

Brussels, 14 April 2021

Statement of the ETF Executive Committee

Social dialogue in Romanian transport sector

The Executive Committee of the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) condemns the unwillingness of the government of Romania to engage in social dialogue, as well as the intimidating atmosphere that the government has created for the transport trade unions.

Since the beginning of 2021 the ETF has been receiving updates on the deteriorating social dialogue in Romania. One particular case concerns the metro company in Bucharest, where the sole owner is the Romanian state. The union in place, USLM, struggled to discuss with the government the lay-offs and pay cuts announced by the company without any prior consultation. Although there now seems to be an agreement to save jobs, we have been informed about the threats of legal proceedings against workers who decided to protest against the new measures.

Additionally, the government has not consulted with the unions on the post-COVID National Recovery and Resilience Plan. On the contrary, the government has been trying to discredit the union leaders by launching personal attacks.

Denying trade unions the right to structured dialogue on working conditions for the frontline workers, is unacceptable. It goes against the most fundamental human rights that are listed e.g., in the European Pillar of Social Rights. Metro workers in Bucharest have been performing their duties despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and despite long-standing health and safety issues in their workplace. They ensure a service that is crucial in making Bucharest a more liveable city and deserve proper working conditions.

Additionally, the actions of the Romanian government are not in line with the European Green Deal. Even though Bucharest metro has benefited in the last decade from several expansion projects, supported i.e., with EU funds, the company's disregard towards working conditions or sufficient staffing goes against the long-term viability of these projects.

The ETF Executive Committee is calling on the government of Romania to stop its attacks on the trade union movement and to restart proper social dialogue. Involving social partners in the policy making process is key for ensuring social fairness and is the basis of the European social model.