

Brussels, 23rd July 2024

Dear Mme. Vozemberg,

On behalf of the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF), representing over 5 million transport workers across Europe, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations on your re-election as MEP and your election as chair of the Committee on Transport and Tourism (TRAN).

As I am sure you know, transport is a vital sector for Europe. It directly provides millions of jobs and supports our economies. It encourages balanced economic growth by providing economic actors with effective means of reaching suppliers and customers. Similarly, the transport sector allows Europeans to access education, work, culture, and leisure, as well as promoting social and territorial cohesion across our Union. Transport also represents a key aspect of the just ecological transition.

However, transport workers in Europe have increasingly faced issues of poor and deteriorating working conditions, low pay, and long hours. Decades of underinvestment, liberalisation and fragmentation have undermined the attractiveness of the sector, with severe labour shortages emerging in recent years. Staff shortages are an undeniable problem in almost every aspect of transport and EU policymakers have a key role to play in addressing this issue.

For this reason, in the run up to the recent European elections the ETF and its affiliates published a manifesto, attached to this letter, which outlines the demands of European transport workers for a new deal for the sector. All EU institutions need to do their part to address the crisis that the transport sector is facing. The Committee you chair has one of the most important roles to play, and for this reason transport workers have high expectations from TRAN.

Transport workers must be at the core of transport policies. Hence, we believe that the TRAN Committee should dedicate part of its activity to re-centre EU policy on workers. This should through continual dialogue with the ETF, (particularly when setting the Committee's agenda), mainstreaming workers perspective in TRAN events and key documents, and issuing opinions and commissioning studies aimed both at exposing labour issues in transport and tackling the root-causes of staff shortages.

We believe that to kick off this term, it is essential to reassess EU transport policies and their impact on transport sectors and workers.

Liberalisation and privatisation have been the guiding principles of EU transport policy for decades. It is now time to evaluate these policies' effects on the workers, on the modal shift too greener mobility, on infrastructure development, and on governance of our transport systems. Transport infrastructure has been neglected by decades of underinvestment and lack of a strategic and systemic vision, severely hampering the effectiveness of the EU's transport systems.

We need an industrial policy for transport which priorities innovation, climate and social dimensions over competition and liberalisation, so that the sector can be made attractive to workers again. The TRAN committee must initiate a call for a change in EU transport policy. We want the TRAN

committee to trigger a debate on the strategies needed to support a robust development of infrastructure, so that the investment needs of transport are properly taken into account. We want the TRAN Committee to recognise that railways and local public transport are public services and that making profit should not be their goal.

Transport professions are set apart from work in other sectors in many ways. This means that labour legislation and enforcement methods need to be tailored to the specificities of this highly-mobile workforce. We need specific rules to protect transport workers' rights and enforcement capacities that are able to efficiently ensure compliance with these rules in a cross-border context. This is especially the case with regards to posting workers and the coordination of social security systems.

We want the TRAN Committee to keep this in mind as a binding principle when generating political debate (i.e. via own opinions) and when working on legislative initiatives launched by the European Commission.

Without decisive action during this legislative mandate to support the transport sector and the workers that keep Europe on the move, the EU faces a very real danger to its mobility, social cohesion, economic development, and green ambitions. It is therefore my sincere hope that the ETF will be able to cooperate with you in addressing these crises.

In light of this, I would also request a meeting with you at your convenience to discuss our further cooperation.

Sincerely,

Livia Spera,  
General Secretary, European Transport Workers' Federation