




Procedure file

Basic information	
COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure) Directive	2003/0252(COD) Procedure completed
Driving licences: issue, validity, renewal (repeal. Directive 91/439/EEC). Recast	
Amended by 2017/0015(COD)	
Subject 3.20.06 Transport regulations, road safety, roadworthiness tests, driving licence	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	TRAN Transport and Tourism		22/08/2006
		PPE-DE GROSCH Mathieu	
	Former committee responsible		
	TRAN Transport and Tourism		28/07/2004
		PPE-DE GROSCH Mathieu	
	RETT Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism		21/01/2004
		PPE-DE GROSCH Mathieu	
	Former committee for opinion		
	ITRE Industry, Research and Energy	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	JURI Legal Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	LIBE Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	LIBE Citizens' Freedoms and Rights, Justice and Home Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
JURI Legal Affairs and Internal Market		22/01/2004	
	PPE-DE FERRI Enrico		
ITRE Industry, External Trade, Research, Energy		21/01/2004	
	PSE LANGE Bernd		
Council of the European Union	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	Agriculture and Fisheries	2774	19/12/2006
	Agriculture and Fisheries	2750	18/09/2006
	Transport, Telecommunications and Energy	2721	27/03/2006
	Transport, Telecommunications and Energy	2695	01/12/2005

Key events

21/10/2003	Legislative proposal published	COM(2003)0621	Summary
15/12/2003	Committee referral announced in Parliament, 1st reading		
16/09/2004	Committee referral announced in Parliament, 1st reading		
07/10/2004	Debate in Council	2607	Summary
19/01/2005	Vote in committee, 1st reading		Summary
03/02/2005	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading	A6-0016/2005	
22/02/2005	Debate in Parliament		
23/02/2005	Results of vote in Parliament		
23/02/2005	Decision by Parliament, 1st reading	T6-0041/2005	Summary
27/06/2005	Debate in Council	2671	Summary
01/12/2005	Debate in Council	2695	Summary
18/09/2006	Council position published	09010/1/2006	Summary
28/09/2006	Committee referral announced in Parliament, 2nd reading		
22/11/2006	Vote in committee, 2nd reading		Summary
27/11/2006	Committee recommendation tabled for plenary, 2nd reading	A6-0414/2006	
13/12/2006	Debate in Parliament		
14/12/2006	Decision by Parliament, 2nd reading	T6-0587/2006	Summary
19/12/2006	Act approved by Council, 2nd reading		
20/12/2006	Final act signed		
20/12/2006	End of procedure in Parliament		
30/12/2006	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2003/0252(COD)
Procedure type	COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure)
Procedure subtype	Recast
Legislative instrument	Directive
	Amended by 2017/0015(COD)

Legal basis	EC Treaty (after Amsterdam) EC 071-p1
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	TRAN/6/39658

Documentation gateway

Legislative proposal	COM(2003)0621	21/10/2003	EC	Summary
Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	CES0067/2004 OJ C 112 30.04.2004, p. 0034-0038	31/03/2004	ESC	
Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	CES0507/2004	31/03/2004	ESC	
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading	A6-0016/2005	03/02/2005	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading	T6-0041/2005 OJ C 304 01.12.2005, p. 0138-0200 E	23/02/2005	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2005)1076/2	31/03/2005	EC	
Council statement on its position	12216/2006	11/09/2006	CSL	
Council position	09010/1/2006 OJ C 295 05.12.2006, p. 0001-0047 E	18/09/2006	CSL	Summary
Committee draft report	PE378.492	21/09/2006	EP	
Commission communication on Council's position	COM(2006)0547	21/09/2006	EC	Summary
Amendments tabled in committee	PE378.835	25/10/2006	EP	
Committee recommendation tabled for plenary, 2nd reading	A6-0414/2006	27/11/2006	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, 2nd reading	T6-0587/2006	14/12/2006	EP	Summary
Commission opinion on Parliament's position at 2nd reading	COM(2006)0859	18/12/2006	EC	Summary
Draft final act	03687/2006	20/12/2006	CSL	
Follow-up document	C(2012)2904	04/05/2012	EC	

Additional information

National parliaments	IPEX
European Commission	EUR-Lex

Final act

[Directive 2006/126](#)
[OJ L 403 30.12.2006, p. 0018](#) Summary

[Corrigendum to final act 32006L0126R\(01\)](#)
[OJ L 019 23.01.2009, p. 0067](#)

PURPOSE : to revise European legislation on driving licences to reduce possibilities of fraud, ensure a true freedom of movement to EU drivers and reinforce road safety. **PROPOSED ACT** : Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council. **CONTENT** : Directive 91/439/EEC on driving licences is governed by two main principles: enhancing the free movement of Community citizens and contributing to an improvement in road safety. These principles continue to be the main guidelines for the future legislation on driver licensing. This proposal is a recasting of Directive 91/439/EEC, in line with the Interinstitutional Agreement on the recasting technique for legal acts. This means that it incorporates in a single text both the substantive amendments it makes to Directive 91/439/EEC and the unchanged provisions thereof. This proposal will replace and repeal Directive 91/439/EEC. This should help to make Community legislation more accessible and transparent. The new draft Directive thus proposes: - to generalise the plastic card type model of European licence. This model allows for higher protection against fraud. Current paper driving licences will not be exchanged but will stop being issued from the date of application of the new legislation; - to allow Member States who so wish are allowed to equip the new driving licences with a microchip including the information printed on the card to reinforce further anti-fraud protection. The use of this microchip will be strictly limited to driving licence issues so as to ensure that a licence can still be withdrawn after a serious offence; - to introduce the notion of a limited administrative validity of driving licences. All new driving licences issued from the date of application of the proposed Directive will have to be regularly renewed. Drivers will keep their acquired rights but the regular renewal of the document will limit the extensive possibilities of fraud that exist today by making it possible to update the anti-fraud protection of all licences as well as the holder's photograph. This will also ensure free movement of drivers: all driving licences will have the same validity periods and they will all be valid in any Member State without condition for this same administrative period. This will prevent Member States from applying restrictive measures to holders of non-national driving licences by subjecting them to national rules on validity periods and medical checks. All new licences of category A (motorcycles) and B (cars) would be valid for 10 years, 5 years if holders are over 65 years of age. All new licences of category C (trucks) and D (buses) will be valid for 5 years, one year if holders are over 65 years of age; - to put an end to "driving licence tourism" by ensuring a coherent and pan-European application in case of driving licence withdrawal. Today, too many citizens establish themselves in another Member State to apply for a new driving licence when the Member State of their normal residence has withdrawn their driving licence because of a serious traffic offence. The Commission thus proposes to reinforce the concept of "one holder-one licence", which will prevent a Member State from issuing a licence to a person who already holds another driving licence, also when such licence has been withdrawn; - to reinforce, in the interest of road safety, progressive access to: the most powerful motorcycles by varying the minimum age between 16 and 24 years, depending upon the technical characteristics of the motorcycle and the experience of the driver; - the most powerful trucks and buses, ensuring that all drivers of trucks and buses, including those that so far were not covered by legislation on the training of professional drivers, be subject to progressive access; - to introduce a new licence category for mopeds which should improve road safety for the most vulnerable youngsters on our roads. A very popular means of transport, mopeds should no longer be left outside the scope of this legislation; - to harmonise the periodicity of medical checks for professional drivers; - to introduce minimum requirements for the initial qualification and training of driving examiners which had been so far left out of the scope of any harmonisation. This should contribute to increasing similarities between driving tests throughout the EU.?

Driving licences: issue, validity, renewal (repeal. Directive 91/439/EEC). Recast

The Council agreed on a general approach on a proposal for a Directive on driving licences, pending the European Parliament's opinion in first reading. This proposal is a recasting of Directive 91/439/EEC.

The text agreed on by the Council provides that within six years after the entry into force of the Directive, all new driving licences will be based on a harmonised "plastic card" model. All new driving licences will have a limited administrative validity, i.e. 10 years for motorcycles and cars and 5 years for trucks and buses.

The agreement reached by the Council also includes the following provisions:

- possibility of introducing a microchip on driving licences;
- harmonisation of the frequency of medical checks for professional drivers;
- introduction of a driving licence for mopeds;
- extension of the principle of progressive access to driving licences for the most powerful types of vehicles;
- introduction of minimum requirements for the initial qualification and periodic training of driving examiners;
- confirmation of the principle of the single driving licence (one holder, one licence).

As regards existing driving licences, the Council decided that Member States would not be obliged to exchange them against a new driving licence.

Driving licences: issue, validity, renewal (repeal. Directive 91/439/EEC). Recast

The committee adopted the report by Mathieu GROSCH (EPP-ED, BE) amending the proposal under the 1st reading of the codecision procedure:

- although no specific deadlines had been set for replacing the many existing types of driving licence by a single format, in view of the administrative effort involved the paper driving licence format still in use in some Member States should be phased out within ten years and replaced by a plastic "credit card" model. These plastic models could then be brought into conformity with the single European model over a further period of ten years. However, the committee stipulated that the replacement of old driving licences must not in any circumstances result in the loss or restriction of acquired rights to drive specific categories of vehicle;
- Member States should be able to store additional data on the proposed microchip to be inserted in the plastic card model, provided the

relevant data protection provisions are taken into account;

- the Commission should set up and operate a network for the international exchange of driving licence data between each Member State, as a means of combating fraud;

- to prevent "driving licence tourism", the text should specifically require Member States to refuse to recognise the validity of any driving licence issued to a person who is subject to restrictions, suspension, withdrawal or cancellation of the right to drive. Similarly, Member States should be required to refuse to issue driving licences to applicants subject to any such measures;

- whereas the proposal stipulated that motorcycle and car licences issued to drivers who are 65 or more should be valid for only 5 years, the committee felt that a blanket restriction for the over-65s was not justified. However, it wanted Member States to be able to introduce a shorter period of validity (3 years) for the first licence issued to novice drivers of trucks and buses, in order to implement special road safety measures;

- on the sensitive issue of medical checks, it proposed that Member States should have the option of limiting the period of validity of driving licences in justified individual cases, such as people with certain diseases. In the specific case of diabetes, drivers should not have to undergo expensive regular check-ups, although insulin-dependent drivers should be subject to medical authorisation and have a duty to inform their national authorities of any changes to their condition;

- a large number of amendments were adopted adapting the technical definitions of certain vehicle categories. In particular, holders of a category B licence who had followed a voluntary training course without examination would be allowed, for non-commercial activities, to drive a motor caravan of up to 4 250 kg. Holders of category B licences should also be allowed to tow trailers of up to 3 500 kg, and drive motor-powered tricycles. In addition, three-wheel vehicles should be classified in category A, in accordance with their power output.

- in another sensitive area - age-limits - the committee sought to introduce a degree of subsidiarity to take account of national traditions. It emphasised the 'step-up' approach with regard to motorcycles to encourage young people to gain experience on smaller machines before moving on to more powerful ones, while nevertheless specifying that Member States which raise the minimum age for motorcycles must recognise licences for this category issued by other Member States with different age-limits.

Finally, other technical amendments laid down detailed anti-forgery specifications for the plastic driving licence card, improved and developed the provisions relating to examiners and introduced new Annexes (VIa and VIb) on driver training.

Driving licences: issue, validity, renewal (repeal. Directive 91/439/EEC). Recast

In adopting the report by Mathieu GROSCH (EPP-ED, BE), the European Parliament announced the end of 110 different paper driving licence formats still in use in some Member States. A majority of MEPs (548 votes in favour, 103 against and 9 abstentions) decided that these licences should be replaced by a "credit card" model within 10 years and that a single EU driving licence should be introduced within 20 years. Member States should have the right to store additional information on the microchip, provided this does not impair its proper use. Data protection must be guaranteed in this connection. They also were in favour of the introduction of a European driving licence information network to combat fraud and "driving licence tourism". (Please refer to the summary dated 19/01/2005 for the amendments adopted by the committee responsible).

In addition, the Parliament states makes clear that existing rights relating to entitlement to drive different classes of vehicle should not be restricted by this exchange of existing driving licences.

The Member States may impose medical examinations as a guarantee of compliance with the minimum standards of physical and mental aptitude for driving a motor vehicle. Eyesight tests from the age of 45 years, for example, could mean an increase in road safety.

It should be possible for Member States to amend the minimum age for motor-car and motorcycle classes in order to improve safety or mobility on roads. However, in the case of motorcycle categories, the principle of progressive access must be retained. Careful consideration should be given to the question whether the principle of progressive access should in future be extended to the passenger vehicle sector

A range of amendments were adopted on the more technical aspects of the Commission proposals such as on the use of trailers for sports or camping equipment, on the various categories of driving licences, the minimum age for drivers of motorcycles, on the physical security of driving licences in order to combat fraud, on the minimum requirements to be met by people conducting practical driving licence examinations, and on driver training in the various categories.

Driving licences: issue, validity, renewal (repeal. Directive 91/439/EEC). Recast

The Council took note of the Presidency progress report on the proposed driving licences Directive. To recall, the main aim of the Directive is to improve the free movement of citizens by ensuring and facilitating the mutual recognition of all licences and to reduce the possibility of fraud. A further aim is increased road safety.

Driving licences: issue, validity, renewal (repeal. Directive 91/439/EEC). Recast

The Council held an exchange of views on the proposed driving licences Directive. It agreed to resume examination of this item at its next meeting.

Driving licences: issue, validity, renewal (repeal. Directive 91/439/EEC). Recast

The Council has adopted its common position by qualified majority. The final text reflects the compromise negotiated between the three institutions following extensive negotiations. The UK delegation abstained. On three previous occasions the Council has been unable to find

agreement on the proposal and a blocking minority held up finalisation of the common position. Agreement was finally reached at the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy council meeting in March 2005, following a proposed amendment on the renewal of driving licences. Driving licences may now be issued with a validity of up to 15 years. Having found political agreement, the Chairman of the European Parliament's Committee on Transport and Tourism has informed the Council Presidency, by letter, that he will be making a recommendation to the TRAN Committee, for approval of the common position at second reading.

In essence, the common position retains all of the principle elements proposed by the Commission in its initial proposal. Certain changes have been made in order to make the content of the text both more logical and more reader friendly. Other, more substantive changes have been made that reflect the concerns raised by the European Parliament at first reading (such as the mandatory exchange of all existing driving licences) and concerns raised by Council. As it currently stands, the common position follows the aim of the three institutions to recast the existing Directive and to add the necessary provision needed to meet the requirement of a mobile society in an enlarged EU. As such the common position addresses the following key issues:

The reclassification of vehicle-trailer combinations: For trailer combinations within category B, the Commission proposed to shift all combinations with trailers above 750 kg to category BE. Both Parliament and Council considered this provision too strict, given that a considerable number of 'light' camping trailers already surpass such a weight limit due to their interior design. In order to meet road safety concerns it was agreed that a new provision allowing a maximum authorised mass of 4250 kg for vehicle and trailer combinations in category B. In cases where a combination exceeds 3500 kg additional training or the passing of a test of skills will be required. The training and practical test requirements are set down in a new Annex V. In agreeing to this provision, both the Parliament and the Council guarantee that the tractor vehicle remains within the 3500 kg limit and that the existing 4240 kg maximum mass (3500 + 750) is not surpassed.

With regard to category BE, the two co-legislators agreed to allow a maximum authorised mass of 3500 kg for the trailer. Combinations with a towing vehicle in category B and a trailer exceeding 3500 kg can only be driven with a category CIE.

Motorcycles' access regime: In order to find a balance between road safety and the right to mobility, the three institutions reached agreement on the principle of progressive access to motorcycles and on the age of mutual recognition of licences. The three institutions also decided to introduce a special category for moped (category AM), for which a licence can be obtained at the age of 16 years, following completion of a theory test. Member State may impose further requirements.

Further, both the Council and the Parliament agreed to adopt a 'staged' approach to accessing motorcycles of higher specifications. The minimum age for motorcycles in category A1 (light motorcycles) is set at 16 years. For category A2 (medium size/weight motorcycles) the age is set at 18 years. The 2 years age difference must also be respected if a Member State decides to grant direct access to category A1 only at the age of 17 or 18 years. If the applicant has acquired a 2 year experience on category A1 they have to pass a test of skills and behaviour or complete a training course in order to ride a motorcycle in category A2.

The minimum age for category A (heavy motorcycles) is set at 20 years upon condition that the applicant has acquired two years' experience on category A2 and passed a test, or alternatively, has completed some training. For direct access to the most powerful motorcycles, it was agreed that the unique minimum age should be 24 years throughout the Community.

One person one licence: In order to limit fraud, the 'one person one licence' approach has been adopted. In addition to the regular renewal of documents a new provision has been introduced which obliges a Member State to refuse a licence where it establishes that the applicant already holds a driving licence. Member States will also be obliged to verify with other Member States that the request for renewal is legitimate if national authorities have grounds to suspect that the applicant already holds a driving licence. For enhanced communication purposes, a new 'Communication network for driving licences' will be created. Minimum standards safeguarding a high level of protection and a provision allowing the Member States to insert a microchip in the licence have been preserved.

Obligatory exchange of all existing driving licences: The common position supports a new Community driving licence model and to the compulsory renewal of documents. At the same time Parliament and Council decided to go one step further and agree to a provision stipulating that all driving licence documents issued before the date of application of the current Directive, and which are still valid, will have to be replaced by the new driving licence model 26 years after the entry into force of this Directive. Thus there will be one single driving licence throughout the EU.

Other issues: A new power/weight ratio not exceeding 0,1 kW/kg for light motorcycles (category A1) has been introduced. This will prevent the construction of extremely light vehicles with high acceleration and top speed possibilities and thereby have a considerable effect on the safety of young or novice motorcycle riders.

New technical characteristics for medium-weight motorcycles: An additional provision for A2 motorcycles, which states that vehicles in this category cannot be deprived from a vehicle of more than double its power, has been introduced.

Introduction of a new driving licence model: Paper driving licences will be phased out. Only plastic card types will be issued following the entry into force of the new legislation.

Minimum requirements for driving examiners: Basic conditions for qualifying as a driving examiner and the setting of minimum standards for their initial qualification and regular training have been introduced.

Driving licences: issue, validity, renewal (repeal. Directive 91/439/EEC). Recast

The Council adopted its common position by qualified majority on 18 September 2006. This text not only represents the Council's position but also reflects the compromise negotiated between the three institutions following negotiations on the matter in June 2005.

Changes made to the initial proposal concern:

- The exchange of existing driving licences within 20 years of the date of entry into force of the Directive.
- Progressive access to motorcycles.
- Establishing the principle of 'one driver one licence'.
- Allowing for a one day training programme or practical test for all combinations between 3500 kg and 4 250 kg and where the trailer

exceed 750 kg.

The Commission is of the view that the Council's common position alters neither the main aim, nor the spirit, of the proposal and is therefore able to support it. It also welcomes the fact that the common position reflects the agreement found during the inter-institutional negotiations, which paves the way for the adoption of this proposal at second reading.

Driving licences: issue, validity, renewal (repeal. Directive 91/439/EEC). Recast

The committee adopted the report by Mathieu GROSCH (EPP-ED, BE) approving - under the 2nd reading of the codecision procedure - the Council's common position on the proposed directive on driving licences. The committee tabled a few technical amendments designed to bring the proposal into line with the new comitology rules relating to the regulatory procedure.

Driving licences: issue, validity, renewal (repeal. Directive 91/439/EEC). Recast

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the report by Mathieu GROSCH (PPE-DE, BE), and approved the common position, subject to five technical amendments on comitology. These relate to the new regulatory procedure with scrutiny provided for in Article 5a of Decision 1999/468/EC.

Driving licences: issue, validity, renewal (repeal. Directive 91/439/EEC). Recast

The Commission can accept all the amendments adopted by the European Parliament in second reading. They intend to bring the new Directive on driving licences in line with the Council Decision of 17 July 2006 amending Decision 1999/468/EC laying down the procedures for the exercise of implementing powers conferred on the Commission.

Driving licences: issue, validity, renewal (repeal. Directive 91/439/EEC). Recast

PURPOSE : to revise European legislation on driving licences to reduce possibilities of fraud, ensure a true freedom of movement to EU drivers and reinforce road safety.

LEGISLATIVE ACT : Directive 2006/126/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on driving licences (Recast)

CONTENT : The Council adopted this directive, which is aimed at ensuring mutual recognition of driving licences by Member States, and approved five amendments voted by the European Parliament at second reading, which adapt the directive to new comitology rules adopted by the Council in July 2006. The directive is aimed at improving road safety by setting minimum standards for medical checks on professional drivers and for qualifications and continuous training for driving examiners. It is also aimed at reducing the risk of fraud by use of a plastic card model, with optional use of a microchip provided that this does not interfere with commonly accessible data.

The issuing of new licences will be obligatory as from 2012, since the new directive will apply two years after entry into force. After that period Member States will have four years in which to comply with its provisions. The directive also requires that by 2033, all driving licences issued or in circulation must fulfil all its requirements. The main aims of the directive are:

- to reduce the possibilities of fraud: elimination of paper driving licence models in favour of a plastic card model only; possibility of introducing a microchip on the driving licence; introduction of limited administrative validity for all new licences issued from the date of application of the proposal;
- to guarantee the free movement of citizens by means of introducing limited administrative validity and by harmonising the frequency of medical checks for professional drivers;
- to contribute to improving road safety: introduction of a driving licence for mopeds; extension of the principle of progressive access to driving licences for the most powerful types of vehicles; introduction of minimum requirements for the initial qualification and periodic training of driving examiners; confirmation of the principle of holding a single driving licence (one holder - one licence)

The validity of new category A and B licences (automobiles and motorcycles) will be limited to 10 years, although Member States may extend the period to 15 years. Category C and D licences (lorries and buses with their respective trailer combinations) will be valid for five years.

The text takes account of a compromise with the Parliament on the following issues:

- ? the reclassification of motor caravans and vehicle-trailer combinations;
- ? an access regime for motorcycles;
- ? the principle of "one person - one licence".

The compromise is aimed at further enhancing road safety by subjecting the conduct of certain vehicle-trailer combinations under a category B licence to additional training and/or practical testing, and subjecting access to heavier motorcycles under category A to a "step-up" approach with a requirement for two years' practical experience in a lower category and additional training and/or testing, while direct access to the heaviest category A motorcycles will be possibly only at the age of 24 years.

As regards the principle of "one person - one licence" and to prevent "licence tourism", the Commission will set up a network to allow Member States to exchange information on the licences they have issued, exchanged, replaced, renewed and revoked.

ENTRY INTO FORCE : 19/01/2007.

TRANSPOSITION : 19/01/2011.

APPLICATION : from 19/01/2013.