

Covid-19: International Trade Union Declaration concerning the Railway Sector

Available in French, Spanish, English, Portuguese and Arabic.

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For a social, ecological, safe railway, let's take the right path out of the crisis: let's choose the right switches now!

We are currently witnessing a global health crisis linked to Covid-19 that is unfortunately causing more and more victims every day. We have been saying it for several weeks now: **it is not the bosses or the governments that have created the virus; but they are responsible for its worldwide spread and the dramatic consequences.**

"Public authorities" have shown their ineffectiveness and confirmed, once again, that the common interest is not among their concerns. Conflicting instructions, insufficient equipment and protective products, insufficient testing, keeping many professional sectors in business under pressure from the bosses, etc.

The railways have also been affected, including rail transport as well as other railway activities: cleaning, maintenance, catering, prevention/safety, etc. In our sector, too, **we are subject to the same contradictory instructions: repeated calls for containment** (a very real need!) **accompanied with measures aimed at sending to work a large number of employees** whose activity does not fall within those services that are absolutely fundamental to cover the essential needs of the community.

The right to withdraw from work in the face of a situation that entails a health risk is a public health measure: company management challenges its application and the public authorities support it! It is a decision whose consequences will have to be assumed by those in charge... **Currently, freight trains are still running. Their sole purpose is to transport equipment to keep factories and building sites running, but these should be stopped to protect employees! But the shareholders of these companies, in the building and public works or automobile industries for example, don't care!**

Moreover, employers everywhere are working to penalise those who are effectively confined (short-time working, childcare, teleworking, etc.) by cutting back on rights, with the approval and support of the public authorities. Those whose presence in the workplace is suspended because of the health crisis must receive **100% of their salary**, regardless of their administrative situation!

Containment is the only way to protect the entire population. It is partly the consequence of the negligence of public authorities in the field of prevention and public health, but it must apply to everyone, with the sole exception of public utilities in the period. In the latter, **it is up to the workers to define how work should be organised; not to the directorates that keep themselves away from the workplaces, where the risk of death is!**

The shareholders of private companies want to profit from the health crisis. They are asking for public money without scruples.

The Alliance of Rail New Entrants (Allrail), which includes NTV, Rail Freight Group, Westbahn, MTR, Transdev, FlixTrain, Leo express, Ilsa, welcomes the first announcements made by the European Commission, which pave the way for direct and indirect subsidies to private operators. But they are asking for more: the granting of State loans, the deferral of the payment of taxes and social charges, the granting of State guarantees on the credits contracted, the possibility of deferring the payment of leasing charges for the rolling stock they operate and the suspension of the payment of charges for the use of (public) infrastructure until the end of 2021! Private companies outside Europe have, of course, made the same requirements! In Africa in particular, the consequences of colonialism are added to this, making the situation even worse.

THE MEMBER ORGANISATIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION SOLIDARITY AND STRUGGLE NETWORK AND THE RAIL WITHOUT BORDERS NETWORK DEMAND:

- **The limitation of railway activities to what is strictly necessary** in the period.
- The implementation, wherever the activity must continue, of **all measures necessary to protect the health and life of railway workers**: materials and products for individual protection, work organisation allowing barrier gestures, reduction of working hours to take into account all external difficulties...
- **That privatisations are called into question**, the setting up of public rail services at the appropriate levels (regions, countries, continents), according to the needs defined by the population, not according to the needs of capitalists, as is the case today. From this point of view, the current situation also shows the urgency of going beyond “nationalisation” when it means giving power to governments.

It is up to those who work to decide: in the company, as in the communities! More than for any other sectors, the railways cannot limit themselves to the local dimension: but we have known about cooperation for a long time now!

- Finally, as railway workers, we reaffirm that **the railways are a mode of transport to be favoured**, for ecological, social and safety reasons.
- However, we also say that **we must question unnecessary transport** and relocate production and its distribution. It is the future of the planet that is at stake.

Pour un chemin de fer social, écologique, sûr, prenons la bonne voie lors de la

sortie de crise : choisissons dès maintenant les bons aiguillages !

<http://www.laboursolidarity.org/Pour-un-chemin-de-fer-social>

_Por un ferrocarril social, ecológico, seguro, tomemos la mejor vía para salir de la crisis : ¡elijamos desde ahora los desvíos adecuados !

<http://www.laboursolidarity.org/Por-un-ferrocarril-social?lang=es>

_Para um Caminho-de-ferro social, ecológico, seguro, temos que tomar a boa via aquando da saída de crise : temos que escolher desde já as boas agulhas !

<http://www.laboursolidarity.org/Para-um-Caminho-de-ferro-social?lang=pt>

_القطار الاجتماعي، البيئي، الآمن، نأخذ المسار الأفضل للخروج من الأزمة : نأخذ منذ الآن الدواب المناسبة !

http://www.laboursolidarity.org/IMG/pdf/2020_4_13_cotonavirus_rail_fr_arab.pdf

P.S.

<http://www.laboursolidarity.org/For-a-social-ecological-safe?lang=en>