



European Commission and Germany reach agreement on a fair and non-discriminatory road charging scheme

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In the margins of the Transport Council held today in Brussels, EU Commissioner for Transport, Violeta **Bulc**, met with the German Federal Minister of Transport and Digital Infrastructure Alexander Dobrindt. After years of discussions between the Commission and the German authorities, both parties agreed on a solution to put an end to the legal dispute over the planned introduction of a road charge for passenger cars in Germany. This agreement upholds the fundamental right of European citizens not to be discriminated against on the basis of their nationality. It will also ensure that road infrastructure is financed in a fairer way and will help the transition to low-emission mobility.

Commissioner for Transport Violeta **Bulc** said, *"I am pleased that after years of discussions, Minister Dobrindt and I have found a solution to ensure that German roads will remain easily accessible for all EU citizens. I would like to thank Minister Dobrindt for agreeing to make the necessary changes to the laws that, once adopted, will ensure that the German car toll system is in line with EU legislation. This is also an important first step towards our plans to create an EU-wide road charging system that will benefit the EU's Single Market."*

German Federal Minister of Transport and Digital Infrastructure Alexander Dobrindt said, *"I want to thank President Jean Claude **Juncker** and Commissioner Violeta **Bulc** for their personal and continued commitment to solve these complex legal issues. The toll charge makes sense and is fair and just. It ensures that all drivers contribute adequately to the financing of our motorways. With infrastructure charges, we will strengthen the user pays principle and facilitate the transition from infrastructure financing through taxes to financing through road charges. This is an important signal for Europe as a whole. Germany welcomes the European Commission's objective to create a single European legal framework for a single European road charging system to reinforce the user pays principle for passenger vehicles in the medium term, and is willing to support the European Commission in its efforts to achieve this at the European level."*

On the basis of the revised draft provided by the German authorities, Commissioner **Bulc** and Minister Dobrindt reached a political understanding on a German car toll system which is fully compatible with EU law. The German Federal Government will now adopt the amendments to the Infrastructure Law ("Pkw Maut") and to the Vehicle Tax Law ("Kfz Steuer") and pass them on to the co-legislators in Germany. Once adopted, these amendments will remove any discrimination based on nationality and incentivise the use of environmentally friendly cars. As a result, German motorways will remain easily accessible to all European citizens and especially cross-border commuters. The price of short-term vignettes – typically bought by non-resident drivers – will be substantially lowered in relation to the annual rate, while the vehicle tax reduction will specifically reward the cleanest vehicles.

Road charging is the best way to reflect the user-pays and polluter-pays principles. Once adopted, this scheme will also contribute to the Commission's political priority of [low-emission mobility](#), by incentivising the shift to sustainable mobility.

Next steps

The Commission will put the infringement procedure "on hold" until further notice. The case will only be formally closed when the amending German legislation taking into account the Commission's legal concerns is adopted and promulgated. As always, the Commission will continue to monitor the correct implementation and application of the law after adoption.

Background

In [June 2015](#), the European Commission initiated formal infringement proceedings against Germany

over the planned introduction of the PkW Maut. On 29 September 2016 the case was referred to the Court of Justice of the EU.

Under the terms of the agreement reached today, the German Federal Government will table amendments to two existing legislative acts. First, the Infrastructure Law establishing the PkW Maut will be amended in order to introduce five categories of vehicles (instead of three currently), which will allow for a better differentiation of the road charge on the basis of environmental criteria. The price of short-term vignettes – which are typically bought by foreign drivers – will decrease in relation to the annual rate and be set below a 1:7.3 ratio. For the most environmentally friendly cars, a short-term vignette (for 10 days) should cost only € 2.50, which is significantly less than €5 originally proposed in 2015. Second, the vehicle tax is once again amended in order to ensure that the most environmentally friendly vehicles are given particularly favourable treatment in the annual vehicle tax.

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Attachments

[ANNEX.pdf](#)