Road transport: charging of heavy goods vehicles and infrastructures fees

2003/0175(COD) - 20/04/2004 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution drafted by Luigi COCILOVO (EPP-ED, I) making several amendments to the proposal. Parliament stated that, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, Member States shall decide on the use of revenue from fees for the benefit of road infrastructure. Consequently, the revenue from fees should be used for the benefit of the transport sector and for improving the entire transport system, in the interests of the transport network as a whole. There is, however, no obligation for Member States to do so. In addition, Parliament inserted the following amendments: - a new recital states that the Directive should not undermine rights stemming from existing concession contracts; - the highest toll charges should not exceed the value of the lowest rates by more than 100%; - there is no obligation on Member States to designate an independent authority charged with monitoring road infrastructure; - a new recital states that, if the objective of fair charging is to be achieved, account must be taken of the system of road infrastructure concessions or equivalent solutions existing in the Member States (for roads, motorways, tunnels and bridges) since, on networks where concessions are in operation, HGVs already pay their external costs in line with the 'user pays' principle, where the concessions in question are public-private partnerships (PPPs) subject to the rules of free competition. - there is a more precise definition of "weighted average toll", with Parliament specifying that it should be calculated by reference to the specific road infrastructure concerned, on the basis of the cost per kilometre, and should be determined by the competent authority in each Member State; - Parliament introduced a definition of "external costs" caused by the road freight system, including "congestion costs, environmental costs, such as local and global air pollution, noise, landscape damages and social costs, such as health and indirect accidents costs, not covered by insurances"; -whereas the proposal provided for weighted average tolls to include costs for "objective environmental elements", Parliament added that this could include congestion costs "where these can be objectively quantified by a methodology duly adopted at European level for the purpose of such calculations"; - Not later than two years after entry into force of the Directive, the Commission must devise a generally applicable, transparent, and comprehensible model for the assessment of all external environment-, congestion-, and health- related costs to serve as the basis for future calculations of infrastructure charges; - Compensation in respect of road charges must be provided without discrimination to all hauliers from EU Member States, irrespective of the driver's country of origin. The compensation schemes shall also fully take into account the fiscal effects of existing or future local and regional charging schemes falling outside the geographical scope of the Directive. - The Commission must draw up uniform bases and principles for calculating external costs; - Parliament amended the Commission's proposed table of charges in order to differentiate clearly between more polluting vehicles (in the EURO 0 and EURO I categories) and the EURO II and lesspolluting vehicles which are already on the market and in use (EURO III and EURO IV and others); - when reporting to Parliament and Council on the implementation and effects of the directive, the Commission should take account not only of developments in technology and the trend in traffic density but also of the trend in road accidents and the impact of transport on the environment.