

## Notification by the Commission – TRIS (2018) 01659

Draft for a Finnish Government proposal to the Parliament concerning the modification of legislation on vehicles, driving licenses and certain other related laws.

## Statement by the motorcycle section of The Association of Finnish Technical Traders

### Background:

During the period 2010 to 2017 the number of registrations of motorcycles has diminished in Finland by over 50 per cent, and during the same period the registrations of mopeds has diminished by up to 60 per cent. This has led to drastic adaptation measures within the field: consolidation of the businesses, bankruptcies of dealers and significant redundancies of staff at importers and retailers. This is largely due to the changes made in 2011 to the Finnish legislation on driving licenses as well as to the economic downturn.

Since the Government proposal for new legislation on light cars (kevyt auto) became public also the number of registrations of L6e vehicles has diminished by 63,9 per cent during the current year. A significant market disturbance has already now been brought about by the Government proposal which would, by an artificial solution which is not in line with the EU classification of driving licenses (M1->T) allow 15-year old drivers to drive M1 vehicles.

### Summary:

- The definition in the EU Directive on driving licenses (article 4.4) is clear: A vehicle is a motor vehicle unless its main purpose is agricultural or forestry work. By creating a national vehicle class which is close to an agricultural tractor will not turn a car into an agricultural tractor. The AM driving license is only valid for vehicles with a total weight of maximum 425 kg (6kW and 45 km/h).
- The Government proposal will not achieve its stated objective of improving road safety of young people. The Report by Trafi which was used as a basis for the proposal concludes unambiguously that substituting heavier and faster light cars for L6e vehicles will not improve road safety.
- If L6e vehicles or mopeds have problems related to vehicle safety or road safety, these should be dealt with on EU level and not by setting up national solutions.
- The conditions for moped and motorcycle businesses will deteriorate significantly during short and long term in Finland if the Government proposal on a new light vehicle class is accepted.
- The proposal should be dropped, and instead an examination should be started on EU level on the best ways to improve road safety among young drivers.

Justification:

**1. The Government proposal is not in line with the EU Directive on driving licenses.**

The definition in Article 4.4. of the Directive is clear: a vehicle is a motor vehicle unless its main use is for agricultural or forestry work. The creation of a special national vehicle class, which resembles an agricultural tractor, will not turn a car into an agricultural tractor. The AM-license is only valid for vehicles with a total weight of maximum 425 kg (6kW and 45 km/hour). The vehicle class proposed by the Finnish Government does not fulfill these criteria. A vehicle in the proposed new class, with a fixed speed limit, is still a motorized vehicle requiring that the driver has a B-license.

**2. Compared to L6e vehicles, road safety will not be significantly improved.**

The draft Government proposal argues, based on a number of reports, that improvements to road safety will be achieved because light cars (kevytauto) will to some extent replace mopeds, which compared to light cars have higher risks. However, the proposal also concludes that compared to L6e vehicles road safety will not be improved. "If road safety is estimated at the current risk level of L6e vehicles, the impact on the number of victims is fairly neutral."

Similarly, when the Swedish institute for traffic accident investigations (Trafa) compared accidents with L6e vehicles to accidents with the Swedish A-tractors, the yearly number of L6e vehicle accidents was clearly smaller than accidents with A-tractors. It can therefore be concluded that the Government proposal will not improve road safety compared to L6e vehicles.

**3. Safety for other road users will deteriorate.**

The proposal states that "the larger the mass of the light car as compared to a L6e vehicle could to some extent increase the severity of the consequences for the unprotected party of an accident". According to the proposal the maximum allowed mass of the light car would be 1500 kg (total mass in this case could easily be > 1800 kg for example for a car registered for 5 persons). A vehicle with a higher mass and higher speed, when in the hands of an inexperienced driver, is a risk to the driver, his/her passengers and to third parties, in particular to light traffic / pedestrians and cyclists. It should also be noted that it is not difficult to bypass the speed limiter of the light car which means that the maximum speed of such vehicles could be up to or even more than 160 km/hour. A significant increase in speed increases risks for everyone on the roads. L6e vehicles can of course also be tuned up, but their maximum speed even when tuned up will not increase over 70 km/hour, which is considerably less than the maximum speed of light cars.

4. According to a report by Trafi, the introduction of cars with speed limiters increases significantly the use of motorized vehicles in the age groups with high risk taking traffic behavior.

This, together with the characteristics of a car, such as its significantly higher mass, speed and acceleration than those of a L6e vehicle, makes it clear that the proposal under preparation will not lead to overall improvement of road safety but rather to the opposite.

5. Emissions from road traffic will increase

According to the report by Trafi it is possible that there would be up to 41 000 cars with speed limiters on the roads in Finland. Even at the lowest estimate the number would be 12 000 which is considerably higher than the current number of L6e vehicles (8100) in Finland.

According to Trafi, the consumption of fuel increases in all scenarios on the introduction of the light car because the fuel consumption of the light car is significantly higher than that of a moped or a L6e vehicle. Trafi also estimates that a light car would be used much more than a moped or a L6e vehicle. This means that if the proposal is accepted CO<sub>2</sub> emissions would increase in all scenarios. According to Trafi's report, in the mean scenario CO<sub>2</sub> emissions will be up by about 20 per cent which is a significant increase.

It is clear that emissions from traffic will increase according to all scenarios in the proposal. The impacts on air quality of increased traffic, as well as on the wearing of streets and street dust, should also be taken into account in particular when estimating total emissions from city traffic.

**Finnish motorcycle importers propose that the draft Government proposal should be dropped and instead an examination should be started on EU level on the best ways to improve road safety among young drivers.**

Additional information:

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