



Press release

Railway tolls: Araf issues a favourable opinion with the exception of freight tolls and certain high-speed trains to Switzerland

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Contact

Nathalie Arensonas
Communication and press relations

nathalie.arensonas@regulation-ferroviaire.fr

+331 58 01 01 20
+336 72 03 31 27

Each year, as part of its opinion on SNCF Réseau's Network Statement, Araf issues a legally binding opinion on the pricing schedule for "minimum services" invoiced by the infrastructure manager to railway undertakings.

"Minimum services" include all services rendered by SNCF Réseau to a railway undertaking so that the latter may run its trains. In 2016, these tolls should total approximately €5.5 billion paid to SNCF Réseau (against €5.7 billion in 2015).

The pricing schedule is broken down into three charges:

- the access charge is intended to cover fixed costs allocated to regulated activities (Regional Express Trains – TERs; Intercity Trains - TET; Greater Paris Train System – Transilien);
- the reservation charge is intended to cover fixed costs by increasing the price for those market segments that can afford it (Araf is asking SNCF to define clearly to which market segments this applies);
- the traffic charge is based on the number of kilometres covered and on the type of train and the type of line. It is intended to recover costs for rail network operations, maintenance and upgrade.

Araf focused on checking compliance with pricing rules and principles set under Directive 2012/34/EU:

- Transparency in the drafting and publication of charges;
- Non-discriminatory access to the railway network;
- Infrastructure costs and market capacity to sustain those charging level.

On 10 June, the Regulator issued a favourable opinion on the tolls submitted by SNCF Réseau under the 2016 working timetable (which enters into force at the end of 2015):

- **With the exception of the unjustified adjusted charges applying to certain Lyria trains bound for Switzerland.** The adjusted charge is accepted for the Paris-Geneva route because of airline competition; and
- **With the exception of freight tolls.**

The 6.27% toll increase that SNCF Réseau is considering, is meant to compensate for the decreased State subsidy to the freight segment that has been announced. Araf notices that the gap between the announced subsidy and the amount actually disbursed by the State has been widening for the past two years and that SNCF Réseau was moreover unable to discern any trends in charges after 2016, lacking visibility on the future State subsidies granted for freight activities.

Araf considers that it would be unduly justified to ask railway undertakings to compensate for the reduction in the State's financial commitments by instantly tweaking toll charges since this would have major financial consequences on these companies' economic balance.

Consult opinion

This decision may be appealed by filing with the Paris Court of Appeal within one month.