



MAG Ireland

The Irish Motorcyclists' Action Group

Press Release - For Immediate Release

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Irish motorcyclists condemn VAT increase

MAG Ireland, (The Irish Motorcyclists' Action Group) which represents in excess of 30,000 motorcyclists in Ireland today issued a statement outlining its disappointment with the Minister of Finance's decision to continue charging VAT on motorcycle safety equipment. *"MAG Ireland have been lobbying the Minister's department on behalf of the bikers of Ireland for some time now"* stated David French, President of MAG Ireland. *"We are deeply disappointed to learn that the Minister has retained the VAT rating on Personal Protective Equipment, and that the new VAT rate increase will also apply. Increases like these further endanger motorcyclists by making high quality, personal protective equipment prohibitively expensive"* he said.

MAG Ireland has been highlighting the issue of VAT on personal protective equipment for Irish motorcyclists for over a decade. *"We have long pointed out the perverse situation where, for example, VAT is charged on motorcycle helmets at the luxury rate of 21% while a builders helmet is VAT exempt"* said Linda O'Loideoin, Road Safety Officer, MAG Ireland. *"The wearing of motorcycle helmets (and Hi Viz tabards for learner riders) is a legal requirement, however this government does not recognise this equipment as 'safety equipment' for the purposes of VAT exemption"*.

A recent survey of motorcycle retailers by MAG Ireland has shown a steady decline in spending by motorcyclists on essential safety equipment. Clearly, they are choosing either to forgo expensive new equipment thus putting their personal safety at risk, or buy it elsewhere at significantly reduced prices.

"We are aware of Irish riders travelling to Northern Ireland to buy their helmets as they are VAT exempt in the UK" said O'Loideoin *"incurring savings of €50 to €100 on that one item alone over it's equivalent in the Republic. Anecdotal evidence suggests the savings are generally spent on other equipment such as gloves or boots purchased at the same time. The Ministers decision will no doubt ensure that this money will continue to flow out of the country to the detriment of motorcycle retailers here."* she said.

David French, President of MAG Ireland is adamant that dialogue with the Ministers department will continue as the safety and well being of motorcyclists in Ireland remain a top priority. *"As the representative body for Irish motorcyclists, we are mandated to ensure that this community's voice is heard through effective lobbying, debate and dialogue with key stakeholders. We have made progress in many areas to date, however it is obvious we have much more to do"* he said.



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About MAG Ireland

MAG Ireland (The Irish Motorcyclists' Action Group) with offices at 94 Merrion Square, Dublin 2 was established in 1985 to represent the interests of Ireland's 30,000+ motorcyclists, scooter and moped users.

Areas tackled by MAG Ireland include road safety, training, road conditions, technical harmonisation, national and EU legislation regarding motorcycling, consumer issues affecting riders, taxation, licencing and insurance.

MAG Ireland offers a wide range of benefits to its membership including discounts at many retail outlets and events, a quarterly newsletter and information services.

See <http://www.magireland.org> for more.

For further information call:

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