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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, 19 March 2020

**To EBU**  
T. Hacksteiner  
Secretary General

**To ESO**  
G. Kester  
Secretary General

### **A call for a dialogue about the measures to be taken in response to COVID-19**

Dear Ms Hacksteiner, Dear Mr Kester,

This morning, European Barge Union released a statement, calling for the free movement of vessels and crew members, as well as flexibility in the application of the working time directive crewing regulations. On top of that, they propose the elimination of penalties in cases where these regulations are not respected. **While the ETF supports the call to guarantee the free movement of crew members in Europe as it allows crewmembers to reach home or their vessels, we cannot allow for the working time directive and crewing regulations to not be enforced.**

Respecting safety standards is vital - not only in the current situation caused by COVID-19 but always. Both the directive on working time and the crewing regulation, provide minimum safety standards. In fact, they already offer some flexibility - the working time directive offers barge owners and operators full flexibility over a 12 month reference period. The same goes for the crewing regulation that offers minimum crew settings according to the business model.

While these are extraordinary circumstances that call for extraordinary measures, the safety of transport workers needs to remain a priority.

**In light of this situation, we call you, representatives of EBU and ESO, to the negotiation table, be it a digital one, where we can jointly look for solutions. We look forward to your suggestion for a remote meeting - as soon as possible - to discuss the protection and the future of transport workers during trying times.**

Kind regards,

Livia Spera  
Deputy General Secretary

Myriam Chaffart  
Senior Policy Officer IWT & EWC's



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