



The German HGV-toll

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Abstract

After many delays, technological problems, and renegotiations between the government and the system operator Germany has successfully introduced a satellite based tolling system for heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) in January 2005. Since then the system is running smoothly. Currently the toll applies only to state motorways (the so called Autobahnen) but there are plans to extend it to the secondary level of federal long-distance roads (the Bundesfernstraßen).

This paper describes the political and economic background of the introduction of the HGV-toll in Germany. The paper sketches the history of the implementation process, describes the major structural elements of the toll, and discusses current problems and possible future developments. Finally some policy conclusions are drawn.

Keywords: Road Pricing; Road Transport; HGV-toll

1. Introduction

In January 2005 Germany has introduced a toll for heavy goods vehicles (HGVs). The toll system started with a delay of two years due to many technological, managerial and political problems which were covered by the media at great length (sometimes scathingly). But since the starting date the system is running smoothly. The only major area of discussion today seems to be the problem of toll avoidance traffic, that is, traffic deviating from the motorways to secondary roads in order to avoid paying the toll. Currently the toll applies only to state motorways (the so called Autobahnen) but due to avoidance traffic there is discussion to extend it to the secondary level of federal roads (the Bundesfernstraßen). Unfortunately official data on avoidance traffic are not publicly available yet (although they are known to exist). Estimates of avoidance traffic therefore have to rely on anecdotal evidence and on simulation exercises.

This paper sketches the political and economic background of the introduction of the HGV-toll in Germany (section 2), describes the history of the implementation process (section 3), presents the structure of the toll (section 4), presents the results of a

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