

**Question for written answer E-002657/2024
to the Commission**
Rule 144
Nils Ušakovs (S&D)

Subject: Reconsideration of the Rail Baltica project

The Rail Baltica project in Latvia has been delayed by three years and may extend beyond 2030. There is a significant lack of transparency regarding funding sources, as well as in decision-making and in the allocation of responsibilities, with the management structure creating conflicts of interest and threatening the coordinated implementation of the project. Costs have skyrocketed from EUR 6 billion to EUR 24 billion, with Latvia's share amounting to at least EUR 8.5 billion – four times the original estimate. To cut costs, the government is considering steps such as bypassing Riga and reducing some route sections to a single track.

1. Will the EU cover 85 % or more of the expenses despite rising costs, taking into account the EU's long-term budget for 2021-2027 and the need for the EU budget authority's approval for future financing?
2. Is the Commission aware that the project's rising costs could negatively impact the Latvian economy and state budget, placing an unsustainable burden on Latvia's finances and potentially resulting in forced tax hikes and a financial and economic crisis?
3. Given these issues, does the Commission believe that the EU value of the project is at risk and that a thorough review of the entire project should be considered before proceeding, in order to avoid potential failure?

Submitted: 26.11.2024