

# Greening transport package and the internalisation of external costs

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The European Parliament adopted by 452 votes to 108, with 134 abstentions, a resolution 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. They observe that the Commission has already taken preliminary initiatives which should ultimately lead to a comprehensive strategy for the internalisation of external costs in all modes of transport; but has so far instead:

- adopted a piecemeal approach drawn up in a Handbook for estimating the external costs of transport and for their internalisation in individual sectors (see the 'Handbook on estimation of external costs in the transport sector'),
- has submitted a proposal to amend Directive 1999/62/EC (the Eurovignette Directive), which is intended to permit Member States to charge for the external costs arising from heavy goods vehicles, in line with Article 11 of that Directive,
- proposed taxing the external costs caused by rail noise via noise-differentiated infrastructure charges.

The Commission is invited to: (i) **where every mode of transport is concerned, provide for the measures and instruments required to make transport greener**, taking into account the international conventions in force and the measures already implemented in the various transport sectors; (ii) with reference to those proposals, 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; and, proceeding from that basis, (iii) 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.

Parliament notes that the Commission, in its communication, has put forward scientifically coherent justifications for the charging of individual external costs to various modes of transport, and has adopted what it terms a "pragmatic approach based on the average cost". MEPs generally support the Commission's basis of **marginal social cost pricing**, in line with the White Paper on Transport of 2001. The Commission is asked to explicitly take account of the "**polluter pays**" principle. Parliament calls on the Commission, however, in further steps with regard to the internalisation of external costs, to take account of all forms of internalisation of external costs which already exist, such as oil taxes and road tolls.

Parliament calls on the Commission, when putting forward further proposals to green the transport sector, to include assessments of the impact of competition between transport modes and associated social and environmental impacts and to include the costs of mobility and competitiveness.

Parliament regrets 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 is called upon to (i) remedy these shortcomings as part of the forthcoming review of the trans-European transport networks (TEN-T); (ii) submit a supplementary proposal for multimodal mobility corridors ('**green corridors**') as part of the review of the TEN-T, offsetting the burdens imposed by the present proposal by enabling accessibility and mobility without obstacles.

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.

Parliament 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.