

Charging of heavy goods vehicles for the use of certain infrastructures

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The Committee on Transport and Tourism adopted the report by Christine REVAULT D'ALLONNES BONNEFOY (S&D, FR) on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 1999/62/EC on the charging of heavy goods vehicles for the use of certain infrastructures.

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, exercising its prerogative as an associated committee in accordance with [Article 54 of the Rules of Procedure](#), also gave its opinion on the report.

The committee recommended that the European Parliaments position adopted at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure should amend the Commission proposal as follows:

Tolls and user charges: since distance-based pricing (tolls) rather than time-based pricing (vignettes) better reflects actual usage, emission levels and pollution, the Commission proposed to phase out time-based pricing schemes after an appropriate transitional phase. Members considered that road pricing imposed by Member States should be based on distance from 2026 for passenger cars (two years earlier than was proposed by the European Commission) and from 2023 for heavy goods vehicles and vans for the transport of goods.

Members considered that road networks covered by an infrastructure charge must afford a high level of road safety, together with all necessary infrastructure facilities, such as safe and secure parking areas, for compliance with the obligations laid down by the regulation on rest periods and driving times.

User rights (proportionality and equal treatment): the proportionality of user charges may take into consideration the specific characteristic of transport operations which start in a Member State on the periphery of the EU. As of 1 January 2020, tolls and user charges applied to heavy duty vehicles shall apply to all heavy duty vehicles, as well as to all vans intended for the carriage of goods fitted with a tachograph.

External cost charging: from 1 January 2021, Member States that levy tolls shall apply an external-cost charge for traffic-based air or noise pollution to heavy duty vehicles and to vans intended for the carriage of goods on all parts of the network referred to in Article 7(1) that are subject to an infrastructure charge.

From 1 January 2026 onwards, an external-cost charge imposed on any section of the road network shall apply in a non-discriminatory manner to all vehicle categories. Member States may apply derogations which allow external-cost charges to be adjusted for vehicles of historical interest.

Congestion charging: Members proposed that congestion charges may be introduced or maintained independently from infrastructure charges. Member States may, however, decide to exempt buses and coaches for the promotion of collective transport and socio-economic development and territorial cohesion.

The level of charges shall be reviewed annually to ensure that they are not higher than the cost of congestion occurring in that Member State and generated on those road sections, which are subject to the congestion charge.

Mark-up: the increase should not exceed 15% of the weighted average infrastructure charge, except in mountainous regions, where infrastructure costs as well as climatic and environmental damage are higher, in which case the increase may not exceed 50%.

Variation in charges: Members proposed that from the date of entry into force of this Directive, zero-emission vehicles shall benefit from infrastructure charges reduced by 50 % compared to the lowest rate. Zero-emission operation shall benefit from the same reduction, provided that such operation can be proved.

Member States may take into account the improvement of the environmental performance of the vehicle which is linked to that vehicles conversion to alternative fuels. A standing subscription or any other mechanism approved by the toll systems operator should allow users to benefit from a variation in toll charges that rewards the improved environmental performance of the vehicle, after conversion.

Discounts: for light vehicles, in particular for frequent users on the areas of dispersed settlements and the outskirts of cities, Member States may provide for discounts or reductions to the infrastructure charge provided that such discounts contribute to social cohesion and ensure the mobility of peripheral regions or remote areas.

Member States or competent authorities may introduce a kilometre-based flat-rate exemption on a specific road section, taking into account the mobility patterns and economic interest of peripheral regions.

In mountain areas and peripheral regions, Member States or competent authorities may vary toll rates for heavy vehicles according to distance travelled by the tolled vehicles to minimise socio-economic impacts.

Use of revenues: to enable the transport network to be developed as a whole, revenues generated from infrastructure and external costs charges, or the equivalent in financial value of these revenues, shall be used to carry out road network maintenance and upkeep, and to optimise the entire transport system.

Revenues shall be used to: (i) reduce air and noise pollution from road transport; (ii) finance collective and sustainable modes of transport; (iii) develop alternative fuel infrastructures; (iv) support the trans-European transport network and eliminating bottlenecks.

Members proposed that the revenue from charges be used on the territory containing the road section on which they applied.

Member States should clearly indicate how the revenue generated by road user charges is used. They should publish the results of reinvesting infrastructure charges and external costs, as well as the benefits in terms of increased road safety, a reduced environmental impact and reduced traffic congestion.

Lastly, Members proposed to establish in each Member State an independent authority to supervise toll systems and to guarantee all road users a high level of information on how revenues are used.