

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**99% of external costs are already internalised by road transport! Point out Road Operators**

In order to make the transport sector more environmentally friendly, the European Commission has developed a strategy to ensure that prices better reflect the real costs of transport to society. In July, the European Commission proposed the review of the Eurovignette Directive. The proposal enables the Member States to charge heavy goods vehicles for external costs such as air and noise pollution and congestions. The European Commission estimates that the internalisation of external costs in road freight transport will contribute to a yearly reduction in congestion costs of 1 billion euros and reduce the environmental impact on transport.



The approval of the revised Eurovignette proposal will have a significant impact on the competitiveness of road transport in Europe. The transport operators will be charged for the costs they cause to the society (so called polluter-pays principle). This will result in certain increase of prices. *“The potential average increase of tolls for the road operators would be maximum in the order of 25%, this would make a maximum increase of direct road haulage costs of 3-4%, while it would bring a lot of benefits to reduce congestion, environmental damages and save fuels”*, indicated **Remi MAYET** from the European Commission during a Business Breakfast on Greening Transport held on November 5<sup>th</sup>. The Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, must find way how to comply with environmental requirements. *“A revision of the Eurovignette directive should allow the Member States to use more efficient economic instruments and policy mixes ensuring the sustainability of the European transport”*, added Mayet.

Nowadays, a lot of environmental policy measures are already in place in road transport and it seems that there is more the need to better allocate perceived charges by Member States. *“When congestion is not taken into account 99% of external costs are already internalised by road transport! It is not acceptable that we are submitted to additional charges without first making in-debt cost benefit studies to clearly show how best to tackle the small remaining coverage of external costs. We therefore ask for, the “cheapest cost avoider” principle to be applied”*, says **Michael NIELSEN** from International Road Transport Union (IRU). The railway operators point out that they can be charged for external costs already. A revised Eurovignette, allowing Member States to charge trucks for external costs too, would put road and rail on the same level. *“All modes should be treated the same manner and Member States should not be prevented, as they are now, from charging for external costs of trucks”*, says **Johannes LUDEWIG** from the Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER).

*“Czech Presidency will look for greater balance between different modes”*, promised **Emanuel ŠÍP**, Czech Deputy Minister for Transport. It will keep the polluter-pays principle in the proposal, examine the potential aspects and try to achieve a compromise. *“In this aim the Czech government will advocate the step-by-step approach and discuss with all stakeholders concerned”*, says Šíp. He also unveiled other Czech presidency priorities in the field of transport such as road safety, intelligent transport systems, future TEN-T policy and reduction of administrative burden in the EU transport.

The Business Breakfast on “Greening Transport in Europe” was organized by CEBRE – Czech Business Representation to the EU in cooperation with Czech Permanent Representation to the EU on the 5<sup>th</sup> November 2008.

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