

Workshop 1 :
Driving Instructor Standards in the
European Union
(long-term vision)
21 January 2005, Brussels

MERIT
Minimum European Requirements
for driving Instructor Training

MEETING REPORT

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1. List of participants

First name	Surname	Organisation name	Country
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Jan	Vissers	MERIT	
Gebhard	Heiler	MERIT	
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Gerhard	von Bressendorf	MERIT	
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Michael	Gatscha	KfV	Austria
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Gilbert	Auwaerts	Ministerie van Verkeer en Infrastructuur	Belgium
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Philippe	Meurice	FAA	Belgium
Georges	Van Aerschot	Fédération des Auto-Ecoles	Belgium
Sylvain	Moras	Ministerie van Verkeer en Infrastructuur	Belgium
Robert	Kotal	Traffic Academy of Bohemia	Czech Republic
Pavel	Nahodil	Ministry of Transport	Czech Republic
Eveliis	Nagel	Estonian Motor Vehicle Registration Centre	Estonia
Sakari	Hopia	Finnish Traffic School Association	Finland
Kari	Hakuli	CIECA Expert Advisory Group	Finland
Sami	Myntinnen	AKE	Finland
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Gerard	Acourt	ECF	France
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Joachim	Wohlfarth	BMVBW	Germany
Michael	Möschel	Verkehrsakademie Bayern eV	Germany
Peter	Harvey	MSA	Great Britain
Bob	Jarvis	Driving Instructors' Registrar	Great Britain
Trevor	Wedge	DSA Policy Unit	Great Britain
Peter	Laub	IVV	Great Britain
John	Lepine	GoSkills	Great Britain
Robin	Cummins	CIECA Expert Advisory Group	Great Britain
Cathy	Bacon	Irish Driving Instructors' Association	Ireland
Stefano	Bottoli	Essebi Italia	Italy

First name	Surname	Organisation name	Country
Emilio	Patella	UNASCA	Italy
Paolo	Crozzoli	Confedertaa	Italy
Mario	Forneris	Unione Nazionale Autoscuole StudiConsulenza Automobilistica	Italy
Francesco	Foresta	Ministero dei Trasporti e della Navigazione	Italy
Jean-Paul	Gillen	Ministry of Transport	Luxembourg
Nico	Meyrer	Lycée Technique du Centre	Luxembourg
Fernand	Mayer	Federation des maitres instructeurs du Grand-Duche de Luxembourg	Luxembourg
Marc	Pannacci	CFC	Luxembourg
Jean	Lemesch	SNCT	Luxembourg
Leo	Schreuders	BOVAG – VAN	Netherlands
Henk	Burghout	IBKI	Netherlands
Han	Rietman	CBR	Netherlands
Brain	Morrison	Driver & Vehicle Testing Agency	Northern Ireland
Lisa	Mann	Northern Ireland Approved Driving Instructor Assoc	Northern Ireland
Jarle	Nermark	Autoriserte Trafikkskolers Landsforbund	Norway
Jan	Isachsen	Norwegian Public Roads Administration	Norway
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R	Szopa	Regional Road Traffic Center Katowice	Poland
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Francisco	Alonso	University of Valencia	Spain
Jacinto	Perez	Confederación Nacional de Autoescuelas	Spain
Gabriel	Molina	INTRAS	Spain
Peter	Kinnbo	Sveriges Trafikskolors Riksförbund	Sweden
Hans	Mattsson	Swedish National Road Administration	Sweden
Orjan	Ellström	Swedish Road Traffic Inspectorate	Sweden
Fathi	Mallek	Ministère du Transport	Tunisia

Minutes: Martina Hendrix, CIECA

2. Agenda

09.00	Welcome	Gregor Bartl, MERIT project manager
09.10	Introduction from the European Commission	René Plank, European Commission
09.20	Project introduction	Nick Sanders, MERIT project secretary
09.40	Discussion	
10.00	The context of novice driver accidents and the relevance of the GDE matrix	Nils-Petter Gregersen, VTI (MERIT team)
10.20	Discussion	
10.40	<i>Coffee break</i>	
11.00	The GDE matrix and driving instructor training	Nils-Petter Gregersen, VTI (MERIT team)
11.30	Discussion	
12.00	Teaching methods and didactics for driving instructors	Gregor Bartl MERIT project manager
12.30	Discussion	
13.00	<i>LUNCH</i>	
14.00	Feedback from stakeholders: structured discussion	
15.30	General round-up and conclusions	
16.00	<i>CLOSE</i>	

3. Aim of workshop

The main aim of the workshop was to discuss the working document prepared by the MERIT project on a long-term vision for driving instructor training (see www.gutefahrt.at/merit).

4. Viewpoint of the European Commission

Current EU legislation focuses on the theory and practical driving test. A new annex, as part of the forthcoming 3rd driving licence directive, lays down requirements for driving examiners. However, there is no European-level legislation as yet on driver training. In an effort to enhance road safety through European standards, the Commission is looking at the possibility of proposing a directive on minimum requirements for driving instructors. The recommendations of the MERIT project would be used as a basis for the proposal. Such a directive would look to improve the reputation of driving instructors, to positively influence driver training and facilitate free movement of instructors throughout the European Union. An alternative - and less extensive – approach to proposing a directive would be to introduce soft law based on best practice guidelines. This is also a possibility.

5. Presentations

The following presentations were made:

- Project schedule and tasks: Nick Sanders
- The context of novice driver accidents and the relevance of the GDE matrix: Nils-Petter Gregersen
- The GDE matrix and driving instructor training : Nils-Petter Gregersen
- Teaching methods and didactics for driving instructors : Gregor Bartl.

Please see the attached files for the powerpoint presentations.

6. Discussion points

Why focus on driving instructor standards while it is possible for learner drivers in some countries to avoid professional driver training altogether?

Belgium seems to be the only country where learner drivers consistently avoid professional instruction altogether. As a result, lay instructors such as parents are seen as competition rather than a complement to professional instructors. In Sweden and the UK, for instance, a combination of lay instruction and professional instruction is the norm. If we are to contribute to road safety, we need to start somewhere, so driving instructors are the focus at the moment. Some countries advocate basic training for lay instructors, in order to provide some structure to experience-based learning with parents, for example. This could be an option in the future.

Learner drivers are not so much interested in road safety, but rather in passing the test. How can this fact be reconciled with all the extra – higher level – knowledge and skills gained by this new generation of driving instructors?

Learner drivers often only focus on passing the test and are not interested in the underlying road safety messages. Driving instructors, in turn, will not use new-found skills and knowledge unless they are obliged to do so, by way of structured driver training for learner drivers or extra requirements in the driving test. Clearly, there is a problem here if new driving instructor standards are introduced but no corresponding changes are made to driver training itself or the driving test to ensure the instructors' new skills are used and transmitted. A parallel EU project called TEST is looking at ways to introduce levels 3 and 4 of the GDE matrix into the test. The European Commission can propose changes to the test. However, it has no remit in influencing the content of driver training in the EU member states. It is therefore important that both the driving instructor and the candidate learn to think about driving tests and driving safety in a different way and the driving instructor has a very important role to play in this. He should act as a kind of "safety manager" directing the learner driver's attention in a "new" direction so that he/she learns to think about more than just basic vehicle control skills and how to pass the driving test but becomes more aware of the influence of his attitudes etc.

Semantics of the term 'driving instructor'

One participant felt that the term 'driving instructor' was too restrictive for the work expected of a future instructor, according to the vision presented at the workshop. Instead, they could be referred to as road safety trainers, for instance.

Are the higher levels of the GDE matrix only relevant to second phase (post-licence) training for novice drivers?

No. Whereas the second-phase is an ideal time to address these issues, they should also be covered in the initial training period.

Should individual instructors be fully qualified according to the entire GDE matrix, or should there be specialisations or grades of instructors according to the levels of the matrix they are trained on?

The MERIT team prefers individuals to be fully familiar with the matrix as a whole, because the different levels and cells interact and this is important to transmit to the learner driver. Specialised grading of instructors according to the training they have had is an option, however.

Should a driving instructor be expected to be able to address the higher levels of matrix?

Concern was expressed that the higher levels of the matrix were influenced by so many factors and over so much time to make it unrealistic for driving instructors to cope with them.

Will teaching methods be integrated into a Directive?

The European Commission may not be able to do this because normally the 'means' of implementing the content of the directive are left to the Member States. However, the MERIT team would argue that without such teaching methods, various crucial parts of the GDE matrix cannot be transmitted properly to learner drivers.

Where is the evidence that if you apply all 4 levels this makes a difference to the learner driver and their safety?

The GDE matrix is based on scientific evidence relating to the causes of accidents. However, there is no scientific evidence that integrating the GDE matrix in training and testing leads to safer drivers.

What about the opinion that you can not address these higher level issues until you have practised driving and have built up some experience?

Scientific evidence of this is inconclusive. Again, we need to address the high accident risk of novice drivers somewhere in the process, and this is one way of doing it.

What access criteria should be set for regulating access to the profession of driving instructor?

Various criteria were discussed such as age, experience, schooling and the potential need for an entrance test to regulate entry into instructor training.

What are the economic implications of improved driving instructor standards?

There was concern that the lengthy obligatory training for instructors would be expensive and that this expense would be passed onto the customer with regard to driving lessons. The European Commission has to carry out an impact assessment of their proposed legislation so this may be part of it.

Suggested minor changes to the working document:

- Add drugs (not just alcohol) to the matrix and the need for instructors to know about this subject

- Instructor needs to know about learning processes in road traffic, in order to be able to prepare learner drivers for learning when driving solo.
- Instructors should know how to interpret statistics because statistics often present a misleading view of reality.

7. Questionnaire survey on current driving instructor standards

Organisations who replied to the MERIT questionnaire survey on current driving instructor standards are kindly requested to contact the MERIT project team if they have identified any errors in the survey report (see also www.gutefahrt.at/merit).

8. Next steps

MERIT will prepare a second working document, on minimum requirements for driving instructors, for consultation at MERIT workshop II (Brussels, 21 March). The final version of this paper will constitute the main recommendations to the European Commission for a future directive on driving instructor training and testing.

Attached presentations:

1. Project schedule and tasks: Nick Sanders
2. The relevance of the GDE matrix to driving instructors : Nils-Petter Gregersen
3. Teaching methods and didactics for driving instructors : Gregor Bartl.
4. Driver testing and training according to the GDE matrix: Jan Vissers (CIECA congress 2004)¹

¹ For general distribution, as requested by Peter Laub, IVV.