

Charging of heavy goods vehicles for the use of certain infrastructures

2017/0114(COD) - 18/01/2022 - Committee recommendation tabled for plenary, 2nd reading

The Committee on Transport and Tourism adopted the recommendation for second reading contained in the report by Giuseppe FERRANDINO (S&D, IT) on the Council's position at first reading with a view to the adoption of a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directives 1999/62/EC, 1999/37/EC and (EU) 2019/520 with regard to the charging of vehicles for the use of certain infrastructures.

The committee responsible recommended that the European Parliament **approve the Council's position** at first reading without amendments.

This proposal amends directive 1999/62/EC on the charging of heavy goods vehicles for the use of certain infrastructures in order to:

- strengthen the application of the 'user pays' and 'polluter pays' principles;
- make an adequate contribution to the financing of road infrastructure;
- reduce congestion;
- stimulate the decarbonisation of transport; and
- contribute to the achievement of the climate objectives.

The European Parliament adopted its first reading position in plenary on 25 October 2018. In its position, Parliament further strengthened the application of the 'polluter pays' principle. At the beginning of the new legislature, the TRAN Committee adopted a decision on 24 September 2019 to start inter-institutional negotiations on the basis of the first reading report.

For its part, the Council adopted its general approach to the negotiations on 18 December 2020. The inter-institutional negotiations started on 29 January 2021 and were successfully concluded on 15 June 2021, under the Portuguese Presidency, after three trialogues. On 30 June 2021, Coreper endorsed the provisional agreement and on 12 July 2021, the TRAN Committee confirmed it.

The agreement reached **improves the provisions of the existing directive** on a number of issues:

- the phasing out of vignettes (time-based charges) for heavy goods vehicles on the core trans-European network and a shift to distance-based charging, with certain exemptions and the possibility of a combined system, with the aim of enshrining the 'polluter pays' and 'user pays' principles;
- a 'greening' of road charging for heavy goods vehicles and light commercial vehicles by introducing the obligation to vary road charges according to CO2 emissions and/or the environmental performance of the vehicle, as well as mandatory external cost charging for trucks to cover the external cost of air pollution;

- addressing congestion by introducing the possibility to charge all vehicles a congestion charge. The Council's position now provides that the revenues generated by the (optional) application of congestion charges, or their equivalent in financial value, are used to solve the congestion problem, or to develop sustainable modes of transport and mobility in general;
- the introduction of price caps for short-term vignettes for passenger cars, including the obligation to offer a one-day vignette to transit travellers;
- an extension of the scope of application. While the current rules apply almost exclusively to heavy goods vehicles over 12 tonnes, the agreement covers all trucks, buses and light commercial vehicles. This means that if Member States decide to apply road charges to these vehicles, they will have to be non-discriminatory, environmentally friendly and fair;
- the introduction of review clauses allowing the Commission to assess the implementation and effectiveness of the Directive with regard to the taxation of light-duty vehicles, as well as the technical and legal feasibility of the differentiated treatment of light-duty vehicles; - the introduction of a review and sunset clause in case road transport is included in a future carbon pricing mechanism, in order to avoid double charging.