

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2715/09
by Thomas Ulmer (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Driving licence for members of the fire service

Driving licences for driving motor vehicles are divided into classes in Germany, with a special driving licence needed for each class and weight of vehicle.

Particularly in rural areas, the fire service in Germany is increasingly employing voluntary personnel in addition to those for whom the fire service is their main occupation. These voluntary firefighters are engaged in another activity as their main occupation and only very rarely have a driving licence that allows them to operate the heavy fire engines in service. The federal government is currently seeking to raise driving licence class B, which allows vehicles of up to 3.5 t to be driven, to 4.25 t. However, this is far from adequate. Fire engines can reach a total weight of up to 20 t and may therefore only be driven by persons with a class CE driving licence. It is very expensive to obtain a driving licence and the costs are prohibitive for private individuals, and cofinancing by local authorities is mostly not an option.

In order to find a solution, could the Commission draw up rules allowing members of the fire service who have a class B driving licence to drive - following targeted training in the operation of class CE fire engines - such vehicles when on duty, and only then?

By way of an alternative, are there disaster management aid programmes that would provide members of the fire service with financial support in obtaining a class CE driving licence?