



## ROAD FREIGHT TRANSPORT

### EUROPEAN TAXATION

# Excise duties and mechanisms for RFT partial refunds on excise duties on diesel in Europe

Situation on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026

#### [A note on methodology](#)

Since December 2022, CNR has chosen to conduct its own survey directly in all Member States in order to ascertain the excise duties applied to diesel and any partial refunds that have been introduced for professionals. CNR does not rely on the oil bulletin published by the European Commission as the frequency of updating rates is not and the information is sometimes incomplete.

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CNR updates its European overview of the specific taxation applied to diesel in Europe and details the arrangements for partial refunds of excise applicable to road freight transport put in place in each country.

Highlights in this 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026 overview:

- Nine Member States applied partial refunds on diesel « for commercial use ».
- Three countries had excise duties on diesel « for non-commercial use » at or below the European minimum (33 €/hl) and seven countries had excise duties on diesel « for commercial use » (heavy goods vehicle with a GVWR greater than or equal to 7.5 tonnes) at or below the European minimum.
- On March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026, excise duty on diesel “for commercial use” (road freight transport) varies from 27.23 €/hl in Poland to 61.58 €/hl in Ireland, i.e. a range of 34.35 €/hl. The average is 42.57 €/hl and the median 41.03 €/hl.
- An increase in excise duties on diesel is observed in 12 European countries, sometimes strong as in Romania (+8.6 €/hl) and in Italy (+5.5 €/hl). These increases are often progressive, as in the case of Luxembourg, which rose from 33.50 €/hl in 2018 to 46.46 €/hl in 2026, placing it ahead of France on excise duties on diesel « for commercial use ».
- Only the United Kingdom applies temporary measures on its excise duties on diesel.

The case of France :

- France is in third place, behind Italy and Ireland, of the European countries where the excise duties applied to diesel “for non-commercial use” are the highest.
- Despite its mechanism of partial refund of excise duties, France remains among the countries where excise duties on diesel “for commercial use” are high, placing it in tenth place among the twenty-seven Member States. France, however, is ranked in a better place than in the 30 March 2025 ranking due to increases in excise duties on diesel « for private use » in Latvia.

Excise duties on diesel are a factor that enables hauliers to gain an edge over their European competitors. Indeed, diesel is the second biggest cost item in the operation of an HGV, even the first one when it comes to East European flags. With a single tank of diesel, an HGV travels up to 4,000 kilometers, it can criss-cross Europe from East to West or from North to South for almost two weeks. Companies whose main activity is international transport adapt their strategies to purchase in inexpensive countries and trigger partial refund mechanisms when they exist. On the contrary, HGVs which do national transport pay the excise duties in their country. Therefore, there is a strong tax competition issue between States and an economic competition between hauliers. The harmonization of competition conditions of the European road freight transport market can be improved on the taxation applied to diesel fuel.

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# 1. Community legislation on excise duties applied to diesel

The disparity in the rates of taxation on diesel in Europe constitutes, after that of driving staff costs, an important source of distortion of competition in the road transport sector. This situation has been found to be incompatible with the normal functioning of the common market and, since 1992, in the spirit of harmonisation, Europe has set minimum rates of taxation applicable to motor fuels. Despite numerous attempts at revision, the rules relating to excise duties in Europe remain contained in Directive 2003/96/EC of 27 October 2003, the so-called "energy directive", structuring the Community framework for the taxation of energy products and electricity. This directive lays down the principle of a minimum rate for all, but nonetheless provides exceptions.

## The principle: a minimum Community rate applicable to diesel

The Directive sets a minimum rate of taxation on diesel below which Member countries cannot go. Initially set at €24.50/hl<sup>1</sup> by Directive 92/82/EEC of 19 October 1992, the minimum Community rate applicable to diesel was raised to 30.20€/hl in 1<sup>st</sup> January 2004, then 33€/hl, in 1<sup>st</sup> January 2010.

This rate of 33€/hl is the minimum rate still in force today.

For member countries that have not adopted the single currency<sup>2</sup>, this rate is converted to national currency at the official exchange rate of 1<sup>st</sup> October of the last year for the current year.

## Exception 1: exemptions from the minimum thresholds granted depending on the country's living standards

Exemptions from the minimum thresholds were able to be negotiated according to the differentials in the living standard of the countries, notably at the time of the entry of countries from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) in May 2004. Until 1<sup>st</sup> January 2012, countries "facing difficulties in the application of the minimum levels of taxation" were thus able to benefit from transitional periods.

Currently, if the law is strictly interpreted, no country is supposed to benefit from this type of exemption anymore.

## Exception 2: a difference in taxation between "commercial and non-commercial use of gas oil used as propellant"

A second exception in Article 7.2 of Directive 2003/96/EC gives the EU Member States the possibility of establishing a difference in taxation between "commercial and non-commercial use of gas oil.

Specifically, the text provides that this difference may be used in the case of "the transport of goods on behalf of others or on one's own account, carried out by means of a motor vehicle or a coupled combination of vehicles intended exclusively for the carriage of goods by road and having a maximum authorised load weight equal to or greater than 7.5 tonnes".

This difference in taxation can also be established "for the regular or occasional transport of passengers by a motor vehicle of category M2<sup>3</sup> or M3 ».

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<sup>1</sup> €/hl: euros per hectolitre (100 litres); can be read as euro cents per litre

<sup>2</sup> Bulgaria, Denmark, Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic, Romania and Sweden.

<sup>3</sup> Vehicles designed and constructed for the carriage of passengers comprising, in addition to the driver's seat, more than eight seats and having a maximum mass not exceeding 5 tonnes

An important restriction in Article 7.2 of Directive 2003/96/EC is that this rate “for commercial use” may not be lower than that which was applied at the pumps on 1 January 2003<sup>4</sup>.

According to transport activity, countries may have put in place different mechanisms for partial refunds. This overview identifies exclusively the measures applied to road freight transport.

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<sup>4</sup> 39.19 €/hl for France.



## 2. Countries applying a difference in taxation between “commercial and non-commercial use of gas oil” – Measures applied to road freight transport

In 2026, nine European States apply a differentiated taxation for diesel “for commercial use”, on the basis of Article 7.2 of Directive 2003/96/EC.

The National Road Transport Committee regularly updates the different practices that exist today in the EU member countries. This information could be useful to carriers who would like to obtain a partial refund for fuel purchased in a member country practicing such a differentiation.

Partial refunds of excise duties are often complex and difficult to understand<sup>5</sup> as direct taxation remains in the field of the exclusive jurisdiction of Member States. As long as they respect the European minima, excise duty can be modified by national policies. In these conditions, it should be recalled that the information provided below was valid at the presentation of the present report. The values for gross excise duties indicated below are converted with the official exchange rate of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2025.

- **Belgium : « Droit d'accise spécial » [Special excise duty]**

In Belgium, reimbursement of part of the “special excise duty” has been in existence since 1 January 2004. It is not capped in terms of volume. It evolves in accordance with the special excise duty on diesel according to a complex system with “positive and negative ratchet effects”.

- ✓ As of 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026, excise duties in Belgium stood at 60.02 €/hl.
- ✓ Currently, the partial refund rate stands at 19.13 €/hl (same for road freight transport (RFT) and road passenger transport (RPT)).
- ✓ The net rate of excise duties applicable to commercial diesel is therefore 40.89 €/hl (same for RFT and RPT).

- **Croatia**

Carriers operating vehicles of a GVWR greater than or equal to 7.5 tonnes purchasing diesel in Croatia, may apply for a refund of part of the excise duty since 1 January 2019. This refund is not capped in volume. Croatia joined the Eurozone on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023.

- ✓ As of 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026, excise duties in Croatia stood at 40.61 €/hl.
- ✓ The amount of refund is 7.61 €/hl (same for RFT and RPT).
- ✓ The net rate of excise duties on commercial diesel is therefore 33 €/hl (same for RFT and RPT).

- **Spain : « Gasoleo profesional »**

The measure for a partial refund of excise duty for heavy goods vehicles with a GVWR greater than or equal to 7.5 tonnes has existed since 2007. It is capped at 50,000 litres per vehicle per year. These payments are processed directly at petrol stations by means of professional cards issued to companies and authorised by the AEAT's Customs and Special Taxes Department.<sup>6</sup> A card issued in another Member State may be used for the purchase of commercial diesel in Spain provided that its issuer complies with the requirements of HAP/290/2013 decree of 19 February 2013<sup>7</sup> and that it has been authorised by the AEAT.

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<sup>5</sup> Some specialised companies offer carriers services for the recovery of this tax in Europe.

<sup>6</sup> Agencia Estatal de Administración Tributaria: [www.agenciatributaria.es](http://www.agenciatributaria.es)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.boe.es/buscar/pdf/2013/BOE-A-2013-2084-consolidado.pdf>

If they do not have business cards, hauliers may register on the website of the Office of the National Agency of Tax Administration<sup>8</sup> that will refund the diesel bought in Spain.

- ✓ As of 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026, excise duties in Spain stood at 37.90 €/hl.
- ✓ Currently, the partial refund stands at 4.90 €/hl (same for RFT and RPT).
- ✓ The net rate of excise duties on commercial diesel is therefore 33 €/hl (same for RFT and RPT).

#### France – Information in road freight transport

In France, diesel said to be “for commercial use” is commonly called commercial diesel. The refund is not capped in terms of volume.

French RFT companies operating vehicles with a GVWR equal to or greater than 7.5 tonnes benefit from a partial refund of excise duty on specific diesel (ex-TICPE)<sup>9</sup>. This rate of refund corresponds to the difference between the TICPE rate in force in the region where the fuel is purchased for the period in question and the TICPE rate applied to commercial diesel set out in Article 312 et seq. of the Tax code for goods and services<sup>10</sup> (45.19€/hl since 2020).

The refund amount in the first half of 2026 amounts to 15.56 €/hl in metropolitan France excluding Corsica and 14.21 €/hl in Corsica.

The National Road Transport Committee is, today, the only organisation which publishes a professional index taking into account the partial refund of excise duties (CNR commercial diesel index).

- ✓ As of 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026, the weighted rate in France amount at 60.75 €/hl<sup>11</sup>.
- ✓ The amount of the partial refund of excise duty is 15.56 €/hl (14.21 €/hl in Corsica) in RFT.
- ✓ The net rate of excise duties applicable to commercial diesel (RFT) is therefore 45.19€/hl.

- **Hungary**

Partial refund of excise duty for heavy goods vehicles with a GVWR equal to or greater than 7.5 tonnes have existed since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2011. The refund is not capped in terms of volume.

Hungary is not in the Eurozone. Its currency (the Forint) fluctuates against the euro.

- ✓ As of 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026, excise duties stood at 38.24 €/hl (i.e. 14,760 HUF/hl).
- ✓ The amount if the refund is set annually by the Hungarian tax authorities. It stands at 2,000 HUF/hl, or approximately 5.14 €/hl<sup>12</sup> for RFT.
- ✓ The net rate of excise duties on commercial diesel in therefore 33.10 €/hl for RFT.

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<sup>8</sup> Sede electrónica de la Agencia Estatal de Administración Tributaria: <https://www.agenciatributaria.gob.es/>

<sup>9</sup> Under certain conditions: <http://www.douane.gouv.fr/articles/a12259-transporteurs-routiers-remboursement-des-taxes-de-carburant>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.impots.gouv.fr/accise-sur-les-produits-petroliers-ex-ticpe-remboursements-des-taxis-et-transporteurs>

<sup>11</sup> Without Corsica.

<sup>12</sup> Currency conversion based on the exchange rate on 1 October 2025.

- Italy: « Aliquota d'Accisa » [Rate of Excise Duty]

The principle of a partial refund of excise duty for heavy goods vehicles with a GVWR greater than or equal to 7.5 tonnes has existed since October 2001. This refund is not capped in volume. A ministerial decree issued each quarter sets its amount.

- ✓ As of 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026, excise duties stood at 67.29 €/hl.
- ✓ Currently, the partial refund stands at 22.918 €/hl for RFT.
- ✓ The net rate of excise duties on commercial diesel is therefore 44.37 €/hl for RFT.

- Portugal « Gasóleo Profissional » [Commercial diesel]

Portugal applies a difference in taxation between diesel for commercial use and diesel for non-commercial use used as motor fuel since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017. Since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025, commercial diesel is capped at 40,000 litres per vehicle and per year<sup>13</sup>.

- ✓ As 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026, excise duties stood at 53.49 €/hl.
- ✓ Currently, the partial refund rate stands at 20.494 €/hl for RFT.
- ✓ The net rate of excise duties on commercial diesel is therefore 33 €/hl for RFT.

- Romania

Since 2014, transport companies have benefited from a refund system for excise duties. It is not capped in terms of volume. This refund is activated if the excise duties applied to diesel “for non-commercial use» are higher than the European minimum rate (33€/hl).

- ✓ As of 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026, excise duties stood at 280.43 RON/hl, i.e. 55.17 €/h<sup>14</sup>.
- ✓ Currently, the partial refund stands at 65 RON/hl, i.e. 12.79 €/hl. It applies from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026 to 31<sup>th</sup> March 2026<sup>15</sup>.
- ✓ The net rate of excise duties applicable to commercial diesel is therefore 42.38 €/hl.

- Slovenia

In Slovenia, it has been possible to obtain a refund for a portion of the excise duty on diesel for vehicles with a GVWR equal to or greater than 7.5 tonnes since 1 July 2009. The rate of excise duties is not fixed and is published on a monthly basis. It is calculated depending on the price of fuel and includes an environmental tax as well as other indirect taxes. The refund is not capped in terms of volume.

- ✓ As of 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026, excise duties stood at 45.02 €/hl.
- ✓ The partial refund corresponds to the difference between the monthly amount established by the Slovenian Ministry of Finance and the European minimum rate (33€/hl). As of 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026, the partial refund stands at 12.02 €/hl (same for RFT and RPT).
- ✓ The net rate of excise duties on commercial diesel is therefore 33€/hl (same for RFT and RPT).

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<sup>13</sup> <https://antram.pt/informacao/53/Procedimentos-em-vigor>.

<sup>14</sup> Currency conversion based on the exchange rate on 1 October 2025.

<sup>15</sup> <https://lemonews.com/en/article/guvernul-roman-aproba-o-schema-de-ajutor-de-stat-pentru-compensarea-accizei-la-motorina-in-transportul-rutier-3h4lyl>

### 3. Summary tables on excise duties applied to diesel

#### Classification of countries according to the level of excise duties applied to diesel « for non-commercial use »

Situation as of 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026, based on the exchange rate on 1 October 2025.

COUNTRIES	Exise duties on diesel fuel "for non-commercial use" (in €/hl)	Evolution since April 2023	RANK
EUROPEAN UNION			
Italy	61.74	=	1
France**	60.94	↗	2
Belgium	60.02	=	3
Ireland**	59.57	↗	4
Denmark	56.59	↗	5
Finland	54.70	=	6
Austria*	53.50	↗	7
Lithuania**	51.96	↗	8
Netherlands	51.63	=	9
Portugal**	50.40	↗	10
Germany	47.04	=	11
Romania	46.58	↗	12
Luxembourg	45.26	↗	13
Latvia	44.05	↗	14
Slovenia**	42.54	↘	15
Greece	41.00	=	16
Croatia	40.61	↗	17
Cyprus	40.00	=	18
Estonia**	39.90	↗	19
Czech Republic	39.36	=	20
Spain	37.90	=	21
Sweden	37.63	↗	22
Hungary	37.39	↗	23
Slovakia	36.80	=	24
Bulgaria	33.03	=	25
Malta**	33.00	=	26
Poland**	27.05	=	27
Range	34.69	↘	
Average	45.56	↗	

Source : CNR - European studies

\* Including a part called "CO2 tax" in the amount of 13.8 €/hl (not taken into account in the European Commission's oil bulletin of March 20, 2025)

\*\*Updates amounts not taking into account the European Commission's oil bulletin of March 20, 2025.

Countries allowing a partial refund

COUNTRIES	Exise duties on diesel fuel "for non-commercial use" (in €/hl)	Evolution since 30 March 2026
OUTSIDE THE EUROPEAN UNION		
Switzerland	79.57	↘
United Kingdom	57.95	↘
Norway	57.56	↗

Source : CNR - European studies

## Classification of countries according to the level of excise duties applied to diesel « for commercial use » - heavy goods vehicles with a GVWR greater than or equal to 7.5 tonnes

Situation as of 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026, based on the exchange rate on 1 October 2025.

COUNTRIES	Excise duties on diesel fuel "for commercial use" (in €/hl)	Evolution since April 2023	RANK
EUROPEAN UNION			
Ireland**	59.57	↗	1
Denmark	56.59	↗	2
Finland**	54.70	=	3
Austria*	53.59	↗	4
Lithuania**	51.96	↗	5
Netherlands	51.63	=	6
Germany	47.04	=	7
Luxembourg	45.26	↗	8
France**	45.19	=	9
Latvia	44.05	↗	10
Romania	42.58	↗	11
Greece	41.00	=	12
Belgium	40.78	↗	13
Italy	40.32	=	14
Cyprus	40.00	=	15
Estonia**	39.90	=	16
Czechia	39.36	=	17
Sweden	37.63	↗	18
Slovakia	36.80	=	19
Hungary	33.12	↘	20
Bulgaria	33.03	=	21
Croatia	33.00	↗	22
Spain	33.00	=	22
Malta**	33.00	=	22
Slovenia**	33.00	=	22
Portugal**	33.00	↗	22
Poland**	27.05	=	27
Range	32.52	↗	
Average	41.71	↗	

Source : CNR - European studies

\*Including a part called "CO2 tax" in the amount of 13.8 €/hl (not taken into account in the European Commission's oil bulletin of March 20, 2025)

\*\*Updates amounts not taking into account the European Commission's oil bulletin of March 20, 2025.

Countries allowing a partial refund

COUNTRIES	Excise duties on diesel fuel "for commercial use" (in €/hl)	Evolution since 30 March 2026
OUTSIDE THE EUROPEAN UNION		
Switzerland	79.57	↘
United Kingdom	57.95	↘
Norway	57.56	↗

Source : CNR - European studies