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59. Points out that unemployment and problems getting into the workforce affect women from a wide range of age groups, and that women have to react quickly to the labour market's requirements and welcomes the measures proposed by the Commission to tackle the current, unacceptable levels of youth unemployment and social exclusion and offer young people jobs, education, and training; supports the initiatives adopted by the Commission, such as the 'WOMen Mobility ENhancement' mechanism, and calls on the Commission to broaden and enhance the scope of projects designed to increase the professional mobility of women;

60. Stresses the conclusions of the Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations; points out the need to support voluntary activities and the exchange of knowledge and experiences between women from different age groups;

61. Calls on the Commission to support the reallocation of adequate financial resources to programmes that promote women's employment and better education for disadvantaged groups;

62. Recommends the establishment of a European Counselling Service Network to help local communities deal with this problem by providing information, know-how and guidance regarding the integration of women; recommends the promotion and use of instruments and networks and continued funding for existing European networks, as well as instruments facilitating mobility such as EURES, Your Europe and Europe Direct, which also make it easier for women to find information about their rights and opportunities in the various Member States;

63. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission, and to the governments of the Member States.

P7_TA(2013)0248

Electronic toll service and vignette system on light private vehicles

European Parliament resolution of 11 June 2013 on a strategy for an electronic toll service and a vignette system on light private vehicles in Europe (2012/2296(INI))

(2016/C 065/06)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission communication to the European Parliament and the Council entitled 'The application of national road infrastructure charges levied on light private vehicles' (COM(2012)0199),
 - having regard to the Commission communication to the European Parliament and the Council entitled 'Implementation of the European Electronic Toll Service' (COM(2012)0474),
 - having regard to the White Paper on Transport entitled 'Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area — Towards a Competitive and Resource-Efficient Transport System' (COM(2011)0144),
 - having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Transport and Tourism (A7-0142/2013),
- A. whereas the current European Electronic Toll Service (EETS) system introduced by the Commission has not been working and needs to be overhauled; whereas certain stakeholders in the market at present see no monetary benefit to adapting to a common interoperable EETS system;
- B. whereas the revenues received by Member States from tax and excise duty in the future will most likely diminish as a result of the move away from oil-based fuels;

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- C. whereas the 'user pays/polluter pays' principle must continue to be a key priority for European transport;
- D. whereas road charging is going to become a reality in more and more Member States in the very near future;
- E. whereas certain problems with non-residents have repeatedly arisen in cross-border areas when new electronic toll systems have been implemented, resulting in protests and complaints about financial losses and discrimination;
- F. whereas the EU has a responsibility to ensure that this new development does not have a negative impact on cross-border travel, on the daily lives of people living in border regions or on trade;
- G. whereas the EU must encourage road charging which does not discriminate against road users who are not resident in the country charging the toll;
- H. whereas in future — in addition to the building of new roads — more funding will be required primarily for the preservation and maintenance of existing transport infrastructure;
- I. whereas Member States should be allowed to introduce either distance- or time-based charging systems, although steps should be taken to ensure that distance-based systems are favoured whenever possible, since these are fairer and less discriminatory than time-based systems;
- J. whereas the technologies already exist for road charging systems to be interoperable;
- K. whereas the single biggest problem facing the EETS is a lack of political will to implement such a scheme, rather than market-related or technical issues;

General framework

- 1. Notes the Commission's statement that the two main stakeholders concerned are toll chargers and EETS providers, but points out that road users, especially transport companies, are a third key stakeholder; points out that users of private vehicles are potential end users who could help to speed up the development of the EETS;
- 2. Calls on the Commission to consider how these stakeholders could be involved to the most useful effect in the next stages of its action;
- 3. Stresses that while the protection of an individual's personal data, and data protection in general, is of paramount importance and any new measures taken should be subject to EU data protection legislation and in particular to Directive 95/46/EC, this should be no obstacle to the interoperability of systems;
- 4. Recognises the rights of road owners to be paid an appropriate amount for the use of their infrastructure and the services connected to it;

The EETS: a failure to date and in need of a new direction

- 5. Agrees with the Commission that the current EETS Directive (2004/52/EC) has not led to the expected development of an interoperable European electronic road toll service between Member States; considers that it has been a failure, and emphasises that drastic action is needed in order to achieve the aforementioned aim;
- 6. Believes that the Commission should consider appropriate legislative measures in the area of interoperability as soon as possible, so as to oblige all stakeholders to advance the EETS project;
- 7. Considers it regrettable that Member States have, on the whole, shown little interest in developing the EETS, and that the Commission is not taking more measures to pursue the enforcement of EU legislation; urges the Commission, therefore, to devise and propose an incentive scheme to encourage operators and Member States to shorten the timeframes for implementing the system;
- 8. Agrees with the Commission that demand exists for an interoperable solution in the area of electronic road charging, but believes that appropriate legislative measures are needed to make stakeholders implement such a system, since the remuneration derived solely from an interoperable system is not sufficiently attractive for certain manufacturers of road charging equipment or certain road operators;

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9. Considers that the market-driven approach favoured by the Commission has failed to bear fruit and that political action is therefore needed in order to speed up the implementation of the EETS and translate it into reality in the immediate future;
10. Believes that the Commission's plans to proceed with regionalisation are not satisfactory, as they may lead to additional delays which could be detrimental to the EU-wide development of the service;
11. Believes that, in any case, the EU-wide development of the service should remain the EU's ultimate goal; stresses that, if implemented, regionalisation should be a transitional stage only;
12. Considers that more wide-ranging measures are needed and urges the Commission, firstly, to take firm action against those Member States which are not correctly implementing the EU legislation, and, secondly, to undertake without delay a review of all available studies on the subject so as to provide a clear basis for different options for action in both the medium and the long term, including charging for road use via technologies such as GPS/GNSS, in order to prevent and reduce traffic congestion caused by physical barriers, and urges it to present this overview by the end of 2013;
13. Believes that the Commission should undertake a study on the financial aspects and conditions which would make the EETS a working reality;
14. Believes that the Interoperability Directive (2004/52/EC) provides an adequate regulatory framework for individual charging systems to coexist, allowing Member States to choose among different technologies according to the characteristics of their road network;
15. Believes that, whatever the system chosen, the Commission should take great care to ensure that consumers are made aware at all times of the cost of the toll being levied via an electronic device or toll tag;
16. Requests that the specific needs of professionals and other drivers travelling through many countries, and in particular to or from outlying Member States, always be taken into account when developing the service;
17. Calls on the Commission, in its work programmes on the trans-European transport networks, to provide for the possibility of financing projects that might afford a means of speeding up the implementation of the EETS;
18. Considers that the market-demand-based approach has failed to produce the desired results and that it is necessary to look into the shortcomings which have led to this situation;
19. Believes that there is no will for an EETS on the part of industry stakeholders, namely toll service providers, road concessions and manufacturers of electronic 'tags' and associated equipment, and that a regulation may be needed to force stakeholders to come together; considers that supporting measures should be introduced by the Commission in order to create an efficient road-charging experience for the end user, particularly in the context of more widespread use of road charging in the future;
20. Calls on the Commission to carry out a detailed assessment in the light of current projects relating to technical and contractual interoperability between Member States and, where appropriate, to propose new measures based on best practice;
21. Agrees with the Commission that the technology for interoperable systems already exists;
22. Points out that several Member States intend to implement charging systems within the next few years or to extend existing concessions; calls on the Commission to ensure that those systems meet the interoperability requirements and to guarantee that the implementation of charging systems will not, under any circumstances, discriminate against non-residents by creating obstacles to the principle of free movement;
23. Calls on the Member States and toll-road operators to work in close cooperation with neighbouring countries and to offer all the necessary support for the setting-up of charging systems and payment and collection facilities and the provision of information to users about prices, terms and conditions of use and so on;
24. Calls for infringement proceedings to be instituted in the event of non-compliance;

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Charging for road use: vignettes, tolling, interoperability and data protection

25. Emphasises that it is for Member States to decide whether or not to introduce road charges, and to set the amount charged for road use, and that Member States should have the final say in spending revenues collected from road charging;

26. Calls upon the Member States to continue to upgrade their transport networks in order to make them as sustainable, efficient, environmentally friendly and safe as possible by ring-fencing revenues from road charges for such purposes;

27. Recognises that Member States are currently developing plans to charge for new categories of vehicles, including light private vehicles, which adds to the urgency of the Commission introducing a coordinated interoperable charging system;

28. Notes that applying toll payments more equally to all forms of vehicle on the basis of the user pays principle is a step in the right direction;

29. Calls on the Member States to take into account the special position of residents of border regions when establishing national toll systems; stresses that national toll systems must not have any discriminatory impact whatsoever;

30. Urges the Commission and the Member States to take into account the specific position of border regions when developing plans for road-charging systems, so as to minimise the impact on people living in border regions;

31. Believes that, while the power to raise revenue rests with the Member States, the EU should favour a system of distance-based tolling over vignette-type systems, since the former is a much fairer, non-discriminatory type of system, whereas the latter has caused problems in the past in terms of efficiency and discrimination and should be avoided whenever possible;

32. Believes that the Commission must make it mandatory for time-based systems to offer road users custom-made vignettes based on various pro-rata charging structures, such as daily, weekly, monthly and yearly options, with the possibility of purchasing a vignette up to 30 days in advance of the road use, and to state clearly the amount being charged in administrative fees, and that it should favour the more widespread introduction of distance- rather than time-based systems;

33. Believes that the introduction of any new charging system which involves the sharing of operating systems and data on clients and their movements must be strictly subject to EU data protection regulations, and that the data should be de-personalised in order to protect individual privacy; takes a pragmatic approach to the issue of data protection and believes that once the necessary safeguards have been put in place, data protection concerns should be no hindrance to interoperability;

34. Urges the Commission to oblige those Member States with vignette systems substantially to simplify the sale of vignettes and access to information, and to operate an online payment service that allows customers to pre-pay their charges via an interface accessible to all, in accordance with the requirements of universal design;

35. Urges the Commission to make payment by mobile phone a possibility for toll and vignette systems;

36. Stresses the need for adequate and visible advance signage informing motorists about how much they will have to pay; stresses also that information about fines and other penalties should be clearly indicated and easily available;

37. Recognises the needs of haulage companies and SMEs, and the benefits that an EETS would offer these groups in terms of bringing goods to the market at the most competitive price possible;

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38. Notes the importance of these companies and SMEs in bringing economic growth and jobs to Europe, and consequently considers it essential not to impose any unnecessary extra charges on them, but instead to apply the user pays principle across the board to all vehicle categories;

39. Recommends that the Commission take firm action against those who fail to cooperate with the current Interoperability Directive, while assessing the necessity of the Commission publishing a proposal for new legislation on the EETS and road charging interoperability;

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40. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.
