



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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Council approves draft directive on driving licences

The Council reached political agreement on a draft directive on driving licences, aimed at improving the free movement of citizens by ensuring mutual recognition of licences by the Member States.

Following agreement reached with the European Parliament, the directive is expected to be adopted in second reading without further amendments.

The draft directive is aimed at increasing 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 risks 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.

P R E S S

The issuing of new licences will be obligatory as from 2012, since the new directive will apply two years after entry into force and after that period Member States will have four years in which to comply with its provisions. The draft directive also requires that at the latest 20 years after the date of application (i.e. in 2032), all driving licences issued or in circulation must fulfil all its requirements.

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 provisional 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".

This 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.