



Driver & Vehicle
Licensing
Agency

Exchange of car driving licences issued in the Republic of Moldova

Response summary report

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)
Longview Road
Morriston
Swansea
SA6 7JL



© Crown copyright 2025

This publication is licensed under the terms of the
Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated.

To view this licence, visit nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3 or write to the Information
Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU,
or email: psi@nationalarchives.gov.uk

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will
need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

Contents

Overview	4
Introduction	4
Executive summary	4
Responses to the consultation	5
Disclosure of information	6
Government response	6



Overview

On 28 February 2025, the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) launched a public consultation to gather views on the proposal to exchange car licences with the Republic of Moldova. The consultation was published on GOV.UK and was open until 28 March. It was available for both the public and industry to express their opinions on the proposed changes. The consultation consisted of one question, which was:

Are you aware of any reason why the DVLA should not exchange car driving licences issued in Moldova for the equivalent GB licence?

Introduction

Driving licences issued by countries outside of the European Economic Area (EEA) are only valid for driving in Great Britain (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 21 other countries. 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, DVLA has considered allowing car licences that were issued in the Republic of Moldova to be exchanged for the GB equivalent if the holders of such licences become resident here.

The current licensing and testing standards of the Republic of Moldova in respect of cars have been assessed and approved by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA).

Executive summary

There were 1,066 responses received, with 895 supporting 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. In light of the evidence from the assessment of testing standards in the Republic of Moldova 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.

Responses to the consultation

There were 1,066 responses to the consultation, which is much higher than usual for this type of consultation. The vast majority (84%) of responses were positive and supportive. This reflects the fact that there are many holders of Republic of Moldova licences that already reside in GB. It is estimated that the volume of Republic of Moldova licence holders who are resident in GB and who have applied for a provisional GB driving licence is approximately 4,300¹ per year.

“I support the proposal to allow the exchange of Moldovan driving licences for British licences without additional testing. Moldovan drivers have training standards compatible with those in the United Kingdom, and this change would help thousands of people continue their activities legally, avoiding unnecessary costs and time losses. This process would reduce bureaucracy and contribute to the easier integration of Moldovan citizens into British society.”

The majority of positive responses were made by individuals who are Republic of Moldova nationals currently residing in GB. The main points highlighted in the replies included ‘avoiding unnecessary expense’ (this is thought to be in relation to the fees for applying for a provisional licence and the cost of theory and practical tests) and ‘delays’ (we assume this to be about the waiting times for booking a driving test). In addition, it was felt that the policy would allow for the smoother passage of Republic of Moldova nationals to integrate into British society.

“I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed exchange of Moldovan car driving licences in the UK, as this change would have a significant impact not only on me but also on my entire family, who have been living in the UK for many years. Having a valid driving licence is essential for work, family responsibilities, and day-to-day life. However, securing a driving test has become extremely challenging due to high demand, long waiting times, and rising costs. These obstacles make it difficult to focus on obtaining a licence, despite the fact that driving is a necessity for me and my family. Allowing the exchange of Moldovan licences would remove these barriers, making a huge difference in our daily lives. It would enable us to continue contributing to the community and economy without unnecessary delays. Recognising the skills and experience of Moldovan drivers is a practical and fair step that would positively impact many people in similar situations. I sincerely hope this proposal moves forward, as it would greatly benefit individuals, families, and the wider community.”

“I support the proposal to allow the exchange of Moldovan driving licences for British ones without additional testing. Moldovan driver training standards are comparable to those in the UK, and this change will help thousands of people continue to operate legally, avoiding unnecessary costs and loss of time. This process will reduce bureaucracy and facilitate the easier integration of Moldovan citizens into British society.”

¹ The figure of approximately 4,300 has been calculated using statistical evidence over a period of 5 years where Moldova nationals who are resident in GB have applied for a provisional GB driving licence.

Whilst the vast majority of responses were positive, the remaining negative responses were concerned with an assumption of poor standards in the Republic of Moldova testing practices.

“From previous experience of dealing with the knowledge and lack of experience from other foreign drivers who have been allowed to exchange their licence instead of taking another test, it is not making our roads safer. It is downright dangerous, and we will see the repercussions of this between fraudulent licences being obtained and the lack of knowledge, experience or background education and study is beyond a joke. This cannot be allowed to happen. We have dangerous drivers who are not keeping up to date with the highway code or road traffic act and it is putting us all in danger.”

One haulage company provided a response that set out the reasons relating to poor driving standards in the Republic of Moldova and the high accident rate, highlighting that there had been some changes to the theory and practical tests in 2024.

“In 2024 Moldova simplified obtaining a driving licence rules and at the same time made major changes to their driving test, which was also simplified, and the theory and practical standards were reduced. As a person that has been to Moldova, I can speak from experience that driver ability and safety are very low priorities to Moldova despite the increase in spending on road safety.”

Due to the fact that the original DVSA assessment had been completed in December 2022, it was felt that this latest information should be assessed again by DVLA and also presented to DVSA to analyse. The licensing and testing changes were then assessed and both agencies concluded that there were improvements in the licensing regime in the Republic of Moldova, notably for theory testing and digitisation of driving licences. DVSA added that the changes did not resolve their concerns over the technical content of the practical driving tests for categories other than Category B (cars). DVSA confirmed that we should continue with mutual recognition for Category B only, which reflects our proposal.

DVLA would like to thank everyone who responded.

Disclosure of information

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

Government response

DVLA will amend the law at the earliest opportunity to allow for drivers who hold a licence to drive cars in the Republic of Moldova to exchange it for a British equivalent if the driver becomes resident in GB.

Until this takes place, those newly resident from the Republic of Moldova can continue to drive in GB on the strength of their domestic licence for up to 12 months. To ensure continuous driving entitlement beyond that 12-month period, a GB driving licence must be obtained by passing a GB driving test. To take a driving test, a provisional GB driving licence must be obtained, although provisional licence conditions would not apply until the expiry of the initial 12-month period.

