

DIFFERENT

User Reaction and Efficient DIFFERENTIation of Charges and Tolls

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Deliverable 6.1 Direct Results from Shipping Case Studies

Executive Summary

In the European Union, levels and structures of transport infrastructure charges vary strongly across transport modes and countries. Some degree of convergence exists, but in the presence of unsolved practical and theoretical difficulties, any such convergence is slow. Deliverable 6.1 investigates the efficiency and user reaction in the shipping sector in relation to ship related port infrastructure charges.

The report is divided in two parts. The first part looks at port infrastructure charges in the context of freight transport, while the second part investigates differentiation schemes and user reaction in passenger ferry transport.

The ports of Hamburg, Gothenburg, Valencia, Amsterdam, Duisburg, Sullom Voe, Lerwick and Scalloway are presented as examples of differentiation schemes in different geographic and economic environments. The activities of the ports vary and their key markets vary. Port users reach from container shipping lines, bulk carriers to ferries.

Differentiation schemes in the port under study are found to have somewhat similar basic structures. However, the detailed analysis shows specific differences depending on the strategic goals and political frameworks in the ports.

Differentiation has specific strategic goals either related to a port's own strategy or to wider policy goals. Deliverable focuses on the efficiency and user reaction of differentiation schemes related to Short Sea Shipping, environmental goals (esp. emissions) and the quality of shipping. It is found that differentiation schemes seem to have contributed to reaching certain goals, but do not seem to be successful as stand-alone measures.

Differentiation to reach specific policy targets (e.g. emissions reduction) are perceived as interesting by ports but the potential implementation faces problems as from the ports' perspective such differentiation schemes need to be revenue neutral, if ports are supposed to work under market conditions.

Differentiation in port in general seems to be jeopardized to a certain extent since port charges in general are negotiable. Under such circumstances the level at which differentiation schemes are brought into play can be questioned.

The analysis of differentiation in ferry passenger transport reveals that the main reason for shipping companies to use price differentiation is their effort to maximize revenue and to achieve better capacity utilization ratios. Ferry operators will use specific market/route differentiation criteria on the basis of different demand elasticities or different quality requirements.

A survey of user reaction revealed that from a passenger perspective high differentiated schemes are desirable, if the chosen scheme precisely reflects the needs of specific user groups. The survey also found that passenger would be willing to pay higher charges for high quality standards of a service. One main quality mean would be integration of ticketing.

The recommendations derived in relation to the potential use in a wider policy context and efficiency of differentiation from the findings in Deliverables 6.1 are discussed in the related Deliverable 6.2.