



The Voice
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Press Release

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Parliament puts revision of Eurovignette Directive on the right track

The European rail sector welcomes the result of today's vote on the revision of the Eurovignette Directive in the European Parliament's Transport and Tourism Committee, as a large majority of MEPs called for the internalisation of external costs of heavy goods vehicles. However, without taking into account CO₂ emissions and by complicating the introduction of congestion charges for trucks, the proposed legislation will only have limited impact on greening Europe's transport sector.

The European railways appreciate the excellent work of rapporteur Saïd El Khadraoui, who drafted well-thought-out compromise amendments on crucial issues. Nevertheless, the proposed revision of the Eurovignette Directive does not reach far enough. To promote sustainable transport in Europe, Member States should be allowed to charge trucks for all their external costs, including CO₂ emissions and accidents, and not only for local air pollution, noise, and congestion.

The introduction of congestion charges for heavy goods vehicles has been made increasingly difficult, as MEPs voted to link this to the existence of similar charging schemes for private cars. "Member States can already apply charges for private cars but not for trucks," said Michael Robson, Secretary-General of EIM, the European Rail Infrastructure Managers. "Heavy goods vehicles have a disproportionate effect on congestion - although they account for only 3% of road traffic they cause 20% of congestion," Michael Robson emphasised.

"Today's vote was an important first step to put the 'polluter pays' principle in action for trucks, but we still see room for improvement in the provisions on congestion charges and the inclusion of CO₂ emissions before the plenary vote of the European Parliament," said Johannes Ludewig, Executive Director of CER, the Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies. CO₂ emissions from road freight transport are projected to increase by around 50% by 2020 according to a study recently published by the consultancy CE Delft. However, by voting against the inclusion of CO₂ emissions, parliamentarians decided to keep these out of the scope of the directive because a majority of the committee still takes the view that CO₂ emissions are tackled best through fuel taxation. On the contrary, Johannes Ludewig pointed out: "Reaching EU-wide agreement on using fuel taxation to regulate CO₂ emissions will be extremely difficult."

The decision to request a revision of the Directive as early as 2012 is very much welcomed by the rail sector. "An early revision in 2012 provides lawmakers with the opportunity to assess the impact of the legislation and fine tune it," said Michael Clausecker, Director-General of UNIFE, the Association of the European Rail Industry. "We support the view of the rapporteur that a speedy approval of the proposed Eurovignette Directive - linked to an early revision - is preferable to postponing the introduction of the internalisation of external costs even further," Michael Clausecker added.

The rail sector also believes that the polluter should pay and not be reimbursed. Revenues should



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therefore be earmarked for investments in sustainable transport to offset negative externalities rather than being reinvested in road infrastructure.

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BACKGROUND:

The revision of the Eurovignette Directive was proposed by the European Commission in July last year as part of its “Greening Transport” package. It is an important milestone in the drive to internalise the external costs of transport. This package finally opens up the possibility for Member States to put the “polluter pays” principle into practice in the freight transport sector and helps to create a more level playing field between transport modes. A broad coalition of representatives of the transport sector, including railways, intermodal transport, logistic and forwarders, have long argued that EU Member States should be able to apply internalisation for road freight transport – as they can already do for the other modes of transport and for private cars. This will finally put an end to the strange situation in which the most polluting transport mode – road – is the only one to benefit from a privileged legal situation: a ban on taking external costs into account when setting road charges for heavy goods vehicles.

The joint position paper of the rail sector on the revision of the Eurovignette Directive is available at:

http://www.cer.be/force-download.php?file=/media/Publications_2/Position_Papers/2009/090119_positionpaper_eurovignette.pdf

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The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) brings together more than 70 rail infrastructure managers and railway undertakings in Europe. CER represents the interests of its members towards the European institutions as well as other policy makers and transport actors. CER's main focus is promoting the strengthening of rail as essential to the creation of a sustainable transport system which is efficient, effective and environmentally sound. For more information, see www.cer.be

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EIM, the association of European Rail Infrastructure Managers, was established to promote the interests and views of the independent infrastructure managers in Europe, following liberalisation of the railway market, with a view to supporting the development of the rail industry. It is a lobbying organisation which also provides technical expertise to the appropriate European bodies. To find out more about EIM, visit www.eimrail.org

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UNIFE represents the interests of the European Rail Industry towards the European institutions, international railway associations and other business relations. The European Rail Industry provides competitive railway systems for increased rail traffic and follows the objective of making rail transport the sustainable solution for the challenges of the 21st century mobility. The European Rail Industry consists of trend setting industries in the field of rolling stock, infrastructure, information technology and signalling, provision of part and services. For more information, see www.unife.org