

Lithuania Responds to Platon Levy System With Tolls for Russian Truckers

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Trucks wait in a line at Ludza in Latvia, 40 kilometers from its border with Russia.

The Lithuanian government has approved a proposal to introduce road tolls for drivers of trucks registered in Russia, according to a statement by the Lithuanian Ministry of Transport and Communications, the RBC news portal reported Thursday.

Lithuania has required foreign truck drivers to pay for road use since 2005; however, Russian truck drivers were exempt on the basis of a bilateral treaty from 1993 — which saw Lithuanian truckers in Russia enjoy the same privilege.

However, the introduction of the Platon road levy collection system in Russia on Nov. 15, with all 12-ton trucks liable to a new federal fee, has prompted Vilnius to do away with the exemption.

“Russia has introduced a federal road toll for Lithuanian carriers, despite bilateral agreements freeing carriers from both countries from such charges. In order to create equal conditions for carriers [in the two countries], an equivalent toll will be levied in Lithuania,”

Deputy Transport Minister Saulius Girdauskas said in a statement, the Interfax news agency reported Thursday.

Russian media wrote Thursday that the fee amount had not been set yet.

The launch of the Platon system, requiring drivers of 12-ton trucks to pay 1.53 rubles (\$0.02, to rise to 3.06 rubles or \$0.05 in March 2016) per kilometer of federal road use, prompted widespread dismay from Russian truck owners, with roadblock protests and rallies flaring up across the country since mid-November.

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