


Procedure file

Basic information	
COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	1998/2170(COS)
Procedure completed	
Transport infrastructure: common charging framework, fair payment for use. White paper	
Subject 3.20 Transport policy in general	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	TRAN Transport and Tourism		02/09/1998
		PSE SCHMIDBAUER Barbara	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs, Industrial Policy	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
Council of the European Union	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	Transport, Telecommunications and Energy	2119	01/10/1998

Key events			
22/07/1998	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1998)0466	Summary
01/10/1998	Debate in Council	2119	
23/10/1998	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
16/03/1999	Vote in committee		Summary
16/03/1999	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0111/1999	
15/04/1999	Debate in Parliament		
15/04/1999	Decision by Parliament	T4-0340/1999	Summary
15/04/1999	End of procedure in Parliament		
30/07/1999	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1998/2170(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)

Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 142
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	TRAN/4/10380

Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document		COM(1998)0466	22/07/1998	EC	Summary
Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report		CES0196/1999 OJ C 116 28.04.1999, p. 0028	24/02/1999	ESC	
Committee of the Regions: opinion		CDR0408/1998 OJ C 198 14.07.1999, p. 0016	10/03/1999	CofR	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0111/1999 OJ C 219 30.07.1999, p. 0004	16/03/1999	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0340/1999 OJ C 219 30.07.1999, p. 0371-0460	15/04/1999	EP	Summary

Transport infrastructure: common charging framework, fair payment for use. White paper

PURPOSE: this White Paper proposes a phased approach to a common transport infrastructure charging framework in the EU. **CONTENT:** this White Paper explains how infrastructure charging reform can solve many of the transport sector's problems, and help develop European transport services. It has evolved out of the discussions on the 1993 Commission White Paper on "The future development of the common transport policy", the 1995 Commission Green Paper "Towards fair and efficient pricing in transport", the 1996 report of the high level group on infrastructure charging and the 1998 report of the high level group on infrastructure charging. The great diversity of infrastructure charging systems across modes of transport and Member States undermines the efficiency and sustainability of Europe's transport system. This situation gives rise to significant distortions of competition within and between modes, often on the basis of the nationality of the transport provider. That is why the Commission considers that a gradual and progressive harmonisation of charging principles in all major commercial modes of transport is required. It is proposed that the charging system be based on the "user pays" principle - i.e. all users of transport infrastructure should pay for the costs, including environmental and other external impacts, they impose, at, or as close as possible to the point of use. The Commission proposes a progressive three-phase approach to implementation, to be accompanied by an advisory committee from Member States experts and with the full involvement of all stakeholders: - phase one (1998-2000) would involve seeking agreement on methodologies for measuring marginal costs and promoting the idea of charging at point of use. Charges up to average costs would generally be accepted; - phase two (2001-2004) would involve adapting particular charges better to reflect the new approach and to harmonise charging systems between modes. In this phase, it is proposed that charges should in general be set at total social marginal costs, that is marginal infrastructure and external costs; - phase three (beyond 2004) would be to further implement harmonised charging principles, both in terms of the marginal cost basis and the consistency of cost estimation. The level of Community wide charges for externalities should also be reviewed and mandatory charging structures, but not levels, for local externalities could also be considered. Hence, the Commission's proposed three-phased approach to fair and efficient charging in transport would ensure that an efficient, cost related approach is taken to charging for infrastructure use, in all Member States, and across modes.?

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The Committee has adopted the report by Barbara SCHMIDBAUER (PES, D) on the Commission proposals for a phased approach towards a common transport infrastructure charging framework in the EU. Fair payment for infrastructure use was the key element in this report. The Committee could basically agree with the Commission's goal of removing competitive distortions between the member states by progressively harmonising the principles for charging for the use of infrastructure. At present, transport charge systems vary widely in the member states. They need to be brought into line. In road transport, annual vehicle taxes vary by up to ECU 3000 a year. In rail transport, there are nine different charging systems and sea and air transport charging systems are equally variable. Welcoming the Commission's proposals, the rapporteur felt that they offer a chance to put the various charging systems in the EU (motorway tolls, vignettes) on a fairer basis. Mrs SCHMIDBAUER emphasized that the measures should not increase the costs of transport but should enable more efficient and environmentally friendly use to be made of existing modes of transport. The Commission's cost charging plan is to be implemented in three stages. In 1999-2000 a Committee of Government Experts will be set up. In the second phase (2001-2004) charging systems especially for road and rail traffic will be harmonised, with charges being based on distance. In phase three, harmonised charging principles should be implemented. Amendments were adopted for a taxation of kerosene and - in sea transport - the gradual taxation of diesel oil and fuel, use of biofuels and biogreases for pleasure boats.?

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The European Parliament adopted its resolution on infrastructure charging drafted by Ms. Barbara Schmidbauer (D, PES). The Parliament

welcomes the Commission's plan for a uniform system for all forms of transport based on the user pays principle. It calls on the Commission to take the following points into account in the directives it submits : - if possible to include car traffic in the charging system to avoid a distortion of competition between the individual modes of transport, to distribute costs fairly among all road users and to ensure the more efficient use of road infrastructure, while ensuring that socially disadvantaged and/or disabled people are not unreasonably penalised by charges, or are the subject of compensatory measures; if this cannot be achieved on the basis of the marginal social cost, the Commission should make new proposals for ways of including private car traffic (e.g. through mineral oil tax). - a charging system for all road users taking into account use of environmentally-friendly technology, encouraging the use in each case of the mode of transport with the least environmental impact, and promoting where possible the use of local public transport. - in air transport : taxing kerosene within the framework of the international civil aviation agreements; in sea and air transport : taxing diesel and heating oil and using biofuels and bio-greases for pleasure boats; in both forms of transport : minimum quality standards for these fuels. - ensuring the provision of a basic level of mobility for all members of society, in particular in sparsely populated and peripheral regions.?