



## MODERNISED EU RULES ON DRIVING LICENCES AND DRIVING DISQUALIFICATIONS NOW IN FORCE

The new EU rules, which entered into force on 25 November 2025, establish an EU-wide framework for driving licences and mutual recognition of driving disqualifications and contain measures that have been proven to significantly improve road safety. Key provisions, among others, include the introduction of fully digital driving licences (available via the EU Digital Identity Wallet, though physical driving licences will remain available at request), an EU-wide accompanied driving scheme for 17-year-old drivers of cars (category B) and a probationary period of at least two years for novice drivers.

Additionally, the rules introduce more systematic checks of the fitness to drive, provide better protection of vulnerable users, extend licensing to alternatively fuelled vehicles up to 4.25 tonnes with a standard category B licence (instead of 3.5 tonnes) and allow additional rights such as driving heavy motor caravans after further training. These new rules also ensure the EU-wide recognition of driving disqualifications issued in one Member State, so that disqualifications for serious offences such as excessive speeding, driving under the influence, or causing death or serious injury by reckless driving apply across the EU. Although now in force, the new legislation will become applicable in Member States in four years following transposition into national legislation, with earlier application for the rules on alternatively powered vehicles and accompanied driving, which will become applicable in two and three years respectively.

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## NEW EU REPORT REVEALS CRITICAL GAPS IN ROAD SAFETY ACROSS EUROPE

The European Commission has published findings from a project on key road safety performance indicators (KPIs), revealing significant gaps in compliance with basic safety measures across EU Member States. The Trendline project (2022–2025), co-funded by the EU, collected and analysed KPIs that form the backbone of the bloc's EU road safety policy framework 2021-2030.

In 2024, 19,940 people were killed in road crashes in the European Union. The EU has set itself the ambitious target of "Vision Zero" – zero road deaths by 2050, with an intermediate target of reducing fatalities by 50% by 2030.

Road safety is a shared responsibility between the EU and Member States. While national and local authorities deliver most day-to-day actions, the EU contributes with safety rules for infrastructure and vehicles and for driving testing and licencing, coordinates cross-border cooperation between authorities and efforts to exchange best practices, and funds road safety projects.

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## ETSC CALLS FOR EU ACTION AS DATA REVEAL SCALE OF WORK-RELATED ROAD DEATHS

Europe is overlooking one of its largest and least acknowledged road safety and occupational health failures: work-related road use. A major new report by the European Transport Safety Council reveals that thousands are killed every year in collisions linked to work activities or commuting – yet governments and EU institutions still lack even a basic common definition of what constitutes a work-related road collision.

According to the report, *Tapping the potential for reducing work-related road deaths and injuries*, at least 2,922 people died in work-related incidents annually in the EU between 2020 and 2022, and 43 percent of all such deaths occurred in the transport sector, including road transport. Ten countries still have no national definition of a work-related road collision, and fewer than half record the purpose of a journey in police crash reports. In most EU countries, police data, employer reporting and occupational safety systems remain completely disconnected.



“Work-related road deaths represent a systemic failure that Europe continues to ignore,” said Antonio Avenoso, Executive Director of ETSC. “Professional drivers, riders, commuters and the public are dying because employers, national governments and the EU treat road risk at work as someone else’s problem. It is time for political leadership.”

The report shows that work-related road deaths span professional drivers, workers on or near the road, professional travellers, commuters and third parties – meaning anyone can be a victim of their own, or someone else’s work-related risk. Professional drivers face pressure from long hours, fatigue, and time constraints. Commuting remains one of the most dangerous parts of the working day in Europe. Yet employers’ responsibilities vary dramatically across countries, and legal obligations often do not explicitly cover driving for work.

“Roads are workplaces. Employers and governments must treat them as such,” added Avenoso. “If the EU is serious about eliminating road deaths, it cannot ignore the thousands of people killed every year simply because they were doing their job or getting to it.”

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## EU MEMBER STATES CUT BACK ON VITAL VEHICLE CHECKS AND OPEN DOOR TO “MONSTER TRUCKS” IN DOUBLE BLOW TO EU ROAD SAFETY

The European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) has condemned the outcome of the EU Transport Council, describing the Member States’ position on two key road safety files as a dangerous rollback of safety standards that will endanger lives on European roads.



EU Transport Ministers have stripped back the European Commission’s proposals to modernise periodic technical inspections (PTI) for vehicles and, at the same time, paved the way for the unchecked proliferation of longer and heavier vehicles (LHVs) across the continent. However, the final shape of the proposals is subject to negotiations with the European Parliament and Commission.

### Vehicle checks

Although small motorcycles and scooters represent 72% of the motorcycle fleet in the EU, the Council has refused to mandate EU-wide inspections for vehicles under 125cc and has also rejected a mandatory link between roadworthiness tests and outstanding vehicle recalls. With recall completion rates for issues such as exploding airbag components varying wildly across the Union, this decision ensures that dangerous defects will continue to slip through the net, leaving unsafe vehicles on the road. Ministers also cancelled the proposal to require annual checks for cars and vans older than ten years, maintaining the current biennial schedule despite the proven higher risk of mechanical failure in ageing vehicles.

## Megatrucks with no safeguards

On the revision of the Weights and Dimensions Directive, the Council has given the green light to the cross-border travel of Longer and Heavier Vehicles (LHVs) between consenting countries. Member States will not be required to rigorously analyse which routes are safe for these massive vehicles in advance of their rollout. The Council has deleted requirements for Member States to monitor the impact of these vehicles on road safety, road infrastructure and on modal shift (the loss of rail freight traffic to road). Thanks to the recent revision of the Driving Licence Directive, 18-year-olds could soon be driving these vehicles, with no requirement for the specific, additional training obviously necessary to handle such massive machinery safely.

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## ETSC SLAMS PROPOSED SAFETY EXEMPTIONS FOR NEW SMALL CAR CATEGORY

Responding to a draft proposal leaked to the Financial Times, the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) has warned that plans to grant a ten-year exemption from updating essential safety regulations for a new class of “Made in Europe” small electric cars will put pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicle occupants at risk.

The exemption is particularly dangerous given that these vehicles are designed primarily for city driving. ETSC data consistently show that 70% of those killed on urban roads are vulnerable road users – pedestrians, cyclists, and motorcyclists. These are the exact groups that new advanced safety technologies, which this proposal would bypass, are designed to protect.

These small cars are designed specifically for urban environments, where interactions with pedestrians and cyclists are most frequent. To exempt these vehicles from installing the latest life-saving technology – and fixing known hazards like non-functioning doors – until the mid-2030s is unacceptable. Minimum safety standards must evolve to reflect what is technologically possible, not be frozen in time to cut costs.



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## ETSC AND PARTNERS CALL FOR DEDICATED EU ROAD SAFETY AGENCY

The European Transport Safety Council (ETSC), together with six major European civil society organisations, has sent a joint letter to European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, urging the creation of a dedicated EU Road Safety Agency. According to the signatories, such a body is essential to achieve the EU's "Vision Zero" goal of eliminating road deaths and serious injuries by 2050.



The letter, dated 2 December 2025, highlights that road transport is the only major transport sector without a dedicated EU authority for safety, a gap not found in aviation (EASA), maritime (EMSA), or rail (ERA). This lack of a centralised body results in fragmented oversight, inconsistent enforcement, and unequal protection for citizens across Member States. The organisations also highlight the need for such an agency to oversee the rapid development of automated vehicles, which rely on complex cross-border pilot projects and software-based updates that often exceed national regulatory capacity. The signatories urge the Commission to include the creation of the agency in its upcoming financial and legislative planning, and they remind President von der Leyen that the Commission's strategy for sustainable and smart mobility had committed to "explore options to further support safe, smart and sustainable road transport operations under an existing agency or another body" — an outcome still pending after a 2023 consultation. The letter adds that an Agency would "fill a critical gap in the EU's transport safety architecture and demonstrate a tangible commitment to the Vision Zero goal of eliminating road deaths by 2050".

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## WORLD DAY OF REMEMBRANCE FOR ROAD TRAFFIC VICTIMS AND AFRICA ROAD SAFETY DAY: REDUCING ROAD CRASH DEATHS AND SERIOUS INJURIES

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) joined hands with the African Union Commission (AUC) and the Government of Ethiopia to celebrate the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims, which is also the Africa Road Safety Day. Organized under the patronage of the Ministry of Transport and Logistics of Ethiopia, the event strived to commemorate all individuals who have been killed or seriously injured on the roads; to advocate for increased support for victims of road traffic incidents and their families; and to promote evidence-based strategies to prevent and ultimately eliminate further road traffic fatalities and injuries.



This year, on November 16, communities across the globe, including several dozen in Africa, gathered to demand actions towards improving roadway safety and to uplift proven strategies, including redesigning dangerous roads, reducing speed limits, and improving vehicle design.



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## UNECE JOINS FORCES WITH UEFA AND UN SPECIAL ENVOY TO PROMOTE ROAD SAFETY AWARENESS

Every year, more than one million lives are lost on the world's roads, and millions more suffer injuries that change their lives forever. These are not isolated tragedies. They are systemic failures and demand collective responsibility. Safer roads do not happen by chance. They are built through policy, standards, enforcement and public commitment.

Sport is uniquely placed to help drive that commitment. With 3.5 billion fans worldwide, football is uniquely situated to reach where other institutions cannot and shape culture and influence behaviour. It speaks to young people in ways few other platforms can.

As the leading UN entity for regulatory and policy development in the field of transport, UNECE conventions and vehicle standards are used across the world and provide the legal frameworks and technical regulations that make transport safer.

The partnership with UEFA is setting a powerful example of what such collective actions can achieve.

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## GEORGE YANNIS AWARDED IRF PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR 2025 AT IRF ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The International Road Federation (IRF) has honoured Professor George Yanniss with the IRF Personality of the Year Award 2025, recognising his exceptional leadership, scientific contribution and global impact in advancing road safety and sustainable mobility.

The award was presented on 2 December during the IRF Annual Conference, continuing a distinguished tradition that dates back to 1951 of celebrating individuals whose work has helped shape safer, more inclusive and more sustainable transport systems worldwide.

Professor Yannis, a leading figure in Traffic and Safety Engineering, serves as Professor and Director of the Traffic Engineering Laboratory at the School of Civil Engineering of the National Technical University of Athens (NTUA). His expertise centres on road safety, data science and intelligent mobility systems. Over his more than 30-year career, Professor Yannis has made an extraordinary contribution to the transport sector. His academic influence is reflected in a remarkable publication record of over 1,000 scientific works, including 285 peer-reviewed journal papers, widely cited around the world.



Beyond academia and institutional leadership, Professor Yannis has also demonstrated an inspiring personal commitment to safer cities. In November 2024, he completed an extraordinary challenge: running 30 marathons in 30 months to promote the adoption of city-wide 30 km/h speed limits.

By awarding Professor Yannis the Personality of the Year 2025, the IRF celebrates not only a distinguished professional career, but a lifelong dedication to making mobility safer for all—through science, advocacy and personal action.

[More information](#)



## SWEDEN USES REAL-TIME CAR DATA TO DETECT SLIPPY ROADS



The Swedish Transport Administration (Trafikverket) is pioneering a unique method to improve winter road safety and maintenance by purchasing real-time data generated when a car's safety systems activate for an annual cost of 7 million SEK (€635,000). This information is converted into precise friction values that show exactly how slippery the road is at specific points. According to Trafikverket's Head of Road Systems, the agency is the first in the world to use this method and receives around 300 million measurement points compared with the 3,000 previously obtained from dedicated test vehicles.

This high-resolution, anonymised data, combined with information from 750 weather stations, will allow Trafikverket to act quicker on gritting and snow clearance. It also enables the agency to systematically assess the performance of its maintenance contractors. Overall, the initiative is designed to enhance road safety and improve accessibility during harsh winter months.

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## WALLONIA COULD IMPLEMENT SPEED REDUCTION TO COMBAT HIGH DEATH RATE

In the southern Belgian region, the Walloon Road Safety Council (CSWSR) has proposed a significant change in speed management for its new action plan for 2026-2030, aimed at reducing the region's high rate of road fatalities. Since Flanders, in northern Belgium, reduced its default speed limit on roads outside built-up areas from 90 km/h to 70 km/h in January 2017, road deaths and serious injuries on these roads have decreased by 23%. This success provides strong motivation for Wallonia to adopt similar measures on its high-risk road sections.

The core proposal is to move away from the current high default limit of 90 km/h, focusing on lowering speed limits where safety is a concern. This will involve a regulatory revision, starting in 2026, to make 70 km/h the default speed limit on many stretches of road outside built-up areas, particularly those where the road environment or the presence of non-motorised users makes higher speeds unsafe. The plan also includes expanding 30 km/h zones in urban areas, particularly around schools.

Furthermore, the CSWSR suggests piloting dynamic speed limits which can automatically adjust based on real-time conditions, such as weather or traffic density. The full scheme is planned for progressive implementation following road classification in 2027.



[More information](#)



## CITIES MOVE TO WEIGHT-BASED PARKING CHARGES

Cities are increasingly adjusting parking charges according to vehicle weight, reflecting growing concerns about safety, space and the impact of large vehicles on urban environments. In Zurich, voters approved a referendum to introduce weight-based pricing for residential "Blue Zone" parking permits, linking annual fees to a vehicle's mass, with electric cars paying a lower rate per kilogram.

Cardiff has taken a comparable step by approving a 10-year parking plan that adds a surcharge for vehicles exceeding 2,400 kg, with the threshold set to fall to 2,000 kg for non-electric models. The move followed a public consultation in which 66% of respondents supported higher charges for larger vehicles. Both measures are part of a broader recognition that heavier vehicles occupy more space, cause greater road-wear and can pose higher risks to pedestrians and cyclists in collisions; city planners argue that parking policy now needs to reflect these externalities.

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