



The ETF Supports Italian Trade Unions in their fight against the weakening of the *Intercity* network

The Italian Trade Unions are sounding the alarm: the Intercity national train service's future is jeopardised. As for other railway networks across Europe, the Intercity service will soon be exposed to a wave of aggressive competition that threatens to weaken it.

The ETF fully supports the Italian Trade Unions' fight against the intensification of competition in publicly-tendered routes in the railway sector, which fragments the network, deepens geographical imbalances, drives up administrative costs and undermines railway workers' rights.

In early August, Italian lawmakers adopted an amendment that requires public authorities to divide Intercity tender contracts into "appropriate and contestable lots" in order to facilitate the bidding of new entrants. By doing so, the public authorities' leeway to tender a service contract in a single lot may be reduced. The amendment also mandates public authorities to establish a yearly census of rolling stock and to make it available to new entrants. These measures stem from the commitments Italy undertook under its National Recovery and Resilience Plan agreed with the European Commission.

This is unacceptable. In the pursuit of ideological fables, the Intercity network risks being dismembered while publicly owned assets may be handed over to private hands to allow new entrants to operate while they are ill-equipped and unprepared to take on a vital public service.

Preventing the tendering of the Intercity network in a single contract precludes public authorities from adapting their tenders to local realities and needs, impedes any comprehensive spatial planning effort, while piling on undue administrative costs at taxpayers' expense.

Furthermore, competitive tendering does not create more competition between railway undertakings, but rather between workers. Without appropriate safeguards, bidding undertakings will not hesitate to slash working conditions to cut costs. This cannot be tolerated; workers' rights are not an adjustment variable.

The ETF reiterates that railways can only deliver to their fullest potential when a strong, cohesive network underpinned by skilled workers and public funding exists. The ETF stands fully behind the Italian Trade Unions in this fight, and will not stand by as service quality and workers' rights are sacrificed to ideology.