

Eurovignette: a lopsided outcome with important misses

Last week the European Parliament plenary voted for the adoption of the Eurovignette Directive compromise agreed in the triilogue, with the Member States' position articulated in the European Council. The amendment will bring few advances from the perspective of the intermodal freight transport sector, while it introduces unproven policy preferences and increases the fragmentation of the regulatory framework:

- **Time-based tolling should be replaced by distance-tolling until 2030.** However, Member States may choose to keep vignette-schemes.
- **The CO₂-based differentiation of applicable road tolls will cement the excessive market share of long-distance trucking,** whereby a corresponding track access charging reform has not been enacted. The policy preference for hydrogen-powered trucks is scientifically still unproven, while electric freight trains directly powered by renewable electricity from the grid must continue to pay the same track access charge as a train driven by a diesel locomotive.
- **Internalisation measures did not get broadened compared to the present Directive,** while their scope also remains limited as a percentage of the payable toll, thereby the proportion of road transport's externalities covered by public budgets will remain high – providing an unjustified **subsidy to road transport**.

The Eurovignette Directive amendment is **a lost opportunity to creating a fair, technology-neutral regulatory framework** that empowers the market to select the winning technologies or solutions. Keeping the infrastructure costs of road transport unreasonably low through regulatory measures means that **the chance to improve the pro-rata energy and labour efficiency of transportation has been postponed** to the future. Moreover, the excessive dependence of Europe on unreliable external energy suppliers will remain high.

Instead of reducing it, **the Eurovignette amendment increases the fragmentation of the European regulatory framework** of transportation. A Single Market can not exist where local rules, exemptions and scientifically unproven technology choices imposed from above determine the market's choice for a competitive service such transportation.

Under the new regulatory framework of the European Union, **local forces must fight for rational policy choices from Member State to Member State.** Market actors and citizens will have to intensify their efforts to achieve the rational policy decisions.

UIRR calls on the European Commission to launch an information portal to enable a better informedness of market players and the general public of the heterogeneous legal framework of transport that will be made even worse by the recently adopted Eurovignette Directive amendment. This internet portal should transparently feature every applicable condition and rule that is introduced by the Member States.



Ralf-Charley Schultze

"The modal approach to decarbonising transportation is mistaken. This attitude misses the potential of using different solutions, such as Combined Transport, to achieve the same transport objective. The current Eurovignette amendment overlooks the inherent limitations of road transport such as energy inefficiency and excessive labour use which will cost us all." – stated UIRR President Ralf-Charley Schultze.

Who is UIRR?

Founded in 1970, the **International Union for Road-Rail Combined Transport (UIRR)** represents the interests of European road-rail Combined Transport Operators and Transhipment Terminal Managers.

Road-Rail Combined Transport (CT) is a system of freight forwarding which is based on efficiently and economically inserting electric rail into long-distance (road) transport-chains through the use of intermodal loading units (ILU).

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