



Country case study
on the implementation of directive 2003/59/EC
Hungary



Deliverable:	No 07	Version:	1.0
WP:	2	Last update:	31.08.2011
Prepared by:	Peter Klingler, DEKRA Albasafe Akademie Kft.		

A. Baseline

A system of initial qualification and periodic training for professional drivers already existed for several decades. It was several times modified but its main pillars remained the same. They led to a very specific sub-structure, a division of professional drivers into the following categories:

1. Drivers, who were only active on national level, within the borders of Hungary,
2. Drivers, who were active on national and international level, abroad,
3. Drivers, who did transport for company purposes only (works traffic).

Drivers belonging to category 1 had to do once an initial qualification (5 days training, 8 hours/day, final written and oral exams) and could afterwards work without any additional trainings. Drivers belonging to category 2 had to do an initial qualification (5 days training, 8 hours/day, final written and oral exams) which's curriculum to a certain extent varied from the one Cat 1. had to do (e.g. international paperwork, traffic rules and signs). Having successfully passed the final written and oral tests, the international drivers had the right to work for a maximum of 5 years. At the end of this period, they had to participate in a periodic training session, which was practically the same like the initial qualification. Drivers belonging to category 3 did not even have to do an initial qualification. The relevant driving license was enough to let them to work for a company.

The whole system, all curricula and examination regulations were setup and controlled by the National Transport Authority (Nemzeti Közlekedési Hatóság, NKH), which was under the auspice of the Ministry of Transport. It was as well this state authority which carried out examinations and accredited private education providers for giving training in this field. Only companies accredited by NKH were able to train truck drivers.

It has to be mentioned that another opportunity to become professional driver was and is existing in Hungary. In direct comparison to the mentioned system it is a by far longer, from a certain perspective deeper going education of up to 600 hours out of which 70% are theory and 30% practice. This is a so called OKJ-education (Országos Képzési Jegyzék) and as such part of Hungary's national qualification framework and linked to the Ministry of Education. It is, however, not in demand at all, as everybody votes for the shorter and cheaper solution of NKH. Additionally it is told that the OKJ-education is not reflecting the needs of the nowadays job profile of a professional driver.

The coexistence of these two systems is a result of a rivalry of influences and competences, principally between the Ministries of Transport and Education. It is as well the reason, that the system in use of NKH is not integrated into the VET.

B. Preparing for the Directives implementation

By order of the Ministry of Transport, the National Transport Authority (NKH) defined a work group of experts which started to deal with the task of setting up a concept for the transfer of all requests coming from the EU-Directive into the existing Hungarian system. A proposal was worked out, later on discussed between NKH and the relevant Parliamentary committees and in its basic ideas as well taken over into the final version. These basic ideas are as followed:

- The initial qualification can be obtained through test only.
- The periodic training can only be obtained through a test at the end of 35 hours training.
- Due to the already existing system and its inherent substructure of drivers into categories with varying starting situations, the implementation of the new system will be introduced step by step with various deadlines:
 - truck drivers who finished their initial qualification before the deadline of 09.09.2009 and only had a license for working in Hungary have to do a first periodic training latest before 09.09.2014;
 - truck drivers who finished their initial qualification before the deadline of 09.09.2009 and were active on national and international level only have to keep their rhythm of 35 hours periodic trainings within 5 years, meaning their individual deadline;
 - truck drivers who only did transport for company purposes only (works traffic) and did not have any initial qualification yet, have to do a first periodic training latest before 09.09.2012.
- Professionals who until now only drove small trucks and/or transporters (2.8-3.5 t) had to do an initial qualification as well. Due to the EU-Directive, there is in the future no need for them anymore for any kind of additional qualification or training besides the driver's license and the regular medical test which is regularly requested in Hungary.
- The Official Curriculum + Syllabus is to be designed by the experts of the National Transport Authority and regularly updated. Experts are employed by the Training and Testing Supervisory Department, The National Transport Authority, Head Office, Central Road Transport Office, Division Training and testing Supervision.

Until today many transport company owners react cautiously restrained towards the fact that the implementation is in progress – simply because it is about something new. Knowing about what is going to come up or has already happened, they tend to react relatively relaxed, for two reasons: 1. the number of training hours remained the same for initial qualification and periodic training (for former drivers on international level), which means that these driver's downtime is not going to change (and this is nowadays the majority of drivers, mainly at bigger haulier companies). 2. the costs related to initial qualification and periodic training are usually paid by the drivers, so even there no change is to be expected for transport company owners. In general, the way the Directive was implemented does not cause too many changes to the structure of education and training of professional drivers, which already existed in Hungary before 9.9.2009.

C. Directive implemented

As already mention within topic A. Baseline, the way of implementing the Directive in Hungary ensured a smooth transfer from the already existing system of initial qualification and periodic training into the new system by

keeping the given best-practices of the past and building-in the requests coming along with the Directive and ensuring the anchoring the national regulations. The "test only" decision finally lead to a kind of "status quo" arrangement between the National Transport Authority (NKH) and the training companies. NKH gave out the recommendation to set the initial qualification to 5 days, just as it was before, in the "old" system.

As a result of the specific situation in Hungary, a coexistence of the used system setup by the National Transport Authority (NKH) and a not-demanded VET-approach, setup by the Ministry of Education, initial qualification and periodic training are not part of Hungarians NQF.

The NKH is responsible for the accreditation of those training companies who want to train professional drivers, for the curriculum, the examination regulations, the examination itself and the handing out of the licenses. After many details of how the concrete implementation will be managed and how the curriculum will look like were at the beginning for a long time unclear and some of them only officially published right before the deadline of 9.9.2009, the implementation is in progress and obviously not facing any serious problems. NKH is trying to support the implementation by informing about the relevant changes on their homepage, they own magazine and at various occasions. However, there are still many drivers and entrepreneurs who are not or not sufficiently informed about the changes. Additionally, many existing drivers of previously (point A.) mentioned category 1 (with national license only) and 3 (works traffic) seem to wait until the very last moment of their individual deadline until they go for their first periodic training – in order to save time (until the next 5 years period starts ticking) and money. It was, however, as well possible to observe some months before the first deadline, 9.9.2009, that drivers of these two categories/groups decided to do for the initial qualification for international drivers exactly for the same reason: to win time (from the exam day on, for each of them a 5-years-period for the next, first periodic training started to count, according to the old system) and to save money (there were rumours that the new period training is going to be much more expensive; on the other hand those drivers who already had a license for national transportations only had to do a shorter education and an easier exam, in order to get the international license).

D. Exams

Examination is done by NKH, the National Transport Authority, which is defining time and locations (often at the approved training institute) for exams and sending out assessors. All test materials and procedures are on the basis of domestic legislation and EU harmonised wherever necessary.

Driver should know everything as for D/L acquisition and for CPC as per the Directive. Theory test sheets are evaluated by the use of "correction templates". Case studies are scored by different scores as per the difficulty of the question. Candidate's scores are added and either candidate passes or he/she fails. Candidate passes the theory test if he/she reaches 60% (60 points of 100).

The subjects are as followed:

Theory:

Rational driving based on safety regulations; application of regulations; health, driving safety, service, logistics

Practice:

On-road driving; Practical knowledge relating vehicle driving; driving on a special terrain or on simulators

Theory test in detail:

Besides the examinees, only examiners, tellers and testing supervisors may be present in the testing room. In case of a written test (test sheets + case studies), examinees fill in the form with their personal data and start answering test questions by signalling of the examiner simultaneously at the same time. Filled test sheets are collected from the examinees as they signal to be ready by raising their hands or at latest as the time of the exam

expire. In case of a failed test (subject), only the failed test of that subject has to be repeated. Theory tests can be led by two examiners only (simultaneously).

Written tests contain 40 test questions per subject (there are 3 subjects as per the Directive - see above). Written tests should be done both at the initial qualification and at the periodic training. There are always 3 x 40 = total of 120 questions to answer. Maximal failed points are 10 per subject.

The case study test is physically handled in a separate room. Case studies are arriving at the scene in closed envelopes. Depending on the number of candidates, there are several series (marked with A, B, C, etc) of case study papers, all closed in envelopes by categories. Envelopes may be opened in the test room only, immediately prior to the start of test. Closed envelopes with the case study solutions may be opened after the last filled case study is collected from the candidates. Candidates sitting next to each other should be given case study sheets of different category only (A, B or C, perhaps D, ...). If a candidate fails in answering case study correctly, the test has to be repeated.

Practical test in detail

Practical test only has to be done for the acquisition of the initial qualification. The three test elements should be regarded as separate test events. If candidate fails only that test element has to be repeated in which he/she failed. Practical test evaluation is done right at the scene after completing the test element.

Test questions for practical knowledge are tell me - show me like questions that are answered orally or shown by the candidate, these are regarded as practical tests. Candidate chooses a test question sheet from a stack of 3 (= three subjects as per the Directive) and answers a tell me - show me like question. There are several questions on a test sheet. Examiner evaluates upon the overall performance of the candidate.

Next type of practical test is driving on a special terrain or by the use of a top-of-the-range simulator. Following exercises have to be completed:

- stopping by emergency braking
- stopping by emergency braking on partly dry/partly slippery surfaces
- curve techniques
- passing narrow corridors also while bending.

Next practical test element is the on-road driving. Test is evaluated right after driving. The same test evaluation sheet is to be used as for the D/L acquisition, however with less failure marks only (7 vs. 10). Driving test examiner has to be with special regard to the eco-driving concept.

E. Periodic training

From the perspective of the basic idea of the Directive, Hungary is exceeding the given requests by building in a mandatory written test after the 35 hours of periodic training course. The reason for this solution can be seen in the past, as the system of qualification and regular training which existed before the implementation of the Directive included as well a test at the end of the training for the international drivers. Consequently, the authority in charge of implementing the new Directive did not want to step back regarding once established standards. On the other hand, the mandatory written test automatically forces to do the 35 hours of training in one block, within one week with the test at the end. This way, the once intended flexibility of the approach is lost and the time-out of truck drivers is a complete week.

F. Execution of the training by public and private providers

Training institutes, which are usually private companies, are delivering the trainings based on Directive 2003/59. For the official accreditation which is issued by NKH you need to prove that you have sufficient trainers with all relevant qualifications experts, all relevant training materials and premises for theory and practical courses.

Providers usually offer both, initial and periodic training.

G. Reflection on the implementation

The responsible state authority, NKH, is today observing first positive effects of the Directive. Among them can be mentioned "the diminishing of the road accidents, a better preparedness of the drivers and a better image of the employers and of the whole country" abroad. Seen from this perspective, the Directive to a certain degree already now brought what it should bring.

The common understanding among drivers, entrepreneurs and to a certain extent even schools about the Directive, however, is a wrong one. The whole implementation is rather perceived as an additional burden, which is making their everyday, hard life in times of a bigger economic crisis even more complicated – independent from the fact, that the changes are for some of the stakeholder rather small or even invisible.

There are no signs that the initiative led to an increase of driver's employability yet. It might be too early, on the other hand other factors like the economic crisis which is still very much present in Hungary and caused in general a high unemployment rate is influencing the driver's market much more. In general, however, it has as well to be underlined that based on the given general situation in Hungary (drivers are usually not employed but work with sub-contracts for bigger hauliers, drivers are earning little money and the economic success of the whole industry is built on this fact (competitiveness on international level), drivers have to pay all trainings by themselves, education is not part of Hungarian NQF) there is only very little, rather theoretic chance that the initiative with its in-built intention will once lead to an increase in driver employability.

Despite some deviating perceptions of different stakeholders, a kind of slight improvement into the direction of a better education, more openness and seriousness towards the issues of safety, environment and sustainability can be observed and has the potential to work in the long-term as a basis for further, deeper going improvements.

H. Competition and European context

(Can we indeed speak of a EUROPEAN directive? Is there a level playing field? Does the implementation of the directive enable a better comparability of qualifications of professional drivers from different European countries? What is the opinion of the branch, the stakeholders, the schools?)

There is no such perspective of any of the stakeholders in Hungary and cannot be, simply because they have no comparative values from other countries and are otherwise concentrating on their business, which usually comes along with a national restricted perception.

I. Prospects

No plans or trends yet.

For further information on the project please consult:

www.project-profdrv.eu

For further information on the paper please contact:

peter.klingler@dekra-akademie.hu