Drivers of certain road vehicles for the carriage of goods or passengers: initial qualification and periodic training; driving licences

2017/0015(COD) - 01/02/2017 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to improve the EU-wide standard of initial qualification and periodic training for drivers of certain road vehicles for the carriage of goods or passengers.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Regulation.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and on an equal footing with the Council.

BACKGROUND: around 33% of all journeys made by heavy goods vehicles in the EU cross borders between Member States. Around 8 % of cross-border transport in the EU involves busses or coaches.

Directive 2003/59/EC lays down the initial qualification and periodic training requirements for professional drivers of trucks and buses, thus improving safety on European roads.

Member States have been given significant flexibility in how they implement the Directive, for example on the specific content of driver training and on administrative procedures and the structure of the training system.

Having evaluated the implementation of the Directive, the Commission identified a **number of shortcomings**:

- difficulties and legal uncertainty in the interpretation of exemptions;
- the **content of the training**, which was found to be only partially relevant for drivers' needs;
- difficulties for drivers in obtaining mutual recognition of completed or partially completed training undergone in another Member State;
- **inconsistencies of minimum age requirements** between Directive 2003/59/EC and Directive 2006 /126/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council.

The objective of the proposal is to deal appropriately with the identified shortcomings. The revision of Directive 2003/59/EC would ensure the application of appropriate minimum training requirements and the recognition of training throughout the EU. It would remedy the current problem of mutual recognition which may affect some 46 700 drivers (2016).

IMPACT ASSESSMENT: the preferred solution to ensure mutual recognition involves issuing driver qualification cards to foreigners.

The preferred solution for addressing the training content is to strengthen content on road safety and fuel efficiency in the training courses and make it clear that it is possible to use e-learning/blended learning in the training courses.

CONTENT: the proposal amending Directive 2003/59/EC aims essentially to:

- **clarify exemptions**: the Directive shall not apply to: (i) vehicles used by, or under the control of, the armed forces, civil defence, the fire service and forces responsible for maintaining public order when the carriage is undertaken as a consequence of the tasks assigned to those services; (ii) vehicles used in states of emergency or assigned to rescue missions; (iii) vehicles used for driving instruction and examination for any person wishing to obtain a driving licence; (iv) vehicles used, or hired without a driver, by agricultural, horticultural, forestry, farming or fishery undertakings for carrying goods as part of their own entrepreneurial activity;
- ensure that all holders of a CPC are issued either with **mutually recognised code 95** on their driving licence, or with a mutually recognised **driver qualification card**;
- ensure **periodic training** ensure at least safety objectives. Periodic training enables holders of a CPC to update the knowledge which is essential for their work, with specific emphasis on road safety and the rationalisation of fuel consumption;
- offer Member States the possibility to: (i) improve and modernise training practices with the use of ICT tools, such as **e-learning** and blended learning, for part of the training, while ensuring the quality of the training; (ii) combine different types of relevant training, such as training on the transport of dangerous goods, on disability awareness or on animal transport, with the training provided for in Directive 2003/59/EC;
- provide a clear derogation in Directive 2006/126/EC, stipulating that driving licences may be issued at the **minimum** ages provided for in Directive 2003/59/EC.