



EU DRIVING LICENCE

POSITION PAPER



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INTRO

Mobility within the EU is one of the most important achievements of European integration. The transport sector accounts for around 5% of the EU's GDP and employs more than 10 million people in Europe. At the same time, transport emissions represent around 25% of the EU's total greenhouse gas emissions and causes noises, accidents and fatalities at the expense of society.

In the face of the existential threat to Europe and the world posed by climate change and environmental destruction, the EU has set itself the target reducing net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels to achieve climate neutrality by 2050. Road transport has the highest share of greenhouse gas emissions from transport. More than 286 million vehicles were registered in the European Union in 2021, accounting for 12% of all EU emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂).

The EU has also set itself the target of halving the number of road fatalities by 2030 and achieving the "Vision Zero Road Deaths" target on EU roads by 2050. Tragically, more than 20,600 people died in road accidents across the EU in 2022. Vision Zero is currently a long way off.

In order to live sustainably, we need to change our ways: Cleaner and safer - enormous changes are necessary for a successful turnaround in transport that affect and challenge us all.

Mobility is a basic human need; individual mobility is essential for social participation. Whether it's a road trip, a family holiday, a visit to the doctor, shopping at the supermarket, the daily commute to work or daycare - for many people, a car is still indispensable for fulfilling their individual mobility needs. Prerequisite: a driving licence.

A lot could change for drivers in 2024: In order to reduce the high number of road deaths, the EU is planning to revise the driving licence directive. Digital, harmonised, modern - the new EU driving licence is to be adapted to the new challenges of intelligent, safe and sustainable mobility. The EU Commission's draft for a 4th driving licence directive was published in March 2023. The amendments proposed by Karima Delli, rapporteur of the Transport Committee has caused heated debates and controversies in the EU Parliament, in the media and in wider society. The proposals of the EU Commission, the rapporteur and the other political groups in the EU Parliament are often mixed up in passionate debates why it is difficult to keep track of the arguments.

Therefore, we have summarised the most important proposed changes and answered the key questions on the following pages:

- What changes does the EU Commission propose?
- What changes does the rapporteur propose?
- What amendments are proposed by other political groups?
- What are the effects of the proposed amendments?

SENIORS

temporal limitation and medical checks

The EU-Commission wants to limit the validity of driving licences to 5 years from the age of 70 in order to apply an increased frequency of medical checks or other specific measures, including refresher courses. Drivers must complete a self-assessment or have a medical examination when acquiring and renewing their driving licence.

The proposals of rapporteur Karima Delli go even further: The validity of driving licences is to be limited to 7 years from the age of 60, 5 years from the age of 70 and 2 years from the age of 80. Furthermore, the issuing or renewal of driving licences is to be linked to obligatory medical examinations of physical and mental fitness to drive a vehicle.

Other political groups in the EU Parliament reject a temporal limitation solely for reasons of age and the introduction of legally binding medical health checks to verify fitness to drive. Instead, member states should consider feedback interventions and training modules by traffic psychologists, driving examiners or driving instructors, or the use of simulators to refresh driving skills.



no age-related limitation

The majority of EAC members reject a temporal limitation solely for reasons of age and the introduction of legally binding medical health checks to verify fitness to drive. Especially in rural regions, older people depend on their driving licences for lack of alternatives to be part in public life in an independent and mobile way.

no obligatory medical checks

The majority of EAC members reject the introduction of legally binding medical health checks to verify fitness to drive and demands that measures to check fitness to drive should be the responsibility of the Member States. Instead, voluntary roadworthiness test and accompanying counselling measures should be promoted. EAC also warns that rigid age limits could be circumvented.

SUVs

new driving licence for SUVs?

Up to now, motor vehicles with a maximum total mass of 3500 kg can be driven with a class B driving licence. In future, the weight limit is to be adjusted to the higher weight of modern vehicles. The proposals here are very different:

EU-Commission plans to raise the maximum permissible mass for vehicles that run on alternative fuels to 4250 kg (inclusive Camping-Vans).

In the rapporteur's view, the driving licence class B in its current form is not fully suitable for modern SUVs. Therefore, a new driving licence category, category B+, should be introduced for cars weighing more than 1800 kg.

Other political groups would like to raise the maximum permissible mass for all vehicles to 4250 kg and reject the introduction of a new driving licence class B+ for heavy motor vehicles.



NO demonization of SUVs

Requiring new licence holders to drive only vehicles < 1800 kg is a step backwards in terms of driving education for young people. In addition to the additional costs, the proposal fails to recognise that modern vehicles, especially electric cars, are becoming heavier due to additional equipment and battery-weight. Novice drivers often use heavier cars belonging to their families. According to the rapporteur's proposed amendment, this would no longer be possible in future. Even small electric cars, such as the VW ID.3, could not be used by novice drivers. The EAC believes that practice and repetition, regardless of vehicle weight, are more important for safe driving than setting subjectively age and weight limits. The EAC is in favour of raising the maximum permissible mass to 4250 kg.

NOVICE DRIVERS



**set minimum age
individually**

If EU member states are no longer permitted to lower the minimum age in future, increasing the minimum age for obtaining a driving licence generally would have a significant negative effect on the mobility and driving routine of young people. The EAC is therefore in favour of member states continuing to be allowed to lower or raise the minimum age individually. Increasing the minimum age generally do not contribute to enhance road safety.

higher minimum age & tempo limit

The EU Commission proposes to set the minimum ages for the different categories of driving licenses at the European Union level. Currently, member states may lower or the minimum age to take account of national circumstances. The minimum age for issuing a category B/BE driving license is 18 years. According to the EU Commission's proposal, it should still be possible to lower the minimum age for B/BE licences to 17 years.

The potential new driving license category B+ for SUVs, proposed by rapporteur Karima Delli could be acquired after a two-year probationary period in driving license category B and reaching the minimum age of 21. According to the rapporteur's proposal, it should no longer be possible to reduce the minimum age for categories B and BE to 17 years.

Other politicians would like to reduce the minimum age for categories B/BE to 16 years.

**no hidden speed
limit**

The question of a speed limit is not a question of the driving licence directive!

Speed limits for individual road users mean that overtaking manoeuvres are impossible if the speed limit is observed and risky overtaking manoeuvres are provoked.

MOPEDS & MOTORCYCLES



no higher minimum age

Contrary to the proposal of the EU Commission, some political groups provides that member states can exclusively lower the minimum age for driving licence categories. Without exceptions, the AM category could no longer be acquired from the age of 15. Since the AM category offers a cheap entry into mobility, especially in rural regions, an increase in the minimum age would have a negative impact on affordable mobility for young people. Raising the minimum age for driving licence class A1 to 18 would have similar negative effects. Therefore, EAC is in favour of a minimum age below 18 for driving licence categories AM, A1, B L17. For driving licence classes AM and A1, EAC requests for a minimum age of 16. Driving licence class A2 should be available from the age of 18.

mobility for teenagers

A minimum age of 16 years is required for the scooter and moped licence, category AM. Member States may lower the minimum age to 14 years or raise it to 18 years. Those who want to drive faster than 45 km/h need a driving licence A1, which can be obtained from the age of 16. The minimum age for driving licence A2 is 18. After two years of driving experience, driving licence A can be acquired from the age of 20.

The rapporteur's amendment proposes raising the minimum age for category A1 to 18 years. In future, Member States should be able to raise the minimum age for categories AM up to 18 years, for category A1 up to 20 years, for category A up to 22 years.

Other political groups in the European Parliament propose to lower the minimum age for obtaining a category AM driving licence to 15 years.

ACCOMPANIED DRIVING

europa-wide recognition

EU plans to introduce an Europe-wide accompanied driving regulation for certain driving licence categories. Applicants should have the opportunity to obtain licences before reaching the minimum required age. These licences should only be used in the company of an experienced driver. Currently, accompanied driving regulations only apply nationally. Europe-wide recognition would enable driving across national borders.

key factor

The EAC supports the plans to introduce accompanied driving at EU level. Accompanied driving is a real success story and an important factor in the training of safe drivers. A lower minimum age of 16 could help to ensure that novice drivers can gain important driving experience over an even longer period of time.



POSITIVE PROPOSALS



What we have to say

Generally, EAC supports the EU plans and efforts to improve road safety and to harmonise driving licence regulations. EAC welcomes the following proposed amendments:

harmonisation must
not lead to lower
standards!

cross-border offences
often go unpunished.
This must change!

driving education harmonization

The standards and minimum requirements for driving tests and licences should be harmonized.

overdue - the second
attempt must be
successful!

digital driving licence

newly introduced digital driving licence with QR code is to be valid across borders and in police stops.

EU-wide driving bans

Currently, driving licence suspensions only apply in the country in which the traffic offense was committed. In the future, driving bans will apply throughout Europe.

correct and
important!

no driving licence tourism

In future, drivers will no longer be able to circumvent the requirements for regaining their driving licence by changing their place of residence.

NEGATIVE PROPOSALS



What we have to say

Bisher dürfen mit einem Führerschein der Klasse B Kraftfahrzeuge mit einer zulässigen Gesamtmasse von maximal 3500 kg gefahren werden. Diese Gewichtsgrenze soll zukünftig dem höheren Gewicht moderner Fahrzeuge angepasst werden.

absurd & unrealistic!
no discrimination against
novice drivers!

helmet compulsory
instead of driving
licence!

night driving bans for novice drivers

The rapporteur's amendment would allow EU Member States to introduce a night driving ban for novice drivers between midnight and 6 am.

additional
bureaucratic effort!

E-Scooter driving licence

Due to the increasing prevalence of e-scooters and bikes and the high number of related traffic accidents, it is proposed to introduce a class AM driving licence for these micromobility vehicles.

facilitate access
to mobility!

new rules for probation period

The probationary period is to be extended to every additional driving licence category acquired. Drivers, who subsequently acquire an additional driving licence category will therefore undergo a further probation period.

additional driving tests

According to the rapporteur's proposal, novice drivers should have to take a new driving test after completing their probation period.

SUMMARY

- The majority of EAC members reject a temporal limitation on driving licences combined with mandatory medical checks on fitness to drive solely for reasons of age,
- The introduction of a new driving licence category for vehicles weighing more than 1800 kg would be disproportionate. Regardless of the type of drive, the maximum permissible mass for all vehicles in driving licence category B/BE should be adapted to the weight of modern vehicles.
- EU member states should also be able to set the minimum age for obtaining a driving licence individually in the future. Increasing the minimum age generally do not contribute to enhance road safety.
- A scooter and moped driving licence offers young people an affordable introduction to mobility and is essential for young people's individual mobility, especially in rural areas. The minimum age should not be increased under any circumstances.
- EAC welcomes the EU plans to introduce and recognise accompanied driving throughout Europe. Accompanied driving is a key factor in the training of novice drivers to become safe drivers.



- Europe-wide driving bans are right and important to ensure that cross-border offences no longer go unpunished in future.
- In principle, EAC welcomes the planned harmonisation of standards and minimum requirements for driving tests and the issuing of driving licences.
- The introduction of a digital driving licence is long overdue. The digital licence will not completely replace the conventional format. By 2033, all EU citizens will have to exchange their old driving licence for a check-card format driving licence.
- In EAC's view, the rapporteur's proposal to ban novice drivers from driving at night is disproportionate and unrealistic. Young people must not be excluded from mobility under any circumstances.
- Instead of a driving licence for e-scooters, EAC recommends the requirement to wear helmets.
- EAC rejects the proposal to extend the probationary period to every additional driving licence category acquired and to require a new driving test after the probation period. Access to mobility must not be made more complicated.

IMPRINT

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