



Social partners in the local public transport sector UITP and ETF¹

JOINT STATEMENT: THE IMPLICATION, APPLICATION AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF DIRECTIVE 2003/59/EC ON INITIAL QUALIFICATION AND CONTINUOUS TRAINING OF PROFESSIONAL BUS DRIVERS IN URBAN PUBLIC TRANSPORT²

Introduction

In 2010 the European social partners in the urban public transport sector (UPT) UITP and ETF carried out a joint project and conference on the application, implication and evaluation of the Directive 2003/59/EC. The UPT social partners highly welcomed the directive as it provides an opportunity for up-skilling the drivers' profession and thus its attractiveness. It further contributes to an improvement of health and safety of professional drivers and an improvement of the performance of the companies regarding the reduction of environmental pollution, the reduction of accidents and other benefits related to improving the quality of service and the professionalism of the drivers.

UITP and ETF are of the opinion that the directive has a positive impact on the concept of quality of services and quality at work, which is important in urban public transport. Additionally, they stated during their joint project an impact on the development of training systems and on the organisation of the labour market. Depending on the situation in the different Member States this impact is not just superficial.

Impact on social dialogue

The European social partners in the urban public transport sector are of the opinion that the Directive 2003/59/EEC can and shall improve the social dialogue at company level. To this end the European UPT social partners recommend that the points listed below are subject of exchange between social partners at national and / or local level so that a common understanding of the effects of the directive can be established and - based on this common understanding - improvements in initial and periodic training can be offered, while complying with the rights of employers' and workers' representatives:

- The terms and conditions of recruitment and working condition shall attract, retain and motivate the workers. In this framework the driver's training has to be considered as an essential tool for improving the loyalty of the drivers;
- Workers shall be given a chance to upgrade and/or diversify skill levels and qualifications;
- Their professional mobility shall be facilitated and their career prospective enhanced;
- The impact of investment in training and return on investment, financing of training and the quality of training shall be subject of social dialogue.

Investment and return on investment

The social partners UITP and ETF are of the opinion that training according to Directive's requirements must be recognized as an investment and not at a cost. Social partners at national, regional and company level should be aware about the potential financial advantages of initial and continuous training and its high return on investment:

- A reduction in fuel consumption;
- A reduction of vehicle maintenance costs;

¹ UITP and ETF so-called in the document below as UPT (Urban Public Transport) social partners

² The present statement acknowledges that there are differences between the (international) freight transport and urban passenger transport, in terms of practical arrangements around the implementation of Directive 2003/59/EC that may lead to social partners defining different needs for the two sectors.

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- A reduction of the number of road accidents/casualties;
- Potentially lower insurance premiums;
- An improvement in the quality of the drivers' working environment; thus improved occupational health and safety and less absenteeism;
- Passengers being offered a better standard of service.

Financing of initial and continuous training

The European social partners in the urban public transport sector, UITP and ETF had noted during their project that there is no coherent situation about financing the initial and continuous vocational training in the Member States.

The social partners in the urban public transport sector recommend an annual cost / benefit assessment by the social partners at sector and company level. Such assessment is particularly necessary in order to avoid that the companies who finance the initial and continuous training for their drivers are experiencing distorted competitiveness compared to those who do not fund initial and continuous training. The social partners are of the opinion that in general investment in initial and continuous training has to be borne by the employers.

There should be also a dialogue with national, regional and local authorities and management in order to develop schemes of public financing or co-financing considering the effects for local and regional employment. The UPT social partners wish to underline the societal responsibility for professional training and lifelong learning that should be supported through public funds.

The social partners in the urban public transport sector are invited to jointly find agreements in order to avoid self-financing the initial or continuous training by the concerned drivers. The social partners call the European Union, the national and local authorities and the employers to find the necessary financial resources.

Quality of the training and examinations, training centers and trainers

The UPT social partners regret that, although the Commission addresses the differences in training and the requirements on trainers and training centers as a main finding within its report on the implementation of Directive 2003/59/EC COM(2012)385), it does not draw conclusions for further action on this matter. UITP and ETF ask the Commission to undertake in consultation with the social partners an objective assessment done by an independent body on how the objectives of the directive are fulfilled. The social partners agreed on the importance of the following criteria:

- Harmonized initial vocational qualification model-training and test in all Members States in order to avoid discrepancies of levels in competencies and to guarantee a harmonized minimum and mandatory curriculum for all Members States;
- Harmonize quality criteria for training centers and the training of trainers;
- Harmonize quality criteria for examinations;
- Harmonize conditions for accreditation of training centers and trainers;
- Centers' specifications (vehicles in use in the centers, educational material available therein, training for instructors, etc);
- Findings that have emerged from supervising training centres, etc.

These above-mentioned criteria are a pre-condition for effective mutual recognition of initial and vocational training.

Also at national level social partners shall be entitled to be consulted and make recommendations.

Summary addressed to the European Commission

The UPT social partners are of the opinion that future Commission actions shall take into account, after the assessment as describe above:

- The quality of the training through criteria for the accreditation of training centers and training of trainers;
- The quality of examinations;
- The financing of the required initial and continuous training with the objective to avoid that workers finance their professional initial and continuous training by themselves;



- Measure for the control and enforcement of the Directive's training and continuous training requirements;

Final statement: Due, as said above, to the positive effects of initial and continuous training of the professional drivers in urban public transport as:

- Improvement of the performance of the companies regarding the reduction of environmental pollution, the reduction of accidents and other benefits related to improving the quality of service and the professionalism of the drivers;
- Improvement of health and safety of professional drivers due to the implementation of the directive.

The UPT social partners UITP and ETF are of the opinion that competent authorities shall express training requirements in tender specifications in order to positively recognize the training efforts of companies when selecting the operator.

Signed in Brussels on the 8th of April 2014

For ETF

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The **European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF)** is a pan-European trade union organisation embracing 243 transport trade unions from the European Union, the European Economic Area and the Central and Eastern European countries. The ETF is the recognised Social Partner in seven European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committees and represents the interests of more than 2.5 million transport workers from 41 European countries vis-à-vis the European Institutions.

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UITP is the international organisation of public transport, based in Brussels. In the European Union, UITP represents the views of the public transport undertakings of the 28 member countries. It is closely following and participating in the elaboration of the different European policies and initiatives that have an impact on urban, suburban and regional public passenger transport.

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