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

Ms Adina-Ioana Vălean
Commissioner for Transport
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
1049 Brussels

Brussels, 19 March 2020

Dear Commissioner,

COVID-19: Drivers in the road transport industry need concrete action from the EU

The ETF urges the European Commission and the Member States to adopt an emergency action plan for truck drivers before our drivers fall subject to a humanitarian and health crisis in Europe.

The ETF has been contacted by numerous trade unions and individual drivers regarding the critical situation the latter face at the moment. Complaints and desperate calls are pouring in! Drivers are forced to continue delivering goods that are not of strict necessity according to delivery schedules that had been planned long before the COVID-19 crisis kicked in! Drivers are forced to undertake long-distance transport while being denied basic access to toilets, food, drinks and sanitary facilities. This, both in parking areas and in delivery sites. Drivers are stuck at borders hours on end with no assistance whatsoever and threatened with quarantine. Cynically, some say that they would be better off confined in their cabins *a la longue* as this way at least they won't spread the virus!

The European Commission and the Member State met yesterday, and regrettably; we have no palpable evidence that drivers' desperate situation was addressed. The policymakers unanimously agreed instead on measures meant to put no barrier to the free movement of goods!

Mindful of the unacceptable situation our drivers face, the ETF demands the European Commission and the Member States to take the following immediate measures before the situation of professional drivers runs into a humanitarian and health crisis!

We urge the decision-makers to adopt without delay an emergency plan for drivers which must be implemented in the swiftest way possible, to include:



President Frank Moreels

Acting General Secretary Livia Spera

Vice Presidents Alexander Kirchner
Ekaterina Yordanova



- The obligation of Member States to set up well equipped and well sanitised mobile units at borders, to ensure the access of drivers to sanitary facilities, hot food and drinks, including access to immediate medical assistance!
- The obligation of delivery sites to organise well equipped and well-sanitised spaces on their premises so that drivers can have access to key hygiene infrastructures and have a chance to clean up before and after delivery!
- Reinforcing the clear interdiction for companies to continue delivering goods under the “business as usual” regime and introducing sanctions for the non-compliant companies
- Reinforcing that the driving and rest time derogations can only be used for the purpose they have been granted for, to the companies. To this end, Member States and the European Commission must introduce a mandatory pre-declaration form to be used by each company resorting to the temporary relaxation of rules
- No relaxation of driving and rest time rules for the EU Member States most impacted by the COVID-19
- Calling for operators to fully meet their health and safety responsibilities towards their employees. Amongst others, the companies must provide all their drivers with disinfectant and sanitise the truck cabins and trailers at least once per day
- Setting up a fund to help drivers have access to medical care if they are contaminated during their work
- Setting up a fund to help drivers cope with the temporary loss of employment

We do understand the key role our people have in keeping necessity goods moving in time of crisis, but we cannot accept the total disregard to the human element in road transport. Delivery drivers must be part of an EU-widely coordinated emergency plan! They are at the moment as important as our medical staff!

Drivers across Europe started talking about walking out on strikes, and it is completely understandable! If Member States continue treating them in this way – denying them the most basic conditions while working under an emergency regime – that they will strike, and the whole of Europe will suffer for it.

We need immediate solutions at the EU level!

Yours Sincerely,



Livia Spera
ETF Acting General Secretary



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Ekaterina Yordanova

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