

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-003695/25
to the Commission
Jonas Sjöstedt (The Left)
(24 September 2025)**

Subject: Impact of EU legislation on rail network charges

The Trafikverket (Swedish Transport Administration) is currently raising rail network charges, leading to significantly higher costs for transport companies. Increased costs for rail transport drive more cargo onto less environmentally friendly road transport, thereby counteracting the EU's climate objectives.

When questioned about this matter, the Trafikverket argued that the policy is governed by EU directives and that the EU is in effect forcing the Member States to increase rail network charges.

In the light of the above:

1. Does the Commission concur with the explanation given by the Trafikverket and its interpretation of EU directives on rail transport?
2. Are EU directives on rail transport forcing the Member States to increase rail network charges, and if so, has the Commission considered the environmental implications of this policy?

Submitted: 24.9.2025

**Answer given by Mr Tzitzikostas on behalf of the European Commission
(21 October 2025)**

1. The Commission does not concur with the assertion that EU rules on the setting of charges for the use of rail infrastructure ('track access charges') oblige Member States to increase them.
2. The EU rules governing the setting of track access charges are laid down in Directive 2012/34/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 November 2012 establishing a single European railway area (recast) ⁽¹⁾.

The Commission has recently adopted Interpretative guidelines concerning the setting up of charges for the use of railway infrastructure ⁽²⁾ with a view to clarify the relevant rules laid down in Directive 2012/34/EU ('the directive').

In these guidelines, the Commission emphasises that the directive sets a policy goal of decreasing track access charges and insists that the objective of ensuring 'optimum effective use' of the railway network should prevail over other considerations, such as the full recovery of infrastructure costs, when defining the level of track access charges.

In any case, track access charges should be set at a level that the market can bear and that does not undermine the competitiveness of rail transport vis à vis other modes.

In view of these considerations, the Commission is of the view that the directive does not force Member States to increase track access charges.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2012/34/oj/eng> (OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 32).

⁽²⁾ Communication from the Commission: Interpretative guidelines concerning the setting up of charges for the use of railway infrastructure (OJ C, C/2025/2606, 7.5.2025).