

Ingeniøren, 23 November

EU Commissioner to Denmark: Forget about extra money for the Fehmarn tunnel

Not one more euro will be granted to the Fehmarn tunnel or to road or railway works in Denmark, Ingeniøren's access to documents shows.

Denmark has to forget about getting more funds for the Fehmarn tunnel and the roads and railway sections that cars and trains are to use to and from Rødby. That is evident from a letter from the EU's Transport Commissioner, Slovenian Violeta Bulc, to the Danish Transport Minister, Hans Christian Schmidt, which Ingeniøren has been granted access to.

On 10 September, the Minister took the plane to Brussels to promote Denmark and the Fehmarn tunnel case. Denmark guarantees alone and without Germany the DKK 64 billion, which the tunnel and land facilities are expected to cost.

Denmark had applied for aid from the EU, which supports infrastructure in important transport corridors with the so-called Ten-T funds. The EU promised DKK 4.4 billion in the period until 2019, which was only half of Denmark's budget.

The EU was willing to support the railway; in fact a whole 40% of the construction price, but support for the road constructions was saved. The EU cut deeply in the funds for new infrastructure to save money for other support programs.

Violeta Bulc emphasizes that the same happened to other cross-border projects, which the Commission consider bottlenecks or very valuable to Europe. The Fehmarn connection is definitely in this group, she underlines and urges Denmark to apply for aid again after 2019 where the current period has ended.

Roads and railways in Denmark cannot expect more euro aid from Brussels.

"When it comes to your wish for the EU's financial support for these access roads, I have to inform you that the Commission is not able to revise the decision of 31 July," the Commissioner writes to the Danish Minister.

She points to the fact that the decision was unanimously approved by all member states, including Denmark, and that the limited budget meant that the land facilities in Denmark were deselected.

Violeta Bulc does, however, provide support for Denmark in another area. The German authorities should not be able to treat the environmental approval of the Fehmarn tunnel for years.

"We should do our utmost to convince the German authorities about the much needed acceleration of the German approval process," she writes.

The first series of hearing meetings about the Fehmarn tunnel hosted by the federal authority in Schleswig-Holstein ended on Thursday. The German environmental organisations are still very dissatisfied with Femern A/S' material and predict a year-long approval procedure, including a lawsuit.