

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-001791/26
to the Commission
Afroditi Latinopoulou (Pfe)
(1 May 2026)**

Subject: Scope for reducing excise duties based on EU law

According to Directive 2003/96/EC on energy taxation, Member States are required to apply minimum excise duty rates on fuels, while keeping open the possibility of setting higher rates.

Fuel prices in Greece are among the highest in the EU, despite citizens' lower disposable income. The Greek Government elects to keep taxes at very high levels, passing on the cost to workers, professionals and families, often laying the blame on European rules.

Given that EU legislation sets minimum but not maximum taxation limits, can the Commission answer the following:

1. Does it confirm that Member States, including Greece, have the possibility to reduce excise duties on fuels down to the minimum levels provided for by EU law?
2. Is there any EU limitation preventing a government from substantially reducing VAT and excise duties for the benefit of citizens?
3. What view does it take of high fuel taxation being retained in lower-income Member States, when this leads to increased social and economic pressures?

Submitted: 1.5.2026

**Answer given by Mr Hoekstra on behalf of the European Commission
(13 July 2026)**

EU law does not prevent Member States from reducing taxation provided that the minimum levels of taxation provided for under EU law are respected. As regards energy taxation, the Energy Taxation Directive ⁽¹⁾ provides for minimum tax levels. Excise duties on gasoil and petrol in Greece have been set at a rate above these minimum levels ⁽²⁾.

As regards the value added tax (VAT), the VAT Directive ⁽³⁾ does not allow Member States to have reduced rates for fossil fuels and the standard rate shall therefore apply (at a minimum level of 15%).

Consumer fuel prices are mainly driven by international oil prices and refining, distribution and retail costs, which have recently risen due to dependence on fossil fuel imports and the disruption thereof. Lowering the price with tax rebates is economically inefficient and risks encouraging consumption, thereby further exacerbating the current dependence on fossil fuel imports.

The AccelerateEU Communication ⁽⁴⁾ therefore calls for timely, targeted and strictly temporary measures to protect the most vulnerable consumers, accelerate the clean energy transition and electrification, and safeguard EU competitiveness.

⁽¹⁾ Council Directive 2003/96/EC.

⁽²⁾ As reported by Greece, rates applicable as of May 2026.

⁽³⁾ Council Directive 2006/112/EC.

⁽⁴⁾ COM(2026) 370 final.