

To the attention of

Ms. Adina Valean
Mr. Nicolas Schmit,

CC:

Ursula von der Leyen
Frans Timmermans

Brussels, 5 July 2021

Dear Commissioners,

RE: Attacks on EU core social values continue in Romania, in the transport sector

Following the letters sent to you concerning the above, we see ourselves obliged to inform you that the situation has progressed, regrettably, in the wrong direction.

Most recently, the Metrorex company challenged in court the collective labour agreement they themselves signed in October 2020 with the USLM. Metrorex asked for the annulment of the CBA. This situation is without precedent and is yet another blow to social dialogue and EU fundamental rights and values.

In addition, all metro workers who went on spontaneous action on 25 - 26 March 2021 are now called in court individually, forced to make false statements under pressure and intimidation i.e. to state that USLM coordinated the action.

May we remind you that the above adds to a long list of abuses by Metrorex that give the European Union and its social values no credit whatsoever. At the top of this list:

- The complaint filed by the Minister of Transport against the protesters, soon after the spontaneous protest action, to the Directorate for Investigation of Organised Crime and Terrorist Acts DIICOT. For clear, legal reasons, DIICOT declined the case; for the record, the spontaneous protest had sparked constant threats, from January onwards, of pay and job cuts in the Bucharest metro system
- The significant delays (several months) by Metrorex in transferring the union membership fees collected from thousands of metro workers, to USLM, against the law and the CBA provisions, as a means to cut the union off from its much-needed resources
- The cuts in company subsidies for metro workers' recovery leave, a benefit that had been long in place to compensate for decades of underinvestment

in the metro system, and particularly in the quality of workplace and working conditions

- The threats of job cuts, in the context where Metrorex has to call retired workers back to work and fails to guarantee legal levels of leave for existing personnel to mitigate the chronic shortage of staff
- Over 20 formal USLM requests to establish a dialogue with Metrorex and the Ministry of Transport on all the above issues. In reply to these, most recently, the Minister of Transport declared that meeting the USLM is neither opportune nor urgent, nor necessary
- The attempts to evict the USLM from their central offices, which are key to the good and effective functioning of the union
- The worrying delays in approving the 2021 Metrorex budget, while lack of investment in the metro system and safety equipment puts the safety of workers and operation at huge risk - the rate of operational safety incidents in the Metro of Bucharest has soared

The above indicates that attempts to undermine the trade union movement in Romania continue to escalate and spread. Most transport trade unions from Romania face the problems highlighted above. Consequently, the ETF, EPSU and the ETUC are currently collecting information on all abuses. To this end, the ETF will publish a report and start an awareness-raising campaign on these attacks.

A final word about Romania's National Rehabilitation and Recovery Plan: according to our information, despite the conditions set by the European Commission in developing the plan, no consultations with transport trade unions have so far taken place. Additionally, if the NRRP includes demands for funding to re-invest in rail, urban public transport and other transport modes, in total disregard of jobs and working conditions, the ETF and our affiliated members across Europe commit to publicising this inconsistency.

The ETF has always played a constructive role at European level in engaging with policy makers and giving a strong push to the social values the EU has been built on. We have rarely come across a situation as critical as the one currently faced by our affiliated members from Romania. Our member organisations from all over Europe have asked us to step up action regarding this case.

In the same constructive spirit, and in the hope that the European Commission will listen to the concern of its transport workers before it is too late, we ask for a meeting with you to discuss the next steps to be taken together to address this case.

European Transport Workers' Federation | Galerie Agora, Rue du Marché aux Herbes 105, BTE 11, B-1000 Brussels

+32 2 285 46 60 | etf@etf-europe.org | etf-europe.org

Frank Moreels, President | Livia Spera, Acting General Secretary | Ekaterina Yordanova - Jan Villadsen, Vice Presidents

The ETF Secretariat will contact you shortly to propose dates.

Regards,



Livia SPERA
ETF General Secretary

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