

Strategy for an electronic toll service and a vignette system on light private vehicles in Europe

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The Committee on Transport and Tourism adopted an own-initiative report by Jim HIGGINS (EPP, IE) on a strategy for an electronic toll service and a vignette system on light private vehicles in Europe.

Members agree with the Commission's assertion that the current European Electronic Toll Service (EETS) system, established by Directive (2004/52/EC), has not been working and needs to be overhauled. They consider that the market-driven approach favoured by the Commission has failed to bear fruit and that **political action** is therefore needed in order to speed up the implementation of the EETS and translate it into reality in the immediate future.

Considering it regrettable that Member States have, on the whole, shown little interest in developing the EETS, Members call on the Commission take more measures to pursue the enforcement of EU legislation. They urge the Commission, therefore, to **devise and propose an incentive scheme** to encourage operators and Member States to shorten the timeframes for implementing the system. They believe that the Commission should consider **appropriate legislative measures in the area of interoperability** as soon as possible, so as to oblige all stakeholders to advance the EETS project.

The Commission is invited to:

- **present, by the end of 2013, a review** of all available studies on the subject so as to provide a clear basis for different options for action in both the medium and the long term, including charging for road use via technologies such as GPS/GNSS, in order to prevent and reduce traffic congestion caused by physical barriers;
- undertake a study on the **financial aspects** and conditions which would make the EETS a working reality;
- provide, in its work programmes on the **trans-European transport networks**, for the possibility of financing projects that might afford a means of speeding up the implementation of the EETS.

Whatever the system chosen, the Commission should take great care to ensure that consumers are made **aware at all times of the cost of the toll** being levied via an electronic device or toll tag.

As regards **the charging for road use**, Members believe that, while the power to raise revenue rests with the Member States, the EU should **favour a system of distance-based tolling over vignette-type systems**. The Commission must make it mandatory for time-based systems.

In addition, Members believe that the introduction of any new charging system which involves the sharing of operating systems and data on clients and their movements must be **strictly subject to EU data protection regulations**, and that the data should be de-personalised in order to protect individual privacy.

The Commission is invited to:

- oblige those Member States with vignette systems **substantially to simplify the sale of vignettes** and access to information;
- operate an **online payment service** that allows customers to pre-pay their charges via an interface accessible to all, in accordance with the requirements of universal design;

- take into account the **specific position of border regions** when developing plans for road-charging systems, so as to minimise the impact on people living in border regions.

Noting the importance of these companies and SMEs in bringing economic growth and jobs to Europe, Members consider it essential not to impose any unnecessary extra charges on them, but instead to apply the **user pays principle** across the board to all vehicle categories.