

Brussels, 6 November 2019

Celebrating European social dialogue in the railway sector

Existing since 1972, the railway social dialogue is one of the longest-standing in Europe. As part of the reform and the strengthening of the European sectoral social dialogue, CER and ETF reconfirmed this dialogue between employers and workers of the railway sector at European level in 1999, by jointly establishing the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Railways (SSDC Railways).

In this year of renewal for the European Union, the Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) and the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) take the twentieth anniversary of the SSDC Railways as an occasion to look back and celebrate the joint work of rail employers' and workers' representatives in Europe.

Since the late 80s, the rail social partners have accompanied the gradual creation of the European transport and railway policies, addressing their social dimension. In the context of the EU policy establishing a Single European Railway Area, social partners played a major role in defining relevant aspects related to staff mobility, qualifications and working conditions such as the agreement on working conditions for mobile workers assigned to cross-border interoperable services (implemented as Directive 2005/47/EC), the agreement on a European locomotive driver's license (integrated in Directive 2007/59/EC) or the Joint Opinion on "Social aspects and the protection of staff in competitive tendering of rail public transport services and in the case of change of railway operator" (PSO Regulations EC 1370/2007 and EU 2016/2338).

By fully using the instrument of the European social dialogue we contribute to the European integration and building social Europe in our sector. We are convinced that a meaningful social dialogue constitutes a definitive added value in finding ways to balance employers' and workers' interests, to avoid unfair competition, as well as to maintain and promote good working conditions and the health and safety of workers. This approach is still valuable today and we are committed to continue this path.

As from next year, the social dialogue will address digitalisation and automation in the rail industry, and their impact on employees' skills, careers and working conditions. By starting EU-level negotiations, the rail social partners have also stepped up their commitment to make the sector more gender-balanced and to guarantee equal opportunities for women.

Conscious about this positive history, the European rail social partners and their members reiterate the value of social dialogue at all levels, and call on the new European Commission to keep on promoting it and recognising its specific role and contribution.

Matthias Rohrmann
SSD Railways President

Giorgio Tuti
SSD Railways Vice-President

Libor Lochman
CER Executive Director

Sabine Trier
ETF Deputy General Secretary