



To the EU Transport Ministers

Brussels, 20 April 2022

Dear Ministers,

War in Ukraine and transport workers

It is our understanding that during an informal video conference of transport ministers held on 8 April 2022 you had an opportunity to exchange with the Ukrainian Minister for Infrastructure Oleksandr Kubrakov on Ukraine's transport needs.

In the article "[War and Transport Workers](#)", recently published on our website, we highlighted the strategic importance of transport and transport infrastructure in times of war. Transport and its infrastructure are essential in providing access to food, medicine and humanitarian aid. At the same time, we underlined the fact that it is transport workers that are essential, as they are the ones who move these goods and people on this infrastructure. Transport workers are transport's more vital asset.

Our Ukrainian colleagues in railways are working day and night to transport refugees to the West of the country and bring humanitarian aid on the way back; our seafarers working on board of ships in the Black Sea are under fire; our aviation workers are stranded without any support from their employers - without accommodation or pay and under threat as a result; and, our truck drivers often risk their lives to supply frontline areas, as road transport is often the last viable transport option for goods to reach its destination.

The role of transport workers and their unions will be critical during the post-war recovery phase. The new reality of transport in Ukraine after the war will be different from the one before and it is of utmost importance to involve transport workers and their trade unions in substantive and constructive discussions about their future. Therefore, we insist of the role of social dialogue during the recovery process, as enshrined in the EU Treaties. Given the ambitions of Ukraine in terms of EU membership, this should be a *conditio sine qua non*. The future of Ukraine should be constructed in close cooperation and consultation with the workers, promoting social dialogue and collective bargaining in line with EU values and principles. The European Transport Workers' Federation, representing 5 million transport workers across all transport sectors in Europe, together with our affiliates [Marine Transport Workers' Trade Union of Ukraine](#) and [Trade Union of Railway Workers and Transport Constructors of Ukraine](#) are ready to be involved in constructive discussions on the recovery, both at European level, as well as in Ukraine.

Before the war, the ETF intervened on a number of occasions upon the request of our Ukrainian affiliates in problems related to social dialogue in Ukraine. Recently, we were alarmed by the statements of the Oleksandr Kamyshin, CEO of Ukrzaliznytsia (Ukrainian railways), published in [Guardian](#): " 'We had implemented European stuff and became a place of discussions rather than decisions, we lost this vertical command culture. In wartime, we brought it back' he said, adding that some of this speedy decision making would be retained after the war was over." Times of war may require some military-style organisation and line of command but, at the same time, the role of workers and their elected representatives must be understood and respected, and a resilient and

inclusive recovery can only occur once workers' rights and the role of their representatives are promoted in the recovery phase.

To conclude, we fully support the much-needed help for Ukrainian transport infrastructure but, at the same time, we insist that it must be conditional upon on the involvement of social partners in the whole process, from the outset, and must respect workers' workers and trade union rights. This is the only mechanism that will ensure that the voice of transport workers will be heard. Our recent humanitarian actions organised by the ETF in close cooperation with our local affiliates show that we are a credible partner and we would like to continue our engagement beyond the war and into and beyond the recovery phase.

Sincerely,



Livia Spera
General Secretary