

CMFB opinion

concerning the CMFB consultation on the role of ISPA in the financing of the high speed railway link in Italy (RFI – TAV)

1. On Eurostat's request the CMFB Chairman, with the assistance of the CMFB Executive Body, asked the CMFB Members to state their opinions on the treatment in national accounts of the financing of the high-speed railway link in Italy (RFI – TAV) through Infrastrutture S.p.A (ISPA). Seventeen (17) national statistical institutes and nineteen (19) national central banks from the Member States returned the questionnaire. A total of thirty-six (36) national institutions responded to the questionnaire. The ECB also provided a reply.
2. The results of the consultation were as follows:
 - 2.1 Based on a large majority of the replies received, the CMFB considers that:

The debt issued by ISPA in the context of the construction of the high-speed railway link is to be recorded as government debt (in whole or in part).
 - 2.2 Those who considered that the debt issued by ISPA should be debt of government were then requested to consider how this debt should be recorded in the Government accounts in the year of issue. Based on these replies, the CMFB considers that:

The debt should be recorded as 100% debt of the government
 - 2.3 Based on the replies from those who considered that the debt should be considered as debt of government, there was no clear majority in favour of recording the counterpart entry of the debt issued by ISPA as either a financial transaction or as a capital transfer.

The CMFB, therefore, is unable to provide an opinion on this aspect.
3. Further details on these accounting treatments are provided in the background document prepared by the Task Force in support of this CMFB consultation.
4. This opinion has been transmitted to Eurostat and will be kept in the records of the CMFB secretariat.

(Signed)

Bill KEATING
CMFB Chairman

Dublin, 20 May 2005