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

2003/0252(COD) - 20/12/2006 - Final act

PURPOSE : to revise European legislation on driving licences to reduce possibilities of fraud, ensure a true freedom of movement to EU drivers and reinforce road safety.

LEGISLATIVE ACT : Directive 2006/126/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on driving licences (Recast)

CONTENT : The Council adopted this directive, which is aimed at ensuring mutual recognition of driving licences by Member States, and approved five amendments voted by the European Parliament at second reading, which adapt the directive to new comitology rules adopted by the Council in July 2006. The directive is aimed at improving road safety by setting minimum standards for medical checks on professional drivers and for qualifications and continuous training for driving examiners. It is also aimed at reducing the risk of fraud by use of a plastic card model, with optional use of a microchip provided that this does not interfere with commonly accessible data.

The issuing of new licences will be obligatory as from 2012, since the new directive will apply two years after entry into force. After that period Member States will have four years in which to comply with its provisions. The directive also requires that by 2033, all driving licences issued or in circulation must fulfil all its requirements. The main aims of the directive are:

- **to reduce the possibilities of fraud:** elimination of paper driving licence models in favour of a plastic card model only; possibility of introducing a microchip on the driving licence; introduction of limited administrative validity for all new licences issued from the date of application of the proposal;

- **to guarantee the free movement of citizens** by means of introducing limited administrative validity and by harmonising the frequency of medical checks for professional drivers;

- **to contribute to improving road safety**: introduction of a driving licence for mopeds; extension of the principle of progressive access to driving licences for the most powerful types of vehicles; introduction of minimum requirements for the initial qualification and periodic training of driving examiners; confirmation of the principle of holding a single driving licence (one holder - one licence)

The validity of new category A and B licences (automobiles and motorcycles) will be limited to 10 years, although Member States may extend the period to 15 years. Category C and D licences (lorries and buses with their respective trailer combinations) will be valid for five years.

The text takes account of a compromise with the Parliament on the following issues:

– the reclassification of motor caravans and vehicle-trailer combinations;

– an access regime for motorcycles;

– the principle of "one person - one licence".

The compromise is aimed at further enhancing road safety by subjecting the conduct of certain vehicle-trailer combinations under a category B licence to additional training and/or practical testing, and

subjecting access to heavier motorcycles under category A to a "step-up" approach with a requirement for two years' practical experience in a lower category and additional training and/or testing, while direct access to the heaviest category A motorcycles will be possibly only at the age of 24 years.

As regards the principle of "one person - one licence" and to prevent "licence tourism", the Commission will set up a network to allow Member States to exchange information on the licences they have issued, exchanged, replaced, renewed and revoked.

ENTRY INTO FORCE : 19/01/2007.

TRANSPOSITION : 19/01/2011.

APPLICATION : from 19/01/2013.