

KEITH TAYLOR  
Green Party  
*MEP for the South East of England*



Violeta Bulc  
Transport Commissioner  
European Commission  
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200  
1049 Brussels

24 October 2018

Dear Commissioner Bulc,

I'm writing to draw your attention to the lack of public consultation relating to the UK Government's decision to build an Expressway between Oxford and Cambridge. Given the significant environmental impact that will ensue from any road building on such a large scale, it is a contravention of the Aarhus convention not to allow public participation in the initial decision making concerning the route, as wherever it is situated, it will have a significant impact on local residents. The Government has thus far conducted all development of the project behind closed doors. In September 2018, a preferred route for the road was announced, with plans to hold a public consultation later in the process. However, the actual notion of the road and the question of its necessity has not been presented to the public, despite calls for a public enquiry from NGOs including the Campaign to Protect Rural England.

Many of my constituents have expressed their concerns that the process thus far has been undemocratic; they want the opportunity to give their views - at the earliest stage in the process as possible. It is my duty to help ensure that their voices are heard and to call for the Government to be held to account for such undemocratic and short-sighted decision-making.

As a member of the European Parliament's Transport Committee, I believe it is imperative to engage with the public as a priority, in order that concerns can be heard before investment is made and decisions are taken. I am not in favour of more road building and would advocate that investment be made instead in raising the profile of the East-West rail link which connects the same regions, electrifying this route and promoting sustainable transport modes over and above the road network. Especially given the recent findings of the IPCC about keeping within the thresholds of dangerous climate change and maintaining commitments made to reduce emissions.

The Aarhus Convention ensures the right to participate in environmental decision-making. It states very clearly that arrangements must be made by public authorities to enable the public affected and environmental non-governmental organisations to **comment on proposals for projects affecting the environment**, or plans and programmes relating to the environment, so that these comments can be taken into due account in decision-making, and that information is provided on the final decisions and the reasons

for it. In this case, there has been no opportunity for comment, and no reasons given for the choices made without consultation.

The Aarhus Convention upholds the public's right to information and review procedures and, where necessary, challenge any public decisions that have been made without fully respecting that right. I don't believe that due process has been followed in the activities relating to this development, and urge the Commission to consider what steps should be taken to redress this situation.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith Taylor". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke underneath the name.

Keith Taylor - Green Party MEP, South East England.