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#### 'I/A' ITEM NOTE

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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee/Council
Subject:	Draft DIRECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on driving licences, amending Regulation (EU) 2018/1724 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Directive (EU) 2022/2561 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and repealing Directive 2006/126/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Commission Regulation (EU) No 383/2012 <b>(first reading)</b>  - Adoption of the Council's position at first reading and of the statement of the Council's reasons  = Statements

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#### Statement by Croatia

The Republic of Croatia reiterates the importance of three main elements that the Directive aims to take into account: improvement of road safety, simplicity of application, and general framework.

At the same time, national circumstances should be considered and current good practices at national level should be preserved, while ensuring a high level of road safety.

The Republic of Croatia could not support the following elements of the proposed text:

1. Article 17, which introduces the obligation for Member States to issue driving licences for categories B and C to applicants aged 17 (with the EU code 98.02) under an accompanied driving scheme.

Driving at the age of 17, even under supervision, lowers the minimum age threshold currently applied in Croatia and creates significant challenges in terms of law enforcement, control and road safety. The introduction of such a scheme should therefore remain optional, as it is closely linked to national traffic conditions, existing safety policies and enforcement capacities.

In addition to safety concerns, the implementation of this system would impose considerable administrative and financial burdens on competent authorities. Monitoring compliance with the conditions for accompanied driving (eligibility of accompanying persons, limitations on driving, identification procedures) would be complex, resource-intensive and difficult to enforce effectively in practice.

We are therefore concerned that the mandatory implementation of the accompanied driving scheme could negatively affect road safety, create disproportionate administrative costs, and result in unforeseeable consequences.

2. The provision introducing a mandatory three-week deadline for the issuance of the physical driving licence (Recital 11).

Under the current national legislation, a driving licence in Croatia is issued within 30 days in the regular procedure. Shorter deadlines exist only in accelerated and urgent procedures, which are more expensive and therefore rarely used.

Introducing a binding three-week deadline at EU level would shorten the existing regular procedure in Croatia and require a systemic adjustment of administrative processes. This would create additional organisational and financial burdens for competent authorities, increase the overall costs of the procedure, and ultimately be transferred to citizens.

For these reasons, Croatia believes that the deadline for issuing physical driving licences should remain within the competence of Member States, allowing flexibility to adapt to national administrative capacities and cost structures.

As the final text does not adequately address the concerns mentioned above, the Republic of Croatia cannot support it.

The Republic of Croatia remains committed to implementation of the EU-wide harmonized legislative framework that will ensure the enforcement of the highest road safety standards.

### **Statement by Malta**

Malta has positively welcomed the Commission's Proposals within the Road Safety Package, recognising their importance in advancing road safety across the EU, fostering safer and smarter transport systems. These objectives set out in this Package are well aligned with Malta's national vision and commitments.

Malta acknowledges that the final compromise reached with the European Parliament contains several constructive amendments aimed at improving and strengthening the text substantially, especially from the perspective of road safety.

The flexibility for Member States to continue to mandate medical assessments for first-time applicants of a driving licence and for elderly drivers when renewing their licences is well received. Additionally, Malta supports the retention of the minimum age for full driving rights of Category B holders at 18 years of age as per Article 7. However, Malta remains unable to express similar support for the Accompanied Driving Scheme. Whilst Malta welcomes the voluntary nature of this Scheme for Category C Licences, we maintain our serious reservations regarding its mandatory application to Category B Licence, especially since this does not align with the specific realities and challenges of Malta's road infrastructure. In view of our limited and highly urbanised road network, a Category B licence to the demographic targeted by the Accompanied Driving Scheme does not align with our objective of enhancing road safety. Such a scheme will place additional pressures on Malta's road networks while restraining the Government's efforts to encourage a modal shift among this same demographic.

To this effect, whilst Malta remains fully committed to improving road safety and achieving our Vision Zero objectives, we are unable to support the provisional agreement reached between the Council and the Parliament on 24 March 2025.

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