



UNION EUROPÉENNE DES TRANSPORTEURS ROUTIERS

ANTP – BASAT – BVT – CNA FITA – CONFARTIGIANATO TRASPORTI – FENADISMER –
NIT HUNGARY – OZS – TRANSPORT EN LOGISTIEK VLAANDEREN – UNOSTRA – UPTR

PRESS RELEASE

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(begin press release)

UETR DISILLUSIONED BY THE EU COMPROMISE ON THE REVISION OF THE EUROVIGNETTE DIRECTIVE

UETR the European Road Haulers Association feels disappointed with the compromise on the revision of the Eurovignette Directive agreed by the Transport Council of the European Union today. The congestion charge proposed earlier is dropped into the Belgian proposition. Instead thereof, Member States can now impose a much higher infrastructure charge. The proposed charges for noise and pollution are maintained but no agreement has been reached on earmarking.

UETR agrees on the "Polluter Pays" principle, e. g. a charge depending on the vehicle's emission. But it is unacceptable for the European road transport operators that Member States have now the individual freedom to increase infrastructure charges during peak hours. Businesses already bear the costs for congestion in terms of fuel consumption, time, road safety.

Road freight transport sector strives continuously for avoiding congestion. The limited opening hours at loading and unloading locations, the severe regulation on driving and resting times and other limiting government measures make this profession more and more difficult entrepreneurs. UETR continues to plead for investments increasing the capacity of the road infrastructure because this is the only realistic scenario in which the expected increase in road transport of goods and passengers within the next 20 years will go hand in hand with a decrease of congestion.

For UETR it is a thorn in the flesh that the other transport modes are once again kept out of the internalisation of external costs as no proposal in this direction has been made by the European Commission. Internalising external costs only to road transport of goods is an obvious distortion of competition. Neither a level playing field nor sustainable solutions for the whole transport system are provided. Therefore, the internalisation should be applied to all passenger cars.

Various studies show that levying a higher tariff only for trucks during congestion hours will have a negligible effect on congestion: the main reason is that freight transport cannot avoid rush hours due to factors such as working hours and delivery times. The exemption for Euro VI vehicles from air pollution charges is pointless, considering their limited impact on the environment and their presence in the whole EU market.

The internalisation of external costs raises the question of double taxation for businesses: on the one hand the already internalised costs (the working time spent in congestion, blocked goods, etc) and on the other hand the charge itself.



The increase in transport costs is unlikely to be absorbed by transport operators: the increase in their prices will not be accepted by contractors; for some type of goods, and in many EU countries due to lack and inefficiencies in the road infrastructure, selecting alternative routes and trip schedules is not feasible; transport SMEs cannot afford the introduction of new improved technologies with the European Commission likely to present the vision of a transport sector relying on self-financing in its new White Book on Transport.

Level of efficiency of co-modality at EU level can be questioned: consequently transport companies cannot rely on shifting a part of transport demand to other modes.

Anyway, it goes beyond any doubt that internalisation will increase the final product prices thus hurting the economy as a whole.

If a clear decision has not been taken on the earmarking issue, toll revenues can continue to go to the road infrastructure as confirmed by Eurovignette II: but the final goal for road haulers is the re-investment into road transport sector, respecting the "User Pays" principle.

(end press release)

