



Committee on Transport and Tourism (TRAN)  
European Parliament  
Rue Wiertz 60  
1047 - Bruxelles  
Belgium

By email

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### **Driving Licence Directive: Stakeholders unite in rejecting the B licence split**

Dear Member of the TRAN Committee,

The International Road Transport Union (IRU), the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile Region I (FIA Region I) and the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association (ACEA) – representing the interests of commercial road transport operators, motoring organisations, mobility users and vehicle manufacturers – express deep concern and unreserved opposition to splitting the B driving licence into two categories: **B for vehicles up to 1.8 tonnes** and **B+ for vehicles between 1.8 tonnes and 3.5 tonnes**, as proposed by the Lead Rapporteur in the draft report on the revision of the Driving Licence Directive (hereafter the Draft Report).

These amendments fail to consider the real-world implications for driving licences, and pose an actual threat to road safety, environmental progress, as well as the realities and good continuation of goods and people's mobility.

#### **The Draft Report's proposal**

The Draft Report introduces a new category of driving licence, called "B+", for all vehicles weighing more than 1.8 tonnes.

In concrete terms, this means that most of the current drivers of electric cars (even compact class battery electric vehicles are heavier than 1.8 tonnes due to the weight of the battery), and of larger cars and vans propelled by any kind of fuel and energy, will be required to obtain a new category of driving licence. This will affect both private drivers and professional drivers of vans transporting people and goods (taxi services or minibuses). This is because today's rules provide just one licence category, B, for all vehicles weighing up to 3.5 tonnes.

The Draft Report proposes that the B+ licence can only be obtained after a two-year probationary period of holding a category B licence and when the driver is at least 21 years old, along with passing additional tests and examinations.

#### **Issues with the B+ licence**

*Unjustified burden and costs on all drivers:* Additional training and examination to obtain the B+ driving licence would trigger a financial, administrative and practical burden on all current drivers who will need adequate requalification. In addition to costs related to a new driving licence category, which will affect all B-licenced EU drivers affected by the vehicle categories, young drivers below 21 years old will be impacted as they typically rely on their family cars in their first years of driving. Family cars often weigh over 1.8 tonnes, especially when they are electric. Moreover, in some countries, driving education/practice is carried out by parents in large family cars. This measure would prevent some parents to teach their children how to drive. Young drivers will face an unacceptable choice of paying the price of a small vehicle for a limited time (in addition to their parents' car), that's if they have the means to do so, to fit in the B

category or abstain from driving larger family cars until they turn 21, when they become eligible for the B+ option.

This could increase the number of cars and make it more difficult to gain driving experience on these vehicles during their probationary period. On top of this, there is no statistical proof that cars weighing over 1.8 tonnes, especially for this sub-group of younger drivers (18–21), are overrepresented in accident rates.

*Impact on professional drivers:* The rapporteur's amendments will have a significant financial impact on professional drivers (e.g., taxi drivers, parcel delivery drivers) who will be compelled to obtain new and costly driving licences to carry out their professional services. Furthermore, imposing additional examination and certification steps on top of the B+ driving licence requirement creates an untenable barrier for driving alternatively fuelled vans or minibuses necessary for transporting disabled people in wheelchairs, which, if electric, typically weigh over 3.5 tonnes (up to 4.25 tonnes). The application of such requirements would also lead to mobility and delivery blockages due to foreseeable backlogs caused by the requirement to requalify millions of professional drivers.

*Ignoring market realities:* Many vehicles produced and registered within the European Union now exceed 1.8 tonnes, especially when they are electric. This trend is intensifying by the growing adoption of alternatively fuelled vehicles and new safety and environmental standards, including those mandated by the General Safety Regulation, making the proposed future B category unfit to accommodate most vehicles weighing over that limit. Furthermore, these proposals create a friction between the type approval and the driving licence regulations, as it is unclear what the baseline for 1.8 tonnes limit is. As far as passenger cars are concerned, the Draft Report makes reference to sports utility vehicles (SUVs). However, from a European type-approval perspective, SUV does not exist as a category.

*Hinders the adoption of electric vehicles:* The proposed B+ driving licence restrictions discourage the uptake of electric vehicles, most of which would fall within this new category. Young drivers will be unable to practice with zero- and low-emission vehicles, undermining the EU's environmental goals.

### **Our sectors' call**

We count on your support in rejecting all the newly introduced amendments regarding the B+ category, which divides, artificially and unjustifiably, the current B driving licence into B and B+ categories.

Sincerely,



Raluca Marian  
Director EU Advocacy and  
General Delegate  
of IRU to the EU



Laurianne Krid  
Director General  
FIA Region I



Sigrid de Vries  
Director General  
ACEA

[IRU](#) is the world road transport organisation and the voice of one million transport operators in the European Union, connecting societies with safe, efficient and green mobility and logistics.

[ACEA](#) is the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association (ACEA) representing the 14 major Europe-based car, van, truck and bus makers: BMW Group, DAF Trucks, Daimler Truck, Ferrari, Ford in Europe, Honda Motor Europe, Hyundai Motor Europe, Iveco Group, JLR, Mercedes-Benz Group, Renault Group, Toyota Motor Europe, Volkswagen Group, and Volvo Group.

[FIA Region I](#) is a consumer body comprising 101 Mobility Clubs that represent over 40 million members from across Europe, the Middle East and Africa. As advocates for motorists, riders, pedestrians, and passengers, the FIA Region I strives to ensure safe, affordable, clean, and efficient mobility solutions for all.