.eu/tabs/affair?lang=en&sort=AFF_NUM-DESC&searchTerm=%2522C%252D573%252F19%2522&publishedId=C-573%2F19.

⁽⁵⁾ INFR(2014)2147.

⁽⁶⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/inf_25_2745.

⁽⁷⁾ Directive (EU) 2024/2881 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2024 on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe (recast) PE/88/2024/REV/1 OJ L, 2024/2881, 20.11.2024.

The Commission does not decide on the allocation of national funds but monitors the implementation of the directive as well as of the above judgments, including through the assessment of the air quality plan's implementation. The Commission may, if necessary, take further action as appropriate.
