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Relaunching transport and tourism in the EU after COVID-19: Transport workers

The research

This thematic briefing overviews the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic on EU transport workers and their working conditions, as well as policy recommendations to address the challenges emerging from the crisis.

The **COVID-19 pandemic** has caused major disruptions in the transport industry. Transport-related jobs often require workers to be physically present and to interact with colleagues or passengers. Such jobs cannot be carried out remotely. It is estimated that **2.3 million transport and storage workers in the European Union are put at risk** losing their jobs due to the pandemic.



Rail transport workers meet with hundreds of passengers every day. Unless social distancing measures are enforced, it is hard to carry out controls at railway stations while protecting personnel and passengers.

Due to travel restrictions, **workers abroad such as seafarers** were unable to be repatriated and were stranded across the globe.

Aviation is one of the most precarious sectors. Globally, **direct aviation jobs are forecasted to fall by 4.8 million** by the beginning 2022, resulting in a **contraction of 43%** when compared to the pre-pandemic situation.

The **EU** adopted **guidelines** to ensure the continuity of the flow of goods while facilitating the safe movement of workers. **National responses** are mostly comprised of financial support, tax exemptions, special fiscal packages, loan guarantees and cash transfers.

Main observations

Urban transport workers experience many risks. The increase in road traffic due to the rise in e-commerce means an increase in their work load, with consequences in terms of fatigue. Many of the food home delivery and ride-hailing platforms' workers do not receive personal protective equipment from the platforms, and are instead pressured into working under unsafe conditions.

Road transport workers suffer from the impacts of trade restrictions and travel bans. Unpredictable and long waiting times at borders have led to drivers being fined for violating driving time limitations.



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Conclusions and policy recommendations

This thematic briefing provides recommendations to ensure **a safer and a better working environment for transport workers**, it advocates:

A stronger social dialogue between stakeholders as well as safer working conditions and higher social standards to reverse the sector's unattractiveness.

The endorsement and adoption of legislation guaranteeing that workers, especially platform workers, are socially better protected.

Address the labour market challenge, by sharing good practices and promoting dialogue and research on skills shortages and recruitment.

Integrating public transport offers with on-demand sharing services and implementing proper contractual frameworks for workers of the platform economy.

Adopting better conditions for road transport workers, with enhanced facilities for long haul transport;

Implementing easier contact tracing via apps to protect railway workers in train stations;

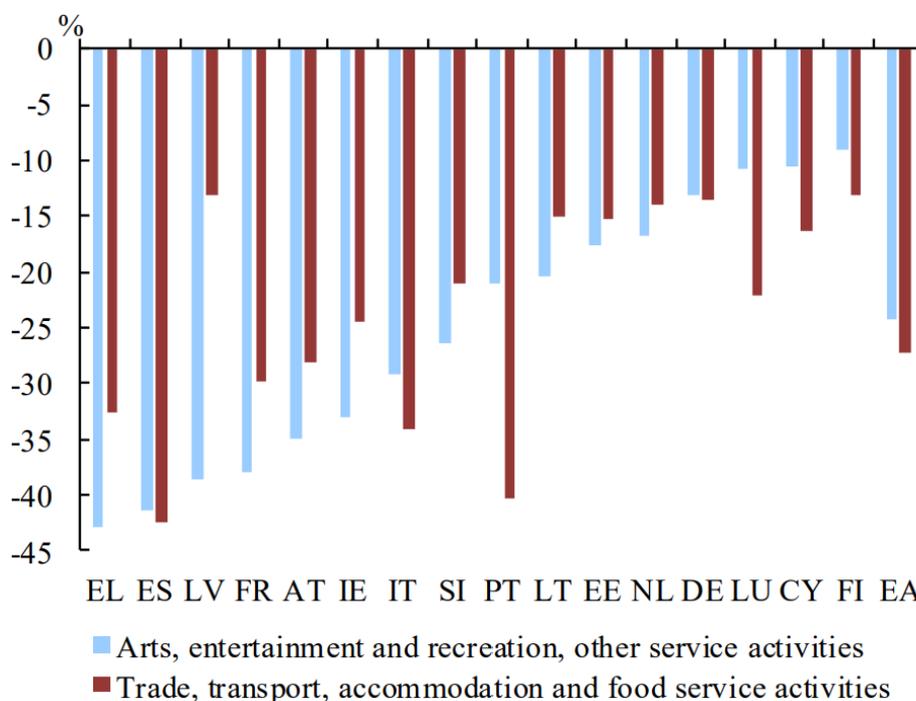
Reviewing the compliance of all foreign ships calling at European ports with the Maritime Labour Convention related to the working and living conditions of seafarers;

Maintaining governmental aid for aviation, harmonizing travel protocols and facilitating safe traveling to resume air-services demand.

Key areas for action

1. Establish safer working conditions and higher social standards for platforms and road transport workers.
2. Protect railway workers' health safety in train stations.
3. Enhance working and living conditions of seafarers.
4. Maintain governmental aid for aviation.
5. Harmonize travel protocols and facilitate safe traveling to resume air service demand.

Figure : Employment in selected sectors (hours worked), 2020-Q2 vs 2019-Q4, euro area



Source: : European Commission, European Economic Forecast. Autumn 2020

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