

Fuel card providers with new digital services

The new fuel card overview by German ‘Trans Aktuell’ transport magazine has arrived. It demonstrates the growing importance of digital services.

Fuel card overview

This was not an April Fools joke, nor were most users in the mood for laughter. The April 1 introduction of the Belgian kilometre levy for trucks as of 3.5 t maximum gross weight ran anything but smoothly. BGL (Bundesverband Güterkraftverkehr Logistik und Entsorgung; *the German Haulage, Logistics and Services Union*) complained, claimed and warned. Its members suffered considerable damage due to truck congestion near borders. In the case of tolls unpaid however, the authorities were supposed to consider the apparent goodwill shown by hauliers and observe lenience when dishing out penalties.

Belgium: chaotic tolls start, or sovereign job?

Provider Union Tank Eckstein (UTA) from Kleinostheim in Hessen, Germany, reported a “chaotic launch” accompanied by technical problems and bottlenecks in the supply of toll boxes. “Waiting-times imply a severe cost impact on the haulage industry”, says director Volker Huber, who took up position in August last year. UTA quickly responded to the problems by arranging mobile providing points for Satellic Boxes at ten highly-frequented border crossings for the benefit of its customers. Apparently however, the turmoil wore off soon after.

DKV Euro Service of Ratingen, Germany, took a completely different view: “Development and timely introduction of this tolls system posed a huge challenge, which was mastered in a sovereign way by tolls operator Satellic and its competent authority Viapass”, as expressed by DKV General Director Dr. Alexander Hufnagl in his accompanying statement.

The right fuel card for use abroad

DKV reportedly “put all its trust in the toll operator’s own Satellic Box ever since the beginning, from the viewpoint of secure, guaranteed service for the benefit of its customers – which was recognised and rewarded by the market”. As a result, the amount of registrations exceeded expectations by far.

A few innovations in the tolls area have been adopted by fuel card service providers as well in 2016. In June, under the name of Easy Go, UTA (including its partner Mercedes) introduced an on-board unit named BroBizz Box for settlement of tolls and tunnel, bridge and ferry costs in Norway, which can also be used for payment of the use of bridges in Denmark and Sweden.

DKV Cockpit for on-line users

General expectation is that on-line services will continue to expand and that more and more new tolls will be integrated. Euro Vignettes will continue to be used for payment of Danish and Swedish tolls (for trucks

as of 12 t). DKV reports the near-future possibility for its customers of advance settlement of other tolls by way of its on-line portal named Cockpit. This year, provider DKV received from the German ‘Initiative Mittelstand’ the IT Innovation Award for this on-line product, which also offers advance settlement of tolls in Belorussia.

The Total fuel company introduces a new app for use in iPhone and Android devices. It also intends to expand its performance in digital services and telematics. From 2017, Total reportedly will be offering an interoperable system for Spain, Portugal, France and Belgium. Aral reports the added possibility of Russian tolls settlement by the end of July.

Increased presence and activity in the East

Those who drive in Russia are at present being serviced by other parties. As of 24 May, DKV customers can use their DKV Cards for settlement of tolls on all federal roads in Russia and the toll road connections to Estonia, Latvia and Belorussia in the Pskov-region.

DKV offers its customers a digital service facilitating their transfer to Belgian tolls through Viapass. Customers can now upload the required documentary evidence, like copies of vehicle licences, at dkv-euroservice.com, after which DKV takes care of registration by order of the customer, verification of the documentary evidence and orders for OBUs.

Moreover, as from February, DKV customers have access to the possibility of post-pay settlement of Slovenian tolls for vehicles as of 3.5 t, in addition to the already existing pre-pay option. This means an end to the necessity for drivers to get off their vehicles at toll stations for charging their on-board units. And from March, England drivers can also use their DKV Cards for cashless toll payment on the M6 motorway.

New products and services - apps, extranet and co.

- Aral: app with fuel station finder
- DKV: refurbished app with real-time fuel station prices in 20 languages, DVK Cockpit for on-line service management
- UTA and Mercedes: station finder app for iPhone and Android devices, additional information and instant vehicle breakdown service, route planner
- SVG: brand-independent fuel card comparison for improved cost control and transparency at www.svgportal.de
- Wölfl: all electronic records and data in one .csv-file