

The charging of the use of road infrastructure

Questions marked with an asterisk * require an answer to be given.

Part I. About you

In what capacity are you completing this questionnaire?

*

- As a citizen
- On behalf of a public authority
- On behalf of an industry association or a non-governmental organisation (NGO)
- On behalf of a company



Is your association/organisation registered in the Transparency Register of the European Commission

http://europa.eu/transparency-register/index_en.htm ?

Your contribution will be considered "as a citizen" if your organisation is not registered in this register

*

- Yes
- No



Please indicate the identification number

*



What is the name of the company, organisation or authority?

*

Please specify your main country of operations or residence.

For international or European organisations, please choose "international".

*

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Austria | <input type="radio"/> Hungary | <input type="radio"/> Slovakia |
| <input type="radio"/> Belgium | <input type="radio"/> Italy | <input type="radio"/> Slovenia |
| <input type="radio"/> Bulgaria | <input type="radio"/> Latvia | <input type="radio"/> Spain |
| <input type="radio"/> Cyprus | <input type="radio"/> Lithuania | <input type="radio"/> Sweden |
| <input type="radio"/> Czech Republic | <input type="radio"/> Luxembourg | <input type="radio"/> United Kingdom |
| <input type="radio"/> Denmark | <input type="radio"/> Malta | <input type="radio"/> Iceland |
| <input type="radio"/> Estonia | <input type="radio"/> Netherlands | <input type="radio"/> Norway |
| <input type="radio"/> Finland | <input type="radio"/> Poland | <input type="radio"/> Switzerland |
| <input type="radio"/> France | <input type="radio"/> Portugal | <input type="radio"/> other European, non-EU |
| <input type="radio"/> Germany | <input type="radio"/> Republic of Ireland | <input type="radio"/> non-European |
| <input type="radio"/> Greece | <input type="radio"/> Romania | <input type="radio"/> international |

Please specify which interests you (the organisation on behalf of which you respond) represent
(multiple answers possible)

*

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Road infrastructure operator | <input type="checkbox"/> Road freight transport | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional road passenger transport (i.e. coach, bus and taxi) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Private car or motorbike use | <input type="checkbox"/> Rail transport | <input type="checkbox"/> Intermodal transport |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other mode(s) of transport (please specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> Pedestrian/public transport use | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-transport related (please specify) |



Please specify "other modes of transport"



Please specify "non-transport related"



Comments

Part II. Problems

In recent decades, public spending on transport infrastructure in relation to GDP has decreased considerably (from 1.5% to 0.8%). Together with the priority often given to building new infrastructure over the maintenance of existing infrastructure when allocating scarce public funds, this has resulted in a chronic state of underinvestment on the existing network.

The economic crisis and the Stability Pact have put additional constraints on the possibility of financing the maintenance of infrastructure from increased public debt and/or tax payer's money. Higher fuel efficiency and increasing use of fuels other than petrol and diesel will also reduce governments' income from fuel excise duty, the revenue of which may be regarded as partly paying for the infrastructure costs.

The urgency of finding new sources of funding has triggered debates in an increasing number of EU Member States, and at the European level, on the possibility in the future to rely less on tax payers and more on road charging for the financing of transport infrastructure.

1. Do you agree that, given the important role of transport networks for enabling economic activities, maintaining an efficient transport network should be one of the priorities for policy makers?

*

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know / No opinion

Comments

2. Do you agree that users of the transport infrastructure, rather than tax payers, should cover the costs related to the maintenance of the transport infrastructure (i.e. in accordance with the 'user pays' principle)?

*

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know / No opinion

Comments

The cost of congestion (delay in the travel time caused by high traffic levels compared to a free flow situation) for the economy and society in the EU are estimated to amount to 1% of GDP on average, while in the more densely populated central regions of the EU the figure is closer to 2% of GDP. Congestion is not only an urban phenomenon: it extends to the entry and exit roads from the cities; inter-urban highways in heavily urbanised or industrialised areas; mountain crossings; roads with heavy transit traffic; roads under reconstruction; other roads with important tourist traffic; etc. Users of non-urban roads in areas such as South-East England, the Ruhr Region, the Benelux countries and the surroundings of main cities across Europe experience regular and frequent traffic jams.

The EU legislation on road charging concentrates on the inter-urban network, leaving congestion management in cities in the hands of local authorities.

3. *In addition to being a problem in city centres, do you think that congestion on the inter-urban and suburban network is a major social and economic problem? The suburban network is defined, for the purpose of this questionnaire, as lying inside the less densely populated part of a large urban area (which can be within or outside the administrative boundaries of the city).*

*

- Yes, but only on the suburban network
- Yes, but only on the inter-urban network
- Yes, on the suburban and the inter-urban network
- No, congestion is a problem only within urban areas
- No, congestion is not a social and economic problem
- I don't know

Comments

4. Would you be in favour of charges for the use of the congested parts of the interurban road network during peak hours if it eased congestion problems?

*

- Yes
- Yes, but the measure should be accompanied by adequate compensations for commuters and operators
- No, I am against charging for the use of congested infrastructure in peak hours, even if it would ease congestion problems
- I don't know

Comments

Transport-related air pollution causes damage to humans, the biosphere, soil, water, buildings and materials. The most important pollutants from road transport are particulate matter (PM_{10} , $PM_{2.5}$), the breathing in of which has serious impacts on human health, carbon monoxide (CO) and nitrogen oxides (NO_x). New vehicles marketed in the EU must respect increasingly stringent mandatory emission norms (so-called EURO classes), but the impact of those standards on overall pollution levels is delayed given the relatively slow rate of replacement of the fleet. Moreover, in spite of these standards, vehicles will continue to emit pollutants, even if at lower levels, in particular small particulates with detrimental effects on health. Also the noise generated by transport has a proven negative impact on the health of exposed human populations. Currently, EU legislation gives the possibility (but not the obligation) of introducing a noise and/or air pollution component in the tolls (distance charges) collected, subject to maximum values defined in the legislation.

Transport is also an important source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and the only economic sector where these emissions are still growing. Road transport accounts for just below $\frac{3}{4}$ of the total GHG emissions from transport in the EU. Increased levels of GHG emissions are the main factor responsible for climate change. Energy taxation is often regarded as a cost-efficient way to charge for the costs of climate change. In practice in most Member States such taxation has no explicit component related to climate change. A Commission proposal to review the Energy Taxation Directive, currently discussed in the Council of the European Union, is however proposing the clear separation of the CO₂ component of fuel taxes.

5. Do you agree that vehicles should be charged for the environmental costs which they generate (i.e. in accordance with the 'polluter pays' principle)?

*

- Yes
- No
- I don't know / No view



For what costs should vehicles then be charged?

(Multiple answers possible)

*

(at least 1 answers)

- For air pollution
- For noise
- For climate change
- For other environmental costs (please specify)



What other environmental costs?

Comments

By putting a price on the social costs generated by transport users (notably the costs of infrastructure damage, congestion, noise and air pollution, and potentially climate change), road charges should in principle guide the users towards more sustainable transport choices. The variety of the pricing systems in the Member States (different vehicle coverage, average charge level, types of costs covered, network coverage, etc.) means however that users receive conflicting price signals depending on the country and route on which they travel. For instance, a heavy goods vehicle driving on a German motorway will pay an infrastructure charge in the range of 14-29 cents/km (depending on the vehicle class), but would not pay any charge on a parallel motorway in the neighbouring French region of Alsace. In Belgium, the same driver wouldn't be asked to pay a toll per km, but a fixed charge that would give him unlimited access to the road network during a defined period of time. The differences in the levels of (annual) vehicle taxation add to the confusion.

Examples of inconsistent and misleading price signals can also be observed at the national level. A heavy goods vehicle travelling from Lille to Paris is charged a toll on the relatively uncongested part of the motorway in a rural area until the toll booth in Senlis, but is not charged at all on the most congested and expensive to build stretch just before Paris.

6. Evidence collected in the past suggests that the introduction of a new tolling scheme results in the diversion of traffic to parallel, uncharged routes.

Do you agree that road charges on parallel routes must be coordinated – both within and between Member States – to avoid such traffic re-routing?

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know / No opinion

Comments

Charges for heavy goods vehicles to use roads exist in a majority of Member States. However, despite some harmonising effects of EU legislation, there is still a patchwork of incompatible systems. Today, international hauliers need the Eurovignette, four different national vignettes and 11 different tags and tolling contracts to drive unhindered on EU roads. It has been frequently reported to the European Commission that this situation is the source of significant administrative burden.

7. Should toll booths be replaced by barrier-free electronic tolling?

*

- Yes
- No
- It depends (specify the conditions)
- I don't know



Please specify the conditions

*

Comments

8. Do you think that European toll services, i.e. services offering the possibility to use all tolled roads with one contract and one on-board unit, should be made available on all tolled roads?

*

- Yes, for heavy goods vehicles, if it doesn't result in any increase in tolls
- Yes, for heavy goods vehicles, even if it does result in a small increase in tolls
- Yes, for all vehicles, including cars, if it doesn't result in any increase in tolls
- Yes, for all vehicles, even if it does result in a small increase in tolls
- No
- I don't know

Comments

There is already European legislation in the field of vignettes and tolls for heavy goods vehicles, which guarantees a certain level of transparency in the way road charges are fixed and amended, and thus protects infrastructure users from discrimination. The question may arise on the need to create a similar framework for the use of tolled roads by other motorists.

9. Should the rationale behind the level of road tolls and vignette prices be explained in a more transparent manner? Do you think that users should be consulted directly or indirectly (through professional organisations which represent their interests) when toll levels/vignette prices are modified?

*

- Yes, the information should be provided in a more transparent manner
- Yes, the information should be provided in a more transparent manner and users should be consulted when toll levels are modified
- No
- I don't know

Comments

10. Are you aware of situations where road users are regularly exposed to problems or discriminatory treatment related to road charging in the EU?

*

- Yes
- No



10a. Please indicate what kind of situations you are referring to.
(Multiple answers are possible)

*

(at least 1 answers)

- Situations of discriminatory treatment
- Situations of disproportionate rates being applied
- Situations of no proper access to information
- Situations where the collection and the payment is too complicated and leads to loss of time
- Situations where enforcement practices are not appropriate
- Other kind of problems



Please describe these situations of discriminatory treatment

*



Please describe these situations of disproportionate rates being applied

*



Please describe these situations of no proper access to information

*



Please describe these situations where the collection and the payment is too complicated and leads to loss of time

*



Please describe these situations where enforcement practices are not appropriate

*



Please describe these other problems

*

Comments

Part III. Possible ways of implementing road charges

In EU law road charges are payments in exchange for which motorists are given the right to use road infrastructure over a certain distance or for a certain period of time. It is often argued that the revenues from road charging should be reinvested in the transport sector and be used to increase its quality. This argument is gaining strength as public sources of funds are drying out and transport infrastructure is degrading.

On the other hand, when revenues from road charges are collected by the state, they could also usefully be dedicated to facilitate fiscal consolidation (i.e. reduce state budget deficits and debt) and reduce distortive taxes (e.g. labour taxes) to improve the competitiveness of the economy.

11. In your opinion, how should the revenues from road charges be used?

You may **pick and rank** up to 5 uses of revenues, where 1 indicates the best use, 2 the second best, etc.

You can not give the same rank to two different uses.

- a: 1
- b: 2
- c: 3
- d: 4
- e: 5

	a	b	c	d	e
Developing and/or maintaining national road infrastructure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sustainable transport, including public transport and transport research	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A European transport fund for developing and maintaining transport infrastructure of European importance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reduction of transport taxes (e.g. vehicle taxes, fuel duties)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reduction of labour taxes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fiscal consolidation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you chose "Other", then please specify.

11a. If you chose "developing and/or maintaining national road infrastructure":

Would the binding obligation for Member States to adequately maintain the charged road network be a satisfactory alternative to mandatory earmarking?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Comments

Road users pay a lot of taxes, such as registration taxes, annual circulation taxes, fuel excise duties or VAT, although different taxes apply in different countries. It is often argued that the fuel excise duty alone is at a level which would be enough to cover the main external costs of road transport. However, due to the character of general taxation, current taxes fail to sufficiently steer users towards more sustainable behaviour such as using infrastructure outside of peak hours, using cleaner vehicles or using public transport. The various existing charges and taxes should be restructured in the direction of the wider application of the 'user-pays' and 'polluter pays' principles, to achieve a system where the payment has a direct link to the level of costs generated by the transport user.

12. Would you support the introduction of new road charges if they were partly compensated by the general reduction of other taxes?

*

- Yes
- No, the introduction of road charges should not be compensated
- No, I would not support the introduction of new road charges
- I don't know / No view



12a. Which taxes should be reduced?

*

(at least 1 answers)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Registration taxes | <input type="checkbox"/> Annual vehicle taxes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fuel excise duties | <input type="checkbox"/> VAT on transport |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Labour charges | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |



Please specify "Other"

Comments

13. Please indicate if you have any views on the proportion of new road charges that should be used to reduce other taxes

Tolls (distance-based charges) can be modulated to reflect congestion. By putting a price on congestion, this modulation can provide incentives for using the infrastructure outside peak hours, resulting in more fluid traffic throughout the day.

14. Should road users pay for driving in peak hours?

*

- Yes
- Yes, where congestion is significant in peak hours
- No
- I don't know / No view

Comments

15. Where road users have to pay for driving in peak hours, should the charge apply to all vehicles?

*

- Yes
- Yes, except certain vehicles used for services of public interest
- No
- I don't know / No view



15a. Please specify to which vehicles it should not apply and why?

*

Part IV. Comments and Suggestions

16. Do you have any other suggestions concerning the upcoming possible initiative on road charging?
You may also email these suggestions to **MOVE-ROAD-CHARGING@ec.europa.eu**.

Useful links

Europa page about this Public Consultation:

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road/consultations/2012-11-04-roadcharging_en.htm