

# Europe Says "No" to Trakia Motorway Shady Deal

*Commissioner for Enlargement Olli Rehn exposed the Commission on Protection of Competition as impudent liar*



Europe has said an explicit "no" to the notorious Trakia motorway concession contract. "The European Commission has never expressed a stand in support of this contract," Commissioner for Enlargement Olli Rehn said.

In a letter he answered questions posed to him by two European MPs - Erik Meijer and Elly de Groen. Rehn exposed the Commission on Protection of Competition as a liar.

What is the pre-history of the scandal? In March, 2005, the government of Simeon

Saxcoburggotski signed a contract for a 35-year concession of Trakia motorway. The consortium comprises two Bulgarian companies: Automagistrali and Tehnoexportstroy, and three Portuguese firms: MSF, Lena and Somag. The contract was not made public. The international non-governmental organization Transparency International Bulgaria (TIB) warned that the deal is not advantageous to our country and used numerous experts' analyses in support of its stand. The organization approached the Bulgarian Commission on Protection of Competition in link with the unlawful character of the concession contract, which had been signed without a tender. It was then that the Commission declared that it will ask Brussels for a stand on the case.

Several months later the antitrust authorities announced that everything's legal and gave green light to the deal. The Commission on Protection of Competition referred to an official letter sent by "Competition" Directorate General. It was kept secret.

"We did it upon the advice of Brussels," sources from the Commission on Protection of Competition said then.

It has turned out that Brussels has never sent an official letter like that. On the contrary: The European Commission has always insisted that the contract for the concession of the motorway is a violation of the EU acquis. The European MPs often give the Trakia motorway concession as a stunning example of corruption.