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Brits would far rather drive in Europe than on the UK's 'broken' roads

- *Quality of European highways puts UK roads to shame*
- *Fifth of UK drivers admit to driving on wrong side of road in Europe*

Four in 10 (43%) motorists say they find driving on the Continent less stressful than driving in the UK compared with just 10% who say they find it is less harrowing in the UK.

Analysis of the opinions of Brits who drive in Europe on a range of factors from the friendliness of other drivers to the condition of the roads and the price of fuel reveals a positive perception of the whole experience across the Channel.

Research, conducted by RAC Europe*, reveals just how positive UK drivers generally feel about driving on the Continent. Motorists particularly praised foreign roads for their lower levels of congestion, with 63% saying major roads in mainland Europe suffered from fewer queues, and 56% thinking minor roads were less congested than those in the UK.

But they also enjoyed the superior asphalt of many European roads – seven in 10 (69%) said they thought major roads are better maintained abroad, with a majority (54%) also stating minor roads are in better condition compared to the UK's potholed roads.

While a quarter (25%) of drivers said they see little difference between motorway service areas in the UK and elsewhere in the EU, nearly double the proportion (46%) favoured those abroad. Half (51%) also said they believe

fuel to be cheaper in mainland Europe which, as RAC Europe data shows, is typically the case – right now diesel costs more in the UK than anywhere else on the Continent except Sweden and Italy, largely thanks to higher taxes. Petrol, however, is currently more expensive in a dozen other EU nations including the Netherlands, Denmark, Greece and, perhaps surprisingly to some UK travellers, France.

Overall drivers on the Continent are perceived to be friendlier and more law-abiding with one in 10 saying that UK drivers are friendlier compared with 16% who said those in mainland Europe are. European drivers are also marginally more law-abiding in the eyes of the British motorists surveyed: 22% said more drivers in Europe obey the speed limit and 17% said fewer drivers use their handheld phones compared with 10% and 6% respectively in the UK. However, UK drivers just pip their European cousins to the post when it comes to the standard of driving with 23% picking the UK over Europe 20%.

The study found that for some drivers their European road trips can get off to a poor start with a fifth (21%) admitting to having put themselves and their passengers in danger by driving on the wrong side of the road. It also revealed that despite the prevalence of affordable European sat-navs – and free navigation apps for smartphones – some UK drivers are still struggling with directions, with 39% saying they've got lost while driving abroad.

It also showed that it is vital to ensure you are familiar with local motoring rules. More than one in 10 drivers (12%) say they have been stopped by a foreign police officer for a driving misdemeanour, while 6% said they have been caught speeding either while away or when they discover a rather unwelcome envelope on the door mat at home.

RAC Europe spokesperson Rod Dennis said: "It really does seem to be a welcome break for UK motorists when they venture abroad by car. Almost half (43%) say they find the experience less stressful than driving on Britain's broken roads.

"Our research also reveals just how keen many of us are about getting behind the wheel on continental roads which drivers tell us are quieter and better maintained with friendlier and better-behaved drivers. With high levels of frustration over the quality of road surfaces, the sheer volume of traffic and poor driving standards, it is little wonder that Brits appear to be enjoying

their motoring experience abroad.

“Nevertheless, it is worth doing your homework when heading off to Europe in the car to further reduce anxiety by checking out local motoring rules and speed limits to avoid falling foul of the law. And the fact that the UK is one of the only European countries where we drive on the left continues to sometimes confuse us when we cross the Channel.

“If you are taking your own car to Europe ensure it has had a recent service before you travel and that you have the right level of breakdown cover in place for the countries you are visiting. The RAC website has a handy [European travel checklist](#) which details all the essentials you need to take including driving documents and equipment. You can also find details of our European breakdown cover – we offer the best cover in the market from just £9 a day.”

The RAC website also carries a comprehensive advice for travelling in [all European countries](#) and you can watch a short video explaining the [different breakdown cover options](#).

Notes to Editors

** 1,070 drivers with experience of driving in continental Europe conducted between 22nd and 30th June 2018.*

About the RAC

First formed in 1897, the RAC has been looking after the needs of its members and championing the interests of motorists for more than 120 years.

Today it has more than eight million members and is one of the UK's most progressive motoring organisations, providing services for both private and business motorists. Whether it's [roadside assistance](#), [insurance](#), [buying a used car](#), [vehicle inspections and checks](#), [legal services](#) or up-to-the-minute [traffic and travel information](#) – the RAC offers a solution for all motoring needs. The RAC is committed to making motoring easier, safer, more affordable and more enjoyable

for drivers and road users.

The RAC is the motorist's champion and campaigns to support the interests of its members and UK motorists at a national level. This includes voicing concerns about the increasing cost of motoring, particularly the price of fuel and the high level of tax levied on it, advancing levels of road safety, and supporting the needs of all drivers, from young to old.

The RAC's annual [Report on Motoring](#) – first published in 1989 – is one of a kind and provides a clear insight into the concerns and issues facing today's motorists.

For the very latest news on UK fuel prices, check [RAC Fuel Watch](#). It provides a comprehensive guide to the latest UK unleaded petrol and diesel prices – both at the wholesale level and at the pump - and tracks these prices daily to help drivers check if the price they pay to fill up is a fair one.

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