

From:
Spasi Sofia NGO
Sofia, Bulgaria

To:
OLAF - European Commission
European Anti-Fraud Office

Copy to:
Mrs. Corina Crețu
European Commissioner for Regional Policy

Mrs. Kristalina Georgieva
European Commissioner for Budget and HR

Dear Sir/Madam,

"Spasi Sofia"(eng. Save Sofia) is as a non-governmental organization formed to provide a source of ideas to the people and the governors of Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria. Our aims include better urban environment, sustainable, ecological and user-friendly public transportation as well as improved quality of life in the city. We write to you with greatest concern about the way Sofia's municipality is spending EU funds for tramway reconstruction with very disturbing results.

The project is entitled Sofia Municipality – Project for Integrated Urban Transport in Sofia. It was approved on July 20, 2011 by the OPRD's MA within the meaning of Art. 39 of EC Regulation 1083/2006. The project's total value is EUR 62,624 million, 50 million of which is grant under OPRD and 12,624 million is own contribution. Our report concerns Component 8 of the project - *"Rehabilitation of the railway along Bulgaria Blvd. – this component will provide 80% new lot of ballast prism and 20% new lot on concrete bed; the concrete lots will be along crossings and subways, constructed **in accordance with the modern standards and requiring very little maintenance**. This option includes the renovation of 7 stops including repair of the platforms and installation of digital information boards"* (quote from the official project documentation).¹

The Bulgarian company **"SK-13 Transstroj"** won the construction bidding while the municipality's own company **"Sofinvest"** was responsible for the supervision. The construction works started on March 5, 2014 with an initial deadline of 97 days. In fact, after 2 postponements, the line was open on July 15, 2014 with a considerable construction delay (38% more time than it was stated in the projects' requirements) . We would like to point out the fact that the second postponement was due to poor quality of the construction works. According to Mr. Lyubomir Hristov, deputy mayor for transport of Sofia, during the second postponement, the construction company was supposed to eliminate the problems so that at the end the reconstruction is in conformity with the high quality standards of the EU².

In this letter as well as on the link to our Facebook page, you will find attached, incontestable proofs of the extremely poor quality of the works on the tramline. After only 7 months of usage, the tracks and the platforms are in extremely poor and even dangerous condition.

Given all the information above, "Spasi Sofia" turns to you with a request to act on behalf of your responsibilities and within your competences to investigate the problem. European taxpayers' money had been spent and the results are overwhelmingly disappointing.

¹ <http://www.bgregio.eu/en/integrated-urban-transport/beneficiants.aspx>

² http://infrastructure.bg/railwaysnews/2014/07/01/2334827_ljubomir_hristov_zam-kmet_po_transporta_na_sofiia_sled/

You can find a detailed gallery with pictures at: <http://goo.gl/Hfcwtu>. In order to illustrate the urgency of the situation and the need of a fast and very strict sanction to both Sofia municipality and the contractors, we include the following pictures:



Please contact us on XXXXXXXXXXXX or info@spasisofia.org if you have any questions or need additional information. We are looking forward to see your actions of defending the interest of European citizens and taxpayers.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,
Boris Bonev
Administrator of "Spasi Sofia"