

EXCLUSIV INTERVIEW

Dr. Bernhard F. Reiter,
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DEGENER: Dear Mr. Reiter, the industry knows you from your time at VdTÜV!

Mr. REITER: I am honored if someone remembers me from my time at VdTÜV - hopefully in a good way. In fact, I was responsible for the Vehicle & Mobility Division at the TÜV's umbrella association for seven years.

DEGENER: Personally, what made you decide to devote your attention to other goals?

Mr. REITER: My personal reasons for changing are quite simple: While working for TÜV and DEKRA I was able to learn and appreciate how well these companies are structured, the important contribution they make to the German society and its economy, for functioning and secure mobility processes. Especially, on what clever legal, legislative and policy framework they are based on. This is- I can and would like to talk only about the field Human & Traffic - a logical set of rules for the discipline "examination". This set of rules has a large share in road safety in Germany: from European driving license directives, all of which were nationalized, the German KfSachVG, minimum admission requirements and qualifications (university or technical college), annual training to fees. I always say the world of examination is a working paradise on earth, seriously. But I do not envy TÜV and DEKRA their functioning working world - on the contrary: it serves as my model. At least in parts I wish this system of order and control for my new task: the world of education. That is exactly why I have switched sides, as they say. For here, in the world of professional training, there is a lot to do. Some even more so.

DEGENER: What is behind the name MOVING International Road Safety Association e. V.? What is the main objective of MOVING?

Mr. REITER: MOVING is an alliance of European transport publishers, which founded an association at the end of 2011. But we are not restricted to publishers. Our latest member is the ACADEMY group, i.e. a company with a wide range of services specialized on the transport industry. Together with its members MOVING wants to contribute to more road safety: in Germany and worldwide. Our key activities focus mainly on preserving and improving professional driver's licence training, as well as in advancing education, accident prevention in the areas of road safety, traffic safety education and driver training.

DEGENER: MOVING has a focus on Europe! What has been achieved by MOVING on a European level?

Mr. REITER: Almost all companies in each discipline have founded an association to unite and promote their economic-political-professional interests. Initially, in each of the national states, later on a European or world association. The TÜVs, for example have their VdTÜV representing the interests of its members within other organisations such as CEOC, CIECA and CITA. German driving instructors are currently divided amongst three driving instructor associations: BVF, BDFU and IDF. The BVF as the oldest with the most members is a founding member of the European Driving Instructors Association EFA. Until one and a half years ago the publishers of the road(safety)world were not politically organized: neither in Germany nor in Europe. Therefore, from the beginning

MOVING was designed to have a European focus - and with good reason. In preparation for the founding of MOVING we had long discussions, pondered, considering this and that: Do we want, and can we even afford just a “mere-German” association phase of, let’s say, ten years? We all know that by now approx. 85% of all relevant laws and regulations for Europe are prepared and finally passed in Brussels before they are handed back to the Member States for ‘re-nationalization’. To make up for this backwardness we skipped the national phase, and became international from the beginning.

DEGENER: About novice driver training in Germany! How can traffic publishers contribute to improving novice driver training?

Mr. REITER: Here, I see three approaches: First, the integration of digital administrative tools with teaching and learning media creates a system for high-quality education. In the driving school administration the training will be documented and monitored by an electronic training chart card as well as statistics of the learning systems training. Students have both online and mobile access to quality learning resources of essential training content using video or digital textbook pages. We believe that this is the only way of ensuring independent learning, as required by § 4 Fahrerschüler-Ausbildungsordnung (novice driver training regulations in Germany). During theoretical training instructors have access to weaknesses of their students - shown directly within the teaching program.

Second, elements of practical driving training must be prepared in media education– in both the driving school and the student’s learning media. Thus, the practical training is more effective, because the instructor can respond to individual traffic safety-related weaknesses, instead of having to impart pure basic knowledge.

The keyword traffic safety leads me to my third point. Transport publishers must use all the technical possibilities to train the student in hazard perception and hazard avoidance. During classical driving and theory lessons it is very difficult to train all the critical traffic situations.

DEGENER: What topics will MOVING be dealing with shortly?

Mr. REITER: Currently, we are working intensively on the topic of professional drivers. In close co - operation with the German Ministry of Transport BMVBS (Unit LA21) we set up a series of meetings in autumn 2012. This way representatives from professional organisations and associations, are given the opportunity to interact with representatives from federal and regional ministries and authorities as well as representatives from the regional chambers of commerce to discuss challenges, latest developments and potential for optimizing the professional drivers sector. But there are more topics that concern us: road safety education, lifelong learning, quality teaching materials and teaching material mix, older road users. And there are still many more. Our members are very active and provide us with sufficient topics.

DEGENER: If you had one current and personal wish to increase novice driver safety in Germany, what would it be?

Mr. REITER: Only one? You know that all good things come in threes! First of all, I wish that basically we change. We need to correct the situation, urgently. I have two interesting numbers for you– one from SPIEGEL Online: in their lifetime Germans will spend on average 332,000 EUR for their car. A study now breaks down in detail what the money is spent for. The figures reveal surprises– for example, that many people spend more money on car care than maintenance. On average Germans spend less than 2.000 EUR for their driving license—including testing fees.

It should be possible that good and better training costs more. With the nationwide introduction of the PC theory exam on January 1st 2010 the testing fee was increased by almost 100%. And it was good—regardless of the fact that our old theory test could barely meet current standards. At that time, BMVBS, Federal Highway Research Institute and regional ministries have implemented the necessary change both carefully and strictly. The good thing about it was that nobody really opposed. The added value for all stakeholders is undoubted. The VW Golf VII has a completely different dimension than was the case with the Golf I back in the 70s. However, now it costs a little more. Only when it comes to education and training we are extremely deaf and resistant to advice. And this in Germany the country of poets and thinkers and compulsory education! Education is the most important, even the last, resource we have in Germany. Only on its basis we can create products and services— top products and top service. I myself agree with John F. Kennedy, who said: “There is only one thing in the long run more expensive than education: no education.”

Second, I am strongly convinced that the security conditions have to be adjusted. It is good that usually all vehicles in Europe are checked every two years. That is why material and technology errors are only responsible for 1 to max. 5% of all kinds of accidents. Trust is good— control is better! Do you sense what I'm aiming at? Exactly: A driver's license for life— and this in the 21st Century? Absurd! I call for a compulsory refresher for all driving license owners every 10 years: first aid training, health check, event info on new laws, regulations, traffic signs, etc., driving with an accompanying driving instructor, sensitizing for the benefit of environmentally friendly driving.

Third, and this is currently my biggest wish: We need a permanent organisation dealing with education, a consortium of professional trainers similar to the Dresdner argetp 21 that you know very well. Therefore, in early 2012 MOVING developed the model *argeAB 21*. This is currently being discussed nationwide, which makes us proud. I do not wish, and I am not able to say more about it today. But I am confident that you will write more about this new arrangement in one of your future issues. And thereafter on a regular basis. I'm looking forward to it.