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

Brussels, 17 March 2020

**Ms. Adina-Ioana Vălean**  
Commissioner for Transport  
European Commission

Dear Commissioner Vălean,

**Due to the latest developments in the transport industry communicated to us by our members, we would like to reiterate the requests in our previous letters ([6/03](#), [11/03](#), [13/03](#)), and provide you with an overview of the current situation, and the measures that must immediately be put into place.**

#### **Limitations to E-commerce**

We welcome the fact that the European Commission has stepped up health-related border management measures which emphasise protecting transport workers' health. In addition to these measures, however, more needs to be done to protect other workers involved in supplying the goods throughout the supply chain. Workers in warehouses and delivery have been under extreme pressures lately because companies such as Amazon have not limited their work, and they are now paying the price of increased demand for home deliveries. **E-commerce needs to be limited only to essential items, and everything else can wait.** For workers in warehouses, safety equipment needs to be provided, and for delivery workers, procedures need to be introduced that prevent contact between them and buyers.

#### **Long-term plans for aviation**

In aviation, the situation continues to unfold, with grave consequences for all groups of workers – working for airlines, air navigation services providers, airports or ground handling operators. To ensure that the industry is saved and rebuilt, a series of **aviation-specific measures** need to be taken in short, medium and long-term perspective both by the European Institutions as well as the individual Member States. These measures must include:

- Health and safety, salary and reinstatement guarantees for all aviation workers;
- In addition to the recently published measures by the European Commission that include state aid and fiscal framework flexibility, any new aviation taxes at EU or national level should be deferred to aid the sector's future recovery;
- End to blind trust in market forces and liberalisation;
- Social dialogue on all changes where employment or working conditions are affected.

All of the points above are explained in detail in the [statement](#) issued by the ETF today.



**President** Frank Moreels

**Acting General Secretary** Livia Spera

**Vice Presidents** Alexander Kirchner  
Ekaterina Yordanova





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### **Travel ban exemptions for seafarers**

As we've emphasised in our previous letter, seafarers are facing difficulties because of various travel restrictions and quarantine measures being put in place around the world. All seafarers need to be exempt from national travel bans so that they can be repatriated or join their ship. The movement of seafarers must be provided with the highest degree of safety to avoid unnecessary threats to their health.

### **Immediate action in tourism**

We join a fellow European Trade Union Federation EFFAT in [calling for quick response](#) for protecting workers in the tourism industry. Similarly to transport, tourism was among the first industries to be hit, and effects will be felt for months to come.

Many workers' jobs have been affected by the measures introduced in response to COVID-19. These temporary impacts on employment need to be handled with care to prevent long-term negative effects on the industry. All the changes need to be approached with the aim to avoid job cuts and only introduced in close cooperation with trade unions.

### **Protecting Railway and Urban Public Transport Workers**

As highlighted in our previous letters, public transport workers are in direct contact with passengers, and we remind you that it is urgent to ensure that all necessary measures are taken to guarantee workers' safety (stop ticket controls, providing protective equipment, sanitising vehicles/trains). We ask you to bring to the attention of the Transport Ministers that it shall be ensured that reduced public services is not considered as a violation of obligations arising from a public service contract. Member States and/or competent authorities shall decree such reduced services without reducing the compensation for public service obligations, in particular for staff costs; the same shall apply for directly awarded contracts and services with own operators.

### **Road transport workers**

With regards to commercial road transport, and in addition to our previous demands: we are aware that a number of Member States have already adopted a relaxation of driving and rest time rules for freight transport. Although we do understand that discontinuity of food and pharmaceutical supplies must be avoided, this has to be truly temporary by nature, well defined and strictly controlled. Drivers will come in touch with many staff in food supply and health sectors. Safeguarding drivers' health and safety is paramount in our fight to contain the pandemic! We therefore take note of the measures that have been taken so far by the Member States in question, but urge them to take these decisions in full consultation with the trade unions - competent and responsible social partners of the sector - so that the relaxation of rules comes within clear limits that ensure driver health and safety, and road safety. The full involvement of trade unions in these decisions will



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ensure that derogations are strictly limited and in full respect of collective agreements! On the other hand, in as far as the red zones of the pandemic are concerned, national measures resulting in prolonged exposure of drivers to contamination risks are not desirable. In these situations, a limitation of transport to strict necessities rather than derogations are the way to go.

This being said, in the context where more and more Member States opt for a total lock-down, drivers risk being on the road for long hours without food and drink, and with no access to toilets, neither in parking areas nor on delivery sites! We appeal to Member States, the European Commission and the Council to take clear measures which ensure that drivers are provided with food and drinks supplies during their work, and that they have access to sanitary facilities.

As for bus and coach drivers, we would like to flag up that not all companies adopt full protection and hygiene measures for drivers and passengers. Since there is a key Europe-wide interest for road transport to keep moving, it must benefit from all emergency measures introduced for other sectors vital to the fight against COVID-19, such as the health sector. We insist that drivers are provided with gloves, masks, hand wash, and that mandatory in-vehicle distance is introduced between driver and passengers, such as in urban transport. Buses and coaches must be disinfected several times per day, to keep drivers and passengers safe.

There is no doubt that the lock-down will affect jobs in transport, and in bus and coach sectors as well. Mindful of the shortage of skilled labour the sector is already confronted with, we appeal to the European Commission and to the Council to devote funds to keep our skilled drivers in employment. Once out of this crisis, Europe will need all of its drivers to contribute to its economic recovery!

Especially in the time of crisis, social dialogue plays an essential role in finding solutions that are balanced and accepted by all partners. All changes affecting workers need to be properly consulted and negotiated with trade unions in the framework of social dialogue. ETF calls for ad hoc consultations in all cases where employment or working conditions are affected. **It is in this vein, that we would like reiterate our request for a remote meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss the protection and the future of transport workers during trying times.**

Yours sincerely,

Livia Spera  
ETF General Secretary



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