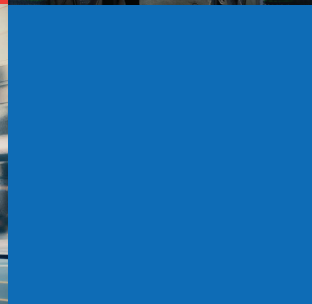




EUROPEAN  
TRANSPORT  
WORKERS'  
FEDERATION

# Public transport THE BEATING HEART OF URBAN MOBILITY

ETF priorities  
for the European  
elections 2024



# Public transport THE BEATING HEART OF URBAN MOBILITY

## ETF priorities for the European elections 2024

Public transport is the beating heart of urban life. A large number of commuters rely on buses, trams, metros and regional trains to get to work every day. If the goals of the European green deal are to be achieved, many more people will have to use public transport. To achieve this, movement in our cities need to be rethought. Public transport, cycling and pedestrian traffic must be given priority over cars. Fewer cars in cities and more public transport also means cleaner, more livable and healthier cities. Fewer parking spaces will create more living space and revive our cities.

Many people also live outside the cities in suburban and rural areas. They must also be covered by comprehensive and reliable local public transport. Urban and rural areas must be connected in such a way that incentivizes public transport use.

To achieve this goal of climate-neutral mobility, European transport policy must be realigned. Climate-neutral mobility means major investment in zero-emissions public transport that protects social standards. The major investment in infrastructure and climate-neutral energy needs to take advantage of the network effect of integrated public transport for the planning and implementation of this transition.

For EU policy, this means putting the achievement of climate neutrality targets before competition. In the past, the obsession with competition has hindered more than it has helped the expansion of reliable and efficient public transport systems. The development of public transport must not be left to competition, ensuring access to public transport for people is the guarantee of a well-functioning society and economy. EU policy must address this task in the new legislative period.

### 1. Public transport as a service in the public interest

Public transport has become unreliable due to price-oriented competition. The overall performance has declined significantly in recent years. Trains and buses cannot operate or run late due to the lack of drivers. Necessary reserves of staff and rolling stock have been cut due to competition and cheaper bids. Yet public transport is the heart of all urban mobility and indispensable for an efficient urban economy and the ecological mobility transition. Public transport is a public service of general interest and should be declared and treated as such. Sufficient public funding must be made available. If this is not sufficient, third-party user financing should also be further encouraged in the Member States.

## **2. Effectively combating staff shortages through fair employment conditions**

Staff shortages are one of the biggest problems in public transport. In almost all Member States in recent years, the deterioration in working conditions due to competition has caused many employees to leave the sector. The result is that more and more trains and buses are breaking down and services are being cut. In the coming years, this will become even more pronounced as many older employees, the so called “baby boom” generation will retire.

In order to create an efficient and reliable local public transport system, we need a sufficient number of qualified and committed staff. This is why companies in the local public transport sector must guarantee good employment conditions and maintain good training standards.

Modern and family-friendly working time models are important in order to find more employees for this sector in the future and also to increase the very low proportion of women. Sufficient, safe social and sanitary spaces at the changing of shifts/routes must also be mandatory.

Safety for employees and users is an increasingly important issue. All efforts to date have failed to reduce the number of violent attacks. European policy must address this and define binding requirements to combat violence and harassment on buses, trams, trains and public transport facilities.

## **3. Intermodality and overall transport planning in favor of public transport**

Mobility in cities and rural areas must be rethought. Public transport, not cars, must be at the heart of urban mobility. To this end, urban space must be redistributed. The fundamental priority of public transport must be guaranteed. To this end, non-motorized private transport must be further expanded. A network of cycle paths and spaces for pedestrians must be linked to public transport in such a way that people can reach all their daily destinations comfortably and on time. It should also be mandatory to allow bicycles on buses and trains.

In order to achieve climate-neutral urban transport, the supply of the necessary climate-neutral energy must also be taken into account in future. To this end, it will be necessary to create the infrastructure and make sufficient hydrogen or electricity available at the required locations. It is therefore vital to combine transport and energy planning. These goals should be an integral part of all local transportation plans in the future.

## **4. Stop the ideology of liberalization - reevaluate the EU's policy on public transport**

The EU's policy on public transport in rail and road over the past three decades has been led by unfounded hopes of competition leading to better services, lower prices, and an increased modal share. ETF have objected to this strategy from the start, because we know that the public transport functions best as an integrated system where companies can cooperate to provide the best service.

After 30 years of liberalization, we do not see any positive results. The reliability of the public transport has fallen sharply and working conditions in the sector have deteriorated. ETF calls on European policymakers to conduct a thorough and objective evaluation of their public transport policies. We need to revisit and adapt Public Service Obligation (PSO) regulations to clearly favour direct awards. Going forward we need a coherent policy that actively promotes public responsibility, ownership, direct awarding for the best service and to protect public investment.



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