



Driver Training and Traffic Safety Education

Commission's Consultation Paper of 22 April 2009¹

ACEA's Response

July 2009

ACEA (European Automobile Manufacturers Association) represents the interests and views of the fifteen major European car, truck and bus manufacturers. All ACEA member companies are key global players and have integrated operations in the European Union. A large proportion of the **€20 billion** that the European automotive industry spends annually on **research and development** is dedicated to developing further initiatives to enhance the passive and active safety features of **new vehicles**.

ACEA welcomes this opportunity to comment on the Commission's driver training and traffic safety education consultation paper. Protecting the safety of both vehicle users and pedestrians is a key priority for automotive manufacturers. Signatory to the European Road Safety Charter, **ACEA has a long track record regarding road safety, based on innovation and responsibility**. While the number of casualties has been significantly reduced in the past years, vehicle makers are determined to support **efforts to further reduce casualties** and injuries associated with road use and to contribute to the EU objective to reduce fatalities. The contribution that automotive manufacturers can make through changes to vehicle is, however, only one part of the **integrated approach** that is required to fully address the issue of **road safety**.

1. Do you think that driver training systems should be harmonised in the EU? If so, what advantages would it have for traffic safety, and what problems do you expect?

Driver training (technical skills) **and education** (judgment) **in road safety** complemented by enforcement of the existing rules are key instruments to achieve a safer road environment. Given the importance of drivers' training and education in road safety, **ACEA would therefore welcome further EU action** in that field too.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/consultations/doc/2009_06_22_training_education_consultation_paper.pdf

An assessment of the main accident causes in general, and novice drivers' in particular, points clearly to the fact that much of the safety improvement, for which the Community is striving, could be achieved by an effective training and safety education system. ACEA is convinced that better training and traffic safety education are **efficient and cost-effective means to help reducing the fatalities on European roads.**

Europe's vehicle manufacturers have always promoted the **integrated approach to road safety** as the most efficient and sustainable way to achieve positive results. In spite of a further strong increase in road traffic, the continuous improvements to vehicle passive and active safety have resulted in an impressive decline in road casualties. Further reductions, however, can only be achieved through an integrated approach. This requires not only even **safer vehicles but also safer infrastructure, improved driver skills and behaviour, better enforcement** of existing legislation and the interaction and networking between all of them.

In this context, the approach adopted by **CARS21**² and the application of its conclusion (infrastructure improvements, driver behaviour and vehicle related activities) could be reinforced to ensure that all stakeholders make the necessary contribution to achieving the sought-after casualty reductions.

While a great deal of improvements has been made to vehicles and some action has been taken on infrastructure and enforcement, **little has been done on drivers' behaviour.** ACEA, therefore, believes it is now time to integrate the three lines of action and pay more attention to better driver training and traffic safety education. At international level, there is considerable body of knowledge on how to do this properly, i.e. the Best Practice Guides by GRSP/WHO/FIA Foundation/World Bank³. The **recommendations for efficient driver training and traffic safety education listed on page 17 of the Commission's consultation paper can be seen as a good step** to becoming part of the Commission's general thinking and future Commission's proposals:

1. ***Additional controlled practice*** – more practice is needed, including specific training on mandatory safety devices (ABS, ESC)
2. ***Alternate theory and practical training*** – training programmes should alternate theory and practice
3. ***Standards for driving instructors*** – the profession of instructor should be defined and developed under similar principles in all Member States
4. ***Driving tests*** – should evaluate driver's understanding of driving challenges and their responsibility towards themselves, their passengers and all road users, and towards environmental issues (eco-driving⁴)

² The CARS 21 High Level Group launched by Commissioner G. Verheugen in 2005 has examined the major policy areas which impact the competitiveness of the European automotive industry and has agreed on a number of recommendations which aim to enhance the industry's global competitiveness and employment while sustaining further progress in safety and environmental performance at a price affordable to the consumer.

³ <http://www.makeroadssafe.org>

⁴ The golden rules of eco-driving: a) shift into a higher gear early; leave in gear when braking; b) maintain a steady speed at highest possible gear; c) look ahead and anticipate traffic flow; d) switch off the engine at short stops; e) check and adjust the tyre pressure regularly; f) make use of in-car fuel saving devices such as on-board computers and dynamic navigators to avoid traffic jams; g) remove surplus weight and unused roof racks

5. ***Emphasizing high risk scenarios*** – training should focus on avoiding risks rather than how to cope with them – encourage defensive driving
6. ***Reducing high risk exposure*** - in particular for novice drivers though specific measures (zero alcohol, lower speed, passenger bans, higher licensing age and night-time driving bans). A recent study by the US Insurance Institute for Highway Safety⁵ refers to substantial reductions in teenage fatalities when ***Graduated Licensing Laws***, including strong nighttime and passenger restrictions, are adopted.

Vehicle manufacturers are convinced that the basis for the optimum solutions is proper training methods and education measures implemented by Member States as established by a common framework, based on existing best practices properly assessed by the Commission. Member States they must now take their share of the responsibility for the casualty reduction targets that they themselves sign up to.

2. Should traffic education at school be mandatory?

Yes.

3. Should driving instructors undergo continuing professional development?

Yes.

4. Should coaching be emphasized more as a teaching method for driving instructors?

Yes.

5. Should post-test practical experience models be encouraged?

Yes.

6. Should accompanied driving systems be encouraged? Should they be harmonised at EU level?

Yes.

⁵ Graduated Licensing Laws and Fatal Crashes of Teenage Drivers: A National Study, IIHA, May 2009
www.iihs.org/research/topics/pdf/r1122.pdf

7. Should accompanied driving systems with ‘lay instructors’ be encouraged? Should there be training requirements for lay instructors?

Yes.

8. Do you agree that the minimum age of solo driving (with a category B licence) should be 18?

Yes.

9. Should more use be made of computer-based training systems? If so, in which areas?

Yes. Driving simulator could be in particular very useful to train novice drivers to react in emergency situations, without requiring long and expensive test in test tracks. Driving simulators could be also used to allow self evaluations of the behaviour, for example looking at his/her behaviour firstly as driver, then as passenger of the vehicle, as another driver in the surrounding traffic, as a vulnerable road user, etc.

10. Should more use be made of e-learning? If so, in which areas?

Yes. E-learning could be very useful; in particular it could accelerate the learning phase on some basic vehicle technologies that need to be understood by the driver of a vehicle. Interactive lessons could be very useful, for example analysis of real accidents.

About ACEA

The ACEA members are BMW Group, DAF Trucks, Daimler, FIAT Group, Ford of Europe, General Motors Europe, Jaguar Land Rover, MAN Nutzfahrzeuge, Porsche, PSA Peugeot Citroën, Renault, Scania, Toyota Motor Europe, Volkswagen and Volvo.