

# 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



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# Promoting safer driving

## 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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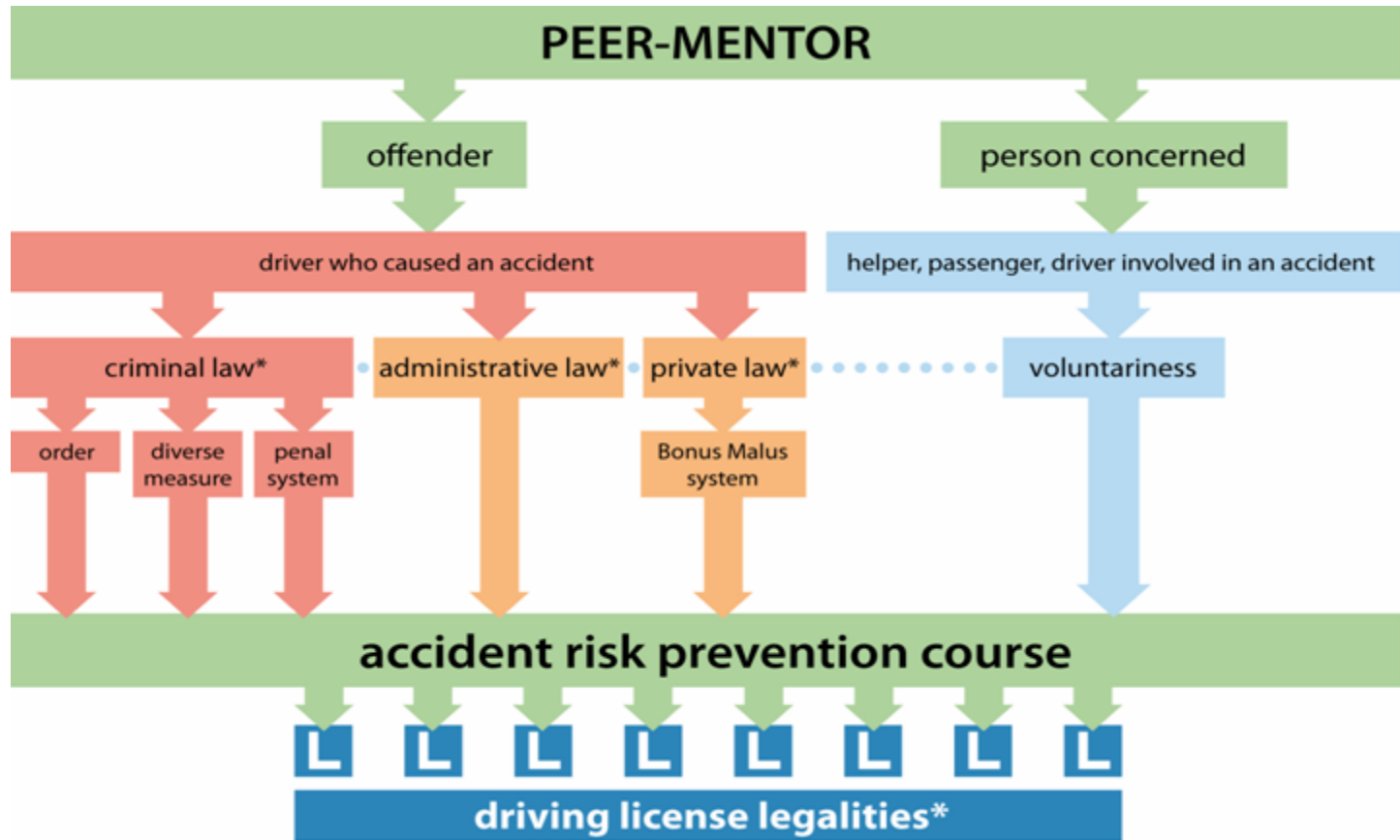
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## About **CLOSE TO**

- 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



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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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