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PRESS RELEASE

Will the Council adopt

A new tax on road freight that flies in the face of EU cohesion?

CLECAT is the largest European organisation representing freight forwarders and logistics service providers, independent and professional users of transport services in all modes. An advance information excerpt prepared by the Clecat Road Transport Institute and the Sustainable Logistics Advisory Body was published today with a view to providing information on the status quo of road transport externalities with regards to the Eurovignette III proposal, which is on the table of the Council tomorrow.

The research comes to the conclusion that the road transport sector can rightfully claim it is already paying taxes and charges that substantially manage to completely internalise its externalities by providing these figures in the four largest countries of the EU. The document further suggests that the unintended effect of the legislation may seriously jeopardise EU cohesion and transfer wealth from the periphery of the EU to the centre, despite the fact that central MS's seem to be comparatively faring better than others in this period. The full research with more detailed information will be published later this year.

After hearing the proposals for a compromise made by the Belgian Presidency that will be discussed tomorrow, CLECAT Members are alarmed that the Council may conclude a political agreement slashing the only positive aspect of the proposal, i.e. the earmarking principle, without coming to any reasonable solution for the issue of congestion, which would be ignored as if it did not exist!

Mr Stefan Back, the Chairman of the CLECAT Road Transport Institute said during the meeting of the Institute this morning that "the political debate should focus on a more comprehensive approach, intended to address externalities in all modes of transport with a comprehensive strategy." These comments are in line with the conclusions of the research that suggests Ministers should reject the Eurovignette III proposal and ask the Commission to come up with a comprehensive strategy for the internalisation of external costs in all transport modes and with a view to mitigating the externalities as its main objective.



Mr Heiner Rogge, Secretary General of CLECAT, commented from Germany that “the unintended damaging effects of transport measures taken in isolation without a comprehensive strategy are well known. The current Eurovignette proposal is the typical example of an unsuitable solution for a real problem. It is now perfectly clear that the Eurovignette III is not about decarbonising transport, but about extracting money from road hauliers instead.”

Marco Sorgetti, Director General of CLECAT took note of the compromise proposal and observed that “the disposal of earmarking is now surfacing in line with the non-ambitious and unfair nature of the Eurovignette III proposal that has been unmasked by CLECAT Members all the way. This is just a new tax on road hauliers, heavier on the poorer and lighter on the richer, just another tax over an above all existing taxation for which hauliers already pay very handsomely, as it is clear in the figures produced by CLECAT.”

Véronique Corduant, Chairperson of the Sustainable Logistics Advisory Body of Clecat further observes that “the mistake in the legal base also makes it impossible to deal with congestion, that is anyway a major problem for all road users and that would require an integrated approach.”

The excerpt can be consulted at the following link:

<http://www.clecat.org/dmdocuments/pp010oetro101014eurovclecatexcerpt.pdf>

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