

Luxembourg 27/03/2006

EU Driving Licence Directive

Political Agreement

The EU Council of Ministers on 27 March 2006 reached political agreement on a European Commission proposal from 2003 regarding a uniform European driving licence (COM(2003)621)

Effects on Road Safety

The new driving licence will ensure improved road safety through better definitions of the scope of application of the different driving licence categories. It will make clear exactly who is entitled to drive what. It provides for the introduction of a licence for mopeds and establishes the principle of progressive access to bigger and more powerful motorcycles. The new rules also set minimum standards for driving examiners.

Fight against Fraud

The new legislation represents an important step towards combating fraud involving driving licences and the phenomenon of "driving licence tourism". Member States will strengthen their cooperation in order to prevent temporarily banned drivers from obtaining a new driving licence in another Member State. An EU wide-network for data-exchange of driving licenses needs also to be established for this purpose.

A single model replaces over 110 existing ones

A single new driving licence model in credit card format with reinforced security features will be introduced, whereas the 110 different models still in circulation will be gradually phased out. After the entry into force of the directive, Member States will have 26 years at their disposal to replace the existing driving licences. Specific provisions have been agreed upon to ensure that every existing entitlement to drive a specific vehicle will continue to benefit from mutual recognition.

Limited validity

In future, the validity of driving licenses will be limited. The new rules foresee a 10 year validity period for licenses, which Member States may raise to 15 years. Member States are free to organise medical examinations at the time of administrative renewal.

Next steps

Following the political agreement of today, the formal adoption of the Directive by the European Parliament will be effective later this year in a second reading. Thus the Directive will enter into force by the end of 2006 and therefore be applicable at the latest at the end of 2012

EuroCOP Position

EuroCOP has already called for quick adoption of the Driving Licence Directive in 2005. In a press statement of today, the EuroCOP President has welcomed the directive, however has strongly criticised the long transition periods which mean that the directive will have practical effects only by 2032 (adoption in 2006 + 26 years transition period).