

Duration of the reference period for the application of temporary measures concerning the levying of charges for the use of railway infrastructure

2021/0437(COD) - 22/12/2021 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to extend the application of the temporary rules on the levying of charges for the use of railway infrastructure laid down in response to the urgent situation created by the COVID-19 outbreak.

PROPOSED ACT: Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and on an equal footing with the Council.

BACKGROUND: the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a sharp drop in rail traffic, because of a significant fall in demand. This has had a serious impact on railway undertakings. Those circumstances are beyond the control of railway undertakings that have continuously faced considerable liquidity problems, major losses and in some cases are risking insolvency.

In order to counteract the negative economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and support railway undertakings, Regulation (EU) 2020/1429 of the European Parliament and of the Council enabled Member States to authorise infrastructure managers to reduce, waive or defer charges for accessing rail infrastructure. That possibility was granted for a reference period from 1 March 2020 until 31 December 2020 and was further extended by [Commission Delegated Regulation \(EU\) 2021/1061](#) until 31 December 2021. The Commission is no longer empowered to extend further that reference period.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic is continuing therefore the reference period of Regulation (EU) 2020/1429 should be extended until 30 June 2022 to ensure continuity in the application of the measures.

CONTENT: the Commission proposal aims to **extend the reference period until 30 June 2022**, and to empower the Commission to adopt delegated acts to further extend such period until 31 December 2023. It is also proposed that the delegation of power should end on the same date, that is, 31 December 2023. All other provisions of the current Regulation should remain unchanged.

The Commission should continuously analyse the economic impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the rail sector and the Union should be in a position to prolong without undue delay the period of application of the measures provided for by this Regulation if the adverse conditions persist.

In order to allow for the prompt application of the measures provided for in this Regulation, it should enter into force as a matter of urgency on the day following that of its publication in the Official Journal of the European Union.