

Joint Trade Union Cooperation Office for Truck Drivers, Romania

Title of the policy or measure (in English)	Joint Trade Union Cooperation Office for Truck Drivers
- Country	Romania
- Sectors	Transport and storage
- What groups are targeted by the measure	- Truck drivers from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) who are working abroad (directly targeted)
- Purpose of measure	Changing attitudes: awareness raising
- Short sentence summarising the measure	The Joint Trade Union Cooperation Office is a collaborative measure between trade unions in Belgium, Denmark, Romania and Sweden which aims to tackle the issues of social dumping and modern slavery in road transportation by providing support for CEE drivers who work abroad.
Background	
- Background context driving the implementation of the measure	<p>Many 'letterbox companies' (companies that register their business in one country for economic reasons, but operate elsewhere) continue to expand in the road transportation sector throughout the CEE region, including Romania.ⁱ</p> <p>This has led to significant pay reductions for tens of thousands of CEE truck drivers working abroad, as they are paid according to the wages of the country where the company is based or in which they were recruited.ⁱⁱ</p> <p>The drivers also face a number of additional difficulties such as health issues, receiving orders from their employers which conflict with the law, living and working in their vehicles for months at a time, and facing strict controls and sanctions from their employers.ⁱⁱⁱ</p> <p>These issues can be very challenging to deal with independently, as the drivers often do not speak the language of the countries they are working in.^{iv}</p>
- When was the measure implemented? (including start date and end date/ongoing)	This is a pilot project, which began in January 2013 and is ongoing. It is hoped the Joint Trade Union Cooperation Office for truck drivers project will continue and be replicated in other countries, beginning with Poland.
- Names(s) of authorities/bodies/organisations involved	<p>The Joint Trade Union Cooperation Office is coordinated by the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) and includes six trade unions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ABVV-BTB and CSC Transcom from Belgium; - 3F Denmark; - ATU Romania and the Sindicatul Liber al Transportatorilor (SLT) from Romania; and - The Swedish Transport Workers' Union.^v <p>The FNV in the Netherlands took part in the initial programme of work detailed below.</p>
- Scope of the measure (a pilot project, nationwide, regional wide)	The Joint Trade Union Cooperation Office for truck drivers has international scope, including activities in Romania, Denmark, Belgium, France and the

	<p>Netherlands, but has a particular focus on Romania due to the high proportion of CEE truck drivers who are Romanian.^{vi}</p> <p>Within Romania, the Joint Trade Union Cooperation Office is located in Targu Mures, supported by the office of the transport federation ATU Romania in Bucharest.</p>
<p>- Type of (policy) measure</p>	<p>New institution</p>
<p>- Key objectives of the measure</p>	<p>General objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To organise CEE truck drivers in trade unions and defend their rights in a cross-border context.^{vii} <p>Specific objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding the needs of CEE truck drivers working abroad; - Identifying joint cross-border organisation and representation strategies between Joint Trade Union Cooperation Office members; - Developing and organising a set of union services that benefit drivers; - Providing practical guidance to truck drivers on how to make better use of their rights and entitlements; and - Improving truck drivers' access to health care.
<p>Specific measure</p>	
<p>- Description of how the measure operates in practice</p>	<p>In 2013, as the first step in the development of the Joint Trade Union Cooperation Office, ETF identified partners in the CEE region.</p> <p>Following this, a one-year programme of workshops and field visits took place, combining practical work (including visits to truck parking areas in Denmark, Belgium and the Netherlands) and debates to determine how to structure the cooperation. This was carried out by 3F in Denmark, BTB-ABVV and ACV TRANSCOM in Belgium, and FNV in the Netherlands.</p> <p>The one-year programme also included leaflet campaigns targeting Bulgarian and Romanian drivers, to raise awareness of their rights and the role of the trade unions, and to encourage them to become members of one of the trade unions involved in the joint cooperation. This also included learning about the needs of CEE drivers through group discussions.</p> <p>Since 2015, an additional aspect of Joint Trade Union Cooperation Office involves bringing criminal charges against companies accused of mistreating drivers. The SLT, supported by ATU Romania, began pursuing court cases against companies for abuses to drivers in 2015. These were supported by international partners from Belgium, France, Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden, furthering cooperation between these organisations.</p> <p>In October 2017, the Joint Trade Union Cooperation Office was opened in Targu Mures. The main tasks of the Office include recruiting members to the trade union SLT, representing members in court cases and involvement in awareness raising campaigns around the Mobility Package, which is a significant revision of EU rules applicable to road transport which will affect the pay, working conditions and work-life of truck drivers. The Joint Trade Union Cooperation Office also undertakes policy work, such as lobbying EU policymakers for the rights of truck drivers.^{viii}</p> <p>The transport federation ATU Romania in Bucharest supports the Joint Trade Union Cooperation Office via communication with stakeholders such as national inspectorates and social partners.</p>

<p>- What resources and other relevant organisational aspects are involved?</p>	<p>The Joint Trade Union Cooperation Office has an annual budget of approximately EUR 50 000. This covers two permanent members of staff, the costs of annual evaluation meetings and day-to-day running of the office. It is planned for the Joint Trade Union Cooperation Office to become self-sufficient by 2022 using funding from trade union membership fees.</p>
<p>- What are the source(s) of funding?</p>	<p>The Joint Trade Union Cooperation Office is funded by the trade unions that comprise it (ABVV-BTB, CSC Transcom; 3F Denmark; ATU Romania; the Sindicatul Liber al Transportatorilor (SLT); and the Swedish Transport Workers' Union).</p>
<p>Evaluation and outcome</p>	
<p>- Has the measure achieved its objectives?</p>	<p>Based on the outcome of the work of the one-year programme, the Joint Trade Union Cooperation Office has been successful in achieving its main objectives in relation to understanding the needs of CEE drivers; developing collaborative strategies; and, raising awareness amongst CEE drivers of their rights and upholding these (for example, through court cases).</p> <p>Work is ongoing to meet the objectives of improving truck drivers' access to health care and assisting truck drivers to make better use of their rights and entitlements. SLT is currently preparing materials to inform truck drivers about access to health care during the exercise of their work on EU territory. SLT also plans to provide advice on cross-border social security entitlements for Romanian drivers working abroad.</p>
<p>- Assessment method (including indicators used to measure its impact), and the outputs and outcomes achieved</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The progress of the Joint Trade Union Cooperation Office's work is evaluated annually via the project partners' meeting. The first evaluation meeting is scheduled for the second half of 2018. Based on this first experience, project partners may introduce more specific evaluation tools. The long-term outcomes will not be known until the first annual evaluation meeting takes place. • Through the work undertaken in the one-year programme, the key needs and desires of CEE truck drivers working abroad were uncovered. These were: spending more time with their families, receiving legal salaries, receiving adequate social and health protection, and being given respect. The SLT has recruited an additional 500 CEE truck drivers as members and are pursuing 14 court cases, while a further 50 court cases have already been resolved. Information campaigns targeting CEE truck drivers continue.^{ix}
<p>- What are lessons learnt and the key conditions for success?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - International cooperation between the trade unions has been a key aspect of the development of the Joint Trade Union Cooperation Office due to the cross-border nature of truck driving. Working with international partners has facilitated the practical work with CEE drivers working abroad and supported the court cases against employers accused of abusing their drivers. - Field visits have allowed representatives from the Joint Trade Union Cooperation Office to directly engage with the target audience, providing opportunities to learn about their needs, inform them about their rights, and encourage them to take action. - The impact of trade union action may be limited by the labour legislation and the culture of the country in which it takes place. For example, SLT has experienced difficulties in gaining the necessary representatives to engage in negotiations of collective agreements, due to limitations of the current legal framework.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Level of transferability (e.g. other countries/groups/sectors) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This is a positive example of trade union action in a cross-border setting, which could be expanded and/or replicated elsewhere. - Where replicated, campaigns should be adjusted to suit the local context and recipients' level of knowledge and needs.
Additional information	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contacts 	<p>Ms Cristina Tilling, Political Secretary, European Transport Workers' Federation Email address: c.tilling@etf-europe.org Telephone: +3222854666</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Useful sources and resources 	<p>ETF Press Release on the Joint Trade Union Cooperation office: http://www.etf-europe.org/files/extranet/-75/47831/ETF%20Press%20Release_Trade%20union%20organisations%20get%20together%20to%20defend%20the%20rights%20of%20truck%20drivers%20in%20Eu (EN) http://www.etf-europe.org/files/extranet/-75/47830/ETF%20Press%20Release_Trade%20union%20organisations%20get%20together%20to%20defend%20the%20rights%20of%20truck%20drivers%20in%20Eu (RO) ETF blog on the Joint Trade Union Cooperation office: http://www.etfroadsectionblog.eu/index.php/2017/10/13/six-etf-member-organisations-open-trade-union-cooperation-office-in-romania/ (EN)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Metadata and key words for online search 	<p>Romania; road transport; truck drivers; trade unions; cooperation; social dumping; modern slavery; drivers' rights</p>

ⁱETF (2018), 'Trade union joint cooperation office for truck drivers'. Presentation at Seminar on Undeclared Work in the Road Transport Sector, Brussels

ⁱⁱIbid.

ⁱⁱⁱETF (2017), 'Trade union organisations get together to defend the rights of truck drivers in Europe and address social dumping and modern slavery in road transport'. [press release]. Internet: http://www.etf-europe.org/files/extranet/75/47831/ETF%20Press%20Release_Trade%20union%20organisations%20get%20together%20to%20defend%20the%20rights%20of%20truck%20drivers%20in%20Eu

^{iv}Ibid.

^vIbid.

^{vi}ETF (2018), op cit.

^{vii}Internet: <http://www.etf-europe.org/files/extranet/-75/47773/ETF%20Road%20Transport%20Work%20Programme%202017%202022%20EN.pdf>

^{viii}ETF (2018), op cit.

^{ix}Ibid.