



ETF-IRU JOINT STATEMENT

Road transport social partners, IRU and ETF, are ready to work together towards a European framework for improved working conditions of third-country drivers whilst ensuring the full respect of their rights.

Background

Road transport is at the heart of EU resilience, mobility and supply chains. It accounts for approximately 75% of land freight transport and ensures the bulk of collective passenger transport trips. It is a key job creator, with more than five million qualified jobs directly created and sustained by the sector.

Yet over recent years, the shortage of professional drivers has become a critical issue, threatening the very functioning of mobility networks and supply chains across Europe. No matter the root causes, the issue must be dealt with in an organised manner by both EU and national authorities and by the national and EU social partners.

We do believe that priority should be given to make the driver profession attractive for all, in particular, for the EU's youth and women, and we want to engage into a dialogue on the conditions third country drivers should be able to enter the EU labour market and their qualifications and certificates recognised, in full respect of the relevant EU and national rules.

We are firmly convinced that the attractiveness of the sector can only be improved if all participants across mobility networks and supply chains comply with the law. Therefore, a commitment to comply with the law, covering also working conditions and driver pay, is needed by all stakeholders and supported by efforts to widely enforce the Mobility Package 1, in order to prevent abuses, whilst also mobilising targeted controls and intelligence-led enforcement focusing on frequent and serious offenders.

We also believe that jointly exploring the potential of relevant standards ensuring social sustainability according to EU rules, as well as due diligence frameworks for driver welfare is crucial as they could become important tools to prevent the violation of human and labour rights across mobility networks and supply chains.

In this respect, we believe that third-country drivers employed by EU companies must enjoy the exact same rights as incumbent EU drivers, including in terms of social protection and pay.

We therefore jointly condemn cases and practices of mistreatment and discrimination against third-country drivers, such as the ones witnessed at the Gräfenhausen-West parking area in Germany in 2023.

The EU road transport social partners, ETF and IRU, therefore commit to:

- Work together to ensure that third-country drivers, employed by EU-based companies, are fully respected and compensated for their work, as outlined contractually within the relevant laws and social partner agreements.
- Promote due diligence standards and regulatory frameworks on human rights and social sustainability, in line with the provisions of the EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence (CSDD) Directive.
- Promote jointly compliance with working conditions as established by EU and national rules and social partner agreements.
- Promote better enforcement of rules by working together with the European Labour Authority (ELA) and with a potential future European Road Transport Agency (ERTA).
-

- Establish, within the framework of the formal EU road transport sectoral social dialogue committee, a permanent joint working group to consult, discuss and elaborate joint proposals on issues relevant for both partners, such as the creation of an EU framework for recognition and acceptance of qualifications of third country drivers, driver attestations, cash payments, to ensure compliance with social security and tax rules, fair and safe standards for pay and conditions, the posting of third-country drivers, and preventing the abuse of differences between Member States' social security systems, whilst ensuring a close monitoring and a follow-up of the proposed actions regarding third-country drivers.
- Raise awareness and distribute information regarding the new rules introduced by Mobility Package 1 on key issues, such as rules on driving and rest time and the posting of drivers, in coordination with the European Labour Authority.
- Raise awareness and promote the interpretation of the Court of Justice's ruling in case C-610/18 AFMB as a fair basis for relations between companies and drivers regarding wage and payment matters, including regarding third-country drivers.
- Organise, once per year, a full evaluation of the progress made with the implementation of the joint decisions regarding third-country drivers, within the framework of the formal EU road transport sectoral social dialogue.

ETF and IRU invite the European Commission to:

- Develop, in partnership with the European Labour Authority, a methodology and a common digital tool to facilitate the calculation of driver remunerations posted in other EU Member States, whilst closely associating and consulting with social partners.
- Make proposals to ensure targeted and intelligence-led enforcement of rules, including for third country nationals employed by EU companies, as well as for companies established in third countries and operating within the EU in relation to the IMI platform and/or the posting declaration.
- Carry out a study on Member States' rules and conditions regarding the access of third-country drivers to the EU labour market, including patterns for hiring and contracting them, covering also self-employed drivers, and how their rights are guaranteed and respected.
- Harmonise professional qualification training and requirements for third country drivers working for EU-registered companies based on industry driver skills profiling and ensure cross border recognition of existing qualifications.
- Support Member States in ensuring an adequate number of truck parking areas and rest facilities for drivers with appropriate standards, to enable greater inclusiveness and accommodate a diverse workforce, including women.
- Make proposals, depending on the results of the study, to close legislative loopholes that might be discovered during the study regarding country drivers employed by EU-registered companies, in consultation with the social partners.
- Support the sectoral social dialogue discussions regarding third-country drivers and, should social partners develop a joint proposal, consider appropriate ways to ensure their further finalisation and implementation, in line with the provisions of [Articles 151 to 155 of the Treaty](#).

IRU and ETF invite EU Member States to:

- Work closely with national road transport social partners in developing policy and/or funding initiatives to improve the attractiveness of the profession and reduce driver shortages by facilitating, as a priority, the access of young people and women to the driver profession, whilst involving social partners proposals in decisions regarding the entry, integration and qualification of third-country drivers into the EU labour market.
- Send regular annual reports to the European Commission on the number, validity and duration of the driver attestations they have issued during the relevant year, as well as on the percentage of annual inspections as stipulated in the relevant European legislation.



- Ensure an adequate number of truck parking areas and rest facilities for drivers with appropriate standards to enable greater inclusiveness and accommodate a diverse workforce, including women.
- Target controls and inspections at the national level, both at the roadside and at company premises, to prevent cases similar to Gräfenhausen-West.
- Agree, in partnership with social partners at the national level, on a roadmap with clear deadlines and targets to digitalise enforcement and increase their enforcement capacities.

ETF and IRU invite all their public and private partners to:

- Recognise professional drivers as essential workers and place the driver at the centre of their attention, care and support, ensuring that drivers are respected everywhere: by their company, during roadside checks, at shippers' premises, at ports, at border crossings, at bus and coach terminal stations and stops, at loading and unloading points, and by society as a whole.
- Support the implementation of the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDD), in line with its scope.
