Driving licences with the functionalities of a driver card

2011/0327(COD) - 11/11/2011 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to amend Directive 2006/126/EC ("Driving Licences Directive") in order to merge the driving licence with the drivers card.

PROPOSED ACT: Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council.

BACKGROUND: this proposal to modify Directive 2006/126/EC follows the proposal on amending Council Regulation (EEC) No 3821/85 on recording equipment in road transport ("the Tachograph Regulation") and amending Regulation (EC) No 561/2006.

The two proposals constitute a legislative package aimed at better enforcing the social rules in road transport and at reducing frauds and administrative burden, by developing the technical aspects and increasing the efficiency of tachographs.

Experience has shown that fraud and misuse of driving licences occurs less frequently than with the driver cards used in the recording equipment installed in vehicles used for the carriage of passengers or goods by road in accordance with the Tachograph Regulation.

This recording equipment would therefore be more reliable if driver cards and driving licences were merged. Further, such a merger would reduce the administrative burden for drivers who would no longer need to apply for and hold two different documents.

Driving licences and driver cards share an almost identical design and set of data fields. The only notable difference is that the driver cards must contain a microchip, whereas for driving licences the inclusion of such a microchip is optional. It follows that the merger of the two documents is easily achievable from a technical point of view.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT: the stakeholder's consultation and impact assessment carried out in order to amend the Tachograph Regulation showed that merging the driver card with the driving licence is a solution for reducing fraud potential while at the same time limiting the costs (issuing and purchasing of one instead of two documents). Driving licences and driver cards are issued in credit card format and contain very similar information (driver’s details, photograph, etc). The Driving Licence Directive already provides for the possibility of inserting a microchip in the standardised driving licence format.

Moreover, both cards have a limited validity period of five years, since the Driving Licence Directive stipulates that, as from 19 January 2013, the driving licences of trucks and bus drivers will be valid for five years. Merging cards would therefore not require any change in the period of validity of the current tachograph cards and therefore of their durability. Merging driver cards with driving licences would facilitate detection at the roadside check of drivers using a card that does not belong to them or using two cards. Furthermore, the drivers will be less inclined to let other drivers use their driving licence to defraud the tachograph system. The impact assessment concluded that merging driver cards with driving licences would allow for a reduction of the administrative burden of around EUR 100 million per year.

LEGAL BASIS: Article 91 TFEU.

CONTENT: this proposal to amend the Driving Licences Directive provides that driver cards shall be issued in accordance with the provisions of the Tachograph Regulation until 18 January 2018. From 19 January 2018, driver cards shall be incorporated into driving licences and issued, renewed, exchanged and replaced in accordance with the provisions of the Driving Licences Directive. This gradual process of replacing driver cards with driving licences requires a modification of the Driving Licence Directive, in order to ensure the co-existence

of the two functions merged into a sole document, i.e. the driving licence having the functionalities of a driver card. Starting from 19 January 2018, any new driving licence or driver card will be issued as a single document.

Driver cards are currently subject to type approval procedures complementary to those applicable to driving licences. From 19 January 2018 the type approval of the microchip introduced in the driving licences delivered to professional drivers and including the functionalities of a driver card should comply not only with the requirements of Commission Regulation implementing Directive 2006/126/EC with regard to driving licences including the storage medium, but also all relevant requirements laid down in the Tachograph Regulation, such as the interoperability test or the logical functionality test.

The proposal will not have any consequence on the driving licences for private individuals and concerns only professional drivers subject to the rules on driving times and rest periods and to the use of tachograph.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS: the proposal will not entail any additional cost for the EU budget.