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

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The Committee on Transport and Tourism adopted the recommendation for second reading contained in the report by Saïd EL KHADRAOUI (S&D, BE) on the Council position at first reading with a view to the adoption of 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 (Eurovignette).

It recommends that the European Parliament's position adopted at second reading, under the ordinary legislative procedure, amends the Council position at first reading as follows:

Tolls and user charges: Member State may choose to apply tolls and/or user charges only to vehicles having a maximum permissible laden weight of not less than 12 tonnes if it considers that an extension to vehicles of less than 12 tonnes would:

(a) create significant adverse effects on the free flow of traffic, the environment, noise levels, congestion, health, or road safety due to traffic diversion; or

(b) involve administrative costs of more than 30 % of the additional revenue which would have been generated by that extension.

Moreover, Member States choosing to apply tolls and/or user charges only to vehicles having a maximum permissible laden weight of not less than 12 tonnes shall **inform the Commission** of their decision and on the reasons therefore.

Members consider that the weighted average infrastructure charge may also include a **return on capital and/or on a profit margin** based on market conditions.

Derogations: the external-cost charge related to traffic-based air pollution shall not apply to vehicles which comply with the most stringent EURO emission standards until **three years** after the dates of application laid down in the rules which introduced.

Fleet renewal incentives: Members consider it necessary to provide full incentives to renew the fleet, together with positive financial incentives for cleaner vehicles which must be accompanied by **financial penalties for the most polluting trucks**. At the same time it shall not be disregarded that, according to Directive, the revenues deriving from mark-up are earmarked for financing priority projects belonging to the TEN-T network.

Infrastructure charge: the infrastructure charge may also be varied for the purpose of reducing congestion, minimising infrastructure damage and optimising the use of the infrastructure concerned or promoting road safety, on condition that:

- no infrastructure charge is more than**200%** above (as opposed to 175%) the maximum level of the weighted average infrastructure charge;
- the peak periods during which the higher infrastructure charges are levied for the purpose of reducing congestion do not exceed **eight hours per day** (as opposed to five hours per day);

- the variation is devised and applied on a road section affected by congestion in a way which offers reduced toll rates to hauliers who choose to travel during off-peak periods and applies increased toll rates to those who choose to travel during peak hours on the same road section;
- a Member State wishing to introduce such a variation informs the Commission thereof and provides it with the information necessary to ensure that the conditions are fulfilled.

User guide: the Commission shall arrange for a user guide on the implementation of the Directive to be drafted in the languages of those Member States that apply it, with a special focus on **modulating congestion**, so as to enable public bodies and private firms to draw up business plans that take into account the possible effects of such modulation.

Information to the Commission: before the implementation of a new external-cost charge tolling arrangement, Member States shall send the Commission a specific plan indicating how additional revenue from external cost charges is to be used.

Interoperable toll collection systems: the Commission shall promote any cooperation between Member States that may prove necessary to ensure interoperable toll collection systems that can be used on one another's territory.

Use of revenues generated by this Directive: the report states that the revenues generated from external-cost charges, or the equivalent in financial value of these revenues, shall be used to benefit the transport sector, to make transport more sustainable and optimise the entire transport system, including providing secure parking places.

Members call for **at least 15%** of the revenues generated by the external cost charge and infrastructure charge in each Member State to be dedicated to **financially supporting TEN-T projects** in order to increase transport sustainability. This percentage shall gradually increase over time.

Delegated acts: the Commission shall adopt delegated acts as regards the calculation methods of sections 2 and 3 in Annex III.

Report: at the latest 4 years (instead of 5 years) after the entry into force of this Directive, the Commission’s report on the implementation and effects of this Directive, shall assess, amongst others:

- the technical and economic feasibility of introducing minimum distance-based charges on the main inter-urban roads. The report shall identify the possible types of road sections to be charged, the possible ways of levying and enforcing in a cost-effective way such charges and a common simple method for setting the minimum rates;
- the degree of interoperability between different toll systems in the Member States as required by Directive 2004/52/EC;
- the technical and economic feasibility of gradually abolishing time-based charging systems and introducing distance-based systems.

The report shall be accompanied by a proposal to the European Parliament and the Council for further revision of this Directive.