

# Greening transport package and the internalisation of external costs

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The Committee on Transport and Tourism adopted an own-initiative report by Georg **JARZEMBOWSKI** (EPP-ED, DE) on the greening of transport and the internalisation of external costs in response to the three Commission Communications on these subjects.

**Greening transport:** the Commission communication on greening transport is welcomed as an important first partial step. Members regret that the Commission has failed to produce an integrated plan to green transport, that is to say, covering every transport sector, and has so far instead:

- adopted a piecemeal approach by submitting a first basic set of guidelines for estimating the external costs of transport and for their internalisation in individual sectors;
- again opted for a “stepwise solution” by starting with a specific proposal for immediate application for higher road tolls for heavy goods vehicles by amending Directive 1999/62/EC (Eurovignette Directive) which is intended to permit Member States to charge for external costs, and even this would apply only in Member States that so wished, and,
- as regards rail noise abatement, listed a range of options and future measures.

The committee calls on the Commission, therefore, to provide for the measures and instruments required to make transport greener. It wants the Commission to conduct scientifically sound assessments of the impact of the individual measures and their competition implications in terms of modes as well as their impact on the costs of mobility and competitiveness. Proceeding from that basis, the Commission should submit an **integrated plan for the greening of transport**, together with specific legislative proposals.

**Internalisation of external costs:** the report notes that the Commission has failed to fulfil the obligation imposed on it by the Eurovignette Directive, since it has not put forward a generally applicable model for the assessment of external costs as a whole, given that it has not analysed the impact on every mode of transport. It expresses disappointment that the positive effects of transport in terms of economic growth and competitiveness ('positive externalities') have not been researched to any significant extent and have not been taken into account in the Commission's calculations, unlike external costs which have been the subject of extensive work. The committee recognises the role of the 'Polluter Pays Principle' and expects the Commission to develop this pragmatic approach. It recognises the contributions made to date by the various modes of transport in the form of general taxation, vehicle and oil taxes, and road tolls to balance out real infrastructure building and maintenance costs and views this as the starting point for future work.

Members also note the fact that the Commission has not attempted to assess the impact that its proposed method for internalising external costs might have on competition among the various modes of transport and on the costs of mobility and calls on the Commission to do so. They also deplore the fact that the Commission has not proposed measures to mitigate the effects of increased remoteness arising from EU enlargement and has not made any forecasts regarding the consequences of its application, in particular in those Member States with geographical barriers and for those which do not as yet have multimodal alternatives. The Commission should do so as part of the forthcoming review of the trans-European transport networks (TENs).

The committee feels that the Commission is behaving inconsistently on several counts in that it maintains that the internalisation of external costs should also apply to cars, but does not even supply related calculations, preferring instead to maintain the freedom of Member States to charge passenger cars as they

see fit. It therefore asks the Commission to publish a **methodology for internalising the external costs of individual vehicles** in order to provide Member States with guidelines in compliance with the principle of subsidiarity.

Lastly, the Commission is asked to produce specific proposals for all modes of transport and to perform the task deriving from the Eurovignette Directive by submitting a comprehensive plan for calculating and charging external costs and assessing their impact on the basis of a comprehensible model.

**Rail noise abatement:** the Commission is asked to draw up a proposal for a directive with a view to introducing noise-related track access charges for locomotives and wagons in order to provide incentives as quickly as possible for railway undertakings to re-equip their fleets rapidly with low-noise vehicles by replacing brake blocks. If necessary, short-term measures may also be considered and no legislative measure should have a negative impact on the rail sector in intermodal competition.

The report looks to the Commission to provide for a practicable way of ensuring, through earmarking of revenue, that upgrading of this kind will not be confined to wagons belonging to railway undertakings, but will also extend to wagons of other companies carried by railway undertakings.