

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0103/03  
by Luciano Caveri (ELDR)  
to the Commission

Subject: VAT on Italian road tunnel tariffs

Article 21(15) of the 2003 Italian Budget Law provides for the immediate application of VAT, at the standard rate of 20%, to tolls collected for using cross-border tunnels. In this way, the 1972 decree under which tolls for using cross-border tunnels were exempt from VAT has been repealed, meaning that Italy, as the Commission had requested, has conformed to the Court of Justice's ruling of 12 September 2000 on this matter. The implementation of this decision has created a paradox both at the Mont Blanc tunnel between Italy and France and at the Gran San Bernardo tunnel between Italy and Switzerland. In the first case, the tariffs are 20% higher on the Italian side because France has for some time been applying VAT to its tariffs, while in the second case there is no VAT in Switzerland and the tolls are therefore higher on the Italian side. These circumstances create a distortion of competition between companies operating the same tunnel and cause problems for users. How does the Commission view this situation?