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Fewer driving licences, but more A-class authorizations in the Corona year 2020

Vienna, 2021-08-25 – 142 103 driver's licences were issued in 2020 according to Statistics Austria. This corresponds to a decrease of 6% compared to 2019 (151 477) and is the lowest value for the past 8 years. With these driver's licences, 157 246 authorizations to drive different vehicles were acquired, 13 430 (-8%) less compared to 2019 (170 676). More driving authorizations were issued for motorcycles (+9%) and there was also an increase of L17 driving licences (+2%).

Fewer driving authorizations during corona-related lockdowns

From March to May and in December 2020 large declines were recorded. An all-time low was reached in April with a minus of 95% and only 888 driving authorizations issued (April 2019: 16 808). There were also large declines in March (-35%), May (-48%) and December (-31%). In contrast, in the period from June to October 2020, the number of driving authorizations issued increased by an average of 23% compared to 2019.

Increase of 9% in motorcycle driving authorizations

The number of A-class authorizations (motorcycle: A, A1, A2) increased significantly with a plus of 9% compared to the previous year: with 19 392 driving authorizations the highest value for the A-classes was achieved for the past eight years (2019: 17 844). An increase was observed in almost all months except during the first corona-related lockdown from March to May and in December. During the second lockdown in November, the number even increased by 47% compared to the previous year. In contrast, a decline was recorded in almost all driving authorization classes in 2020. Particularly affected were the F-class (tractor; -27%), C-class (truck incl. trailer; -23%), BE-class (car trailer; -20%) and the D-class (bus incl. trailer; -15%) (see Table 1).

Decrease in car driving authorizations, increase in class L17

Car driving authorizations (B-class) also decreased significantly in 2020. 76 800 people obtained the B-class, which is 5 143 fewer authorizations or minus 6% compared to 2019 (81 943). While the decline in the regular B-class (18 years and older) was even higher at minus 10%, the number of L17 driving licences actually increased by 2%. In general, the trend towards the increasing choice of the L17 driving licence thus continued. In 2020, 35% already acquired the B-class in the form of an L17 driving licence, compared to 32% in 2019 and only 25% 10 years ago (see Table 2).

The share of the L17 licence within the B-class varied between the federal states. In Burgenland, already more than half of the B-class licenses (54%) were acquired in the form of an L17, followed by Lower Austria (48%) and Carinthia (44%). In Vienna, on the other hand, the share was only 12% and in Vorarlberg 16%.

Average age of driver's licence applicants in the regular B-class is rising

In general, persons who regularly acquire the B-class are becoming older. The average age was 21.5 years in 2020, while it was 20.2 years 10 years ago. The federal states recorded great differences here as well. The average age was the lowest in Vorarlberg with 20.3 years, in Burgenland and Tyrol it was at 20.5 years, and in Vienna it was by far the highest at 24.1 years (see Table 3).

For more detailed results as well as additional information please refer to our website or the [German version](#).

Definitions:

Driving licence register: Central IT application and database for the registration and administration of all information relevant to driving licences. **Driving licence:** document on the issue of one or more driving authorizations. **Driving licence:** document on the issue of one or more driving authorizations.

Driving authorization: Official licence to drive vehicles on public roads. It is tied to a certain motor vehicle class.

Granting a driving licence: The prerequisite for granting a driving licence is a successfully passed theoretical and practical driver's licence test and reaching the minimum age for the respective motor vehicle class.

First Application: First granting of a driving licence, whereby prior to that a driving licence was not granted either national nor abroad.

Expansion of a driving licence: Driving authorizations previously granted are extended by one or more classes.

AM-class: Moped; two-wheel vehicles or three/four-wheel vehicles with a maximum design speed of not more than 45 kilometres per hour. The AM class is only shown if it was issued alone, not in the course of grantings of other classes.

L17 (driving licence for cars granted at the age of 17): Since March 1999, driving licence for class B (car) can - under special circumstances- be granted at the age of 17: After verifiably 3,000 kilometres driven with an accompanying person and a perfection drive in the driving school. The regular age for driving licences for cars is at the age of 18.

C-Classes: include the authorizations to drive motor vehicles (large goods vehicles) with a total mass over 3.5t (C1: up to 7.5t; C: over 7.5t); with trailer (C1E, CE)

D-Classes: include the right to drive buses for the transport of more than 8 people (D1: up to 16 people; D: more than 16 people); with trailer (D1E, DE)

F-Class: Includes authorization to steer tractors, motor carts, self-propelled work machines, etc.

Table 1: Acquired driving authorizations by class, 2016 to 2020

Classes	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Change 2019/2020 in %
A1 – motorcycle up to 11 kW	2 006	2 065	2 277	2 454	2 721	+10.9
A2 – motorcycle up to 35 kW	6 638	6 420	6 318	6 213	6 534	+5.2
A – motorcycle	7 632	8 496	8 862	9 177	10 137	+10.5
B regular	58 994	56 725	55 564	55 492	49 933	-10.0
BV (L17)	23 924	24 563	24 859	26 451	26 867	+1.6
BE – class B with trailer up to 3,5t	14 432	14 793	14 886	16 325	13 085	-19.8
C1, C, C1E and CE – large good vehicles incl. trailer	9 304	9 451	9 522	10 525	8 105	-23.0
D1, D, D1E and DE – buses incl. trailer	1 509	1 437	1 422	1 532	1 305	-14.8
F – tractor, motor cart etc.	12 606	12 104	12 440	14 069	10 229	-27.3
AM – moped ¹⁾	31 425	30 992	30 787	28 438	28 330	-0.4
Total	168 470	167 046	166 937	170 676	157 246	-7.9

S: STATISTICS AUSTRIA, Driver's licences and driving authorisations. – 1) The AM class is only shown if it was issued alone, not in the course of grantings of other classes.

Table 2: Share of class BV (L17) in class B by federal state, 2019 and 2020

Year	Burgen-land	Carin-thia	Lower Austria	Upper Austria	Salz-burg	Styria	Tyrol	Vorarl-berg	Vienna	Austria
2019	50.7%	41.0%	45.0%	36.4%	33.1%	37.8%	26.3%	13.7%	10.5%	32.3%
2020	53.6%	44.3%	48.0%	38.7%	35.3%	41.3%	27.9%	16.2%	12.0%	35.0%

S: STATISTICS AUSTRIA, Driver's licences and driving authorisations.

Table 3: Average age of persons obtaining a regular car driving licence (B-class, without L17) by federal state, 2019 and 2020

Year	Burgen-land	Carin-thia	Lower Austria	Upper Austria	Salz-burg	Styria	Tyrol	Vorarl-berg	Vienna	Austria
2019	20.4	20.8	21.0	20.9	20.8	21.1	20.6	20.6	24.0	21.6
2020	20.5	20.6	20.9	20.9	20.7	21.0	20.5	20.3	24.1	21.5

S: STATISTICS AUSTRIA, Driver's licences and driving authorisations.

For further inquiries please contact Directorate Spatial Statistics, Statistics Austria:
 Eveline PFEILER, Tel.: +43 1 71128-7223 resp. eveline.pfeiler@statistik.gv.at and
 DI Brigitte ALLEX, Tel.: +43 1 71128-7553 resp. brigitte.allex@statistik.gv.at

Media owner, producer and publisher:
 STATISTICS AUSTRIA, Federal Institution under Public Law
 1110 Vienna, Austria, Guglgasse 13, Tel.: +43 1 71128-7777
presse@statistik.gv.at
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