

DRIVING ADVISORY DRIVING IN EUROPE



Everything you need to know about driving on the continent this year.

Since the UK left the EU, there have been some changes to requirements for driving on the continent.

Use this checklist as a guide but remember to always check for any country-specific travel and vehicle requirements as these may be different depending on local legislation. The UK Government [website](#) is a good place to start.



Licence check

Despite leaving the EU, a British driving licence is still valid in the area (although you must carry your licence with you). If you still only have a paper driving licence, or a licence issued in Gibraltar or the Channel Islands, you may need an **International Driving Permit** costing £5.50.



Insurance for driving in the EU

Usually UK insurance is valid abroad, but you should read the small print so you're aware of the level of cover you have. You should check with your insurer to see what level of cover your policy has for events such as theft, damage or roadside recovery too.



Stickers to display

A GB/Great Britain sticker, or numberplate with Great Britain, or EU identifiers are no longer valid in the European Union now the UK is no longer in the EU.

Instead, you need a UK/United Kingdom sticker or number plate with a United Kingdom identifier. The rules for what you need to display can be found [here](#).



Documents to take

There are a number of documents you should have with you when you travel abroad. This includes:

- Driving licence
- Insurance certificate
- Vehicle registration documents (the V5C 'log book' if the vehicle is owned, or a VE103 if the vehicle is hired or leased).
- A United Kingdom sticker to attach to the rear of the car (or trailer).



Essential driving equipment

- Hi-vis jackets
- Warning triangle
- First aid kit
- Spare bulbs
- Headlight converters



Obtaining a VE103 form

A VE103 form proves that you are allowed to use a leased/hired vehicle abroad. Usually, the vehicle's leasing company/hire company will have this and you can request it. There is often an administrative charge for this. A VE103 form is valid for one year from the date of issue. You can find out more [here](#).



Other documentation

You should have a travel insurance certificate. An existing EHIC (European Health Insurance Card) is still valid but if it

has expired, a **GHIC** (Global Health Insurance Card) can be used. These cards entitle you to access reduced cost or, sometimes, free state healthcare in the EU.

Visas to travel in the EU are not required if the visit is for less than 90 days in a 180-day period. But there are specific rules for business travel, such as a requirement for a work permit or visa if you are transferring from the UK branch of a company to a different office in another country. Check [here](#) to see what rules apply.



Taking trailers abroad

You must register trailers before taking them abroad. This applies to commercial trailers over 750kg gross weight, and non-commercial trailers over 3,500kg gross weight.

They must display their own registration plate, and you need to carry a trailer registration certificate. Find out more [here](#).

Registering a trailer costs £26 and can be done **online**.



Clean air zones

European countries are also introducing versions of clean air zones like the ones in the UK. In France, for example, 11 cities now have them (Paris, Lyon, Aix-Marseille, Toulouse, Nice, Montpellier, Strasbourg, Grenoble, Rouen, Reims and Saint-Étienne), with Bordeaux added this year, and it is compulsory to register your vehicle and display a Crit'Air sticker. It costs €3.70, but fines for not having one can be as high as €135. You can find out how to register [here](#).

A list of all European clean air and low emission zones can be found [here](#).



Speed Limits

Generally, the speed limit for motorways in the EU is mostly 120kph (74mph) or 130kph (80mph), while for rural roads it is mostly 80kph (50mph) or 90kph (55mph) and in urban areas 50kph (31mph).

There are some local differences though:

- Germany does have some unrestricted autobahns but be aware that not all of it is.
- The Netherlands has an increasing number of motorway sections at 100 or 80kph to combat air and noise pollution.
- Also, countries such as France, Finland and Sweden change speed limits depending on weather conditions or seasons. Keep a close eye on signage.
- You can find out more [here](#).



Don't forget! Check your passport expiry date

As a general rule, EU countries require your passport to be issued:

- Less than 10 years before the date of entering the country.
- Valid for at least three months after the day of leaving the country.
- Passports can be renewed **online** – they cost £75.50. To apply, you'll need a digital photograph, credit or debit card and your current passport.



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