



UITP POSITION PAPER ABOUT THE REVISION OF THE DRIVING LICENCES DIRECTIVE

UITP asks the EU Institutions within the revision process of the Driving Licence Directive to:

- to skip the reference to the length of lines (less than 50 km) in Art.5 3. (a) in Directive 2022/2561 and thus lower the minimum age requirements for Category D(DE) drivers holding a CPC to 21 years and allowing Member States to further reduce that age to 18 years on their territory.
- allow workshop employees, like mechatronics, holding a Category C driving licence to move busses without passengers (for example for test or transfer trips) and carry out the necessary inspection drives.

THE SITUATION IN URBAN PUBLIC TRANSPORT COMPANIES:

The urban public transport operating companies employ approximately 1,3 million people in Europe. They represent the largest employer in many European cities. In average 2/3 of these jobs are driving jobs. In companies that just operate busses most staff are drivers (up to 80% in countries like France – source Bilan Social 2021, UTP¹).

For several years an evolution of the age pyramid is observed, with an increase in the proportion of employees aged over 50 and a corresponding decrease in the proportion of employees aged under 50. This trend is particularly strong in countries like the Scandinavian countries, Germany, or the Netherlands. In cities like Amsterdam, the public transport company is preparing to replace over 40% of its staff due to retirement over the next 5-10 years. In German public transport operators, in average, 30% of staff will have to be replaced by 2030 due to retirement. This trend is particularly strong for driving personnel.

¹ Bilan Social Transports Urbains 2021 (édition 2022) <https://www.utp.fr/note-publication/bilan-social-transports-urbains-2021-edition-2022>

IMPORTANT RECRUITMENT NEEDS:

In many cities public transport companies face imbalances in labour market demand and supply with an important shortage in the supply of drivers.

The high levels of recruitment due to the demographic situation in many public transport companies will even be worsened by the anticipated constant increase of population living in urban areas² and the subsequent need to increase the mobility offer. In addition, the growing congestion levels, and the environmental/air quality problems act as accelerator for a shift towards alternative mobility, in particular public transport. Thus, these companies will be expected to significantly grow their mobility offer, responding to rising customer numbers and expectations.

At the same time, the deployment of new technologies and in particular CAD will affect the situation by changing the demand and skills set for drivers.

There is so far no evidence of a significant job loss due to the introduction of autonomous driving systems.

It is likely that in local public transport, there will be shift in demand for labour within the different divisions of the company towards jobs strongly linked to customer orientation.

As far as drivers are concerned, it can be observed since some year that the required skill levels are raising. A broader skill set (covering also customer relations and ICT) is required. Through the ongoing technological developments and continuous progress in automation, the profession is also less physically demanding. All these developments are likely to attracting people with more diverse backgrounds.

ATTRACTING MORE AND YOUNGER CANDIDATES' DRIVERS:

There are obviously different levers for addressing the recruitment challenges, like opening opportunities for a more diverse workforce, including young and female workers, improving working conditions, ... etc

However, to deal with the current driver shortage and in order to be able to attract young workers to the sector, **it is also crucial to adapt the minimum age requirements of the EU Directive.**

In order to attract young driver candidates more easily, it would be important to enable candidates to enter the profession after finishing secondary school.

Currently, the period between leaving secondary school and the moment at which training to become a professional bus driver can be started is approximately 3 years. Many students choose a different vocational training (and a subsequent profession) after high school. The lowering of

² Europe's level of urbanisation is expected to increase to approximately 83.7% in 2050, see https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/foresight/topic/continuing-urbanisation/developments-and-forecasts-on-continuing-urbanisation_en

the legal minimum age for a D driving license would make it possible to allow young, motivated people to start their (vocational) training shortly after secondary school.

REDUCING MINIMUM AGE REQUIREMENT FOR D DRIVING LICENCES WOULD NOT INCREASE ROAD SAFETY ISSUES AND ACCIDENT RISK!

Experience and available statistics³ show that:

- Almost all accidents involving young drivers are caused by non-professional drivers, rather than professional drivers,
- Behaviour in traffic is not so much an age-related issue, but above all a personal mentality issue. For all ages, the training and mentality (attitude and behaviour) of a driver «as a person» is decisive for being able to practice the profession correctly and safely.

Extract from the report following an experiment launched in the Netherlands with an age reduction, see [Evaluatierapport - Experiment verlaging leeftijdsgrens bus- en touringcarchauffeurs – 2015](#)⁴:

*“An important observation from the research in this regard is the fact that behaviour in traffic is not so much an age-related issue, but above all a personal mentality issue. **For all ages, the mentality (attitude and behaviour) of a driver «as a person» is decisive for being able to practice the profession correctly and safely.** Sufficient guarantees have been built into the selection process for this vocational training, so that only the best candidates become bus drivers.”*

In this context, it must be acknowledged that in the European Union, DIRECTIVE (EU) 2022/2561 lays down the rules on the minimum level of training for (professional) road transport drivers (certificate of professional competence - CPC), including the obligation to hold an initial qualification and to undergo periodic training to improve road safety.

This Directive also establishes the minimum age for drivers holding a CPC in accordance with the requirements set in that Directive. In the case of a category D (bus and coach) driving licence, this reduced minimum age is limited by the length of the operated bus/coach lines (50 km).

Therefore, UITP demands that during the adoption process of the future Driving Licence Directive, the reduced minimum age for professional bus/coach drivers holding a CPC as set in Directive 2022/2561 is not restricted any more to lines of less than of 50 km and covers all lines.

³ Young drivers – Analysis of data from Arriva (Sweden)

⁴ Evaluatierapport - Experiment verlaging leeftijdsgrens bus- en touringcarchauffeurs (13 oktober 2015) <https://www.tweedekamer.nl/downloads/document?id=ab656e09-ed81-4ab1-a163-928ae317c2bf&title=Evaluatierapport.pdf>

THE SITUATION OF WORKSHOP EMPLOYEES (FOR EXAMPLE MECHATRONICS)

In addition, the special minimum age conditions for Category D driving licence also represent a barrier for (young) workshop employees (for example mechatronics) holding a Category C driving licence (freight transport). Those employees are not allowed to move busses even without passengers nor carry out the necessary tests and inspection drives.

This situation represents another (avoidable) bottleneck for public transport companies that employ young mechatronics for the maintenance of busses.

CONCLUSIONS

Due to the national transposition process of the EU Driving Licence Directive the situation and impact on public transport companies varies quite a lot between member states.

Nevertheless, the urban public transport operators in many countries encounter problems with the minimum age requirements for Category D driving licence (bus drivers). Young people starting vocational training are often deterred to become a bus driver due to the age criteria and rather choose other professions. Consequently, the industry risks missing a generation of possible bus drivers. The average age of bus drivers in many urban public transport companies is high, leading to an important recruitment challenge in the coming years. In countries with sharp driver's shortages those problems are more severe.



This is an official position paper prepared by UITP EU Committee. UITP is the international association representing public transport stakeholders. In the European Union, UITP brings together more than 450 urban, suburban and regional public transport operators and authorities from all Member States. We represent the perspective of short distance passenger transport services by all sustainable modes: bus, regional and suburban rail, metro, light rail, tram and waterborne. Visit our website: uitp.eu
