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From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Permanent Representatives Committee/Council

Subject: Draft DIRECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL amending Directives 1999/62/EC, 1999/37/EC and (EU) 2019/520, as regards the charging of vehicles for the use of certain infrastructures **(first reading)**

- Adoption of the Council's position at first reading and of the statement of the Council's reasons
- = Statements

Statement by Austria

As already stated in December 2020, Austria supports the objectives to decarbonize road transport and to strengthen the polluter pays principle. Austria acknowledges that the revised Eurovignette Directive will contribute to achieve the Union's climate targets. In this sense, Austria welcomes the introduction of a CO2 modulation in the charging of heavy goods transport and the obligation to levy external costs in areas with significant environmental damage. Austria also recognizes that certain improvements with regard to mark-ups have been achieved, notably the possibility to levy mark-ups outside mountainous regions and in addition to external costs.

However, the revised directive will also keep the fundamental principle of cost recovery in Art. 7b and 7e, which in general continues to set limits to transport policy measures in the area of road charging.

In this regard, the text on mark-ups in Article 7f (1)(b) falls short of adequately addressing the traffic situation on the Brenner Alpine crossing, which has been a heavy burden for the population as well as the environment for many years. It is of utmost importance to Austria to apply a mark-up of 50%. The new text requires the agreement of all Member States, which are part of that corridor and neighboring the Member States in whose territory falls the section of the corridor to which this 50% mark-up is applied. This represents an unnecessary hurdle that would result in the provision never being applied in practice. This is more than regrettable not least in view of the ambitious climate goals we have agreed upon at EU level. This provision is therefore not acceptable to Austria.

It must be our goal to adopt a Directive which in practice leads to a sustainable reduction of road freight traffic and contributes to the objectives of the Green Deal, especially in light of the EU target of a net domestic reduction of greenhouse gas emissions of at least -55% until 2030.

On top of that, Austria cannot support the obligation to introduce a daily user charge (vignette) for passenger cars, as this might result in restrictions for Member States or administrative burden for already existing systems.

For the reasons outlined above, Austria does not consider the current text of the revision to be a valid contribution on the path towards a climate-neutral EU nor towards a sustainable reduction of road traffic. Therefore, Austria votes against.

Statement by Denmark

Denmark commends consecutive presidencies for the handling of the Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 1999/62/EC on the charging of heavy goods vehicles for the use of certain infrastructures, and indeed the Portuguese presidency for concluding the trilogue-negotiations with the European Parliament on 16 June 2021.

Denmark greatly supports the intentions of the proposal, particularly the measures that can ensure the use of the polluter-pays and user-pays principles.

Denmark regrets, however, to see the introduction of obligatory earmarking of revenue from congestion charges. Denmark has made it known throughout the negotiations of the proposal that Denmark is against any earmarking of revenues, as decisions on the use of revenue should be an exclusive national prerogative.

While Denmark generally supports the purpose and green elements in the agreement, Denmark thus cannot support the earmarking mentioned in Article 7da of the compromise text and is thus unfortunately unable to support the final compromise text.
