

PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 23 March 2023

Safe and effective rail operations - Social partners approve joint recommendation for the revision of the Train Drivers Directive

Today, 23 March, at an extraordinary meeting of the Sectoral Social Dialogue the Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER), representing railway sector employers, and the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF), representing railway workers, officially adopted a joint recommendation for the revision of the Train Drivers Directive (TDD).

With this joint recommendation CER and ETF call on the European institutions to take into account their proposal which is based on profound expertise from daily work, operations, and business experience. ETF and CER also emphasize the importance of safe, feasible, and proportionate requirements in the revision of the Train Drivers Directive.

CER and ETF believe that a sound certification scheme and a comprehensive approach to communication in and around the railway system is of the utmost importance for the revision of the TDD. While fully supporting harmonisation at European level, where feasible and appropriate, the social partners nonetheless emphasise the need for acknowledgement of the existing different levels (European level, the drivers operation area and the company level). They therefore recommend developing a digitalised train driver certification system with a differentiated approach recognising all three levels.

Additionally, the social partners stress that safe train operation on a country's network can only work if communication between drivers and traffic controllers, emergency services, as well as other railway staff, works flawlessly, particularly in disrupted/emergency situations. The railway communication arrangements in place already ensure this essential requirement. They therefore oppose the introduction of a single or additional common language requirement for the rail sector. When it comes to exemptions, ETF states that the minimum of a B1 level should be required on the entire European railway network whereas CER favours exemptions for countries with more than one official EU language as well as for border sections.

In order to define a future target system for railway communication, which takes into account all communications aspects and relations comprehensively, both parties recommend that a scientific study which looks into the communication needs of the railway sector incl. field tests/ pilots is carried out.

CER and ETF believe that the sectoral social dialogue is a cornerstone of the European social model, where social partners – both workers and employers - are essential stakeholders to explain the realities of work across many sectors. In this respect, the Sectoral Social Dialogue for Railways has been highly active and constructive, and CER and ETF are fully committed to continue this journey and consider it an important tool for social exchange on EU policies, promoting open and transparent discussions.

The social partners also look forward to the European Year of Skills which will put skills appropriately centre-stage in the European dialogue in the coming months and outline how EU initiatives and funding can address skills shortages in the EU.

The full statement can be found on the CER website [here](#).

CER

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The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) brings together around 70 railway undertakings, their national associations as well as infrastructure managers and vehicle leasing companies. The membership is made up of long-established bodies, new entrants and both private and public enterprises, representing 78% of the rail network length, 81% of the rail freight business and about 92% of rail passenger operations in EU, EFTA and EU accession countries. CER represents the interests of its members towards EU policymakers and transport stakeholders, advocating rail as the backbone of a competitive and sustainable transport system in Europe. For more information, visit www.cer.be or follow [@CER_railways](https://twitter.com/CER_railways) on Twitter.

ETF

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The European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) represents over 5 million transport workers from more than 200 transport unions across Europe, from the European Union, the European Economic Area, and Central and Eastern Europe, in over 30 countries.

ETF's work is driven by its vision for [Fair Transport](#): quality jobs with safe, reliable transport services for customers. For more information, visit etf-europe.org and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).