

Abstract

Title: Evolution of charging for the railway infrastructure use on high performance passenger services: identification of adopted strategies and competition with air mode.

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Since the mid-twentieth century the railway has suffered an uninterrupted slope down on its use in favour of the private transport and plane. This is why the European Union decided to write a series of directives aiming to revitalize this mode of transport, because of the better performances, compared to private transport and plane, from an environmental point of view.

The objective has tried to be accomplished with a liberalisation process of the sector that was reflected in 1991 in the first directive 91/440/CE which established the basis of the route to follow. The main challenge was to guarantee an efficient use and a non-discriminatory access to the rail infrastructure.

Later, the European Union has published the Railway Packages. The first of them was approved on 2001 and is formed by 2001/12/CE, 2001/13/CE, 2001/14/CE. The last one states that the management companies have to draft out a "Network Statement" which describes the characteristics of the infrastructure, its capacity and the access conditions, which are the charges that will be applied to the operating companies.

The charging system will be based, according to that directive, on the Marginal Cost plus Mark-ups principle. The application of this directive in each Country differs much, depending basically on the level of economic aid received by the infrastructure manager from its Government.

This dissertation gives an overview of the charging system used by some of the most important countries in Europe, both in terms of charge concepts (Right of access, right of movement, etc.) and service categories, as in terms of the amount of money that this charges suppose to the operators. After making a compilation of the "Network Statements" or other equivalent legislation which has regulated the charging in different countries as Spain, France, Italy, Portugal and Germany, the charging structure is described and the cost is calculated for the historically most representative routes from each country, all made for the years when that legislation or "Network Statements" were in force.

From the collected information about flight and airport rates that constitute the plane mode charging, the cost that it represents to flight companies is calculated. In this way the weight of both train and air canons is compared to the revenues from the sale of tickets. So it can be estimated the margin of the companies from both modes, and it will be analyzed the possibilities of new rail companies to be established and compete with the existing operators which in most cases are monopolies and are the only ones capable of bearing such canons.

After all, it is identified which strategy has adopted each of the countries studied and it is analyzed if it is directed to the liberalisation of the rail market, as the European Union claims, in order to attain the goal of an efficient management of rail transport and the opening of the market to new operating companies.