

CLOSE TO AUSTRIA



Risk Prevention for beginning Drivers

“Young drivers who are confronted with stories of severe road accidents presented by people of the same age are less likely to engage in risky and reckless driving”

Promoting safer driving



CRYSTAL SCALES
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About **CLOSE TO**

- Coordination: FGM – AMOR Austrian Mobility Research
- Financed: Federal Ministry for Transport, Federal States
- Supported: Ministry of Justice
- Road traffic accidents are the **primary cause of death** amongst Europe's youth under 25.
- The main cause is **reckless driving**, frequently by recently qualified, **inexperienced young drivers**.
- The CLOSE TO project puts those who have been involved in a road accident first hand, in the role of **Peer Mentors** who share their experience learner-drivers.



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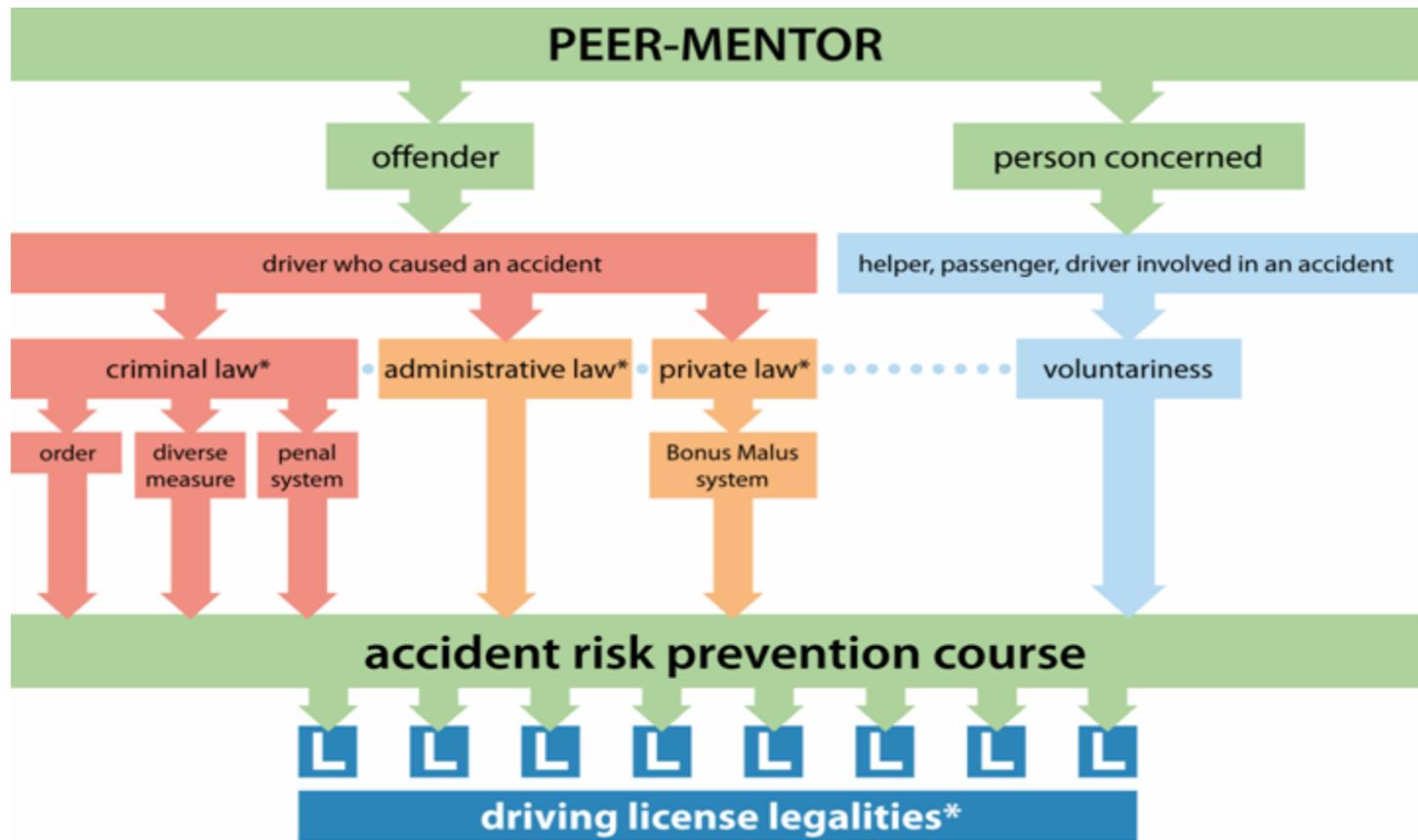
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About **CLOSE TO**

- Peer Education – Methodical didactical base
- Mentors are often youths that are responsible for accidents which have **killed or maimed someone** and who are facing legal penalties.
- Peer Mentors, supported by a Peer Coach, tell their story
- Young learner drivers **brought face to face with the real consequences** of accidents are often subdued and shocked by what they hear.
- Human, legal, social and economic consequences



Peer Mentor Recruiting



*amendment



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The aims of CLOSE TO

- To **reduce the number of deaths on the road**
- To use a young person's traumatic experience as a **deterrent, through peer to peer learning.**
- To have these contact sessions **integrated** into the Austrian driving school curriculum.
- To expand CLOSE TO to other facilities (Military, Schools etc.)
- To assure CLOSE TO as an alternative measure in criminal law



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The results of CLOSE TO

- Since 2008 a total of about **8300 young beginner drivers** have attended the classes – 290 units have been held in driving schools, apprentice training, schools and military around the country.
- **Evaluation:**
- The courses are **highly effective in preventing accidents**. Awareness is much higher among those who have attended the classes with 92% of learner-drivers saying they found the exercise very interesting and 86% saying the message was effective.
- Follow up a few months later reveals **70% feel their own behavior behind the wheel has changed** as a result of the course.
- Nearly every Federal state in Austria has taken up the project.
- CLOSE TO is an alternative or supplementary sanction that can be applied to penal proceedings across the EU



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Case 1: Aldin K. (33 Hv 184/06i LG Linz)

- The 19 year old Aldin K. was sentenced because he was driving a car under the influence of alcohol (0.51 mg/l) and failed to observe the diligence and attention required in road traffic and, as a result, he was seriously injuring one person and slightly injuring five more persons.
- **Sanction:** unconditional 6-month imprisonment
- **Reprieve of the sentence** until 20/4/2009 was granted.



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- **Subsequent mitigation of the sentence was requested**, since Aldin K. had carried out prevention work within the framework of Close To between 31/10/2008 and 8/4/2009, thereby addressing in this way 271 young student drivers.
- **Subsequent mitigation of the sentence:** Aldin K. was granted subsequent mitigation of the sentence in so far as the 6-month imprisonment was reprieved conditionally.
- **Special preventive effect:** High understanding of the offence and reflection of one's own misbehaviour by attending the ARP-course and the repeated lectures in driving schools for a longer period of time.



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- **Positive general prevention effect:** Increased compliance with the law by raising the awareness in beginning drivers by a person of approximately the same age (high authenticity). In each driving school session approx. 20 to 40 persons are addressed.
- **Resocialization:** The offender is not taken out of his professional and social environment. Thus, quick consideration of the victim's interests (compensation for pain, suffering, and damages).



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