

## Eurovignette: the path to modal shift but not yet the destination

**It is not easy to provide a clear judgment on the provisional agreement reached on Eurovignette at the triologue of 15 June. The positive elements present in the text will, in fact, not be enforceable until very late, preventing sustainable modes of transport such as rail from benefitting from the improved competitive conditions with road. As the text of the provisional triologue agreement is under scrutiny by decision-makers, the Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) would like to highlight the following elements of the deal.**

- The phasing out of vignettes (time-based charging) will finally implement the user-pays principle, but only on certain parts of the road network and with an 8-year transition.
- Regarding the polluter-pays principle, the most important achievement of the provisional deal is the requirement to introduce an external cost charge for pollution, where tolls are applied.
- However, a phase-in period of 4 years and exemptions for concessions apply. Furthermore, externalities for accident costs are not included and a specific congestion charge is only optional.
- Revenues from optional congestion charging shall be used by Member States to address the specific problem of congestion or to develop sustainable transport and mobility in general, including rail projects.
- Member States are allowed to apply higher mark-ups to the infrastructure charge on specific highly congested road sections with the condition that all concerned Member States agree.
- The provisional deal introduces CO2 variation for infrastructure charging, to provide substantial discounts to zero-emission vehicles (e.g. electric trucks). With the market uptake of zero-emission trucks, the competitiveness of rail will be further hampered in the long run due to the track access charges applicable to electric rail freight.

It must be reiterated that modal shift will only happen once the user- and polluter-pays principles are fully applied in all modes.

CER therefore looks forward to evaluating the further legislative proposals that will be put forward under the Fit for 55 package, in the hope that it could represent a positive step towards the full internalisation of CO2 emissions for all transport modes.

**CER Executive Director Alberto Mazzola** said: *“The priority measures needed to establish a level playing field between rail and road are far from being achieved. The railway sector is ready to carry more passengers and goods, but we need more ambition and fairness in the application of the user- and polluter-pays principle across all modes”.*

## Press release

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### About CER

The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) brings together around 70 railway undertakings, their national associations as well as infrastructure managers and vehicle leasing companies. The membership is made up of long-established bodies, new entrants and both private and public enterprises, representing 73% of the rail network length, 76% of the rail freight business and about 92% of rail passenger operations in EU, EFTA and EU accession countries. CER represents the interests of its members towards EU policymakers and transport stakeholders, advocating rail as the backbone of a competitive and sustainable transport system in Europe. For more information, visit [www.cer.be](http://www.cer.be) or follow us on Twitter [@CER\\_railways](https://twitter.com/CER_railways) or [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/cer).