

Press Release
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Eurovignette Transport Committee vote: A mixed outcome that threatens the express business

The objective of the Eurovignette proposal is to reduce the external costs of transport. In this regard, express companies strongly believe that Eurovignette revenues must be earmarked and used to reduce these external costs of road transport. The European Parliament Transport Committee has taken a first step in the right direction by obliging Member States to use revenues mainly for road transport projects. Express companies are keen to reduce the external costs of transport, notably through regular fleet renewal. These industry efforts need to be complemented through public investments in infrastructure and technology. The express industry therefore calls on all Members of the European Parliament to take a stronger stance on earmarking for the upcoming plenary vote as a crucial means of greening tomorrow's transport.

The agreed text, however, fails to meet the initial objectives of the revision, most importantly the reduction of external costs and the greening of European transport. As amended the text also lacks a solid impact assessment, in contradiction with the principle of Smart Regulation.

In particular, the variation of the infrastructure charge by 200% during peak hours in order to fight congestion will penalise the express industry without solving the congestion problem. By increasing the peak hours per day to 8 hours, the entire operational timeframe of the express industry now falls under the new scope. With an obligation to meet customers' demands (e.g. delivery during working hours) while respecting regulatory patterns (e.g. night ban of deliveries), express companies would therefore face significantly higher charges for demand-driven deliveries in congested time zones without being able to shift operations to off-peak hours. Revenue neutrality will not apply to the express industry since its operations are only conducted during peak hours. The variation is in fact a congestion charge in disguise which fails to tackle the source of congestion and provide credible alternative solutions. The very complex issue of congestion should only be addressed by an integrated approach putting together all road users (including passengers, representing 90% of road usage) and the different stakeholders of the supply chain.

The express industry also regrets the weak provisions regarding the interoperability of electronic tolling systems that will lead to high administrative and operational costs for carriers.

In conclusion, the European Express Association (EEA) regrets that the Parliament has neglected some of the original objectives of the Eurovignette revision for the sake of compromise, especially regarding how to tackle congestion. Although the Transport Committee of the European Parliament took a step in the right direction on earmarking, the agreed text will lead to significantly higher charges for demand-driven express deliveries. It is therefore essential that the Parliament's plenary vote and the ensuing Council negotiations revise the provision on congestion and guarantee that all Eurovignette revenues are invested in projects that enhance road transport sustainability.



About EEA:

The European Express Association represents global and local express delivery companies. In the EU-25 alone, the express industry currently employs 250,000 people and delivers more than 450 million packages each year, constituting almost half of the intra-European air cargo market. It has been forecast that, by 2013, the express industry will employ 550,000 people in the EU-27. The European, domestic and international markets for express services have significant scope for further expansion as companies increasingly adopt best international business practice with regard to time-definite, guaranteed delivery. Our Members provide guaranteed, fast, reliable, on-demand, world-wide, integrated, door-to-door movement of shipments which are tracked and controlled throughout the journey, both inside and outside the EU. The express industry is a fast-growing business sector which not only provides vital services for the European economy, but which also plays a large role in making the global marketplace a reality.

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