

Training of professional drivers

On 1 February 2017, the European Commission adopted a proposal to revise existing provisions concerning the training of professional drivers (lorry and bus drivers). The proposal amends Directive 2003/59/EC on the initial qualification and periodic training of drivers of certain road vehicles for the carriage of goods or passengers and Directive 2006/126/EC on driving licences, with the objective of tackling the main shortcomings identified in the implementation of the existing legislation. Parliament is due to vote on the proposal during its March plenary session.

Background

Announced in annex II (covering REFIT initiatives) of the European Commission's 2017 work programme, this initiative fits within the general framework regarding professional drivers of trucks and buses, and is closely related to road safety. It is also in line with the Commission's 2011 Transport White Paper and the 2010 communication 'Towards a European road safety area: policy orientations on road safety 2011-2020', which notably sought to improve road safety through the education, training and post-licence training of road users.

European Commission proposal

[Directive 2003/59/EC](#) was implemented without major problems, contributed to road safety, and improved labour mobility. Past evaluation and implementation reports, however, identified shortcomings affecting the effectiveness and consistency of the legal framework as well as undermining the directive's objectives. These were, in particular, the following:

- Difficulties for drivers to obtain recognition of training undertaken in another Member State;
- Training content only partially relevant to drivers' needs;
- Difficulties and legal uncertainties regarding the interpretation of exemptions;
- Inconsistencies between Directive 2003/59/EC and [Directive 2006/126/EC](#) in respect of the minimum age requirements, ambiguity concerning the possibility to combine training under Directive 2003/59/EC with training courses required under other pieces of EU legislation, and lack of clarity concerning the use of ICT for training courses such as e-learning or blended learning.

The main changes in the [proposal](#) relate to Article 2 of Directive 2003/59/EC on exemptions, Article 7 on periodic training, Article 10 on Community code and the annexes and also Article 4 of Directive 2006/126/EC.

European Parliament position

On 12 October 2017, Parliament's Committee on Transport and Tourism (TRAN) adopted its [report](#) on the proposal. The report introduces a few changes such as specific provisions related to driving in extreme weather conditions, the addition of a few exemptions, and the idea of a common EU-wide register to help enforcement authorities fighting against illegal trade in fake licences. Interinstitutional negotiations resulted in a provisional [agreement](#) on 12 December 2017, endorsed by Coreper for the Council on 20 December, which modernises existing training requirements, placing stronger emphasis on safety and the environment, and will make the recognition of drivers' qualifications easier in all Member States. On 23 January 2018, the [TRAN committee](#) endorsed the provisional agreement, which now needs to be voted at first reading in plenary.

First-reading report: [2017/0015\(COD\)](#); Committee responsible: TRAN; Rapporteur: Peter Lundgren (EFDD, Sweden). See also our '[EU Legislation in Progress](#)' briefing on the proposal.

