

Declaration by the European social partners in the railway sector ETF and CER on the Covid-19 pandemic, the outstanding performance of the employees and necessary measures for the future of the railways

- With the Covid-19 pandemic and climate change, Europe, the people, politics and society are facing an unprecedented challenge.
- During this crisis, the railway has shown to be a guarantee of mobility for people and goods, both nationally and across borders, and thus ensuring essential services.
- The reliability, safety and central role of the railways for the transport of people and goods is a positive finding from the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The European social partners have great respect and great appreciation for the enormous performance of the employees in the railway sector, who have made this possible under difficult conditions and make it possible every day.
- The Covid-19 pandemic made it clear that railway employees are systemically essential and therefore indispensable for smooth and strong rail traffic.
- We would like to express our thanks to all employees, because the railway only functions as a network of systems and integrated unit, from drivers, dispatchers, to infrastructure, maintenance, services, management and security (on board and off board staff).
- The rail sector is the key to achieving the vital climate targets and at the same time enabling sustainable mobility for people.
- The EU social partners ETF and CER are underlining: For this, however, the rail sector needs - now finally - decisive political commitment and full support at all levels, national, cross-border and European
 - for sufficient financing and fair framework conditions to ensure a level playing field in the European transport sector;
 - for a European set of rules on interoperability and safety promoting rail traffic with the necessary socially acceptable harmonization and standardization;
 - for fair and high-quality working and employment conditions and, above all, for sufficient, well-qualified and motivated staff in an attractive sector.
- Rail is a growth sector with a future. The European strategy for smart and sustainable mobility must now set the course so that the associated goals can be achieved.
- There must be consequently more traffic on the rail tracks. The trust of passengers and customers in the railways must be strengthened. The financial problems of the railway companies in Europe caused by the Covid-19 crisis should not lead to a reduction in traffic and employment. The Member States shall allocate the available resources, including EU funds for the promotion and support of the rail sector, taking social criteria into account.
- The necessary breakthrough for rail freight transport is central. The ETF and CER jointly identified the measures required here in the 2015 Rail Freight Declaration¹. The current

¹ <https://www.etf-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/CER-ETF-Rail-Freight-Declaration.pdf>

political initiatives to support the railway sector at EU and national level have already taken up many points.

- The European freight corridors as well as a European system of single wagon traffic and their promotion are an important focus, whereby high quality and fair working conditions must be ensured
- In sum, a joint effort is required, supported by the EU, so that more freight traffic can finally be brought onto the rail tracks.
- Increasing the attractiveness of the railway sector for employees and the prevention of unfair competition on the basis of working conditions must be additional and important objectives.
- The transformation and more traffic on the railways can only succeed with the appropriate employees in the railway sector.
- They need job security, good social standards, attractive and fair employment conditions.
- The EU social partners are ready to make an active contribution to this themselves: In the European Year of the Rail 2021 they want to conclude an autonomous agreement on the promotion and integration of women in the railway sector and also address the issues of employability and future security of the professions in the context of digitization and automation in our sector. Other concerns are addressed in the Work Program 2020/2021 of the rail social partners.
- Strengthening the railway sector and its employees consistently means investing in the future and achieving the climate targets.
- To do this, the course and signals must be set correctly.

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For ETF



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