

REPORT ON THE THEORETICAL TEST

Categories B and B+E

MAY 1998

Report on the theoretical test of category B(+E)

Commission Internationale des Examens de Conduite Automobile, CIECA,

The "Commission Internationale des Examens de la Conduite Automobile" (CIECA) is an organisation for authorities in the field of driver licensing and was founded in 1956. It has an official status as observer to the United Nations.

The European Commission decided to subsidize a project entitled "Comparative analysis and practical guide on driver licensing in the European Union". To this end, several workshops were organised, one of which deals with the theoretical test.

This report is also available in German and French.

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Foreword by the CIECA President

It is an honour for me to present this report on the theoretical test for category B(+E). The fact that the European Commission has given CIECA the task to organise these workshops, demonstrates that our knowledge and experience are appreciated at an international level. The Driving Standards Agency in Nottingham and the Direction Générale de la Sécurité et de la Circulation Routières in Lille were proud to host the two workshops, which served as a basis for this report. This study forms part of the project "Comparative analysis and practical guide on driver licensing in the European Union". I am grateful to the Directorate General for Transport of the European Commission for subsidizing this project. Herewith I would also like to thank the experts from the 20 countries who participated to these workshops. This report would not have been possible without their expertise and hard work. I look forward to the presentation of this report at the CIECA congress in Tunis, in May 1998.

J.P. Vaessen

Summary

This report describes the recommendations the experts arrived at during two workshops, which have been organised within the framework of a project entitled "Comparative analysis and practical guide on driver licensing in the European Union", as well as the discussions which preceded them. The workshop participants are experts, not political delegates and the recommendations therefore reflect their expert opinions.

Directive 91/439/EEC served as a starting point for discussions on the contents. The points stipulated in this Directive have been analysed and restructured. Even though most countries now have a written theoretical test, the discussion on the form of the theoretical test did not result in any recommendations. The experts decided that the theoretical test should be a condition for access to the practical test and therefore should precede it. In order to allow candidates to review, there should be a minimum waiting period in between a theoretical test and a retest. CIECA will carry out further study regarding the possibility of a periodical theoretical test for specific groups, such as elderly and novice drivers. The validity of a theory certificate should not be longer than one year, because the theoretical and practical test should be as closely linked in time as possible. Furthermore, it was decided that each licence category should have its own theoretical test.

The above-mentioned recommendations constitute minimum requirements, based on best practice solutions. This implies that countries can impose stricter requirements if their legislation demands this.

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Introduction

In the course of 1997 and 1998 two workshops were organised by the "Commission Internationale des Examens de Conduite Automobile", CIECA, to analyse in detail the theoretical test and to outline joint recommendations for future developments. The workshops were attended by experts in the field of driver licensing.

The workshops focused mainly on theoretical test for category B. A separate theoretical test for category B+E was also under discussion. This then led to a further debate on the issue of a separate theoretical test for each category. These topics will therefore also be described in this report.

The first workshop on the theoretical test was hosted in Great Britain by the Driving Standards Agency (DSA) and was held in Nottingham on 17, 18 and 19 March 1997. It was attended by experts from fourteen countries:

Austria (**A**), Belgium (**B**), Germany (**D**), Spain (**E**), Estonia (**EST**), France (**F**), Finland (**FIN**), Great Britain (**GB**), Hungary (**H**), Luxemburg (**L**), Northern Ireland (**NI**), The Netherlands (**NL**), Portugal (**P**) and Sweden (**S**).

The second workshop on the theoretical test was hosted in Lille by the "Direction Générale de la Sécurité et de la Circulation Routières" of the French Ministry of Transport on 5 and 6 March 1998. It was attended by experts from six additional countries, thus bringing the total to twenty. These six new countries were:

Croatia (**HR**), Israel (**IL**), Latvia (**LV**), Monaco (**MC**), Norway (**N**) and Tunisia (**TN**).

The working method for this project was as follows: participants' responses to questionnaires were used to draw up a working document, which then became the basis for discussions during the workshops. In the first workshop, the participants started by presenting the theoretical test in their own countries, after which the discussion on the theoretical test in general took place. This gave the experts a clear overview of the various testing methods in Europe. The minutes of the workshops were sent to the participants for approval, after which they were elaborated in this report. The entire process was guided by the Steering Committee, who evaluated the workshop results and put forward recommendations for further discussions.

Many differences exist in the contents and form of the theoretical test in the participating countries. Therefore it is important to note here that the recommendations resulting from these workshops are the product of discussions amongst the experts themselves and do not reflect the present situation in the countries which they represent. The recommendations mentioned in this report are based on best practice.

This report is structured as follows; in order to give readers an overview of the theoretical tests in the participating countries, the first chapter starts with a presentation of the current situation by country. The report then deals with several aspects of the theoretical test. Each chapter first gives a brief description of the current situation. Subsequently the workshop discussions are summarized; positive and negative sides are compared. Lastly, specific conclusions and recommendations following each of the above are given.

The report has the following annexes:

- I) questions regarding first aid, environmentally friendly driving and the use of alcohol, drugs and medicine
- II) examples of theoretical test forms of the participating countries
- III) the names and addresses of the participants.

1. Current situation

The theoretical test currently given in the 20 countries represented at the workshops is described below in summaries of the presentations given by the experts.

In **Austria** the theoretical test consists of two parts: one on traffic rules and one on behaviour in traffic. Therefore examiners are either lawyers or technicians. Both parts must be passed before a practical test can be taken. Candidates are obliged to follow a driver education course of 40 lessons which usually takes three weeks, before they can take the theoretical tests. A total of 19 basic questions test the candidate's understanding rather than his/her knowledge. Since August 1997 these tests are computerized. They consist of basic multiple choice questions followed by "why" questions. In total there are 800 basic questions on fourteen topics.

In **Belgium** a computerized theoretical test was introduced in 1997. It consists of 40 questions, of which 32 must be answered correctly. There are 25 series of questions and 600 questions in total. Candidates may answer the multiple choice questions at their own speed, which usually takes fifteen minutes. The theoretical test is taken individually, but if candidates do not speak any of the three languages spoken in Belgium (Dutch, French and German), they may take a group test accompanied by an interpreter.

In **Croatia** the theoretical test must be taken before any driving lesson. Candidates must take 30 obligatory theory lessons at a driving school before they are allowed to take the theoretical test. The theoretical test is a written test which consists of 30 questions (category B) of which 27 must be answered correctly.

In **Estonia** written theoretical tests have been in existence since 1992, but if a candidate has language problems he/she may take an oral test. The theoretical test consists of fifteen multiple choice questions with two to six answers. There are five picture questions (mainly on traffic signs, crossings and position on the road) and ten text questions (about traffic rules, road safety, traffic psychology, first aid and the technical condition of the car). The test takes 25 minutes and 80 % of the questions must be answered correctly.

In **Finland** 65 % of the tests have now been computerized. The theoretical test is taken individually, at the end of which the reasons for a pass or failure are given by the computer. This procedure is quite cost-effective, as the computer does not need to be operated by an examiner.

In **France** the theoretical test is audiovisual. Up until now, candidates indicated their answers on a perforated card. Since April 1997 this card has been replaced by an answering box, similar to a remote control, with four buttons A, B, C and D to indicate the answers. Candidates look at 40 slides and are required to choose the correct answer(s) by pressing one or more buttons. There are ten series of slides, and 35 out of 40 questions must be answered correctly. Those candidates who answer fewer than 35 questions correctly receive a slip afterwards with the codes of the type of errors they have made. An interpreter is made available to foreigners.

In **Germany** candidates are obliged to follow 12 two-hour lessons of theory at a driving school as a condition for taking the theoretical test. The test is written and consists of 30 questions which are weighted according to their importance to road safety. Out of 96 points only 8 may be missed, which means that only two to three incorrect answers are allowed. The driving licence authorities may choose from 1300 questions in total. The written test exists in eleven languages. The theoretical test can also be taken orally if necessary. In December 1997, a computerized test was introduced for comparison with the written test as part of a pilot project in Nordrhein Westfalen.

In **Great Britain** and in **Northern Ireland** the procedure is as follows: candidates initially receive a provisional licence, after which they take the theoretical test, then the practical test and finally they obtain a full driving licence. The theoretical test is written and normally lasts 40 minutes. The theoretical test has been translated into seven foreign languages. The theoretical test for cars and motorcycles consists of 35 questions, of which 30 must be answered correctly. There are no requirements for the length or type of study. 57% of the candidates use the DSA theoretical test book. Future developments: in Great Britain the possibilities of audiovisual support are being explored.

In **Hungary** driver education involves 30 compulsory 45-minute lessons before candidates may proceed to the written theoretical test. The test consists of 50 multiple choice questions; the candidates choose from three answers, of which one is correct. 10 points out of 70 may be missed. At present those who do not speak Hungarian take oral tests with the help of an interpreter. The introduction of computerized tests is being considered for the future.

In **Israel** the theoretical test is a written, multiple choice test. It consists of 30 questions, of which 26 answers must be correct. The theoretical test takes 30 to 45 minutes. An oral theoretical test with the use of slides is given to people with language difficulties.

In **Latvia** the theoretical test is a written test, which is taken in a group. The theoretical test for category B consists of 10 questions, of which 9 must be answered correctly. Candidates must follow at least 116 obligatory theory lessons at a driving school before they are allowed to take the theoretical test.

In **Luxemburg** candidates are required to follow twelve one-hour lessons of driver education before they may take the theoretical test at a driving school. The tests are available in four languages: English, French, German and Portuguese. The test is written and candidates may only take an oral test upon request. The tests are multiple choice, and candidates choose from four, three or two answers. The questions are changed every six months.

In **Monaco** the theoretical test is a computerized test, which is taken in a group. For category B, the theoretical test consists of 40 questions, of which 35 must be answered correctly.

In **The Netherlands** the CBR started using audiovisual classroom tests with slides and a tape in 1984. A computer helped to give candidates immediate results. In 1996, a new CD-I system was introduced. The theoretical tests are still taken in groups, and the candidates have to press a yes/no button. The theoretical test can also be taken in English and Turkish. Individual tests can be taken in other languages, with the same CD-I system and an interpreter. The theoretical

test for category B consists of 50 questions, of which 45 must be answered correctly. More questions are asked about more important items, such as priority, changing directions and speed. In the future it may develop into a test taken in a simulator-created environment.

In **Norway** the theoretical test is a written test, which is taken in a group. The theoretical test for category B comprises 45 questions, of which 36 must be answered correctly. Candidates are not obliged to take theory lessons before the theoretical test.

In **Portugal** theoretical lessons at driving schools are mandatory. Candidates must follow a minimum number of lessons per licence category. Twenty-five 55-minute theoretical lessons are required for category B. The test is written and lasts 30 minutes. It consists of 25 questions, of which 22 must be answered correctly. Results are communicated orally immediately afterwards. The licence authorities have placed 2000 questions in a database and they are changed every three months. Portugal envisages to lengthen the theoretical test, consisting of 30 questions and lasting 35 minutes. It will also be computerized in the future.

In **Spain** the theoretical test is written. The test consists of 40 questions, of which 36 must be answered correctly. There are sixteen extra questions for categories A1, A, C, D and E. The tests last thirty to forty minutes and are available in English, French, German, Catalan and Basque. A video test for the deaf is being developed. The theoretical test certificate is valid for six months.

In **Sweden** the written theoretical test comprises 40 multiple choice questions, of which 36 must be answered correctly. Candidates may choose from four answers. The driving licence authorities have six series of tests. According to Swedish law, every person has the right to take the test in his own language. Therefore, the licensing authorities offer it in seventeen languages. However, manuals for study are only available in Swedish. If a candidate fails the test, there is a minimum two-week waiting period before he/she may be retested.

In **Tunisia** the written theoretical test is taken individually. It consists of 50 questions, of which 40 must be answered correctly.

Conclusions

There are many differences between the theoretical tests of the participating countries. In some countries the test questions are available in book form. The maximum amount of time allowed for the test also varies, as well as the number and variety of questions. Some countries use a set number of questions on paper and others make use of infinite combinations of questions on the computer. The participating countries all have a different weighting system. In some, candidates receive more points for questions according to their perceived priority to road safety. In others, more questions are asked on subjects which are important in terms of road safety, such as priority rules. The form the test takes also differs from country to country: it can be oral, written or computerized. In some countries, theory lessons before the theoretical test are mandatory (**A, D, H, HR, L, P**).

2. Contents of the theoretical test

The contents of the theoretical test was examined in the light of Directive 91/439/EEC on driving licences. The experts discussed the list of items and regrouped them.

Discussion

The aim of the discussion was to come to a general agreement on the basic contents of the theoretical test. The experts were of the opinion that it was not necessary to include every item in every test. For example, driver attitude can be tested by both the theoretical and the practical test. Despite some reservations regarding certain points (e.g., point 2, driver, could be tested more effectively in the practical test), the experts generally agreed with the list under discussion. In fact, in many countries these items already constitute the basis for the theoretical test.

Conclusions/recommendations

The regrouped items of Directive 91/439/EEC listed below constitute a solid minimum basis for the theoretical test.

A. Compulsory check of:

1. Road traffic regulations:
in particular as regards road signs, including markings, signals, right of way and speed limits
2. The driver:
 - importance of alertness and of attitudes towards other road users;
 - perception, judgement and decision-making, especially reaction time, as well as changes in driving behaviour due to the influence of alcohol, drugs and medicinal substances, state of mind and fatigue
3. The road:
 - the observance of safe distance between vehicles, braking distances and road-holding under various weather and road conditions
 - risk factors related to various road conditions, in particular as they change with the weather and the time of day
 - characteristics of various road types and the related statutory requirements
4. Other road users:
 - specific risk factors related to the lack of experience of other road users and the most vulnerable categories of users, such as children, pedestrians, cyclists and people whose mobility is reduced
 - risks caused by other various types of vehicles and the different fields of view of their drivers
5. General rules and regulations and other matters:
 - rules concerning the administrative documents required for the use of vehicles
 - general rules specifying how the driver must behave in the event of an accident

(switching on warning devices and raising the alarm) and the measures he/she can take to assist road accident victims where necessary
- safety factors relating to motor vehicles and passengers

The following items may be assessed alternatively during the skills and behaviour test:

6. Precautions necessary when exiting from the vehicle
7. Random checks on the condition of the tyres, lights, reflectors, steering, brakes, direction signals and audible warning device

B. Random check of one of the following points:

1. Mechanical aspects with a bearing on road safety; ability to detect the most common faults, in particular in the steering, suspension and brake systems, tyres, lights and direction signals, reflectors, rear-view mirrors, windscreen and wipers, the exhaust system and seat belts
2. Vehicle safety equipment and, in particular, the use of seat belts and child safety equipment
3. Rules regarding vehicle use in relation to the environment (appropriate use of audible warning devices, moderate fuel consumption, reducing harmful exhaust emissions, etc.)

2.1 Theoretical Test Questions

The experts were asked to send in examples of theoretical questions concerning specific subjects, such as environmentally friendly driving, drugs, medicine, alcohol and first aid. These questions can be found in Annex I of this report.

GB, N, S, D and **NL** all include questions on environmentally friendly and economical driving. In all the participating countries, the theoretical test contains questions on drugs, medicine and alcohol.

GB, F, D, A, S, N, E, L, NL include questions on first aid. These mainly concern practical issues, such as what to do in case of an accident. The theoretical test contains no medical questions with regard to first aid. **D, A** and **H** issue mandatory first aid certificates. The licensing authorities in **GB** and **NL** are also considering introducing first aid certificates, as they expect it will encourage drivers to act in cases of road accidents.

3 Form of the theoretical test

The form of the theoretical test differs greatly from country to country. The advantages and disadvantages of the oral, written and computerised forms were examined. The experts also briefly discussed the use of moving images versus still pictures. As far as the theoretical test for category B is concerned, the most commonly used format is the written theoretical test.

3.1 The oral theoretical test

Current situation

Most countries provide an oral theoretical test only for candidates with reading problems, e.g. dyslexia, or for foreigners. In this case, the oral test is complementary and usually based on the written test. There are only a few countries which have regular oral theoretical tests (NL (categories C and D only) and S (categories A and B+E only)).

Discussion

Administering the test orally presents obvious drawbacks, as the quality of the test depends very much on the examiner. He must be able to determine if a candidate's knowledge of traffic rules and regulations is sufficient to drive safely. This method does not guarantee the validity and reliability of the theoretical test, and it is also quite time consuming. Therefore, this was not the most preferred form for the standard theoretical test. Nevertheless, the experts agreed that oral testing remains suitable for foreigners and candidates with reading problems.

3.2 The written theoretical test

Current situation

The most commonly used form is the written theoretical test (B, EST, F, D, GB, NI, H, L, E, S, P).

Discussion

Although most countries make use of written theoretical tests, the disadvantages of this form were also considered. Failure in the written test is sometimes caused when candidates understand the traffic rules, but do not understand the way the questions are put. Therefore, it is important to phrase the questions as clearly, correctly and simply as possible. It was also suggested that questions first be used in trial tests in order to gauge their degree of difficulty and make any adjustments necessary.

Benefits of the written theoretical test:

- if the questions are phrased correctly, it can be understood and handled by candidates of all educated backgrounds
- more than one candidate can take the test at the same time in a classroom situation
- the written theoretical test is relatively cheap
- the written theoretical test is objective.

3.3 The computerised theoretical test

Current situation

A few countries (A, B, FIN, MC, NL) now offer computerised theoretical tests. The advantages and disadvantages of the computerised theoretical test were discussed at length in the light of future developments in this area.

Discussion

Advantages:

- questions can be updated easily
- the order of the questions can be changed easily
- central control creates greater efficiency
- young people are familiar with computers
- results can be given immediately after the test

Disadvantages:

- higher initial costs are involved
- lack of familiarity with computers may create practical difficulties in taking the test
- computerised tests must be completed within a time limit, whereas some countries prefer to allow candidates all the time they need.

3.4 Moving images versus still pictures

Current situation

Most countries make use of still pictures. These can be shown as slides, but most countries use ordinary pictures. The option of using film or video was also discussed briefly in the context of future developments.

Discussion

The pictures used for the theoretical test differ in quality and form from country to country. Ideally, the experts would like to see the theoretical test match reality as closely as possible. This led them to explore the use of new types of images. Since real traffic is always in motion, demanding constant vigilance from the driver, the option of using film or video was considered.

However, experience in the Netherlands shows that it is difficult enough to obtain suitable images for slides, let alone for film or video. Furthermore, moving images would make the questions more ambiguous. Lastly, film and video images are more expensive and some candidates might find a theoretical test involving moving images too difficult. Apart from that, film and video add nothing new. Therefore, it was decided not to recommend moving images.

Conclusions/recommendations

No particular form of the theoretical test is recommended. Every form has its advantages and disadvantages and therefore the experts could decide on any specific form for the theoretical test.

4. Timing of the theoretical test in relation to the practical test

Current situation

Many situations arise on the road which go beyond the scope of any practical test. Therefore certain aspects need to be tested in the theoretical test. In **B**, **HR** and **H**, passing the theoretical test is a condition for admission to subsequent practical training. In most countries however, passing the theoretical test is a condition imposed before taking the practical test.

Discussion

Several reasons were mentioned for having the theoretical test precede the practical test. Firstly, because theoretical knowledge of traffic rules would enhance road safety during the practical test. Behaviour cannot be tested, but knowledge about it can be learned. The knowledge gained in the preparation for the theoretical test should support the practical training and the practical test. If the theoretical test is taken before practical training, it prepares a candidate better for the situations he/she may encounter in traffic. It was also suggested that driver licensing authorities should specify the subjects to be studied by candidates before they are actually allowed on the road. Secondly, because theoretical knowledge gained prior to practical training would increase the efficiency of the latter, as the necessary competence of the candidate in certain areas would already have been tested. The experts considered it sensible that candidates should have to demonstrate knowledge and understanding before they are required to apply practical skills. Moreover, candidates who passed a practical test first, but had difficulty with the theoretical test could be tempted to drive without a licence.

Conclusions/recommendations

- The theoretical test should be taken before the practical test because passing the theoretical test should be a condition for admission to the practical test

5. The waiting period between two theoretical tests

Discussion

The experts generally agreed that there should be a waiting period between two theoretical tests to allow candidates to review. Certain experts were of the opinion that there should be a minimum period of at least one week between two theoretical tests. The waiting period often exists for administrative reasons.

A survey in Great Britain indicated that the average number of hours study for a theoretical test varies from 3 to 11 hours, which would make it difficult to justify a waiting period of more than 3 days.

The workshop decided not to specify the waiting period because it is closely linked to the administrative system in each country.

Conclusions/recommendations

- There should be a minimum waiting period between the theoretical test and a retest. This period could be enforced legally.

6. Periodicity of the theoretical test

The introduction of periodical theoretical tests and/or extra training could apply in the following cases:

- Traffic offenders (speeding, aggressive driving behaviour or alcohol abuse), who could be required to take a theoretical test as part of their sentence. Instead of being prosecuted, they could follow a theoretical course, possibly combined with practical training. This option already exists in some countries, usually combined with psychological training.
- Certain countries offer advanced courses for drivers; these could also include theoretical training and/or a theoretical test.
- Voluntary refresher courses could be set up with a focus on new traffic rules and regulations.

Discussion

It is difficult to prove the positive effect of periodical testing on road safety. It was generally agreed that although many drivers know the rules, they do not follow them. Certain experts were of the opinion that general driver education has very little positive effect, but that targeted education works, for example in Austria, where fewer young people have been involved in accidents since the introduction of a probational driving licence. Other experts pleaded in favour of a point system, whereby frequent offenders must appear before a commission, after which they may have to attend training. In Finland tests were developed for elderly people which can be taken on Internet. By making driver education easily accessible and interesting, driver licensing agencies can help reverse the prevailing image of driving tests as a punishment.

Conclusions/recommendations

More research should be done on extra training for beginning and elderly drivers. CIECA will focus on these topics again this summer in its 1998 questionnaire (with a clear distinction between voluntary and compulsory tests / training).

7. Validity of the theoretical test certificate

Current situation

At present the theoretical test certificate has the following validity in the countries that were represented at the workshops:

EST, E, FIN, LV:	half a year
D, S, L, A, NL, TN:	one year
P, F, H, NI, GB, HR, MC*:	two years
B:	three years
N:	five years

* In Monaco, the certificate is valid for 2 years for category B and 3 years for other categories.

Discussion

The experts all agreed that the theoretical test and the practical test should be closely linked. In Norway, the lengthy validity of the theoretical certificate is justified by the lifelong validity of the driving licence. However, the Norwegian experts also agreed that the time lapse between the theoretical test and the practical test should be as short as possible.

Conclusion

The period of validity of the theoretical test certificate should be as short as possible, with a maximum of one year.

8. Theoretical test for category B+E and other categories

One of the subjects not dealt with in the first workshop was the necessity of a separate theoretical test for category B+E. Directive 91/439/EEC stipulates that there should be a separate theoretical and practical test for every driving licence category. Furthermore, point 7.1 of Annex II of the Directive stipulates that:

Any applicant for a licence in one category who already holds a licence in a different category may be exempt from the common provisions of point 7 of this Annex.

Current situation

In certain countries, for example **F**, separate (oral) tests are offered for all categories. Common sections must be retested when candidates apply for another licence category. **A**, **FIN** and **D** ask questions regarding all the categories in the theoretical test. In **D** the theoretical test for categories B, C1, D and D1 also cover the trailer categories B+E, C1+E, D+E and D1+E, but for category C+E there is a separate theoretical test. In **A** and **NL**, questions on the trailer category are included in the category B theoretical test. In **S** and **FIN** there are separate tests for trailer categories. In **FIN** these theoretical tests are not as long as those for basic categories.

Discussion

The Steering Committee outlined 3 different models and brought the following points to the debate:

- 1) no separate test, but basic questions within the theoretical test which cover the trailer category;
- 2) a distinction between written and oral formats in order to provide separate theoretical tests for all categories;
- 3) a separate test for every category, including a common section identical for all categories and a specific section geared towards each separate category.

These models are in vigour in the various countries represented within CIECA. Adoption of one model would have asked major modifications of the theoretical test in countries where another model is used.

However, as the experts discussed the redefinition of category B+E, and the vehicle criteria in particular, questions arose on the advisability of a separate theoretical test for the trailer category E. This led to further discussions on a separate theoretical test for each category. The Steering Committee put forward two proposals for tackling the question of separate theoretical tests for all categories:

- 1) a separate theoretical test for each category, which would oblige the candidate to refresh his/her knowledge, even if the previous theoretical test had been passed within the previous year;
- 2) the common section of the theoretical test, which is identical for all categories, does not need to be redone if the candidate can present a valid certificate from an earlier theoretical test he/she has passed. Otherwise, the candidate will have to complete both the specific and the common sections. This proposal is in line with the recommendation that the theoretical test certificate remain valid for a maximum period of 1 year (see above).

With regard to theoretical tests for separate categories, and in particular for category B+E, the experts are nearly unanimous in their support for a separate theoretical test for each category. The British participants were not in favour of separate theoretical tests per category, as they felt that the questions regarding the trailer category could be introduced in the tractor category. Finally, they were of the opinion that the British public would not favour separate tests.

It was the explicit wish of the experts present not to make any recommendation on theoretical tests for subcategories. Rather, it was decided to make it the task of future studies and/or workshops to gather the information necessary for coming to sound decisions in this area.

Conclusion/Recommendation

There should be a separate theoretical test for **each** category.

Conclusions

Even though many differences still exist between theoretical tests in European countries, the experts attending the CIECA workshops reached agreements on some major points, such as the contents, the timing and the period of validity of the theoretical test.

As far as the contents of the theoretical test was concerned, the experts did not elaborate too much. Directive 91/439/EEC stipulates a number of important items, which should be tested in the theoretical test. The experts studied these and regrouped them. The list should be seen as a minimum basis, not as a complete list.

The main aim of the theoretical test is to prepare a candidate to real traffic situations. The knowledge gained as a preparation for the theoretical test should enhance road safety during the practical training and support a candidate at the practical test.

Even though the written theoretical test is most commonly used for category B, all forms have their benefits. The computerised theoretical test certainly holds promises for the future, but for the time being was not preferred by a majority. The use of moving images was rejected because it would not enhance the quality of the theoretical test. Furthermore the cost effectiveness of the introduction of film or video images is low. It should be left to countries themselves to decide which kind of delivery they use, no particular form of the theoretical test was recommended.

All experts agreed that the theoretical test and the practical test should be closely linked in time. They concluded that the theoretical test should precede the practical test. Theoretical knowledge gained prior to the practical test would not only enhance road safety during the practical training, it would also increase the efficiency of the training. For similar reasons passing the theoretical test should be a condition for access to the practical test. For these reasons it was decided that the period of validity should not be longer than one year at the most.

The main reason for determining a minimum waiting period between the theoretical test and a retest is that it allows candidates to review. The administrative system in the various countries differed too much for the experts to reach a common agreement on the length of the waiting period. This decision is left to the countries themselves.

If drivers are to be periodically tested on their theoretical knowledge, this test should be targeted at specific groups, such as beginning and elderly drivers. CIECA will carry out further study on this topic in the near future.

The experts agreed that there should be a separate theoretical test for each category. The subcategories will be subject of future study.

The recommendations arrived at in this report should be regarded as minimum requirements. If countries wish to impose stricter requirements, they can do so.