

4.6. Moreover, in view of the complexity of the new system proposed, the reliability of statistical information may suffer, especially in the outlying countries, from the lack of technical facilities and training for the staff responsible for collecting and processing statistics. Another technical problem will affect Luxembourg, which will need to strengthen its administrative services

which currently benefit from collaboration with the Belgian authorities under the Belgo-Luxembourg Economic Union (BLEU). It would be a good idea if, in addition to any introduction of a new system, the Commission provides at the same time adequate assistance with technical, training and financial facilities.

Done at Brussels, 26 April 1989.

*The Chairman
of the Economic and Social Committee*

Alberto MASPRONE

Opinion on the proposal for a Council Directive on the driving licence⁽¹⁾

(89/C 159/08)

On 21 December 1988 the Council decided to consult the Economic and Social Committee, under Article 75 of the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, on the abovementioned proposal.

The Section for Transport and Communications, which was responsible for preparing the Committee's work on the subject, adopted its Opinion on 12 April 1989. The rapporteur was Mr Tukker.

At its 265th plenary session (meeting of 26 April) the Economic and Social Committee adopted the following Opinion by a large majority with 4 abstentions.

1. Introduction

1.1. Directive 80/1263/EEC of 4 December 1980⁽²⁾ provides as follows:

- a) when the holder of a driving licence moves to another Member State his/her original licence remains valid for one year but must be exchanged for a licence issued by the other Member State before the end of that period;
- b) a Community model driving licence is to be introduced with effect from 1 January 1986.

1.2. There are difficulties in comparing driving licences issued by different Member States. There are disparities as regards:

- a) categories of vehicle;
- b) period of validity;
- c) driving test requirements.

1.3. The Commission work programme for 1985 states that the Commission is to submit a proposal for making driving licences valid throughout the Community, regardless of the Member State in which the holder is resident.

There are also to be more favourable arrangements for the disabled and invalids.

1.4. In order to fulfil these commitments the Commission is proposing that Directive 80/1263/EEC be replaced by a new Directive.

2. General comments

2.1. The Committee believes that driving licences should be harmonized in the EC, for technical and also psychological reasons.

2.1.1. It is of course desirable from the technical point of view that the same rules should apply in all Member States so that all driving licences have the same value.

⁽¹⁾ OJ No C 48, 27. 2. 1989, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ OJ No L 375, 31. 12. 1980, p. 1.

2.1.2. Harmonization is also psychologically important for the People's Europe. People would be brought into contact with a Directive which affects, and will be welcomed by, virtually every EEC citizen. As a result people would begin to appreciate that steps are being taken to further the integration of Europe.

3. Specific comments

3.1. Article 4(1)

These rules are already in force in most Member States. The categories already appear on the EC driving licence.

3.2. Article 4(3)

This would involve some change for three Member States.

3.3. Article 4(4)

Introduction of the 400 cm³ threshold for motorcycles. Already exists in some Member States.

If adopted, a sufficient transitional period should be allowed.

3.4. Article 4(5)

The Committee supports the introduction of specific licences for these categories, particularly the proposals for categories C and D.

3.4.1. Category C

Vehicles heavier than 3 500 kg are in effect lorries with quite different characteristics from private cars. They are larger and harder to manoeuvre, e.g. when reversing.

3.4.2. Category D

Vehicles with less than 8 passenger seats (not counting the driver's seat) include estate cars and vehicles for the carriage of workmen which are nonetheless the size of normal cars.

Vehicles with 8 or more passenger seats (not counting the driver's seat) can be described as minibuses. The situation regarding responsibility is different; roadholding characteristics are different and manoeuvring is more difficult. More stringent training and a corresponding licence are thus needed.

3.4.3. Categories C and E

See under C.

3.4.4. Categories D and E

See under D.

3.4.5. The Committee feels that more stringent driving skill requirements are needed for the categories of vehicle listed in Article 4(5) but that the group 1 medical requirements are sufficient.

3.4.6. Article 4(5) is a controversial point, as the United Kingdom and Ireland have different standards from other Member States. Furthermore, minibuses play an important role in both these countries. Opinions are in any case divided even in those two countries and among their representatives.

3.5. Article 8

See point 3.4.5 regarding the requirements for the categories of vehicle listed in Article 4.5, and the group 1 medical requirements.

3.6. Article 9

When a single uniform driving licence is introduced in the EC, it should have the same period of validity in all Member States.

3.7. Article 10(2)

A resident of a Member State who moves to another Member State may apply for a driving licence in his/her new country of residence. In this case he/she must, however, surrender the licence issued by his/her original country of residence. He/she is, however, not obliged to apply for a new licence, as the original licence is and remains valid in other Member States regardless of where the holder is resident.

3.8. Article 10(3)

It would be unthinkable for a Member State issuing a licence to a citizen of a non-Community country to withdraw the original licence issued by the non-Community country. In most countries driving licences, like passports, remain the property of the State and cannot thus be withdrawn by another State.

3.9. Annexes

It is difficult to assess the annexes.

3.9.1. Point 6 of the comments in Annex 1 (p. 19) states that:

Member States shall have the right to:

- dispense with the photograph requirement,
- replace the permanent place of residence by the postal address.

The Committee does not support these provisions and considers that the photograph and the exact address are, on the contrary, necessary in order to prevent fraud.

3.9.2. Annex 2 is very long and it may be asked whether all the requirements listed are really necessary.

3.9.3. The sub-categories C+E and D+E should be added to group I in point 1.1 of Annex 3.

Done at Brussels, 26 April 1989.

*The Chairman
of the Economic and Social Committee*

Alberto MASPRONE

Opinion on the proposal for a Council Directive on speed limits for certain categories of motor vehicles in the Community ⁽¹⁾

(89/C 159/09)

On 26 January 1989 the Council decided, in accordance with Article 75 of the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, to consult the Economic and Social Committee on the abovementioned proposal.

The Section for Transport and Communications, which was responsible for preparing the Committee's work on the subject, adopted its Opinion on 12 April 1989. The rapporteur was Mr Cavazzuti.

At its 265th plenary session (meeting of 26 April 1989), the Economic and Social Committee adopted the following Opinion by a substantial majority, with one dissenting vote.

1. The Committee endorses the Commission's aim of standardizing road traffic regulations in the Community.

2. The Committee notes that the proposed Directive covers only certain aspects (introduction of differentiated speed limits according to the characteristics of vehicles and roads) and agrees with this pragmatic approach. It basically endorses the Commission proposal, but would make the following comments.

3. It would ask the Commission to complete the rest of its work in this area as soon as possible by drafting general rules for road traffic and for cars. The Committee hopes that the points (both general and specific) made in its Opinion of 21 October 1987 ⁽²⁾ on speed limits will be given due consideration.

4. Although the Commission proposal concerned does not mention the 1987 Opinion as such, the Committee notes that the two are broadly similar.

5. The explanatory memorandum is somewhat cursory as it covers traffic of all kinds (goods vehicles, public transport and private vehicles). The fact that it is so sweeping means that, in addition to sounding slightly unconvincing, there are frequent inaccuracies, e.g. as regards the link between accidents and different types of road, and the factors determining the impact in an accident (points 5 and 6).

6. To be effective, safety policy requires coordinated action, the objective being to reduce the likelihood of accidents. Sensible road traffic rules will help to achieve this.

7. The Committee therefore hopes that the recitals will be reworded so as to give priority to this objective

⁽¹⁾ OJ No C 33, 9. 2. 1989, p. 9.

⁽²⁾ OJ No C 347, 22. 12. 1987.