



Driver & Vehicle  
Licensing  
Agency

## Response to consultation

Exchange of Driving Licences Issued in  
Republic of North Macedonia, Taiwan,  
Ukraine and United Arab Emirates (UAE)



Interactive document



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## Response to consultation

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Taiwan, Ukraine and United Arab Emirates (UAE)

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## March 2021

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## Consultation question

**Are you aware of any reason why the DVLA should not take this proposal forward?**

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### 01. Executive summary

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) asked for views on allowing drivers with a driving licence issued in the countries/territories and for the specified category of vehicles detailed below to exchange it for a GB equivalent, if the driver becomes resident here.

- North Macedonia: cars only
- Taiwan: cars only
- Ukraine: cars only
- United Arab Emirates: cars and small motorcycles not exceeding 125cc.

There were 83 responses and 73 were in favour of the proposal. Consideration has been given to the issues raised in responses that opposed the proposal. However, the evidence for these issues is not clear and in light of the evidence from the assessment of testing standards in each of the countries/territories and the potential benefits to licence holders, the Government intends to implement the proposal. As with all driving licence exchange agreements, arrangements will be monitored and reviewed if issues are identified.

### 02. Introduction

The consultation ran between 26 November 2020 and 23 December 2020. It was published on GOV.UK and brought to the attention of 17 organisations with an interest or responsibility within motoring, driver licensing or road safety. Analysis and consideration of the responses has now been completed and decisions taken on next steps.

### 03. Background

Driving licences issued by countries outside of the European Economic Area (EEA) are only valid for driving in GB for 12 months. After this period, the driver must obtain a GB licence.

GB law provides for the designation of countries or territories outside the EEA for the purpose of driving licence exchange. Designation orders are already in place for 16 other countries/territories. This means that licences to drive specified categories of vehicles issued by their authorities can be exchanged for a GB equivalent without the need to take a driving test here.

Following requests from their respective governments, the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) has considered allowing specified licences that were issued in North Macedonia, Taiwan, Ukraine and United Arab Emirates to be exchanged for the GB equivalent if the holders of such licences become resident here.

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The current driver testing standards in each of these countries/territories have been assessed and the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency has approved the standards for cars in respect of North Macedonia, Taiwan and Ukraine, and for cars and small motorcycles not exceeding 125cc in respect of United Arab Emirates.

Each of the licensing authorities in these countries/territories has also agreed to put in place arrangements to allow for the exchange of equivalent GB licences in their territory.

### 04. Responses to the consultation exercise

There were 83 responses to the consultation, which is higher than usual for consultations on licence exchange proposals. This reflects the fact that the consultation related to a number of countries and territories and perhaps that more licence holders from these countries reside in GB. The DVLA would like to thank everyone who responded.

A large majority (73 out of 83 responses) supported the proposal. Where clarified, the most common reason given was that testing standards for the specified vehicle categories are equivalent and so there is no value in requiring the driver to repeat a test to get a GB licence.

Where respondents were opposed, the only reason given was the suggestion that driving licences in Ukraine could be obtained unofficially and without having to take the test and that this was reflected in Ukraine's road safety statistics.

### 05. Disclosure of information

None of the respondents to the consultation asked for their response to be treated as confidential.

### 06. Government response and next steps

The consultation document highlighted the benefits of the proposal for individual driving licence holders. As driving tests in these countries/territories meet GB standards, requiring drivers to undergo a driving test here to get a GB licence represents an unnecessary burden. The consultation responses overwhelmingly supported this. There may also be benefits to GB licence holders from the reciprocal arrangements that will allow them to exchange their licence for one issued in these countries/territories.

It is recognised that road safety statistics for countries/territories being considered for designation may not be comparable to the UK. Given the outcome of the assessment of the testing standards for the specified vehicles, these are unlikely to be a factor. Road safety may be affected by other factors unique to those territories (e.g. speed limits) and will not affect driving in GB. We are not aware of any formal evidence of the ability to obtain driving licences unofficially in these countries.

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The DVLA has procedures in place to identify potential issues. Countries/territories are notified when one of their licences is exchanged and are expected to advise if there appears to be any issue e.g. there is no official record of that licence holder. Evidence of repeated issues with exchangeable licences will be raised with the relevant licensing authority and exchange arrangements reviewed if necessary.

We consider that any risks with allowing the exchange of licences issued by these countries/territories for the specified vehicles is low and do not justify withholding the benefits that it would provide to individual licence holders.

It is expected that the legislation supporting this change will come into force on 20 May 2021. Until then existing arrangements will apply. Drivers resident in GB with licences issued in North Macedonia, Taiwan, Ukraine and United Arab Emirates can continue to drive in GB using that licence for up to 12 months from the date they became resident. To ensure continuous driving entitlement beyond that 12-month period, a GB driving licence must be obtained by passing a driving test. To take a driving test, a provisional driving licence must be obtained, although provisional licence conditions would not apply until the expiry of the initial 12-month period.

Driver licensing is a devolved matter in Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland Assembly will consider its own legislative provisions.

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