



## Road safety: Commission proposes updated requirements for driving licences and better cross-border enforcement of road traffic rules

Brussels, 1 March 2023

The Commission today presented proposals to modernise driving licence rules, including the introduction of a digital driving licence valid throughout the EU, and new provisions to facilitate the enforcement of traffic rules across borders. More than **20,000 lives were lost on EU roads last year** and the **majority of victims were pedestrians, cyclists and users of scooters and motorbikes**.

The new rules will improve safety for all road users, and will help the EU achieve its Vision Zero – having no deaths on EU roads by 2050. They will prepare drivers better for zero-emission vehicles and for driving on city roads, alongside more bicycles and two-wheelers, and with many pedestrians around. They will also allow young drivers to gain experience through an accompanied driving scheme - from the age of 17, young people will be able to learn to drive and obtain a licence. Those who pass at 17 will be able to drive alone from their 18th birthday, and to work as a professional driver as soon as a specific job allows. This will help address the current driver shortage.

### Modernised driving licence rules to make roads safer and simplify everyday life

The proposal on driving licences amends existing EU law and is inspired by best practices already in force in several Member States.

A key objective of the new rules will be improving **road safety**, with measures including:

- A **probation period of at least two years** for novice drivers after passing the test, and a **zero-tolerance rule on drink-driving**. This is essential as even if young drivers only represent 8% of all car drivers, 2 out of 5 fatal collisions involve a driver or rider aged under 30.
- Allowing young people to **take their test and commence accompanied driving of cars and lorries from the age of 17**, to gain driving experience.
- Adapting driver training and testing to **better prepare drivers for the presence of vulnerable users on the road**. This will help improve safety for pedestrians, cyclists, as well as users of e-scooters and e-bikes as the EU transitions to more sustainable urban mobility.
- A **more targeted assessment of medical fitness**, taking into account advances in medical treatment for diseases such as diabetes. Drivers will also be encouraged to update their driving skills and knowledge to keep up with technological developments.

To simplify the recognition of driving licences between Member States, the Commission proposes the introduction of a **digital driving licence**, in a world first. It will be much easier to **replace, renew or exchange a driving licence** since all procedures will be **online**. In the same vein, it will **also be easier for citizens from non-EU countries** with comparable road safety standards, to exchange their driving licence for an EU one.

Updated testing rules will take into account the **transition to zero-emission vehicles**. They will, for example, assess the knowledge and skills linked to advanced driving assistance systems and other automated technologies. Novice drivers will also be taught how their driving style has an impact on their emissions – the timing of gear changes, for example. Finally, the permitted mass of a 'B' category vehicle will be adjusted for alternatively fuelled vehicles, since battery-carrying zero-emission vehicles can be heavier.

### Effective cross-border enforcement of safety-related traffic rules

Current EU rules on cross-border enforcement have helped to ensure that non-resident road offenders do not remain anonymous. Nonetheless, in 2019 **some 40% of cross-border offences**

**were committed with impunity**, either because the offender was not identified or because the payment was not enforced.

Today's proposal seeks to address this by allowing enforcement authorities to gain access to national driving licence registers. The Commission is also proposing to strengthen the role of established national contact points so they can better cooperate with the enforcement authorities involved in the investigation of offences. This will **address current shortcomings in cooperation between Member States when investigating offences**.

Furthermore, the current law covers some of the most frequent and egregious offences, such as speeding and drink-driving. The Commission proposes to expand the scope of traffic offences covered to:

- **not keeping sufficient distance** from the vehicle in front;
- **dangerous overtaking**;
- **dangerous parking**;
- **crossing one or more solid white lines**;
- **wrong-way driving**;
- **not respecting** rules on the use of **emergency corridors**;
- the use of an **overloaded vehicle**.

These additions will help reduce impunity for such offences and improve **Member States' ability to penalise offenders from other Member States**. It will also ensure **equal treatment** of resident and non-resident offenders.

The updated laws will ensure that the **rights** of people accused of traffic offences are upheld. Non-residents retain the **right to an effective remedy and a fair trial, to the presumption of innocence, and to defence**. These rights will be better guaranteed by provisions ensuring **unified content and delivery of penalty notices**, by ensuring recipients of such notices are able to verify their authenticity, and by making the sharing of information with presumed offenders a standard requirement.

A dedicated IT portal will give citizens **easy access to information on the road safety rules in place in each Member State** and, in time, allow them to **pay any fines directly**.

The rules will also be aligned with the EU rules on personal data protection ([GDPR](#) and [LED](#)).

### **Driver disqualifications with EU-wide effect: an end to impunity for severe offences**

To prevent impunity among road traffic offenders, a **new system** will be put in place, **allowing for an EU-wide driving disqualification** when a Member State decides to disqualify a driver because of an offence committed on its territory.

Holding road traffic offenders accountable in all Member States is essential for road safety. However, under current rules, when a serious offence results in a driving disqualification, it cannot be enforced EU-wide if the driver committed the offence in a Member State other than the one that issued his/her driving licence.

Today's proposal covers **severe road traffic offences** such as excessive speeding, driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and causing death or serious bodily injury as a result of any traffic offence.

### **Next steps**

The proposals will now be considered by the European Parliament and the Council under the ordinary legislative procedure.

### **Background**

In its [EU road safety policy framework 2021-2030](#), the Commission recommitted to its ambitious goal of having close to zero deaths and zero serious injuries on EU roads by 2050 ('Vision Zero') and to reducing deaths and serious injuries by 50% by 2030. Today's proposals will help to achieve these goals, and were announced in the Commission's 2020 [Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy](#).

The Commission published [most recent road safety figures](#) last week, showing fatalities remain below pre-pandemic levels, but progress remains to slow.

The Commission is implementing a Safe System Approach to driving in the EU. This Safe System requires safe driving, safer vehicles, safer infrastructure, lower speeds and better post-crash care.

## For More Information

[Proposal for a Revision of the Directive on Driving Licences](#)

[Proposal for a Directive amending Directive \(EU\) 2015/413, facilitating cross-border exchange of information on road-safety-related traffic offences](#)

[Proposal for a Directive on the Union-wide effect of certain driving disqualifications](#)

[Questions&Answers: proposals on driving licences and cross-border enforcement of traffic offences](#)

[Factsheet: New EU driving licence on its way – what to expect](#)

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## Quotes:

Today's package of proposals seeks to simplify rules on driving licences while adapting them to technological and medical progress; to make sure that novice drivers are well trained and supported; that obstacles to cross-border mobility are eliminated; and that there is no impunity for those who break road safety rules across borders, through better cross-border exchange of information on traffic offences and driver disqualification for the most serious ones. Safe driving is crucial in our efforts to halve road deaths and serious injuries by 2030.

Adina Vălean, Commissioner for Transport - 01/03/2023

We need to make our roads safer for all users. Most road deaths involve a car but very often the victim is not someone sitting in it. The new rules on training and testing therefore teach future drivers how to share the roads and streets with a growing number of other, more vulnerable users, such as cyclists. There will also be less impunity for traffic offences committed in other EU Member States, while new administrative deadlines make sure drivers are not taken by surprise by a fine arriving many months after the fact.

Frans Timmermans, Executive Vice-President for the European Green Deal - 01/03/2023

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