

# CIECA Report Medical Fitness to Drive Psychiatric Illness / Mental Health

Report covering the answers to the questionnaire  
about medical fitness to drive and psychiatric illness / mental health  
final / October 2019

CIECA Topical Group on Fitness to Drive  
Sub group 2: Setting Standards for the Evaluation of Medical Fitness to Drive  
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the answers in the questionnaire regarding “Psychiatric Illness / Mental Health” which was sent to 31 countries within Europe (Questions 1 – 4 below). Responses were provided by 15 countries (Austria, Belgium, Czech Rep., Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden), although some of the countries did not answer all the questions. The questionnaire was not answered at all by 16 countries. The countries who did not answer some of the questions or where the answers needed further clarification were contacted again, and in some cases an answer or clarification was received.

Part two of this report lists the questions sent to the countries and the answers received. Part three contains a conclusion concerning fitness to drive and vision, based on the answers.

## 2. SUMMARY / OVERVIEW

Answers to questions in the questionnaire “Psychiatric Illness / Mental Health Issues”.

### 2.1 Notification of psychiatric illness / mental health issues

**How is psychiatric illness** (e.g. schizophrenia spectrum and psychotic disorders, depressive and anxiety disorders, bipolar disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorders, trauma and stressor-related disorders, eating disorders, addictive disorders, personality disorder *(BUT NOT neurodevelopmental disorders [autism, ADHD and disruptive behaviour disorders which is covered in a separate questionnaire])*) **notified to the Driving Licensing authority in your country?**

A number of routes were possible for notification even within some individual countries. Self-declaration ranked equally with physician reporting as the most common forms of notification (SE, F, UK, IRL, E, BE) followed by physician reporting (NO, D, P, FIN, CZ) sometimes after specific time periods of illness (FIN): one country uses a medical certificate at the time of licence application and renewal (DK), and one country bars physicians from reporting (F). If the driver comes to the attention of the police, they can inform the driver licencing authorities (A, F, FIN, D). Family or third parties can inform in two countries, and one country did not require notification (BE). One country has devolved notification to federal states (D) but processes are largely related to medical and police staff.

### 2.2 Process from notifying to obtaining or retaining driving licence.

**Please describe the process from notifying psychiatric illness** (e.g. schizophrenia spectrum and psychotic disorders, depressive and anxiety disorders, bipolar disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorders, trauma and stressor-related disorders, eating disorders, addictive disorders, personality disorder *(BUT NOT neurodevelopmental disorders [autism, ADHD and disruptive behaviour disorders which is covered in a separate questionnaire])*) **to obtaining or retaining driving license for group 1 and group 2.**

For virtually all countries this involved the provision of certification by a physician. In one country (UK) there is a driver questionnaire, can be supplemented by questionnaire to doctor. In one other country (E) there is routine assessment by physician and psychologist at licence application and renewal.

### 2.3 On-road assessment

**Are on-road driving assessments used as part of the medical fitness to drive process for drivers with psychiatric illness** (e.g. schizophrenia spectrum and psychotic disorders, depressive and anxiety disorders, bipolar disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorders, trauma and stressor-related disorders, eating disorders, addictive disorders, personality disorder *(BUT NOT neurodevelopmental disorders [autism, ADHD and disruptive behaviour disorders which is covered in a separate questionnaire])*)?

On-road assessments were possible in 4 of 15 countries, but not routinely: in general, this was where the assessing doctor was unable to clarify medical fitness to drive.

## 2.4 Adequacy of Annex III

**Do you feel advice given in the Annex III for psychiatric illness / mental health is adequate and appropriate?**

Only 2 of 15 countries considered Annex III not to be adequate or appropriate.

### 3. CONCLUSION

Possibly reflecting the lack of evidence of the risks arising from psychiatric illness / mental health<sup>1</sup>, the vast majority of European countries who responded considered that Annex III, which is relatively broad and non-specific, was adequate in terms of advising on driving and psychiatric illness / mental health. This would seem to indicate reliance on individualized assessment. This is supported by the fact that medical certification is the key element in procuring a licence after notification in nearly all countries.

The responses from the different European countries have shown that the procedure to notify driving licensing authorities of psychiatric illness / mental health issues is heterogeneous, ranging from self-declaration, to physician reporting to opportunistic notification by healthcare providers.

It is unlikely that more uniform guidelines can be developed in the absence of stronger evidence of risk profiling for specific syndromes in terms of medical fitness to drive. However, in conjunction with notification profiles from other medical conditions in this CIECA project, it may be possible to develop consensus on which drivers with psychiatric illness / mental health issues should notify the driving licence authorities at application, renewal and between licensing emergent illness. In addition, pathways for reporting and assessment need to be developed for drivers detected by police or healthcare professionals as having driving problems related psychiatric illness / mental health issues.

### 4. RECOMMENDATION

- a) The European Commission should consider funding further research linking medical records of drivers with psychiatric illness / mental health issues and crash rates
- b) The CIECA research project should collate the processes for notifying relevant diseases to licensing authorities, and aim for a synthesis approach specifying the responsibility of drivers, healthcare professionals and police in the presence of psychiatric illness / mental health issues of sufficient gravity to affect medical fitness to drive.

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<sup>1</sup> Unsworth CA, Baker AM, So MH, Harries P, O'Neill D. A systematic review of evidence for fitness-to-drive among people with the mental health conditions of schizophrenia, stress / anxiety disorder, depression, personality disorder and obsessive compulsive disorder. BMC Psychiatry. 2017 Aug 31;17(1):318.

# Annex

## Austria

FTD - psychiatric illness / mental health

Topic	Description
How is psychiatric illness notified to the Driving Licensing authority in your country?	There is no defined system - on occasion, possibly by police if they get the information
Please describe the process from notifying psychiatric illness to obtaining or retaining driving license for group 1 and group 2.	The medical expert of the authority makes the decision with additional certificate of a medical specialist in the respective field
On-Road Assessments?	No
Annex III appropriate?	Yes

## Belgium

### FTD - psychiatric illness / mental health

Topic	Description
How is psychiatric illness notified to the Driving Licensing authority in your country?	It is not notified to the authority. The MD diagnosing such a disease is only to inform his patient and take the adequate FTD decision. The authority is not notified.
Please describe the process from notifying psychiatric illness to obtaining or retaining driving license for group 1 and group 2.	If in process of obtaining first DL: a self declaration form is to be filled in. This should lead to obtaining a FTD declaration by a psychiatrist or other MD based on psychiatrist report.  if it is an acquired condition, when there is already a DL: the MD diagnosing should deliver a FTD declaration (positive or negative). This should lead to a new DL or the obligation to surrender the DL
On-Road Assessments?	Yes: When the psychiatrist or other MD refers to the specialised FTD evaluation centre, the practical driving evaluation is an option.
When are on-road assessments used?	it is always an option, the idea being to verify that that the medical condition has no consequences on safe traffic participation. However, it is very rare that there are such consequences that could not be noticed otherwise
Who is involved in on-road assessment?	driving experts, with paramedical (OT mainly) background
Annex III appropriate?	No: it is too general, but it would need an elaborate study to reformulate it. Perhaps again not the diagnosis is determining, but the functional consequences. An adequate follow up and monitoring is necessary, but that involves a lot of investment. Of course the aspect of medication is not to be forgotten.



## Czech Republic

FTD - psychiatric illness / mental health

Topic	Description
How is psychiatric illness notified to the Driving Licensing authority in your country?	Every physician has a duty to notify patient's eventual disability to local authority (that means not only to registering GP).
Please describe the process from notifying psychiatric illness to obtaining or retaining driving license for group 1 and group 2.	Patients with severe mental illness (diagnoses from group 1) are not able to obtain or retain driving license. Patients with milder forms of illness can obtain driving license with permission from psychiatrist.
On-Road Assessments?	No: Specific traffic psychological tests sets are used incertificated equiped laboratory.
Annex III appropriate?	Yes

## Denmark

### FTD - psychiatric illness / mental health

Topic	Description
How is psychiatric illness notified to the Driving Licensing authority in your country?	Through a medical certificate when applying for a driving license or renewal of a driving license.
Please describe the process from notifying psychiatric illness to obtaining or retaining driving license for group 1 and group 2.	Concrete medical assessment of preemtness and assessed the person who has not been counted then given a "medical" driving ban. if the person does not follow a "medical" driving ban, the doctor must report to the authorities, ie. the police by a healthcare report to the Danish Patient Safety Authority (pursuant to § 44 if the Authorization act).
On-Road Assessments?	No
Annex III appropriate?	Yes

## Finland

### FTD - psychiatric illness / mental health

Topic	Description
How is psychiatric illness notified to the Driving Licensing authority in your country?	Psychiatric illness is not notified to the authority but if a person doesn't meet the driving health requirements for six months or longer the physician has to inform the authority (police)
Please describe the process from notifying psychiatric illness to obtaining or retaining driving license for group 1 and group 2.	After police is notified that a person doesn't meet the driving health criteria police will impose a driving ban. If the situation gets better and the person meets again the criteria, physician writes a new medical certificate that is posted to police and the person retains his/her driving license. Sometimes police requires that the medical certificate is written by physician with same specialty as the original announcement that the person does not meet the driving health criteria.
On-Road Assessments?	Yes: On-road assessments can be used
When are on-road assessments used?	Physician can refer a driver to on-road assessment if he/she has difficulties to evaluate the situation otherwise
Who is involved in on-road assessment?	Physician refers the driver to on-road assessment and gives the evaluating driving instructor information on what matters to pay attention to (for instance ability to concentrate or alertness).
Annex III appropriate?	Yes: better place for mental retardation and behavioral problems due to aging (caused usually by dementia) would be among neurological diseases

## France

### FTD - psychiatric illness / mental health

Topic	Description
How is psychiatric illness notified to the Driving Licensing authority in your country?	<p>By law, a physician is not entitled to report a medical condition to the licensing authority (this is completely forbidden in France, due to the rule of medical confidentiality (see "General" Q 4a and Q 7)</p> <p>If family or police think there is a problem regarding the person's fitness to drive, the procedure is the same for a mental issue as for a physical illness : they can notify the problem to the local administrative licensing authority, the "préfet" (representing the state authority in every "département").</p>
Please describe the process from notifying psychiatric illness to obtaining or retaining driving license for group 1 and group 2.	<p>If a member of the family (or police) has notified a problem, the "préfet" summons the person to a medical examination with a certified physician. If this GP considered it necessary, he asks for the opinion of a psychiatrist. Eventually the certified physician decides if the person is allowed to obtain or retain a driving licence. The procedure is the same for group 1 and group 2 licences.</p>
On-Road Assessments?	No
Annex III appropriate?	

## Germany

### FTD – Dependence: psychiatric illness / mental health

Topic	Description
How is psychiatric illness notified to the Driving Licensing authority in your country?	It depends on the region, means, it's not the same procedure all over Germany. In some regions (for example Bavaria) mostly the driving Licensing authority notified it, because the person is coming to the hospital by the police according to our law (=Unterbringungsgesetz) and the authority for public affairs (Ordnungsamt) gives a message to the Driving Licensing authority. The other way is only to attract attention (unusual behavior) during driving or outside the road traffic, telling the police something about psychotropic medicine or something like this. In such cases our law (§ 2, chap. 12) obliged the policeman to inform Driving licence authority. This is a relevant duty of the policeman in cases with impairments of fitness to drive.
Please describe the process from notifying psychiatric illness to obtaining or retaining driving license for group 1 and group 2.	Having a schizophrenia means, beside very favorable course of illness, not to be allowed to drive group 2, also if someone has some episodes of manie or deep depression, he is not allowed to drive group 2. Group 1 is possible after a positive medical examination, mostly as a conditional suitability (Bedingte Eignung, Auflagen), means for example to give the Driving license authority in certain intervalls an attest from the treating doctor that everything is okay etc. Personality disorders, eating disorders or anxiety disorders, Trauma etc. are not described in our assesment guidelines (only dementia) and the medical expert has to look if there is a comorbidity with deep depression for example. Other forms of comorbidity are possible according to our Assessment Guidelines that have to be utilized: Substance Abuse (alcohol or drugs), dissociative disorders accompanied by loss of awareness for example.
On-Road Assessments?	No
Annex III appropriate?	Yes: The current architecture of requirements and regulations by law are quite balanced among scientific and legal areas so that it is difficult to define upper advices by the EU-level because they might not be compatible with the local architecture of recommendations, requirements and experiences within our country.

## Great Britain

### FTD - psychiatric illness / mental health

Topic	Description
How is psychiatric illness notified to the Driving Licensing authority in your country?	Self declaration via post, telephone or online and third party medical notification i.e. General practitioner, police, concerned members of the public.
Please describe the process from notifying psychiatric illness to obtaining or retaining driving license for group 1 and group 2.	Medical questionnaire to be completed by the driver and returned to DVLA. On receipt, where appropriate a medical questionnaire is sent to the driver's registered medical practitioner.
On-Road Assessments?	Yes: Occasionally, but uncommonly, used when investigating mental health condition when sole diagnosis. It is more common that driving assessment may be required for a psychiatric illness in combination with other conditions.
When are on-road assessments used?	As above, especially if psychiatric illness is diagnosed alongside another relevant condition such as cognitive impairment.
Who is involved in on-road assessment?	Initial medical questionnaire from GP or specialist (Psychiatrist) then on road driving assessment performed by Forum of Mobility Centres at specialist assessment centre.
Annex III appropriate?	Yes

## Ireland

### FTD - psychiatric illness / mental health

Topic	Description
How is psychiatric illness notified to the Driving Licensing authority in your country?	By self-declaration at licence application or renewal: doctors advised that they should advise driver to inform National Driver Licencing Service (NDLS) if the medical advice is to abstain from driving for six months or greater (Group 1 and 2) for most psychiatric conditions: for alcohol and substance misuse/dependence doctors advised that they should advise driver to inform (NDLS)
Please describe the process from notifying psychiatric illness to obtaining or retaining driving license for group 1 and group 2.	Doctors advised that they should advise driver to inform National Driver Licencing Service (NDLS) if the medical advice is to abstain from driving for six months or greater (Group 1 and 2) for most psychiatric conditions: for alcohol and substance misuse/dependence doctors advised that they should advise driver to inform (NDLS). Licence removed or retained on the basis of medical certification
On-Road Assessments?	No
Annex III appropriate?	Yes

## Lithuania

### FTD - psychiatric illness / mental health

Topic	Description
How is psychiatric illness notified to the Driving Licensing authority in your country?	each person who wants to get a driving licence must provide a medical certificate to the traffic authority. If the doctor sees a health problem which a listed in the Health minister Oder (all psychiatric illness mented above), when this certificate can be issued only if the doctor decide that health conditions won't interfere driving ability.
Please describe the process from notifying psychiatric illness to obtaining or retaining driving license for group 1 and group 2.	Health is checked by family physician and psychiatric depend on the age group every 10, 5, 2, 1 years or individually, depend on the health condition (detailed psychiatric test and consultations).
On-Road Assessments?	Yes
When are on-road assessments used?	Each person who wants to get a driving licence must provide a medical certificate to the traffic authority. If the doctor sees a health problem which a listed in the Health minister Oder, when this certificate can be issued only if the doctor decide that health conditions won't interfere driving ability.
Who is involved in on-road assessment?	Family physician and psychiatric
Annex III appropriate?	Yes



## Luxembourg

### FTD - psychiatric illness / mental health

Topic	Description
How is psychiatric illness notified to the Driving Licensing authority in your country?	By a mandatory medical examination of every new application for a driving licence by a general practitioner on a special mandatory medical certificate. Sometimes, information is provided by judicial authorities.
Please describe the process from notifying psychiatric illness to obtaining or retaining driving license for group 1 and group 2.	Follow up by regular psychiatrist certificate every 6 or 12 months.
On-Road Assessments?	No
Annex III appropriate?	Yes

## Norway

### FTD - psychiatric illness / mental health

Topic	Description
How is psychiatric illness notified to the Driving Licensing authority in your country?	The Norwegian Road Authority is notified by a medical administrator via the county doctor
Please describe the process from notifying psychiatric illness to obtaining or retaining driving license for group 1 and group 2.	If the GP would consider suffering to last shorter than 6 months, he/she could give a meat to the patient. Over 6 months, the county doctor must be notified that will require a driving ban or driving assessment. Execution not allowed during unstable periods.
On-Road Assessments?	Yes: Your doctor will notify your County doctor who may require a driving assessment and make a decision about the patient's driving right.
When are on-road assessments used?	Disease and the patient's response to medicinal products and lack of disease insights. No disease insights should always be added to the assessment.
Who is involved in on-road assessment?	Medical practitioner, specialist, county physician
Annex III appropriate?	Yes: Our driver's licence guide provided by the health authorities is at all times updated in relation to EU directives

## Portugal

### FTD - psychiatric illness / mental health

Topic	Description
How is psychiatric illness notified to the Driving Licensing authority in your country?	Especially by family doctors or by doctors or psychologists while practicing their profession.
Please describe the process from notifying psychiatric illness to obtaining or retaining driving license for group 1 and group 2.	A medical evaluation is performed to check for congenital or acquired mental disorders that affect driving.
On-Road Assessments?	No
Annex III appropriate?	Yes

## Spain

### FTD - psychiatric illness / mental health

Topic	Description
How is psychiatric illness notified to the Driving Licensing authority in your country?	Normally they are not notified due to problems with the data protection law. It is in the reviews for obtaining or renewing the permits where either the driver declares it or the problem is detected by the medical doctor and the psychologist. In that case they ask the patient to provide a report from the psychiatrist or psychologist who treats him.
Please describe the process from notifying psychiatric illness to obtaining or retaining driving license for group 1 and group 2.	See the previous answer.
On-Road Assessments?	No
Annex III appropriate?	Yes

## Sweden

### FTD - psychiatric illness / mental health

Topic	Description
How is psychiatric illness notified to the Driving Licensing authority in your country?	In case of new licenses, notification is done by the driver himself using a health self-declaration. If the person already has a driving license and doesn't fulfill the medical requirements for driving licence, physicians and GPs have a legal obligation to report the driver to the Swedish Transport Agency (STA).
Please describe the process from notifying psychiatric illness to obtaining or retaining driving license for group 1 and group 2.	<p>When person apply for a driving licence he/she fills out the health self-declaration where information about psychiatric illness is included. If the self-declaration states that the person has a psychiatric illness the STA perform a medical enquiry and request a supplementary medical certificate from a specialist doctor. If the certificate indicates that the driver meets the medical requirements and is assessed to be able to drive safely, the application is approved.</p> <p>If a physician's or GP's notification to the STA clearly shows that the driving skills are impaired because of a psychiatric illness and road safety is compromised, the driving license is revoked by the STA. If the notification is unclear or insufficient the STA perform a medical enquiry and request a supplementary medical certificate from a specialist doctor. If the certificate indicates that the driver meets the medical requirements and is assessed to be able to drive safely, the driving license is retained.</p>
On-Road Assessments?	No
Annex III appropriate?	No: The regulations in the Annex III are unprecise and lack criteria for when driving licenses may be issued or renewed and when the medical conditions are to be regarded as effectively treated. The Annex III has to comprise much clearer medical requirements that applicants or drivers have to meet to be regarded as fit to drive.