

Road freight transport

Logistics Hotspot Slovakia: Smart EETS box makes reliable, cross-border toll identification possible for the first time



OBU on the windscreen / Toll4Europe



Motorway near Podbanské, Slovakia /michaltrnka360 @pixabay

Slovakia's location at the centre of Europe makes it an important hub for inland goods traffic in the EU. Major investment and export surpluses in recent years have promoted economic growth in Slovakia, despite various crises, making the country an attractive location for many manufacturing companies in the automotive and electrical industries. Haulage companies are required to pay tolls for the use of the roads. For many hauliers, this means that an additional country has to be taken into account for toll transactions, leading to increased expense and effort for all concerned. As a step closer to a unified European toll collection system, from 15 March 2024 Toll4Europe GmbH is expanding its country portfolio to include Slovakia. The EETS (European Electronic Toll Service) solution from Toll4Europe has undergone comprehensive advance testing and has passed the country's stringent national quality criteria. The Toll4Europe OBU (On-board unit) enables easy access to different toll systems at the same time. The

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OBU makes fully automatic toll collection possible, and takes into account the various toll conditions that apply at any time, such as the country, the vehicle type and the weight. Moreover, drivers also receive a warning if a required toll service has not been booked, or if the power supply to the device is deficient. The Toll4Europe OBU is available from our various sales partners throughout Europe, and from mid-March Slovakia will be included in the service for the first time.

Because Slovakia has a strong export focus, freight transportation by road has taken on an important role, making it a key transit country for European freight traffic. To finance the maintenance and expansion of the road infrastructure, the Slovakian government, as long ago as 2010, introduced a national digital toll system which applies to all vehicles over 3.5 tons. For many logistics companies and hauliers, this has meant, until now, that drivers have had to carry an extra OBU which identifies and records the toll kilometres driven since crossing the border into Slovakia. Although the country is not a large one, it has, in comparison with other European countries, many national roads where tolls apply, in addition to the motorways. The toll transactions can therefore involve extra time and expense, particularly when national specifics are not known.

The tried and trusted interoperable EETS service from Toll4Europe can help with this. The IT company offers an extremely reliable OBU which already covers most European countries, so that only one device is required for cross-border toll transactions. Toll4Europe's expertise means that, from the outset, it was one of the four companies approved to provide EETS services within the Slovakian toll system. As part of this process, not only was the testing of the data exchange between Toll4Europe and the Slovakian toll system required; the reliability of the toll collection for long journeys also had to be verified. For this, HGVs and buses fitted with Toll4Europe OBUs had to drive thousands of kilometres within Slovakia. The accuracy of the

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toll collection was successfully demonstrated with the help of the Slovakian test vehicles and drivers. With the expansion of the Slovakian toll system, a major gap in terms of achieving a single toll collection system within the EU has now been closed. This will make fleet management easier for all haulage providers who transport goods across Slovakia or operate internationally from the country.

Now there is no need for a separate OBU for the Slovakian toll system

The trusted scheme uses an easy-to-operate, satellite-assisted OBU. In this way, the technology behind it accurately identifies and transmits the location of the vehicle and automatically collects the toll due. In practical terms, this means that when leaving or entering Slovakia, the OBU automatically identifies the correct toll service, without the driver having to make any manual adjustments or change the OBU when crossing the border. When this occurs, the driver can see at a glance on the screen the current toll service, the number of axles and the vehicle's weight, in addition to other parameters particular to the toll.

In order to ensure that the system functions cross-border, Toll4Europe has also used reliable communications technology for Slovakia. Thanks to real-time updates, the OBU always has the latest information on the toll regulations in each country. Incorrect billing is therefore reduced to a minimum, and fleet managers receive the data immediately in digital format. Since Toll4Europe offers its own service via its sales partners, in the event of any problems or queries, users have access to support in their own language through local contact staff. For more specialised issues, our toll experts at Toll4Europe are also available when required, to support our sales partners. 'It's important to us that hauliers and fleet managers can rely on us to provide prompt assistance at all times,' explains Dr Felix Wex, CEO of Toll4Europe GmbH.

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Smart toll transactions for better fleet management

Fast assistance does not just mean the service partners, however; it also applies to the Toll4Europe technology functions. In this, the EETS service from Toll4Europe is regarded as being the central platform for any issues relating to tolls. Intuitive management and clear systems are paramount. In practical terms, for hauliers, this means that they can now review their own data and inputs, check them against the parameters input by the drivers, and are able to intervene sooner. An integral feature for this is ‘OBU Health’, which has been available since the beginning of 2024. With real-time insight into the OBU settings, such as the trailer axles and the vehicle weight, the necessary data to enable sales partners and fleet managers to evaluate customer complaints and tickets is easy to access.

Furthermore, the battery status, device status and even the type of OBU installation are shown. Thanks to this information, fleet managers will now be able to react much more quickly if a driver has a query or a problem with the OBU. As Dr Wex confidently asserts, ‘With this new expansion into countries that are now supported, as well as an increase in the services offered, toll transactions within the EU are becoming ever easier, and rather than being a troublesome burden, they are now a straightforward routine procedure.’

You can find more information online at: www.toll4europe.eu

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Background: Road freight transport in Slovakia

In Slovakia, tolls apply for HGVs and buses/coaches over 3.5 tons on a total of 17,700 km of motorways, dual carriageways, Class A roads and other major roads. The toll is levied on the basis of the kilometres driven, as well as the number of axles, tonnage and emissions class.

Although Slovakia is a small country in terms of its overall area and its economy, it is in position 12 in Europe in relation to its road freight transport sector as a percentage of its overall activities, and position 6 with regard to its international business; this is because it benefits from occupying a very favourable geographical location.

According to Eurostat figures, the cross-border road freight transport in Slovakia, as a percentage of the total goods transported by road within the EU, is particularly high, at 84.9 percent.

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Toll4Europe GmbH, founded in 2017 and headquartered in Munich, Germany, is a joint venture of T-Systems Road User Services GmbH, Daimler Truck AG, DKV EURO SERVICE GmbH + Co. KG and EuroShell Cards B.V. By pooling the combined expertise of the individual partners, the company has developed a unified On-board unit (OBU) and platform for the levying and payment of cross-border and cross-service tolls. To make this as simple as possible, Toll4Europe offers a universal toll box for HGV cabs. The comprehensive EETS service already operates in Belgium, Germany, France, Spain, Portugal, Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy, Switzerland, Poland, Denmark (Storebælt Bridge), Sweden (Øresund Bridge), and for various tunnels and carparks. In mid-March 2024, Slovakia will be incorporated into the system. Other countries are expected to be added soon.

Image information:



Image ID: motorway_Podbanské.jpg

Caption: Slovakia's location at the centre of Europe makes it an important hub for inland goods traffic in the EU.

Source: michaltrnka360 @ pixabay

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Image ID: Bratislava_slovakia.jpg

Caption: In Slovakia, tolls apply for HGVs and buses/coaches over 3.5 tons on a total of 17,700 km of motorways, dual carriageways, Class A roads and other major roads.

Source: Toll4Europe



Image ID: OBU_windshield.jpg

Caption: The smart OBU accurately identifies and transmits the location of the vehicle and the distance it has travelled.

Source: Toll4Europe



Image ID: OBU_one unit for all.jpg

Caption: Toll4Europe offers an extremely reliable OBU which already covers most European countries, which means that only one device is required for cross-border toll transactions.

Source: Toll4Europe



Image ID: T4E_Map_Europe_2024_EN.jpg

Caption: As a step closer to a unified European toll collection system, Toll4Europe GmbH has expanded the countries it covers to include Slovakia in its service. Other countries are expected to be added soon.

Source: Toll4Europe

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