

Nordisk Trafikskole Union

Nordic Union of Driving Schools Associations



February 14, 2020.

Dear Matthew,

Re: NTU and Europe want automatic transmission as standard in driving tests

Nordic Union of Driving Schools Associations, NTU, is an organization that has worked for increased road safety and driver education for over 70 years. In recent years, we have found that effective measures and associated decisions for road safety and the environment should be considered immediately. NTU believes that the European rule that is based on a driving test for a license being taken in a manual passenger car, should fundamentally change. The reasons that NTU cites are the importance of more environmental vehicles, a more efficient and easier driving license training and testing process, and better road safety. Claes Tingvall advised us, when asked who a suitable recipient might be, to send this letter to you, which is why it is now in your hands. NTU wishes to lay out the reasons why our organisation chooses to get involved and hopes that you find our viewpoints interesting and possible to implement.

In the Nordic countries, the shift in technology is clearly evident as more automatic vehicles are being registered than manual vehicles (i.e., Norway 96%, Sweden 66%). There is also the technological development with electric or hybrid cars, which provide more environmentally friendly vehicles. But we do not see the same behavioural development when it comes to driving licenses, as many learners still take their driving license test in a car with a manual gearbox. The reason is that an automatic driving license is still considered less worthwhile in the eyes of people, in that it is conditional, and that another different driving licence is required if the learner wants to drive manually. Learners, parents, companies and others, therefore, do not want to limit each aspiring driver, so therefore advocate taking the manual driving test, ignoring the technological improvements of more modern vehicles.

This, in turn, results in many families retaining their older manual vehicles to enable learner drivers to practice driving, instead of switching to a new and more environmentally friendly car. NTU has even experienced people sometimes buying an older vehicle to have during the driving license process. Traffic schools are also forced to train new drivers on old and outdated technology. NTU is of the opinion that the concept of driving an automatic should be changed, to a single licence and test for such vehicles, thus promoting a change of behaviour which would go much faster than under the current legislation. Changes in the law would certainly affect society at large and with it also companies, rescue services and organizations, encouraging them to move more quickly towards more environmentally friendly and automatic vehicles. Such actions would fit well with the EU's tough climate target.

Society must provide the best possible driver education. Such training must be road-safe, accessible, efficient and cost-effective. An instructor knows that if he or she has a customer who, for some reason, needs more training and may also have difficulty learning to drive safely, this can be helped if the customer instead chooses to be trained in an automatic vehicle. The cognitive load decreases as the vehicle is more easily driven and less time is needed to practice basic manoeuvring. With this, more attention can be directed at identifying risks in traffic, planning their driving, weighing up their speed options and much more. Taking a driver's license in an automatic also gives more people the opportunity to take a driver's license and often at a lower cost and time (about 15 - 25% in savings).

Through changed legislation, where people take driving licenses in the vehicle they want, without being conditional, would open up the opportunity for more people to obtain a driver's license, as well as lower costs and better education. In a transition period where automatic driving licenses are equated with manual driving licenses, transitional rules can be introduced.

Traffic safety is, for many, absolutely essential as, of course, it is also for NTU. We see a lot of road safety gains in changing legislation. More training hours, regardless of whether it is in traffic school or private practice training, will take place in traffic-safer vehicles than when old vehicles are "saved" for use in training.

Sekretariat/Office
Järvgatan 4
261 44 LANDSKRONA
www.ntu.nu

Telefon: +46418401000

Nordisk Trafikskole Union

Nordic Union of Driving Schools Associations



The fact that a future road user has good knowledge of new technology and new safety systems guarantees that these are used better and more optimally. The likelihood of choosing an environmentally friendly and safer car after obtaining a driving license in one is likely to increase. And, for an instructor, he or she could spend more valuable training time on what makes a difference for road safety, e.g. high-speed roads, complex traffic situations, unprotected and difficult road conditions and visibility. Few serious accidents occur in a parking lot or during reversing exercises, but often considerable training time is spent on these activities.

NTU also notes that EFA (the European traffic school organization) also shares NTU's view. In its August 2019 referral response, EFA wrote that today's regulations stand in the way of using more environmentally friendly cars in driver training, such as rechargeable hybrids and electric cars. NTU and EFA agree that the use of automatic gearboxes will promote better climate initiatives and the environment, increase road safety, as well as reducing the number hours of lessons at a traffic school, i.e., doing away with the need for an additional supplementary driving test.

Therefore, we at NTU would like to recommend that the EU take this development into account and accelerate changes to the necessary regulations as this is in the interest of both the environment, road safety and those desiring to take their driving licence.

Yours Sincerely,

Berit Johansson
Chairman STR
President NTU

Bent Grue
Chairman DKU
Vice president NTU

Per-Ove S Husevik
Chairman ATL

Jukka Kiviniemi
Chairman SAKL

Björgvin Thor Gudnarson
Chairman ÖKU

Sekretariat/Office
Järvgatan 4
261 44 LANDSKRONA
www.ntu.nu

Telefon: +46418401000