5 November 2008

ETSC and CIECA

Joint Transport Safety Lunch

Fit to drive: is *medical screening* the answer?

Chairperson: **Divera Twisk** (SWOV, Netherlands)

Panelists: **Javier Álvarez** (Valladolid University, Spain), **Desmond O'Neill** (Trinity College, Ireland), **Fridulv Sagberg** (TØI, Norway), **Joel Valmain** (European Commission), **Helmer Schweizer** (EUROMCONTACT)

Welcome by: **Prof. Herman de Croo** (Speaker, Belgian Chamber of Representatives) & **Jean-Pierre Fougère** (CIECA Secretary General)

Annex III of the EU Driving Licence Directive lays down "minimum standards of physical and mental fitness for driving" for the EU-27 (eyesight, locomotor disabilities, cardiovascular diseases, alcohol, drugs, etc). But as far as Group 1 category B (passenger car) drivers are concerned, it is up to each member state to decide on how to uphold these standards. Rules and regulations differ substantially on this issue from one country to another.

Mandatory ongoing medical testing is required for category B drivers in the majority of EU member states. Most of these countries begin to impose a medical testing requirement once the licence holder reaches late middle age, or older. Five member states require regular mandatory testing throughout the licence holder's entire driving career. Other countries have physician-reporting requirements, whereby general practitioners are obliged by law to report to the authorities any of their patients who they believe pose a risk to themselves and others while driving. One country works with self-declaration forms as a first step in the process, instead of obligatory medical tests for all licence holders. In stark contrast, 5 EU member states have no mandatory medical testing or declaration requirements for this category of driver at all.

Clearly, the objective of mandatory medical testing is to identify drivers who pose an unacceptable risk to themselves and others when driving. These drivers can then get the medical problem treated, compensate for – or learn to overcome - the problem, reduce the scope of their driving or stop driving altogether. Certain medical problems are considered to be more serious than others with regard to driving. For instance, the EU co-financed IMMORTAL project concluded that the following disorders are of particularly high prevalence and high relative risk: alcoholism, neurological disorders, psychiatric disorders, drug and alcohol-related disorders and diabetes.

However, many questions remain as to how effective mandatory medical testing is. For instance, which medical impairments constitute a high enough relative risk to justify mandatory screening of all licence holders? How prevalent are these impairments amongst the driving population? Are current medical testing procedures effective enough in diagnosing high risk drivers? What is the likelihood of false diagnoses? Are countries justified in imposing medical testing only on ageing drivers? What are the consequences of being subsequently deprived of one's driving licence? And what feasible alternatives to mandatory medical screening are there?

Two of our panelists in this debate (Dr Álvarez and Professor O'Neill) will present science-based arguments for and against mandatory medical testing for category B drivers. The remaining speakers will provide essential background information on relevant research and regulatory issues.

The European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) and The International Commission for Driver Testing (CIECA) invite you to a joint Transport Safety Lunch on fitness to drive in Brussels on the 5th of November 2008 between 12:30 and 15:15.

European Transport Safety Council

ETSC's Transport Safety Lunches are the site for openly debating promising and successful European approaches to prevent both accidents and injuries in transportation. They bring together decision makers from the transport sector in Brussels, thus establishing a platform to exchange information and views for all those interested in transport safety.

Following a buffet lunch the experts provide the audience with an insight into innovative transport safety work in the particular country. By addressing the most pressing problems they are paving the way for sharing knowledge and experience of how to best reduce transport-related accidents and injuries. The debates will explore possibilities of how key actors can develop the political and organisational leadership that it takes to implement effective safety schemes.

The Lunches provide good opportunities for both public authorities from all EU countries and private companies from all transport sectors to present their technical and organisational measures for the improvement of safety within the different modes of transport.



Professor Herman De Croo MP, Speaker, Belgian Chamber of Representatives

Joint Transport Safety Lunch organised by ETSC and CIECA

On 5 November 2008 from 12:30 to 15:15

Fit to Drive: Is *medical screening* the answer?

At Hotel Crowne Plaza Brussels Europa, Rue de la Loi 107
1040 Brussels

Free of charge
Limited seats

Registration: Mr. Daniel Ugarte, daniel.ugarte@etsc.be

Please register before 31 October 2008.

ETSC (www.etsc.be) and CIECA (www.cieca.be) wish to thank CIBA VISION for the financial support provided for the organisation of this Lunch.

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