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Communication breakdown is motorists' biggest concern on the continent

Getting 'lost in translation' is the number one concern for almost half of Brits who are worried about driving abroad

Nearly 60,000 confused motorists drive on the wrong side of the road for up to half a mile every year

We may be a nation of car lovers but when it comes to driving abroad, it's less "j'adore" and more "my lingo is poor".

Just under six million of us are expected to take our own cars to Europe this year* so it may be surprising to learn that more than half (56%) of motorists surveyed by RAC European Breakdown** have reservations about driving abroad, and not being able to talk the talk is their biggest concern.

New data from the RAC reveals that almost half (48%) of those taking a car from the UK to Europe are most worried about not being able to converse in the local language should their vehicle break down.

Aside from being unable to communicate, a further 42% of those surveyed cited breaking down or being stranded as their top concern, followed by feeling uneasy about the behaviour of local drivers (27%). And, in a similar vein, 22% of motorists said not understanding foreign road signs was highest on their list of concerns on the continent, some of whom based this on previous experience.

Fourteen per cent of those that have already used their vehicle to explore Europe owned up to having driven on the wrong side of the road. Alarmingly,

7% of those have done so for up to half a mile before correcting their error, which suggests nearly 60,000 motorists are making the same mistake every year. Two per cent also admitted to going round a roundabout the wrong way, and a further 7% have been stopped for committing a motoring offence in a European country.

What's more, 45% of drivers feel more nervous behind the wheel when abroad, with 12% of tourists getting their partner to take control of the car for the entire trip. And, results indicate that a much higher proportion of women (46%) versus men (19%) confess to feeling trepidation on their travels.

RAC European breakdown operations manager David Huggon said: "Driving abroad can be a daunting experience for some, but at the moment there's plenty to worry about before you even get to Europe with current industrial action and migrant activity causing disruptions to usual cross-Channel services.

"Ultimately, planning is key, and our advice is to make sure you have everything you need before you set off so that nothing comes between you and the open roads. There are a number of ways to prepare for your journey so that you are able to navigate your way around language barriers, and enjoy all that driving on the continent has to offer.

"A translation book could not only come in handy in shops and cafes, but may be useful if you happen to break down or be involved in an accident. However, it is no replacement for having comprehensive European breakdown cover as this way you won't need to worry about speaking a foreign language in the event of a break down.

"Each year, the RAC attendsthousands of summer breakdowns on the continent, with most taking place in France. Travel insurance is always high on the list of priorities for Brits taking their car abroad, but motorists should be aware that they may need to increase their existing breakdown cover, or take out standalone European breakdown cover to steer clear of unnecessary stress and avoid any significant additional expenses."

*Source: ONS, Travel Trends <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/ott/travel-trends/2014/index.html>. Latest available figures for 2014 indicate 5.987 million private vehicles visits to Europe

**Source: 1,091 people surveyed via the RAC Motorists' Opinion Panel, July 2015

Notes to Editors

About the RAC

With more than eight million members, the RAC 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, including advancing levels of road safety, supporting the needs of young drivers and voicing concerns about the increasing cost of motoring. The RAC's annual [Report on Motoring](#) – first published in 1989 – 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](#) or follow [#racfuelwatch on Twitter](#). This is a comprehensive guide to the latest UK unleaded petrol and diesel prices – both at the wholesale level and at the pump. RAC Fuel Watch analyses how prices changed through the previous month and compares the most recent prices with those from three, six and 12 months before.

The RAC supports and is a founding member of [FairFuelUK](#) which campaigns for fairer taxes on petrol and diesel.

Key facts:

- RAC patrols fix four out of five vehicles at the roadside and on average within 34 minutes
- RAC vans carry more than 500 parts and tools to get members' vehicles going again
- 98% of members would recommend RAC Rescue to their friends and family

Contacts



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