

# Driving licences

2023/0053(COD) - 28/02/2024 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 339 votes to 240, with 37 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on driving licences, amending Directive (EU) 2022/2561 of the European Parliament and of the Council, Regulation (EU) 2018/1724 of the European Parliament and of the Council and repealing Directive 2006/126/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Commission Regulation (EU) No 383/2012.

The European Parliament's position adopted at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure amends the Commission's proposal as follows:

## Physical driving licences and mobile driving licences

Members suggested that no later than four years after the date of adoption, applicants should be issued with both a mobile driving licence and a physical driving licence by default.

Member States should ensure that by 19 January 2033 (instead of 2030), all physical driving licences issued or in circulation fulfil all the requirements of this Directive.

Those electronic applications should be based on the European Digital Identity Wallets issued in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 910/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and an appropriate level of security of these applications should be ensured.

Personal data should be processed by implementing the principles of data minimisation, purpose limitation and data protection by design and by default, in particular with regard to technical measures.

The Commission should provide assistance to Member States who should work together in pursuit of the worldwide use and recognition of the European mobile driving licence.

## Minimum age

Members agree to allow 18-year-olds to obtain a licence to drive a truck or a bus with up to 16 passengers, provided they hold a certificate of professional competence (CPC). The age limit would be 21 for buses with no passenger limit for professional drivers using their national and international driving licences, provided they hold a CAP. In addition, 17-year-olds could also be eligible for a driving licence for trucks if accompanied by an experienced driver.

Any Member State may lower the minimum age for categories D and DE for professional bus and coach drivers to 19 years on their territory, provided that drivers have undergone a full professional training and are holders of CPC (18 years old if they drive such vehicles without passengers).

## Novice drivers

Members considered that for novice drivers, a probationary period of at least two years should be established. In case a novice driver already has a valid driving licence for another category, the probationary period should only include what may remain of the probationary period of the existing driving licence, yet it should not be shorter than 6 months.

During that period drivers should be subjected to stricter rules and penalties Union-wide when breaking them, for example, due to the influence of alcohol or drugs, speeding, using unauthorised vehicles, failing to use safety equipment, or driving without a valid driving licence. Member States should lay down rules on penalties for novice drivers who drive with a blood alcohol level exceeding 0.2g/mL or under the influence of psychotropic substances or narcotics. The enforcement authorities of Member States should establish a technical zero tolerance threshold for their effective measurements, which should not be higher than 0.2 g/mL, in order to take into account accidental exposure to alcohol.

Member States should establish an obligation for novice drivers to display a standard Union disk on the back windscreen of their vehicle during the whole length of their probationary period.

## Issue, validity and renewal

Members were not favourable to the measure providing that Member States should reduce the periods of administrative validity to five years or less for driving licences of holders residing on their territory having reached the age of 70.

Parliament accepted that drivers assessing their own fitness to drive when a driving licence is being issued and renewed, letting EU countries decide if the self-assessment should be replaced by a medical examination with a minimum set of checks on drivers eyesight.

Member States should:

- establish evidence-based guidelines for General Practitioners and family doctors to identify those who may be at risk of driving a car, and shall operate in coordination with licencing authorities;

- develop national sensibility campaigns to raise awareness among the general public about mental or physical signals that may put a person at risk of driving a vehicle.

The European Commission should, based on expert advice, develop an online training course for general practitioners allowing them to assess all aspects of an applicant's fitness to drive.

## Interim driving licence

Members introduced a new article stipulating that during the replacement, renewal or exchange of a driving licence, the Member State

performing the replacement, renewal or exchange should issue an interim driving licence in a form of a certificate. Such certificates should be mutually recognised by Member States.

#### Exchange of driving licence issued by a third country

A certificate of professional competence (CPC), or an equivalent certificate, issued by a third country may be replaced by a new CPC issued by a Member State where the holder has completed in that Member State additional competence training of up to 35 hours.

#### Up to date skills

Members back a proposal to adapt driver training and testing to better prepare drivers for real driving situations and develop their risk awareness, in particular to vulnerable users such as pedestrians, cyclist, and users of e-scooters and e-bikes.

Safe phone usage while driving, driving in snow and slippery conditions, blind spot risks, driver-assistance systems, and vehicle use in relation to the environment and emissions should also be part of driver tests.

#### Platform for cooperation

The Commission should establish a platform for cooperation by inviting national authorities and the relevant stakeholders with the view to aggregate, process and disseminate knowledge and information on best practices for drivers of special use vehicles such as Non Road Mobile Machinery (NRMM) in all Member States.