

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

2003/0252(COD) - 19/01/2005

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.