



7.1.2025

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

Subject: Petition No 0974/2018 by C.K. (German) on EU-wide recognition of eco-stickers

1. Summary of petition

The petitioner calls for the mutual recognition of eco-stickers. He mentions Denmark, Austria and France as examples of countries where, like in Germany, ‘traffic prohibition zones’ may be set up in agglomerations. It is unreasonable, he says, to expect drivers to check the specific local rules on vehicle approval when travelling abroad in order to avoid being liable for fines. German drivers must be protected from sanctions and the interoperability of vehicles in Europe must be guaranteed.

2. Admissibility

Declared admissible on 4 February 2019. Information requested from Commission under Rule 233(5) (former Rule 227(5)).

3. Commission reply, received on 7 January 2025

The Commission is aware that urban vehicles access regulations (UVARs), such as low emission zones and the need to purchase eco-stickers can differ per Member State and thus make it more difficult for citizens to drive without further formalities to urban areas in different Member States. While respecting the right of Member States to implement their own vehicle access schemes (subsidiarity), the Commission is supporting Member States in finding more user-friendly solutions for both cities and citizens regarding UVARs.

To protect local citizens from air pollution Ambient Air Quality Directive 2008/50/EC¹

¹ Directive 2008/50/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 May 2008 on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe, OJ L 152, 11.6.2008, p. 1.

requires Member States to ensure that concentrations of air pollutants do not exceed the binding limit values, e.g. for nitrogen oxides (NOx) and particulate matter (PM).

The principle of subsidiarity ensures that decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizen and in the case of measures regarding local air quality it is left to the discretion of the Member States which specific measures, they take to comply with the respective EU Directive. For example, Member States may take measures to limit transport emissions through traffic planning and management, such as e low emission zones or the use of eco stickers. As these measures respond to specific local circumstances in the more than 800 cities across the European Union, the scope of local restrictions can differ from Member State to Member State.

To ease the problems caused by the multitude of local UVARs, the European Commission is supporting Member States by offering practical tools and guidance for both cities and road users, while respecting the principle of subsidiarity, transparency and the functioning of the internal market. The UVARbox project is for instance a tool that provides up to date, continuous and interoperable EU-wide real-time traffic information services that navigation systems or mobile applications. The UVARexchange project supports authorities to improve the communication of information to drivers in the vicinity of UVARs, including physical signs, variable message signs and cooperative intelligent transport system messages and gives recommendations on cross-border sharing of vehicle and driver information for enforcement². A further study, which will map available technical and digital solutions to enable more effective and user-friendly UVARS, will become available at the end of 2024.

Finally, on the basis of Regulation 2018/1724³ establishing a single digital gateway to information, Member States are obliged to provide information on national traffic rules and requirements for drivers. This includes time and distance-based charges and emission stickers. The information on these rules and procedures is made available for all road users on the Your Europe portal⁴.

Conclusion

The Commission acknowledges that on the basis of the subsidiarity principle it is left to the Member States to take specific measures on UVARs according to the specific situation and circumstances. However, in order to address the adverse effects of the various UVARs, the Commission is offering tools and guidance to support road users and authorities to facilitate cross-border travel as much as possible in a user-friendly manner.

² <https://uvarbox.eu/>.

³ Regulation (EU) 2018/1724 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 October 2018 establishing a single digital gateway to provide access to information, to procedures and to assistance and problem-solving services and amending Regulation (EU) No 1024/2012, OJ L 295, 21.11.2018, p. 1–38.

⁴ <https://europa.eu/youreurope/index.htm>.