

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3835/08
by Nickolay Mladenov (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Tolls for crossing the Ruse-Giurgiu bridge between Bulgaria and Romania

In answer to my question H-0226/08¹, the Commission stated that according to Directive 1999/62/EC² on charging of heavy goods vehicles for the use of infrastructure (the so-called 'Eurovignette' directive) Member States may introduce tolls provided that they are based on the principle of the recovery of infrastructure costs only. According to official public records from the Bulgarian government for 2007 the amount of collected fees for crossing the bridge were 24 730 000 BGN (app. EUR 12 644 000). The amount spent for reconstruction, support and operation of the bridge was only 32 563 BGN (app. EUR 16 649) which is less than 0.15% of the amount collected.

The Commission also stated that the tolls 'shall cause as little hindrance as possible to the free flow of traffic'. The total tolls paid for a return crossing of the bridge totals around EUR 17. In 2007, according to the National Statistics Institute, the average salary was around BGN 400 (app. EUR 200). To pay 9% of the average salary to cross a bridge can hardly be considered as 'little hindrance'.

Considering that (1) the toll taxes are not used exclusively for the maintenance of the aforementioned infrastructure; and (2) the toll constitutes an excessive hindrance for Bulgarian citizens:

Is the European Commission willing to co-operate with the Bulgarian and Romanian authorities in abolishing the aforementioned obstacle to the free movement of persons and goods at the Ruse-Giurgiu bridge?

¹ Written reply, 22.4.2008.

² JO L 187, 20.7.1999, p. 42.