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Working Party on Road Traffic Safety

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COLLECTION AND DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

National road safety requirements

Submitted by Latvia

The following amendments to road traffic legislation entered into force in 2004:

**1. Maximum permitted blood alcohol level for novice drivers
reduced to 0.2 gr/1000 cm**

The decision to lower the level for novice drivers is based on scientific research. The level for other drivers remains at 0.5 gr/1000 cm.

2. A penalty point system is introduced

Drivers who have not committed offences have 0 penalty points. The maximum number of penalty points is 10 for novice drivers and 16 for other drivers and leads to a 1-year disqualification. The maximum number of penalty points for a single offence is 8 for the most serious offences such as drunk driving or leaving the scene of an accident. Penalty points last for 2 years or in the case of serious offences (8 points) for 5 years.

If, within a 10-year period, a driver twice reaches the maximum number of penalty points, he/she receives a life-long disqualification, but has the right after 5 years to apply for a driving licence as a novice driver. There are opportunities for drivers to reduce the number of penalty points by participating in driver improvement courses or theory tests.

The following written notifications are sent to drivers when 4, 8, 12 and 16 (10 for novice drivers) penalty points are registered:

1. letter recommending the driver to drive more carefully;
2. letter recommending participation in driver improvement courses;
3. letter recommending a theory test;
4. notification of disqualification.

If courses are attended or a theory test is passed, the number of penalty points is reduced by 2 points. If the driver ignores the test or fails it 2 penalty points are added. Courses can be attended and a theory test taken only once in a two-year period.

In addition to the penalty point system, a significant revision of the penalty system has been undertaken. Fixed penalties for smaller offences have been introduced. Also possibilities to use automated enforcement methods and equipment have been introduced in legislation.

3. Mandatory registration of mopeds

From 1 June 2004, only mopeds which are registered and have a number plate are allowed to participate in road traffic.

4. Driving licences, vehicle registration documents and number plates completely harmonized with EU Directives

From 1 May 2004, when Latvia became an EU member State, all driving licences, vehicle registration documents and number plates issued fully comply with EU Directives.
