

STATEMENT OF THE ETF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

FIGHTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN TRANSPORT WORKERS MUST BE A PRIORITY

25 November marks the “International day for combating violence against Women”. The ETF Women’s Conference on 20/21 October reconfirmed gender-based violence as one of the most urgent problems to tackle across all transport modes. Violence, harassment and sexual harassment in the workplace are among the main barriers that prevent women from working or staying in the transport sector.

The Covid 19 pandemic has worsened the problem. Aggressions and violence against front line workers in all sectors including transport increased and in particular against women transport workers as many reported cases showed.

During the lockdowns across Europe, there has also been an alarming increase of domestic violence against women self-isolating at home. This has become an important workplace issue for women who are working remotely or teleworking, which many women are having to combine with responsibility for taking care of their children while schools and kindergartens remain closed.

An important instrument to fight violence against women is the ILO Convention 190 on eliminating violence and harassment at work to which ETF and ITF affiliates largely contributed. It provides for specific measures to address gender-based violence and harassment. It acknowledges that gender-based violence and harassment disproportionately affects women and girls. On 25 June 2021, Convention 190 came into force, but so far only nine countries have ratified the Convention. Among them are only two European countries: Greece and Italy.

Within the EU, the EU Council is delaying Member States’ ratification of the ILO Convention on eliminating violence and harassment at work by saying it will issue legal advice on ratification - which ETUC and ETF consider to be unnecessary - while also taking an age to give the legal opinion.

Furthermore, the European Commission is delaying its proposals to “prevent and combat specific forms of gender-based violence” which were due on 8 December 2021 and the EU accession to the Istanbul Convention on violence against women that began in 2015 but also remains blocked in the European Council despite a European Court of Justice ruling in October, saying that the EU is not required to wait for the completion of the ratification by all member states.

The ETF Executive Committee meeting on 24-26 November 2021 in Copenhagen calls on

- All European countries to follow the example set by Greece and Italy and to ratify the ILO Convention as a matter of urgency;
- The European Commission to ratify the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention at European level and in every Member State;
- The European Commission to no further delay its announced legislative proposals to tackle gender-based violence and ensure that they reflect the important role of trade unions and collective bargaining in eradicating violence against women workers;
- The employers at sectoral social dialogue and work place level develop effective workplace policies that prevent and eliminate gender-based violence, harassment and sexism making use of the ETF Workplace Guide and checklist for gender-responsive risk assessment as part of the management of occupational health and safety.¹

Copenhagen, 24 November 2021

¹ <https://www.etf-europe.org/resource/etf-workplace-guidance-to-address-violence-and-harassment-against-women-at-work/>