



European Organisation of Agricultural, Rural and Forestry Contractors

Confédération Européenne des Entrepreneurs de Travaux Techniques Agricoles, Ruraux et Forestiers

Europäischer Zentralverband der land- und forstwirtschaftlichen Lohnunternehmer und ländlichen Dienstleistungsunternehmer

CEETTAR proposal for a EU Common Driving Licence for Agriculture And Forestry Machinery (T Licence)¹

The European Confederation of Agricultural, Rural and Forestry Contractors, CEETTAR, proposes an EU driving licence for agriculture and forestry vehicles, which is recognised by all EU member states, and which applies without discrimination all actors of the agriculture value chain (farmers and contractors included).

CEETTAR proposes to keep the already existing national driving licence (based on already existing national rules) without making it compulsory to implement a new T-driving licence for national agricultural use. However, a Member State will have to accept a driver with an EU driving licence, in the same way as it is today, for all road driving with the machines covered by the scope of the licence, regardless of the sector of activity in which the machines are operating.

At present, there is no EU driving licence for tractors or mobile machines, although these machines are harmonised according to EU regulations to ensure road safety. However, a majority of these machines are used outside the agricultural sector. Hence, the driving licence should apply both for agriculture and non-agriculture work.

The EU T-driving licence will foster the free movement of services and employees across borders. It will also improve road safety on all EU roads. Furthermore, in order to lower the costs of licencing, CEETTAR recommends to insert free licencing in educational curricula and to develop automatic licencing for experienced drivers.

CEETTAR proposes a two-tier (T1 and T) driving licence for agriculture and forestry machinery. The T1 tier is adapted for small farming activities, such as feed loading machines and cattle farms, whereas the T2 tier is valid for heavier and faster agriculture and forestry vehicles and for yellow machines (Non Road Mobile Machinery). For each of these tiers, there should be different speed and capacity limitations.

This CEETTAR position paper presents the state of the current existing EU legislation across the EU and develops into details the modalities of the new T-Licence.

¹ The CEETTAR position paper was adopted by CEETTAR Member Organisations, with the exception of the Fédération Nationale Entrepreneurs Des Territoires – FNEDT (France).

Context of the proposal

At present, there is no EU driving licence for tractors or mobile machines, although these machines are harmonised according to EU regulations to ensure road safety.

The lack of a harmonised driving licence presents various challenges for the free movement of services and employees across borders.

The lack of an EU driving licence for a tractor can also be a limitation in ensuring equal road safety on all EU roads.

We see that the machines are built in a neutral way (regardless of the users sectors) according to EU rules and we also see that a large part of these machines are used outside the agricultural sector, which make it difficult to apply to them the special rules designed for agricultural work.

Therefore, CEETTAR sees a need to establish an EU driving licence for tractors, which is recognised by all EU member states, but also allowing member states to choose to either keep their national driving licence they have today or implement the new EU T-driving licence for their national driving licence.

Current situation

To try to quantify the approximate amount of machines that require a T-licence, we have received input from a selection of EU member states. We only took into consideration active machinery that needs a T-licence to drive and there are used for business (in other words, we excluded the amount of veteran and machines driven as a hobby). Then we added machines used on construction sites where there are different laws for which of these machines require a T-licence to drive.

This estimate is based on the data that we have collected in five member states. Based on a sample of five countries (Germany, France, the Netherlands, Denmark and Ireland), we estimate the amount of total vehicles in all the EU member states that require a T-licence at about 6.3 million vehicles. This estimate refers to vehicles per hectare of agricultural land, in relation to the data we have received in the table below.

Number of active machines which require a T-licence to be driven	
Germany (only tractor)	1000000
France	400000
The Netherlands	400000
Ireland	92500
Denmark	70000

Due to geographical differences, there is a big difference in the different member countries' number of workers crossing the border, as well as companies working across borders. For example, in the Netherlands, 15% of their contractors work across EU borders.

When we look at how many employees work across borders, we see a larger number of workers. In Denmark, 9% of the workforce are foreign employees and 24,000 of these are distributed in the construction industry and agriculture, where they often need a driving licence to drive the machines they use. In Germany, mostly farmers employ 285,000 seasonal workers annually, (while the volume of seasonal workers for contractors in Germany is below 10%). The reason why we see a significantly smaller proportion of seasonal workers hired by contractors as compared to farmers is that contractors are using more high-tech machines, for which they demand a higher technical level. Nevertheless, the work in agriculture is still dependent on the foreign employee being able to use the tractors and NRMM machines to be used in the farm's operation.

The evolution of the machinery transport on road

We see that these machines run longer on the road than in the fields. This is because the agricultural areas are gathered around large farms, thus machines have to drive longer between the farm's own lands. However, the distance on the road, which can be covered, also increases as the efficiency of the machines increases (and thus a machine can cover a larger area). For instance, contractors often drive 30- 50 km just to reach their customer. The distance can be somewhat larger for very special equipment, such as special harvesters or slurry machines.

The European Green Deal integrates the idea of sustainability in such a way that, for example, agriculture can no longer be reduced to food production alone. Enriching soils with carbon dioxide, increasing groundwater recharge rates, improving climate resilience (heat waves and heavy rain events) in agriculture and forestry, stabilising biodiversity, etc. are important tasks of agriculture and forestry for rural areas.

This evolution is going to continue in the rate the farms are getting bigger and the demand for more specialized machinery will increase.

The legislation in the EU-member states today

In each country, there are differences in speed limits related to the type of licence and activity. Nevertheless, there are some similarities.

For instance, in Germany, Switzerland and United Kingdom, the specific types of licences, which include tractors, require an average speed limit 40 km/h concerning agricultural activities. Denmark, France, Sweden and Italy apply the same speed limit, but it concerns all types of activities.

On the other hand, in Germany there are some specific categories of licences with maximum speeds limits 60 km/h concerning agricultural activities. In Austria, the maximum speed limit must not exceed 50 km/h for all types of activities. However, in Belgium and Ireland, there are no maximum speed limits for agricultural and non-agricultural activities. In Finland, the maximum speed limit is up to 40-60 km/h (depending on tractors and type of licence) and concerns all types of activities.

In the Netherlands, for licence B and T the maximum speed is 40 km/h and there are no specific restrictions on mass, dimensions or maximum speed for young drivers (in the Netherlands the B-licence is only valid for driving agricultural vehicles, when obtained before 1st of July 2015). Italy also applies the same and there are no limits for mass, dimension, towing trailer, etc. About Poland and Switzerland, the types of licences that are required include tractors with a maximum speed limit of 30 km/h for agricultural activities. In Spain and Switzerland, the average speed limit is 45 km/h concerning all types and non-agricultural activities respectively.

There are also differences and similarities in terms of ages for obtaining a type of licence in each country.

In most countries, such as Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Spain and the United Kingdom, the minimum age of acquiring a type of licence that is required for agricultural activities is 16 years. In Denmark, Netherlands and Poland, the same minimum age is applied to get a type of licence, but it regards all types of activities. In Italy also, 18 years is the minimum age to obtain a licence concerning all types of activities. However, in some countries there are different minimum ages of acquiring a licence depending on the type of licence. For instance, in Finland, the minimum ages are 15 (T-licence) and 18 (B-, C-licence), and Austria from 16-18 for all types of activities. In Sweden also, may be 15 or 18 years depending on the type of licence concerning agricultural activities. This country and Switzerland have no limit for one specific type of licence as far as agricultural activities. Switzerland has 14 and 21 years as a minimum age for specific categories of licences respectively regarding agricultural activities.

For non-agricultural activities, in Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland and Spain, the minimum age for acquiring certain specific types of licences required is 18. In Sweden, the minimum age for acquiring certain other specific categories of licences is 21 years (18 years when part of education) and in Switzerland, 16 or 18 years, depending of the speed of the tractor.

Difference in agricultural use and non-agricultural use

There is a difference between the use of the machines and the required driving licence. Most member states assume that a tractor has been used for agricultural work and thus the driving licence becomes a driving licence for agricultural work. However, this is far from true everywhere, as in France and Germany, about 40% of the work done by tractors is non-agricultural work.

For the purpose of this document, non-agricultural work encompasses work for public authorities, such as municipalities, utility work, such as transportation for biogas plants, and all activities related to territorial amenities.

The exception in the driving licence directives is also based on agricultural work, but this exception becomes more difficult to maintain as Directive 167/2013 and the existing rules for Non Road Mobile Machinery are independent of the use. This means that we have several EU type-approved machines that are used on the road that do not require any EU driving licence to be used.

Benefits for the business: road safety

The main reason for making an EU T-driving licence is to ensure a minimum of competencies required to drive these machines safely on EU-roads, in the same way as the directives that describe how the machines must at least comply with a minimum of safety requirement for road use.

The most important safety component on any vehicle is the driver of the vehicle himself/herself! If his/her skills do not match the risk of the vehicle he/she drives, the vehicle will never be safe on the road, until we reach the point to have autonomous machines driving without a driver.

Ensuring a free movement of services and labour

By having a T-driving licence that is recognized by all member states, we can ensure that companies' services and labour can cross borders in the EU.

That is the whole reason why we have these EU directives on how products must be produced safely so that machines and products can cross borders freely. Moreover, if it is so important that products can cross borders freely, then it is just as important that companies and labour can cross borders freely.

Now, one of the few driving licences that cannot be used freely across borders are the national T-driving licences, without the need for special agreements between member states. Truck and car driving licences can be used freely across borders, to ensure free movement.

Harmonizing licences for harmonizing machines

Work is currently undergone at EU level to harmonize regulation for machines produced and imported to the EU. It makes sense to have a harmonized driving licence for these harmonized machines, because the same risks exist on a road in Germany as in the Netherlands.

Ensuring recruiting an educating driver from 16 years of age

The alternative EU driving licence that could be used for driving modern agricultural machinery would be a C driving licence. It will be strongly limiting throughout the agricultural industry the opportunity to recruit employees from the age of 16. Most people who start in agriculture start early right after finishing school. If we can only recruit people to drive with these machines when they are 21 years old, we will not recruit these and lose many good employees.

This will cause major problems in educating the employees for agriculture. Most education programmes are based on students and interns gaining experience in driving machines, which they must relate with the theoretical knowledge they gain at the next school stay.

The scope of machines covered by the proposed EU T-licence

The scope is a licence to be recognized by the member states. In parallel, member states should still be allowed to use their existing national agricultural T-licence. Member States are also allowed to implement the EU T-licence for national use, as done with car and truck driving licence.

The machines we propose that the new EU T driving licence should include are:

- Vehicles with a maximum construction speed of 40 km/h
- Vehicles covered by EU directive 167/2013
- The future Non- Road Mobile Machinery machines with maximum speed of 40 km/h
- Machines with the same characteristics of these to directives
- There should not be a possibility to make exceptions based on the sector for which these machines are operating.

This type of machines is already harmonized now or will be in the near future; therefore, it would make sense to harmonize the licence to drive these machines. We have set the speed limit at 40 km/h by the reason that if vehicles are able to drive faster, they should be driven with a C licence or a national licence. The member states could allow speeds up to 60 km/h for national use.

CEETTAR's proposal to a two-tier EU T-Driving Licence

CEETTAR proposes a two-tier (T1 and T) driving licence for agriculture and forestry machinery; the main tenets are:

	T1	T
	The licence is valid for agriculture and forestry vehicles and is particularly adapted for small farming activities, feed loading machines, cattle farms...	The licence is valid for agriculture and forestry vehicles and for yellow machines (NRMM). It is particularly recommended for heavier and faster vehicles.
Age	16	16
Vehicle or vehicle combination weight limit	20 tonnes	No weight limits at EU level (national laws can impose a weight limit)
Maximum construction speed	40 km/h	40 km/h
Road licence which automatically gives right to agriculture and forestry vehicles licence Equivalent for road vehicles	B licence automatically gives right to T1 licence	C licence automatically gives right to T licence
	You can get a AM licence for free, to drive a motorbike	You can get a BE licence free, to drive a trailer.
Examination	Theoretical examination + light practical examination	Theoretical examination + heavier practical examination

Three additional points are also of importance for CEETTAR:

- Driving licence should be both for agriculture and non-agriculture work;
- Obtaining the driving licence should be specific to the sector and accessible to widest number of candidates;
- There should be speed and capacity limitations.

What else is important for CEETTAR?

- Equality for all sectors: it is very important that, if a Member State implements the T-licence, it should be mandatory for all road driving with the machines covered by the scope of the licence. There should NOT be any exceptions allowed for any profession or sector. Otherwise, this would create an unfair business situation, where some sector would benefit of not having to comply with the T-licence requirement, and others in a nearby sector would suffer from an additional burden with this cost. At the moment, contractors are experiencing unfair conditions, as compared to the set of government support allocated to the farmers they are servicing. This includes a range of measures, from higher tax on diesel, higher road tax, or, in some Member States, specific regulation for using plant protection. We are expecting additional discriminatory decisions, such as on the CAP eco-schemes for field technology investment support from the member states. For all these reasons, we need to ensure that the implementing a EU T-licence will not add to this unfair discrimination and focus on the main goal of ensuring safety on the road for all road users, regardless of the sector in which the machines are operating. The need of safety is based on the type of machine and not on the sector it is used for- The financial dimension is also important. Currently, the cost of existing T licence can be expensive for one single contractor (up to 2000 euros in the Netherlands). CEETTAR recommends, either to insert free licensing in educational curricula, or to develop automatic licensing for experienced drivers.
- The modalities of the licensing exam should also be taken into consideration. CEETTAR may present an additional position paper on the topic.

What are our plan for implementing a T-licence?

We propose that, during a transitional period of maximum two years, it is permitted to acquire an EU T-driving licence by proven experience together with the driver having an EU driving licence for a car. This will lower adaption costs for existing companies and avoid Member States to have to establish a huge capacity for training new driving licence.

The driver should be able to obtain the licence with 2-3 years of practical experience in driving machines, as most of them already acquired a car licence, and with it the necessary knowledge of traffic rules. Then the driver would be able to apply to the national authorities for an EU T-driving licence on transitional terms.

CEETTAR's proposal for the impact assessment

When we talk about expected costs and what it will mean for the profession, we need to distinguish between costs to have in the beginning and costs when it is all implemented. Likewise, we must also distinguish between costs for the employer and costs for the Member State.

Based on our experience from the Netherlands, where they have implemented a new T-driving licence with the same competencies as what we are willing from an EU T-driving licence, the market price is about 1500- 2000 euros per licence. However, in more Member States, it will be part of an education with the support of the state and thus it will not be such a big financial cost for the employer.

CEETTAR propose a two tier T-licence to make the cost for the small farmer less, but also to those farmers who have labour only using machinery under 20 tons, as loading machines or smaller tractor

and trailer. These smaller machines can also be driven safely with a regular car-driving licence and in this case, there are no additional costs.

Costs for the Member State depend on how the Member State's existing T-driving licence is. If the national T driving licence is obsolete and needs to be renewed, it will be a direct financial gain by implementing a set of rules presented at EU level. Based on our experience, we see for example that drafting national legislation for type approval of machines in small series and single machines is expensive and costly, if we want to make comprehensive national rules. That is why these national approval rules use EU legislation as a starting point, where possible. This will also apply to an EU-T driving licence.

In conclusion, CEETTAR would like to keep the already existing national driving licence (based on already existing national rules) without making it compulsory to implement a new T-driving licence for national agricultural use. However, a Member State will have to accept a driver with an EU driving licence, in the same way as it is today.

About CEETTAR

The European Confederation of Agricultural, Rural and Forestry Contractors, established in 1961, represents about 150,000 companies and nearly 600,000 workers. It aims to represent the interests of land-based contractors in Europe. In 2014, the European Network of Forestry Entrepreneurs decided to merge with CEETTAR, resulting in a stronger and more representative single organisation representing land-based contractors at EU level.

CEETTAR aims to be a proactive force to benefit the contractors and the rural economy at European level. Its objectives are to:

- Represent the national federations and defend their professional interests in relation to the institutions of the EU. This way, CEETTAR is recognised as representative organisation for contractors towards the European Institutions,
- Represent the national federations and defend their professional interests towards other private organisations, which are active at European level and beyond. CEETTAR maintains constructive relations with COPA-CEGOCA (farmers), CEMA (agricultural machinery industry), EFFAT (workers)...