



## 3rd European Driving Licence Directive

If reading about this issue causes you to lose the will to live then we understand but it is important as the architects of this legislation are trying to do one simple thing.

They are trying to stop people riding motorcycles so it's worth writing a letter or sending an email.

As we go to press the Commission has not presented the final text of the directive, as recommended by the Council of Ministers to the European Parliament and thus to what will be a full Second Reading for MEPs to vote on.

This is despite the Council of Ministers recommendation that there should not be a full Second Reading, only a rubber stamping exercise to run through the directive without questions or amendments submitted.

We do have some suspicions that the final text may be different to the Council's recommendations and may be put out during this recess while the Parliament is devoid of MEPs.

MAG has contacted MEPs who sit on the Transport Committee in Europe and at present we are working together on re-submitting amendments at Second Reading possibly through the Committee on Transport and Tourism (TRAN).

Our main demand is the removal of the motorcycle aspects, with the fall back position of removal of the training and/or testing between categories.

Other amendments will be submitted which include changes to what is called the "Grosch Age Ladder" where riders can start trying to gain licences through stepped access or direct access, introduced by the Rapporteur (MEP) in charge of the directive.

This will not be a simple matter of putting these positions forward as the text of the full directive will have to be worked through and each clause picked out with an amendment and a reason for that amendment.

Therefore we have changed tack slightly on the political lobbying. We have stopped lobbying MPs as any replies we are receiving are quoting a standard letter from the Transport Minister or one of his civil servant subordinates.

The letter in MAG's opinion reflects the poor performance by the British Transport Minister in Europe to represent the concerns of motorcyclists.

The letter suggests that reopening the issue would be

a serious mistake as the majority feeling in the European Parliament is that the Directive does not go far enough in restricting access to motorcycles and re-opening the issue is likely to make matters considerably worse.

Make matters worse! It couldn't get any worse apart from Europe banning motorcycles.

This from the Government that wanted Direct Access Direct restricted to those age 27 plus.

The strongest support that the minister could give was to abstain rather than to vote against the measures in the Council of Ministers as a whole and he only submitted strong objections in a recorded minute statement.

On the other side of the coin Conservative MEPs have been supportive of the MAG position especially West Midlands MEP Philip Bradbourn who attended the FEMA MEP ride in Brussels with Roger Helmer MEP and gave a speech at the demo in Birmingham.

Therefore our focus in this stage of the political lobby is to secure a response from MEPs from the rest of the parties.

The non Conservative MEPs top of the list to contact and who sit on the TRAN - Committee on Transport and Tourism in Europe are:

### Labour

Gary Tittle – North West MEP  
Catherine Stihler – Scotland MEP  
Robert Evans – London MEP

### Independent

Ashley Mote – South East MEP

### Other MEPs to contact who are not on the Transport Committee are:

**Liberal Democratic** – all constituencies apart from Northern Ireland and Wales

**Greens** – Constituencies in London and the South East

**Plaid Cymru** – Wales

**Scottish National Party - Scottish Conservative & Unionist Party** - all in Scotland

**Northern Ireland** - Mr Jim Allister QC Democratic Unionist Party, Mr James Nicholson Ulster Unionist Party, Mrs Bairbre de Brún Sinn Féin

We need replies from these MEPs specifically regarding

these two paragraphs from the campaign website.

"Both the European Commission and Council of Ministers have ignored the expert opinions of motorcyclists and their representatives and I would urge you to take motorcyclist's representatives' expert opinions on board."

"I would also ask that you carefully consider supporting any amendments and the complete withdrawal of the directive or the motorcycle aspects which will be presented at the Second Reading in Parliament or in Committee."

Hopefully this will open a dialogue with your MEPs. If they don't respond, keep at them, then we can hit them with the amendments to support once these are finalised.

Note: At present there's no need to lobby the following MEPs although you may wish to thank them for their support as they are very on side.

#### **Conservative and Unionist Party**

Philip Bradbourn, West Midlands MEP, Den Dover, North West MEP, Sir Robert Atkins, North West MEP, Geoffrey Van Orden Eastern MEP.

#### **UK Independence Party**

Michael Henry Nattrass, West Midlands MEP, has made public support of motorcyclists' position.

If your MEP is a UKIP MEP they should be fully aware of the issue. However we would wish them to support amendments and not just the removal of the directive as a whole which would be presented at the Second Reading in Parliament or in Committee.

#### **Campaign Website - On-Line Lobbying**

The campaign website with a suggested letter, background details and how to find your MEP can be found at [www.mag-uk.org](http://www.mag-uk.org)

Remember although email is fast and easy, old fashioned letters can have more impact.

The European Parliament is at: European Parliament, RueWiertz, 1047 Brussels, Belgium.

***Please don't forget to sign the on-line petition which we will be presenting to the legislators!***

#### **Suggested Letter**

Remember standard letters can get ignored. For maximum impact every letter needs to be personal.

The sample letter below should be used as a guide when drafting your letters to MEPs. Please forward any responses to Trevor Baird at MAG UK, PO BOX 750, Rugby, CV21 3ZR or email [publicaffairs@mag-uk.org](mailto:publicaffairs@mag-uk.org)

#### **Dear Your MEP**

As a motorcyclist in your constituency, I am writing to you regarding the 3rd European Driving Licence Directive which at present is waiting for the Council of Ministers final text to be

presented to the European Parliament.

I am concerned that the Commission will present a final text that is different than the agreed text that was presented by the Council of Ministers to the Commission.

However I feel that motorcyclist's representatives' views on the directive have been ignored through out the stages of the directive including the first reading in the European Parliament.

My opinion and those of riders groups throughout Europe represented by the Federation of European Motorcyclists Associations (FEMA) are that the motorcycle aspects of the directive should be withdrawn so that a more meaningful directive can be redrafted with full consultation with the motorcycle experts in rider organisations across Europe.

At the very least direct access to upper category of motorcycle licence should be applied at 21 years instead of 24 years as set out in the directive and the withdrawal of prohibitive training/testing requirements between licence categories.

The main reasoning is that the strict application and moving age limits upwards and the complicated regime of testing without looking at how riders are trained will not improve motorcycling or the safety of riders.

It is my belief that the emphasis should be on other vehicle drivers, yet the directive does not address car drivers via the licensing "regime" for these vehicles.

Recently the European Commission Vice President Jacques Barrot stated, "We have 6% more deaths since the year 2000 caused by motorbikes. We have to take very targeted action there."

I consider that his biased statement conflicts with research which indicates that the primary blame for accidents with motorcycles and other vehicles lies with the other vehicle driver at least 40% of the time.

The whole process of the directive can be seen as a philosophical approach that tougher testing and training will reduce accidents simply by reducing the numbers of motorcyclists.

I believe that the directive is premature as the 2nd European Directive regarding motorcycle testing has still to be implemented in the UK.

I believe that this directive if implemented will create unacceptable financial barriers to motorcycling without any guarantee of improving motorcycle safety.

In my opinion the complexity of the directive by making it harder to gain a motorcycle licence will encourage young riders to go outside the law to ride unrestricted bikes on a restricted licence.

The directive will discourage people from taking up motorcycling at a time when the environment is desperately in need of less harmful transport options.

Both the European Commission and Council of Ministers have ignored the expert opinions of motorcyclists and their representatives and I would urge you to take motorcyclist's representatives' expert opinions on board.

I would also ask that you carefully consider supporting any amendments including the complete withdrawal of the directive or the motorcycle aspects which will be presented at the Second Reading in Parliament or in Committee.