

**Priority question for written answer P-005311/2020
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Sven Schulze (PPE)

Subject: Reasons for complexity in current EU law on driving licences where trailers are involved

The EU directives on driving licences (91/439/EEC, 2006/126/EC) have made travelling with trailers with a permissible mass of up to 3.5 t considerably more complicated. This has led to confusion among citizens, unnecessary outlay for acquiring additional driving qualifications, and jobs being put at risk.

The holder of a category B licence may not exceed a permissible combined mass (towing vehicle + trailer) of 3 500 kg when travelling with a braked trailer. This means that the larger, more powerful and safer the towing vehicle is, the smaller the trailer must be. With the B96 licence, which has been available since 2013, this is extended to 4 250 kg, but the licence appears to be rarely accepted across the EU. This leaves the much more expensive BE trailer licence. Accident statistics and analyses show that trailers are seldom involved in accidents causing harm to persons. There is an urgent need for removing the red tape and making the law on driving licences more logical.

One possible solution might be to extend the category B licence to a permissible combined mass of at least 4 250 kg alongside expanding the practical and theoretical driving licence training to include a module on trailers.

1. What is the factual reason for the complexity of the current EU law on driving licences with regard to travelling with Class 01 and 02 trailers?
2. What steps will the Commission take to combat the loss of jobs at manufacturers in rural areas as a result of the excessively bureaucratic rules on driving licences?

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Answer given by Ms Vălean
on behalf of the European Commission
(22.10.2020)

According to the Directive on driving licences, drivers with a Category B licence are allowed to drive motor vehicles with a maximum authorised mass not exceeding 3 500 kg, combined with a trailer having a maximum authorised mass not exceeding 750 kg. However, they may also drive motor vehicles towing a trailer whose maximum authorised mass exceeds 750 kg, provided the mass of the combination of the two vehicles does not exceed 3 500 kg.

With additional training or passing a test of skills and behaviour, drivers with a category B licence may drive a combination of a motor vehicle and a trailer whose maximum authorised mass exceeds 750 kg and the mass of the combination exceeds 3 500 kg, but not 4 250 kg. The entitlement to drive such a combination is recorded in the driving licence with a harmonised code '96' and must be recognised by all Member States.

The complexity of the driving licence categories is due to the fact that the Directive on driving licences¹ mirrors those of 1968 Vienna Convention on Road Traffic, which has been ratified by more than 83 countries across the world, including most Members States.

Finally, the Commission has no information on job losses due to the driving licence; on the contrary, all the data in the possession of the Commission indicate that the harmonisation of driving licences had a positive impact in the free movement of persons and goods across the EU.

The Commission is currently evaluating the Directive on driving licences with a view to updating it for technological progress and new emerging needs. In the context of a possible revision of the Directive, the Commission will further analyse these concerns and will assess to which extent they could be addressed.

¹ Directive 2006/126/EC.