Article – Free travel passes to enable young people to discover Europe

Thanks to backing by MEPs, 50,000 18-year-olds have enjoyed the chance to travel in the EU for free since its launch in June 2018. An additional 20,000 will now also be able to benefit from the Discover EU initiative, which was first proposed during Parliament’s European Youth Event (EYE) in 2014.

How it will work

At least 20,000 young people will get the chance to travel Europe by rail between 1 April and 31 October 2020. Any EU citizen born between 1 January

2001 and 31 December 2001 can apply for tickets online from noon (CET) on 7 November until noon (CET) on 28 November. To be eligible, applicants will have to answer a few multiple choice questions.

Participants will be able to travel for up to 30 days to at least one foreign country. Travel will be mainly by rail, but also by bus and ferry to ensure wide access. Flights will be allowed in exceptional cases where no other form of transport is available. This could be for example for people coming from remote areas or outermost regions.

Participants with reduced mobility or special needs may be eligible for extra help, for example support with the costs for an accompanying person or dog for those with a visual impairment.

More information on the initiative is available on the European Youth Portal.

Parliament support

The Parliament has been a strong advocate of the idea of free rail tickets for 18-year-old Europeans, adopting three resolutions backing the initiative.

MEPs believe the initiative will allow young people to experience Europe's diversity, better understand each other and learn more about Europe. They expect encouraging young EU citizens to travel in the EU and meet people from other countries will foster European identity and reinforce common EU values.

MiFID II: ESMA publishes data for the systematic internaliser calculations for equity, equity-like instruments and bonds

As announced on 30 October 2019, ESMA has published the total number of trades and total volume over the period April-September 2019 for the purpose of the systematic internaliser (SI) calculations for 22,015 equity and equity-like instruments and for 334,610 bonds.

The results are published only for instruments for which trading venues submitted data for at least 95% of all trading days over the 6-month observation period. The data publications also incorporate OTC trading to the extent it has been reported to ESMA. The publication includes data also for instruments which are no longer available for trading on EU trading venues at the end of December.

The publication of the data for the SI calculations for derivatives and other instruments has been delayed until 2020 at the latest, as set out in the updated plan announced by ESMA on 30 January 2019. The SI-assessment for those asset classes does not need to be performed until 2020 at the latest.

Background

According to Article 4(1)(20) of Directive 2014/65/EU (MiFID II) investment firms dealing on own account when executing client orders over the counter (OTC) on an organised, frequent systematic and substantial basis are subject to the mandatory SI regime.

Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 2017/565 specifies thresholds determining what constitutes frequent, systematic and substantial OTC trading. In particular, investment firms are required to assess whether they are SIs in a specific instrument (for equity and equity-like instruments, bonds, ETCs and ETNs and SFPs) or for a (sub-) class of instruments (for derivatives, securitised derivatives and emission allowances) on a quarterly basis based on data from the previous six months. For each specific instrument/sub-class, an investment firm is required to compare the trading it undertakes on its own account compared to the total volume and number of transactions executed in the European Union (EU). If the investment firm exceeds the relative thresholds it will be deemed an SI and will have to fulfil the SI-specific obligations. ESMA, upon request of market participants and on a voluntary basis, decided to compute the total volume and number of transactions executed in the EU in order to help market participants in the performance of the test since that data is essential for the operation of the SI regime and is not otherwise easily available.

MiFID II: ESMA makes new bond liquidity data available

As announced on 30 October 2019, ESMA has started today to make available the latest quarterly liquidity assessment for bonds available for trading on EU trading venues. For this period, there are currently 611 liquid bonds subject to MiFID II transparency requirements.

ESMA's liquidity assessment for bonds is based on a quarterly assessment of quantitative liquidity criteria, which include the daily average trading activity (trades and notional amount) and percentage of days traded per quarter. ESMA updates the bond market liquidity assessments quarterly. However, additional data and corrections submitted to ESMA may result in further updates within each quarter, published in ESMA's Financial Instruments Transparency System (FITRS), which shall be applicable the day following publication.

The full list of assessed bonds will be available through FITRS in the XML files with publication date from 8 November 2019 (link available here) and through the Register web interface (link available here).

As communicated on 27 September 2018, ESMA is also publishing two completeness indicators related to bond liquidity data.

Background

MiFID II became applicable on 3 January 2018 introducing, amongst others, pre- and post-trade transparency requirements for equity and non-equity instruments, including for bonds. Post-trade, MiFID II requires real-time publication of the price and quantity of trades in liquid bonds. It is possible to defer the publication of post-trade reports if the instrument does not have a liquid market, or if the transaction size is above large-in-scale thresholds (LIS), or above a size specific to the instrument (SSTI). In order to assist market participants to know whether a bond should be considered as liquid or not, ESMA publishes these quarterly liquidity assessments for bonds.

Next steps

The transparency requirements for bonds deemed liquid today will apply from 16 November 2019 to 15 February 2020.

MIFID II: ESMA ISSUES LATEST DOUBLE VOLUME CAP DATA

Today's updates include DVC data and calculations for the period 1 October 2018 to 30 September 2019 as well as updates to already published DVC periods.

The number of new breaches is 62: 51 equities for the 8% cap, applicable to all trading venues, and 11 equities for the 4% cap, that applies to individual trading venues. Trading under the waivers for all new instruments in breach of the DVC thresholds should be suspended from 14 November 2019 to 13 May 2020. The instruments for which caps already existed from previous periods will continue to be suspended.

In addition, ESMA highlights that none of the previously identified breaches of the caps proved to be incorrect thus no previously identified suspensions of trading under the waivers had to be lifted.

As of 8 November 2019, there is a total of 385 instruments suspended.

Please be aware that ESMA does not update DVC files older than 6 months.

Background

MiFID II introduced the DVC to limit the amount of dark trading in equities allowed under the reference price waiver and the negotiated transaction waiver. The DVC is calculated per instrument (ISIN) based on the rolling average of trading in that instrument over the last 12 months.

Safer cars in the EU

Safer cars for safer EU roads.

As of mid-2022, all new cars put on the EU market will have to be equipped with advanced safety systems. Following an agreement with the European Parliament last March, the Council today adopted a regulation on the general safety of motor vehicles and the protection of vehicle occupants and vulnerable road users in a bid to significantly reduce the number of road casualties.

> These new rules will help us to reduce significantly the number of fatalities and severe injuries on EU roads. They also enhance the European car manufacturers' competitiveness in the global market.
>
> *Timo Harakka, Finnish minister for employment*

Ten years after the adoption of its predecessor, the new general safety regulation gives a new boost to EU action on road safety. For the first time, it addresses the specific concerns of vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians and cyclists.

Under the new rules, **all motor vehicles** (including trucks, buses, vans and sport utility vehicles) will have to be equipped with the following safety features :

- intelligent speed assistance,
- alcohol interlock installation facilitation,
- driver drowsiness and attention warning systems,
- advanced driver distraction warning systems,
- emergency stop signals,
- reversing detection systems,
- event data recorders,
- accurate tyre pressure monitoring,

Supplementary advanced safety measures will be required for **cars and vans.** These include :

- advanced emergency braking systems,
- emergency lane-keeping systems,
- enlarged head impact protection zones capable of mitigating injuries in collisions with vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians and cyclists.

In addition to the general requirements and existing systems (such as lane departure warning and advanced emergency braking), **trucks and buses** will have to be designed and manufactured in such a way that the blind spots around the vehicle are significantly reduced. They will also have to be equipped with advanced systems capable of detecting pedestrians and cyclists located in close proximity to the vehicle.

Furthermore, the regulation enables the Commission to enact specific rules for the safety of hydrogen-powered vehicles and of automated vehicles. More generally, it provides for Commission to update the new specifications to take account of future technical developments.

The regulation updates existing rules on car safety contained in the general safety regulation (EC) 661/2009 and the pedestrian safety regulation (EC) 78/2009.

Next steps

The regulation shall apply 30 months after its entry into force. A longer application date is provided for a limited number of features in order to allow car manufacturers to adapt their production to the new requirements.

Background

The regulation is part of the Commission’s third “**Europe on the Move**” package, launched in May 2018. The package aims to ensure a smooth transition towards a mobility system which is safe, clean and automated.

For information on other legislative proposals belonging in the same package, see:

- CO2 emission standards for trucks regulation, adopted on 13 June (press release below)
- Road infrastructure management directive, adopted on 7 October (press release below)

Visit the meeting page