



# Impacts and incentives of differentiated rail infrastructure charges in Europe - focus on freight

Bryan Matthews<sup>1\*</sup>, Christos Evangelinos<sup>2</sup>, Daniel Johnson<sup>3</sup>,  
David Meunier<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Institute for Transport Studies, University of Leeds

<sup>2</sup> Fakultät Verkehrswissenschaften, Technische Universität Dresden

<sup>3</sup> Institute for Transport Studies, University of Leeds

<sup>4</sup> Université Paris-Est, Laboratoire Ville Mobilité Transport

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## Abstract

One of the key objectives of rail infrastructure charges has been stated as being to promote the efficient use of the infrastructure. Much effort has been put into the derivation of charging regimes by infrastructure managers and regulators throughout Europe, and a mix of differing regimes have been put in place. However, relatively little work has been undertaken to examine the impacts and incentivisation effects that these charging regimes produce. This paper gives consideration to relevant theory in this area, what one might expect - from first principles - and then reports on a number of interviews and case studies undertaken to explore these impacts and incentives. Finally, it discusses a number of methodological issues surrounding this area of research, and proposes further lines of enquiry that might reasonably be pursued.

*Keywords:* Railways; Infrastructure charging; European Policy; Competitiveness; Impacts; Freight; Differentiated.

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## 1. Introduction

Charging in the rail sector has, over recent years, made a number of moves towards greater efficiency and this has tended to lead to a greater degree of differentiation in the charges. A number of countries sought, as part of the reform of their national railway industries, to develop and implement systems of rail infrastructure charging that approximate to marginal cost pricing and, since adoption of Directive 2001/14 which requires rail infrastructure charges to be based on marginal cost, the majority of member states have now done the same. However, the ways in which Member States are basing

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\* Corresponding author: Bryan Matthews (b.matthews@its.leeds.ac.uk)