Extension of the derogation for heavy-duty vehicles with zero emissions

2025/0188(COD) - 27/06/2025 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to extend the period during which zero-emission heavy-duty vehicles can benefit from significantly reduced rates of infrastructure or user charges or from exemptions to pay them.

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

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

BACKGROUND: in 2022, the heavy-duty road transport sector caused 27.5% of road transport CO2 emissions despite making up only 2.4% of the vehicle fleet. CO2 emissions in the heavy-duty road transport sector accounted for more than 6.9% of all emissions in the EU and were 20% higher than in 1995.

The registration figures of new zero-emission heavy-duty vehicles have recently increased in the Union but remain too low to achieve the CO2 emission reduction targets of the transport sector set in the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy. One of the main barriers to wider deployment of zero-emission heavy-duty vehicles is the high upfront cost of acquiring such a vehicle. The gap of the total cost of ownership between conventional and zero-emission vehicles can be reduced by lowering the operational costs of zero-emission vehicles. Those costs include road charges.

Directive 1999/62/EC currently gives Member States the possibility to apply reduced rates, without any ceiling, to infrastructure charges or user charges, or to apply total exemptions from such charges, only until 31 December 2025. Member States were required to transpose this provision, introduced by Directive (EU) 2022/362, into national law by 25 March 2024 at the latest. However, **this period is too short** to encourage demand for new zero-emission heavy-duty vehicles. Therefore, this deadline should be extended to create the conditions for the wider deployment of zero-emission vehicles.

CONTENT: the proposal to amend Directive 1999/62/EC aims to **postpone until 30 June 2031** the date until which Member States have the possibility of applying a significant reduction or exemption from infrastructure charges or user charges for zero-emission vehicles.

Given the optional nature of the amended provision, Member States will not be obliged to transpose this measure but will have to inform the Commission if they decide to make use of it after 2025.

This proposal will ensure a clear and coherent legal framework and help EU automotive companies achieve their CO2 reduction targets, the timing of the measures on the demand and supply side of the market of heavy-duty vehicles should be aligned.