

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000535/25
to the Commission
Kostas Papadakis (NI)
(5 February 2025)

Subject: New toll increases

The new year began with the now customary toll increases, dealing another blow to the already plundered income of the people. Ordinary people paid-and are paying-a heavy price for the construction of the road network: they pay increased tolls every year, they pay very expensive fuel bills and very expensive traffic fees, while business groups enjoy ‘guaranteed profits’, as well as the so-called ‘shadow tolls’, which they secure for themselves from the clauses of concession contracts. This is what the handover of the transport network to business groups leads to. As for the security of the infrastructure, this always comes into the ‘cost-benefit’ balance, with well-known consequences — not being able to meet basic security measures.

The EU bears enormous responsibility for the above, as it repeatedly claims that it does not impose tolls itself, while Directive (EU) 2022/362 establishes ‘user fees proportionate to the duration of the use made of the infrastructure’ and provides that ‘financing for future transport investments’ will be secured on the basis of the EU ‘user pays’ principle.

In light of the above,

1. What is the Commission's position on the fact that increases in tolls are made based on EU guidelines, as reflected in Directive (EU) 2022/362, which are co-designed by governments and which affect the people?
2. What is the Commission’s position on the request for a road network under the exclusive responsibility of the state, with the abolition of concessions and tolls, and free travel on modern, safe motorways for the people?

Submitted: 5.2.2025

Answer given by Mr Tzitzikostas on behalf of the European Commission
(3 July 2025)

1. Among the main objectives of Directive 1999/62/EC ⁽¹⁾, as lastly amended by Directive (EU) 2022/362 ⁽²⁾, are the elimination of distortions of competition in the Single Market and the establishment of a fair mechanism for charging infrastructure costs to hauliers. Accordingly, the directive sets out a methodology in its annexes to define toll tariffs for heavy-duty vehicles based on the recovery of construction costs principle and of the user pay principle. Those rules continued to apply only to heavy-duty vehicles following the 2022 revision that extends the scope of the directive to include light-duty vehicles. Therefore, the definition of toll tariffs imposed on light-duty vehicles falls entirely under the remit of Member States. The requirement of proportionality of user charges, mentioned in the question, refers only to user charges (also known as time-based charges or vignettes) and not to tolls (distance-based charges).
2. The decision between exclusive state ownership or private ownership of roads lies with Member States. The Commission supports the user pays principle which implies that users bear the cost of building and maintaining the infrastructure they are using, rather than the infrastructure being financed with public money. Directive 1999/62/EC gives Governments the possibility to impose tolls to recover these costs and sets out the rules to follow if they choose to do so.

⁽¹⁾ Directive 1999/62/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 1999 on the charging of heavy goods vehicles for the use of certain infrastructures, OJ L 187, 20.7.1999, p. 42, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/1999/62/oj>.

⁽²⁾ Directive (EU) 2022/362 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 February 2022 amending Directives 1999/62/EC, 1999/37/EC and (EU) 2019/520, as regards the charging of vehicles for the use of certain infrastructures, OJ L 69, 4.3.2022, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2022/362/oj>.