Trans-European transport network: electronic road toll systems, widespread introduction and interoperability

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In accordance with the requirements of Decision 2009/750/EC, the Commission presents a report on the state of advancement of European Electronic Toll Service (EETS) deployment. After putting the EETS in the broader context of European transport policy, the report presents the progress achieved and gives the Commission's assessment of the next steps to be taken for making the EETS operational. European industry is at present a global front-runner in road charging and tolling equipment. EETS can facilitate the introduction and roll-out on a global scale of new products such as interoperable on-board units, combining the digital tachograph and tolling with other intelligent transport systems applications. This in turn may give rise to completely new services and applications, again with a potentially global market, which will contribute to the creation of growth and jobs in the European economy.

To recall, Decision 2009/750/EC establishes the essential requirements of this service valid over the entire EU and sets the mandatory standards, technical specifications and operational rules. In its 2011 White Paper "Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area" the Commission stressed that the EETS can be instrumental in the promotion of road charging strategies that contribute to a sustainable transport system and in facilitating road charging acceptance by users. Similarly on the occasion of the recent amendment of Directive 1999/62/EC (Eurovignette Directive), the European Parliament and the Council have asked the Commission to monitor progress made to implement within the agreed dates a genuine European Electronic Toll Service and to promote cooperation between Member States that may prove necessary to ensure the interoperability of electronic toll collection systems at European level.

The report states that **progress achieved in the advancement of EETS deployment is disappointing.** Despite the efforts of the Commission and the maturity of tolling technologies, the EETS is not yet a reality in everyday life of road users. This failure to implement EETS and to do it in the timescale provided is **not due to technical reasons**. It is not more complicated technically to implement pan-European interoperability of electronic road toll systems than pan-European roaming of mobile phones or worldwide interoperability of credit cards. The report examines a number of possible explanations for the delays:

- EETS implementation is still hampered by a **lack of cooperation** between different stakeholders groups, and eforts by Member States have been limited to the level of separate national interoperability, which is now implemented in most countries with electronic tolling systems;

- most Member States still have to complete the national framework so that potential EETS providers know how to register in practice;

- some Toll Chargers are proposing a **contractual clause which automatically ends the contract** if the EETS provider has not reached full European coverage within 24 months. Such a clause sets a considerable business risk and discourages potential EETS providers.

Next steps: in order to facilitate the timely introduction of EETS by Member States and industry and to promote the necessary cooperation as requested by the European Parliament and the Council, certain actions are necessary.

Accelerate a uniform implementation of the decision:

- intensify the work of the Toll Committee set up by Directive 2004/52/EC. Member States should fulfil their obligations in Decision 2009/750/EC regarding the **designation of their national Conciliation Body**. The Commission will launch infringement procedures where appropriate;

- Members States shall see to it that contractual clauses automatically ending the contract if an EETS Provider does not reach full European coverage within 24 months are **not allowed**. If this practice is kept, the Commission will launch infringement proceedings;

- the Commission will **develop a uniform set of protocols for "suitability for use" tests**, including on the security aspects, in order to limit the discrepancy of these protocols between toll chargers, which would in turn contribute to reducing the costs charged to EETS providers;

- the Commission will set-up a **comprehensive information sharing resource platform**.

A stepwise approach

- as a first step towards full European interoperability, Member States with significant volume of traffic on the trans-European network should encourage the cross-border interoperability of their electronic road toll systems;

- attention should be paid to the involvement of a **sufficiently wide set of toll chargers and Member States to ensure these projects may be applied across the entire Union**. The knowledge gained in implementing these regional projects fully complying with the single contract /single on-board unit principle should be shared effectively across all the stakeholders;

- the Commission is **willing to provide a technical assistance** to such regional initiatives and is ready to examine the provision of **possible financial support to large scale regional projects in the context of the TEN-T programme;**

Closely monitor development and take new initiatives:

- Member States when starting new projects or renewing concessions should systematically check and ensure compliance with EETS requirements. When adopting its opinion on new tolling arrangements which are notified in the framework of Article 7h of Directive 1999/62/EC (Eurovignette), the Commission will issue a negative opinion if they do not include a fully EETS compatible system;

- if disputes between toll chargers and EETS providers cannot be solved by the Conciliation Body, the Commission will examine the points of contention and whether the arrangements between toll chargers and their existing local/national service providers are discriminatory in comparison with those proposed to EETS providers;

- the Commission reserves its right to present a new initiative to the European Parliament and the Council. It reaffirms its commitment to take all the necessary measures to facilitate the establishment of full technical and operational interoperability of European electronic road tolling systems.