

# Charging of heavy goods vehicles for the use of infrastructure: differentiated charging

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The Committee on Transport and Tourism adopted the report drafted by Saïd El KHANDRAOUI (PES, BE) amending the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 1999/62/EC on the charging of heavy goods vehicles for the use of certain infrastructures.

The main amendments adopted in committee – under the first reading of the codecision procedure – are as follows:

**Extension of rules to all major roads and 3.5 tonne vehicles:** according to MEPs, the directive should permit the free movement of goods in the Union while guaranteeing equal treatment of carriers. It is therefore appropriate to apply it throughout the trans-European transport network and on all the roads customarily used for international goods transport. In addition, the Directive should apply to 3.5 tonne vehicles from 1 January 2012.

**Congestion:** the Directive should allow Member States to apply a congestion charge on lorries on the condition that they apply a similar charge to "all other road users". Before the implementation of a congestion charge, the Member State concerned should set out an action plan which identifies, on the basis of a cost/benefit analysis, the possible measures to enhance the capacity of the road sections concerned by reducing the traffic volume or by building new infrastructure. The action plan should cover all road users causing congestion.

The proposal stipulates that in exceptional cases concerning infrastructure in mountainous regions and conurbations, and after informing the Commission, a toll mark-up may be added to the infrastructure charge levied on specific road sections which are subject to acute congestion, or the use of which by vehicles is the cause of significant environmental damage. MEPs felt that **conurbations** could also be affected by congestion, and this could justify a toll mark-up. They proposed that the Member States should be able to use the revenues for the improvement of transport infrastructure in general according to their own priorities.

**Cost of use:** charges should not apply to vehicles complying in advance with future EURO emissions standards as regards the dates laid down in the relevant rules.

**Earmarking of revenues:** MEPs said that the concept of earmarking should be reinforced. A Member State in which an external cost charge is levied should ensure that the revenue generated by the charge is earmarked as a priority to reduce and where possible eliminate the external costs arising from road transport. The revenue could also be used for measures aimed at facilitating efficient pricing, reducing road transport pollution at source, mitigating its effects, improving CO<sub>2</sub> and energy performance of road transport vehicles, and developing and improving existing road infrastructure or developing alternative infrastructure for transport users.

As from 2011, at least 15% of the revenues generated by external costs and infrastructure charges in each Member State should be dedicated to financially supporting TEN-T projects in order to increase transport sustainability. This percentage should gradually increase over time.

**Galileo:** as soon as the operability of toll collecting services based on the Galileo satellite positioning system is technically worked out, external cost charges should be levied and collected by an interoperable European electronic toll collecting system as specified in Directive 2004/52/EC.

**Reporting on tolls:** no later than 31 December 2010, the Commission should present a report to the European Parliament and the Council on the availability of safe and secured parking places on the Trans-European Road Network (TEN). After involving the relevant social partners, this report should be accompanied by proposals on:

a) earmarking of infrastructure charges for a sufficient number of safe and secured parking areas on the TEN to be complied with by infrastructure operators or by public authorities responsible for the TEN;

b) guidelines for the European Investment Bank, the European Cohesion Fund and the European Structural Fund for due consideration of safe and secure parking areas within the design and co-financing of TEN-projects.

**Report on the results of the Directive:** the report on the application of the Directive, to be drawn up by the Commission in 2013, should focus inter alia on:

a) the technical and economic feasibility of gradually abolishing time-based charging systems and introducing distance-based systems and the need to maintain a derogation for Member States with external borders with third countries to continue to apply time-based charging systems to heavy goods vehicles queuing at border-crossing points;

b) the need for a proposal for a scheme to ensure the consistent and simultaneous internalisation of external costs for all other modes of transport.

The report should be accompanied by an assessment of the progress of the internalisation of external costs for all modes of transport and by a proposal to the European Parliament and the Council for further revision of this Directive.

**Calculation of external costs:** in order to ensure that European road hauliers receive clear price signals, which act as an incentive to optimise their behaviour, efforts should be made in the medium term to bring about convergence in the methods which all European charging systems use to calculate external costs.

**Internalisation of external costs:** the report stressed that the principle of internalising external costs was the equivalent of a management instrument and should encourage road users and the related industrial sectors to exploit and expand their respective capabilities in the area of environmentally-friendly transport, for example by means of changes in driving behaviour or further technological development.

**Interoperability of toll systems:** MEPs said that the interoperability of the toll systems in the Community should be achieved as quickly as possible. Efforts should be made to limit the number of devices in the vehicle to one, making it possible to apply the various rates which are in force in the various Member States. The Commission should take all necessary measures to ensure the rapid introduction of a truly interoperable system by the end of 2010.