



# ETF CAMPAIGN 4<sup>TH</sup> RAILWAY PACKAGE

**IT'S ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE RAILWAY WORKERS IN EUROPE  
4<sup>th</sup> RAILWAY PACKAGE  
VOTE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT PLENARY IN STRASBOURG**

## **ETF CALL FOR ACTION**

**25 February 2014, 13h00 – 15h30, European Parliament, Strasbourg**

### **WHY THIS CALL FOR ACTION?**

End of February the European Parliament is going to vote on the so-called 4<sup>th</sup> Railway package. This is the first important decision of one of the two European legislators (the other is the Council of Transport Ministers) on the six European laws that form the package. Those European laws are compulsory for all EU Member States (and candidate countries) and will define the future framework conditions for the railway sector and in consequence for the railway workers.<sup>1</sup>

### **WHAT IS AT STAKE?**

Within the political pillar of this 4<sup>th</sup> Railway Package the European Commission proposed market opening and competition for the domestic rail passenger services and jeopardized the existence of integrated railway companies by setting severe conditions (Chinese Wall) for the organization of integrated companies. The European Parliament Transport Committee modified and partly "smoothed" some provisions but principally confirmed the Commission's approach when voting on 17 December 2013:

- Liberalisation of domestic rail passenger transport and in particular for high speed services (open access liberalisation);
- Promoting and facilitating competitive tendering of rail public transport services (fragmentation of the contracts, access to rolling stock by transfer of the financial risk to the public authorities, strict conditions for direct award of public service contracts with full competences given to the Commission to define the criteria);
- Priority for separation of infrastructure management and operations by tightening the conditions for integrated rail companies;

**One positive aspect** of the vote on 17 December 2013: The EP TRAN Committee strengthened the social part of the PSO regulation by making it compulsory for competent authorities to require social standards in competitive tendering and/or the transfer of staff in the case of change of operator.

**Very negative:** The TRAN Committee introduced the issue of minimum services in the case of strike (as a recital) and thus attacks the fundamental right to strike.

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<sup>1</sup> The EU co-decision procedure foresees two or even three readings in both chambers, the EP and the Council. This vote is the first reading decision of the European Parliament. It is however very important because it defines the position of the EP in its future negotiations with the Council.

## WHAT WOULD BE THE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE RAILWAY WORKERS?

In a nutshell: With the extension of competition to the domestic rail passenger transport and the splitting up of the remaining integrated companies the privatisation process and cost cutting pressure we experienced already in the past will continue with the known consequences:

- reduction of number of employees;
- increase of outsourcing and sub-contracting of services;
- increase of atypical and precarious employment;
- increase the use of agency workers;
- intensification of work load and work pressure;
- increase of flexible working hours, split work shifts, overtime.

**This will inevitably affect the safety, the security and the quality of the services!**

**Open access competition** in passenger transport means cherry picking on profitable lines. Two or three operators are directly competing on the same line - via the price. Working conditions are at stake: at the new operator but also at the old operator. Both have to make profit. The expected losses of the network-operator cannot finance any more less-profitable offers on other lines or at other moments beyond the peak hours. Passengers might win on the profitable lines but lose elsewhere. The public has to pay more when the same offer in less served regions shall be maintained.

**More competitive tendering in public transport services against direct award of public service contracts:** Two, three or more operators make an offer for running a line or a bundle of lines for a limited period of time. Usually the cheapest offer gets the contract. Workers are put in regular uncertainty. Good employment is replaced by precarious employment or jobs are totally deleted. In passenger transport in particular the jobs of on-board staff are in danger. The existing railway workers' status of the traditional rail operator is under threat.

The EP TRAN Committee admitted these effects and adopted a provision that obliges competent authorities to set social standards and/or to oblige the new operator to take over the staff when there is a change. But are these rules really watertight?

**The position of integrated rail companies:** There is a clear priority to separate infrastructure management and operation with the idea that this would better guarantee competition. Integrated companies are still allowed but under severe conditions that make them useless. The victims are the railway workers. It will be more difficult to ensure employment security in particular for workers with safety tasks who can no longer work in their jobs for medical reasons. The conditions for maintaining and improving working conditions will be more difficult and uniform working conditions for all railway workers will be at threat.

## WHAT DO WE WANT FROM THE MEMBERS OF EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT?

- Reject the proposal of liberalising the domestic rail passengers' services;
- Reject further fragmentation through separation between infrastructure management and operations and jeopardizing integrated companies;
- Respect the Member States' right to organise the public transport services in the best way considering the specific needs of their citizens and regions;
- Make sure that railway workers' rights and conditions are always protected, since they are prerequisites for safe, secure, well-functioning and high quality railway services;
- Hands off the right to strike; reject the introduction of minimum services in the case of strike;
- Remember that railway services are public services!

## WHAT TO DO?

**Let's go to Strasbourg!**

Let's make our voice heard in front of the European Parliament! **The ETF calls for a demonstration in Strasbourg on 25 February 2014 (about 13h00 – 15h30) in front of the European Parliament. We need to be many from many countries to show and make listen to the MEPs our anger and our demands.**



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