



To: Unite the Union

Brussels, 23/02/2022

Ref: Letter of solidarity to Unite the Union

Dear friends,

The European Transport Workers Federation stands in solidarity with Unite the Union and its transport workers - in the categories of Bridge Watchkeeper, Deckhand, Engine Room Watchkeeper, Engineer, Master and Trainee Master - employed under the ringfenced Contract - which will take part in a continuous ban on overtime starting from the 1st of March 2022.

We ensure our transport workers at Svitzer UK of our full support also for the discontinuous strike action planned between 1-3, 19-20 and 26-27 March 2022.

We call on the Svitzer UK to take responsibility and engage in meaningful negotiations with Unite the Union and its inland waterways transport workers to find the best solutions for decent wages and working hours and end the current trade dispute over Pay Claim.

Jacques Kerkhof, the ETF Tug and Towage Committee Chair, warns there is a clear need for an urgent intervention of the national governments to set up the correct parameters and regulate the functioning of the towage sector:

*"How big can greed be? When will national governments, port authorities, supervisors of social legislation and wages and working conditions finally stand up for workers' rights? These mega container shipping companies, such as Maersk and MSC, have not made just millions of profit these last couple of years, but **billions of euros profit**. They buy whatever they want, start their own in-house towage operations and cause a global <race to the bottom> in the towage sector."*

Estelle Brentnall, the Head of ETF Maritime, is pleading for solidarity in the entire Tug and Towage sector to protect the inland waterways transport workers' rights:

"When transport workers, and especially those working in the waterborne sectors have done everything at their own personal peril to ensure fluid supply chains during COVID-19 lockdowns, big shipping companies like Maersk and its Tug & Towage daughter Svitzer have done everything in their power to spiral down the working conditions of those very same crewmembers. We call for solidarity amongst the entire Tug & Towage sector - please send messages to your UK Svitzer colleagues during their actions against the corporate strategies to put pressure on workers. Only through solidarity can we win this! We are stronger together! "

We stand in solidarity with our inland waterways transport workers. We will continue to encourage and support the social dialogue while continuously calling out their employers not just in the UK but all around the world to ensure decent working and living conditions and decent pay.

In solidarity,

ETF Maritime team



