



Galerie Agora,
Rue du Marché aux Herbes 105, Bte 11
B-1000 Brussels
Telephone +32 2 285 46 60
Fax +32 2 280 08 17
Email: etf@etf-europe.org
www.etf-europe.org

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

Brussels, 28 April 2020
International Workers' Memorial Day

It comes naturally to us to dedicate this year's International Workers' Memorial Day to all the transport workers who have been keeping Europe moving even during these difficult times. They have transported goods by land, air and water, they have made sure other key workers were able to get to work and that stranded citizens could be taken back home. By the nature of their job, transport workers are among the workers that are most exposed to the dangers of contracting the virus.

Today we mourn our comrades who have died after having been infected on buses and trains, on ships or in ports, on barges and planes, in airports and stations, in warehouses and on the roads. No sector has been spared.

But today we also want to give courage to all our colleagues who are ill and are fighting to recover.

Transport workers are not asking to be called heroes: they are professionals who are aware of the importance of their jobs. And we are proud of them. They deserve dignity and safety at work, and we are fighting for them:

To make sure that nobody is obliged to work without the required protection. That nobody has to accept to work without gloves and a mask during a pandemic, without the right to speak up because they have a precarious contract. To make sure that employers engage with trade unions and respect and enforce agreements to protect workers' health. To make sure that while they are delivering goods across Europe, they are not treated as contagious and are denied access to toilets.

We keep receiving reports of transport workers directly in contact with passengers, colleagues and third parties who are being sent to work without personal protective equipment. On Workers' Memorial Day, we want to reiterate – it is employers' responsibility to ensure that the workplace is safe and that workers are not exposed to any danger to their health that can be avoided. EU and national laws are clear on this! Governments have a crucial role to play during this unprecedented pandemic. Companies as well – they need to stop putting profits before their workforce!

Our unions are working hard to expose abuses, to protect workers, to negotiate safety protocols, company by company, workplace by workplace. Without them, the number of fallen transport workers would have been even higher. Too many transport companies are disregarding their duties as employers.

Transport unions will continue to fight to keep transport workers safe and see to it that this pandemic is not used as an excuse to take us a step back in terms of workers' rights. We will ensure that transport workers that are in direct contact with passengers are given proper protection, and social distancing is



President Frank Moreels

Acting General Secretary Livia Spera

Vice Presidents Alexander Kirchner
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respected. We will make sure that the sustained efforts to make transport a better workplace for women continue in times of crisis and beyond, with health and safety at the core. We will continue our fight so that truck drivers delivering goods can shower, eat, rest, and have access to sanitary facilities. We will make sure that when social distancing is not possible, like in fisheries and ports, workers are always provided with protective equipment.

No transport worker should have to go to work with the constant fear of contracting the disease and spreading it to their loved ones weighing on them. No one should have to die from work!



Livia Spera
ETF General Secretary



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