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European Transport Workers' Federation
Fédération Européenne des Travailleurs des Transports
Europäische Transportarbeiter-Föderation
Federación Europea de los Trabajadores del Transporte

Ursula von der Leyen
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Brussels, 18 September 2019

Dear Ms von der Leyen,
Dear President-elect,

Social dimension in the transport portfolio for 2019-2024

Following the publication of your mission letter to the Commissioner-designate for transport, we are deeply concerned that the social dimension of the sector is not receiving the attention it merits. The risk is indeed considerable that the mandate given to Ms Rovana Plumb singularly lacks in ambition to tackle the many difficulties facing the millions of workers we represent across Europe.

Transport workers make Europe going. They enable goods and people move both within the EU and to and from third countries. Regrettably, these workers are considered to be second-class citizens and the ongoing EU policy on liberalisation and privatisation has been putting extreme downward pressures on them. In addition, the major problem of applying the EU labour standards to transport workers and the fact that they have been often excluded from the Community regulatory framework has resulted in a lower social protection and a greater exposure to job insecurity and social dumping, allowing workers to compete one against the other. Not to mention the social dumping imported from outside the EU with the increasing competition by third country transport workers who are more and more present in the EU labour market and are subject to social exploitation.

Thousands of transport workers expressed their frustration with this reality during the Fair Transport demonstration in Brussels on 27 March this year. Their voice cannot go unheard and the Commission which you have the honour to lead now should respond to their demands.

By contrast, the mission letter places climate transition as one of the priorities for the new Commissioner. It is therefore important to stress that the ongoing climate and social emergency in transport have the same origin: a very harmful push for a low-cost model in most of the transport modes. As long as the matter of a fair and just price for transport services is not tackled, we will fail to achieve the social and



President Frank Moreels

Acting General Secretary Livia Spera

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Ekaterina Yordanova



environmental sustainability of the sector which should be an important element of the European Green Deal to which we also aspire.

Similarly, the current Transport Commissioner has launched the initiative on improving attractiveness of work in transport. Indeed, too often the sector is considered has not being an appealing workplace, particularly amongst youngsters and women. However, this is not due to the inherent characteristics of transport. It is mostly because of the poor working conditions and the casualisation and flexibility mentioned above. Therefore, it will be indispensable for the new Commission to tackle the root causes of social dumping if we are serious about substantially improving the attractiveness of the transport sector.

Finally, we acknowledge the fact that the initiative on the European Pillar of Social Rights has been embraced in the mission letters to the Executive Vice-President-designate for An Economy that Works for People and the Commissioner-designate for Jobs. However, we believe that the situation of transport workers requires special attention, as social issues in the sector are strongly intertwined with the European transport policies.


In light of the above, we are calling on you to make sure that the Commission, and in particular the future Commissioner for Transport will live up to the expectations of the ten million European transport workers who want a positive change without any delay to keep on moving Europe forward in a fairer manner.

We thank you for the attention you will give to our plea, and remain at your disposal to further discuss with you and your team the critical issues raised in this letter.

Yours sincerely,



Livia SPERA
Acting General Secretary



Frank MOREELS
President



President Frank Moreels

Acting General Secretary Livia Spéra

Vice Presidents Alexander Kirchner
Ekaterina Yordanova

