



PRESS RELEASE

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EU Directive Costing Lives

The British Aggregates Association, BAA, is warning that an EU Directive designed to make our roads safer has backfired and made them a great deal more dangerous instead.

The Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (DCPC) is a new requirement for professional bus, coach and lorry drivers. It has been introduced by the EU with the stated aim of 'improving road safety and helping to maintain high standards of driving.' The legislation came into effect on 10 September 2009 with five years allowed for existing drivers to gain the 35 hours training required. The period of grace expired 10 September 2014 but many drivers either didn't complete the training or left instead. Eight other EU countries have delayed implementation of DCPC until September 2016.

The consequent shortage of drivers has forced hard pressed transport operators to use less experienced, younger and foreign drivers to keep their trucks working. Despite many complaints, the Department for Transport, DfT, has so far refused to acknowledge any problem. However, their inaction could leave them with blood on their hands. An ongoing series of horrific accidents have caused suspicion that the new legislation may be costing lives rather than protecting them. Two cyclists were mown down in Cornwall just 40 miles into their 960 mile Land's End to John O'Groats charity ride. The young truck driver was short of sleep and had been texting repeatedly at the wheel. A twenty year old girl was killed and her fiancé seriously injured when their car was struck by a truck driver watching an online dating site. A motoring correspondent was pronounced dead at the scene when a truck ploughed into the rear of his car on an M25 slip road. No doubt all three drivers had a piece of paper certifying that they were 'professionally competent.'

Our lorry drivers used to be famed for their skills, however, most regard this scheme as an insult to their intelligence and many are packing in rather than return to school. Drivers complain that the modules are simply box ticking exercises with few qualified instructors. They are required to complete five seven hour sessions but can repeat the same module five times. Foreign drivers have passed without understanding a word that has been said, others whilst fast asleep and certificates are also available on the black market.

The HGV accident rate, which had been in steady decline, is now rising again since the introduction of the CPC. By the time accident statistics for the post September 2014 cut-off feed through it could be too late for many innocent motorists, cyclists and pedestrians.

BAA Director Robert Durward;

"Unfortunately, what we have seen so far may only be the tip of the iceberg as court cases can take a year or more to come to court. Starving industry of transport is crazy; however, causing many thousands of inexperienced truck drivers, some who cannot even speak our language to drive 44 tonne trucks alongside private cars, bikes and pedestrians is positively insane. This is not so much a case of 'something must be done,' this time something needs to be undone, and quickly.

It is of course virtually impossible to argue against legislation to 'save lives.' There have been so many episodes like this that most people now simply shrug their shoulders in defeat. However, this one is different – very different! Almost all of us will encounter HGVs whilst going about our daily business and any accident involving a truck with a car, pedestrian or bicycle can be very serious indeed. DfT are now risking all of our lives with their head-in-the-sand attitude.

The best way to achieve a safe and cost effective haulage fleet is to allow professional operators to run their businesses properly. They are best placed to judge a driver's capabilities but their ability to select only competent drivers has been seriously compromised by this ill-conceived legislation. LGV CPC has back-fired and is almost certainly killing innocent people as well as strangling the economy. It must be scrapped or postponed in line with other EU countries."

Notes to editors;

1. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cornwall-28983049> Robert Palmer, 32, pleaded guilty at Truro Crown Court to two counts of causing death by dangerous driving. Palmer also admitted injuring another driver in a crash two months later, while he was on bail over the deaths.
2. <http://www.expressandstar.com/news/local-news/2014/05/31/fatal-crash-lorry-driver-was-watching-porn/> "Ian Glover was flicking through profiles of women on an explicit dating website when he hit a Vauxhall killing 20-year-old Laura Jane Thomas."
3. <http://www.sloughobserver.co.uk/news/roundup/articles/2014/06/09/100995-lorry-driver-pleads-guilty-in-fatal-m4-crash-case/> "Anthony Rourke, pleaded guilty to causing death by careless driving at Reading Crown Court. John Connor died after his Nissan Qashqai was hit from behind by a lorry being driven by Rourke, close to the M25 junction slip road."
4. <http://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/Lorry-driver-jailed-causing-fatal-smash/story-20398078-detail/story.html> A Polish lorry driver caused a fatal head-on collision by driving on the wrong side of the road because he forgot he was in England.
5. <http://news.sky.com/story/1135193/german-trucker-jailed-for-fatal-m25-smash> A German lorry driver smashed into stationary traffic on the M25 killing an elderly man and leaving two other people seriously injured
6. <http://www.commercialmotor.com/latest-news/some-european-drivers-could-avoid-vosa-driver-cpc-action> Eight EU countries have delayed implementing DCPC until 2016 but their drivers are still legally entitled to drive in the UK.
7. The British Aggregates Association is the representative trade body for the UK's independent quarry industry. We have over seventy member companies who collectively operate some three hundred sites. Our members are also engaged in ready-mix concrete, asphalt and recycling operations. www.british-aggregates.co.uk
8. The UK quarry and recycling industry delivers over 200 million tonnes of aggregates every year by road, this equates to some 10 million fully laden lorry movements.
9. A more extensive non-copyright article is attached for further information.
10. Christmas could be delayed. <http://theloadstar.co.uk/fta-cpc-driver-shortage/>

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