

The role of worker participation in the recovery of the transport sector after COVID-19

The aim of this project is to draw up a comparative map of the experiences of **Croatia, Poland, Serbia, Montenegro, Lithuania, North Macedonia, Italy, and Spain** in strengthening workers' rights to consultation and participation in transport companies after the COVID 19 pandemic.

The project involved various stages, including the preparation of topics to be studied and discussed, international meetings, dissemination, the drafting of various reports on the reality of the situation in the participating countries, as well as the monitoring of all the actions that make up this initiative. The meeting also undertook to prepare documents and proposals to improve the frameworks in which the project partners operate.

One of the objectives of the project is to promote the exchange of experiences and to try to standardise best practices among the group of trade unions and managers that met. It is also very important to highlight and respond to the doubts and fears of the participants, and to this end activities, meetings and conferences have been organised to address the main issues related to the benefits of negotiation and participation in a good working environment, where strategies can be discussed to ensure that crises have a less virulent effect on all the workers in a company and that measures can be taken to overcome the problems.

Another sensitive and important aspect was to promote not only the exchange of experience but also effective cooperation. This aspect was achieved through national work, the creation of a digital platform and its subsequent sharing at international meetings.

Worker participation in the post-COVID-19 recovery of the transport sector was seen as a crucial aspect of ensuring an effective and sustainable response to the challenges facing the industry. Some of the roles and benefits of worker participation in this context that have been explored and discussed include the following.

1. Occupational health and safety

Many of the workers have played a key role in implementing and monitoring health and safety measures in the workplace, ensuring that the necessary protocols are followed to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

2. Adapting to new rules and regulations

As evidenced by conferences and discussions, workers can provide valuable information on the practical implications of new pandemic-related regulations and guidelines, facilitating adaptation and informed decision-making by companies.

3. Risk assessment

As these activities have shown, workers can contribute to the identification and risks in the transport sector, enabling more effective planning to ensure worker safety and business assessment of specific continuity.

4. Human resource management

It has also been found that employees can contribute ideas on human resource management, including the implementation of flexible working arrangements, employee support measures and training programmes to meet the changing needs of the sector.

5. Innovation and continuous improvement

There is clear evidence that worker involvement can stimulate innovation and continuous improvement by encouraging collaboration and the exchange of ideas on how to optimise operations, reduce costs and improve efficiency in the transport sector.

6. Social dialogue

This was an area where there was full agreement. Involving workers in the decision-making process promotes constructive social dialogue between workers, employers and public authorities, which can lead to fairer and more sustainable solutions.

7. Building trust

Active worker participation in decision-making can help build trust between workers and employers, which is essential for job stability and worker morale.

8. Sustainability

Workers can drive forward sustainability initiatives in the transport sector, advocating more environmentally friendly practices and technologies and promoting corporate social responsibility.

In conclusion, worker participation plays a key role in the recovery of the transport sector post-COVID-19 by contributing to safety, adaptation, innovation, and sustainability. Fostering an environment of cooperation and dialogue between workers, employers and regulators is essential to successfully address the challenges facing the industry in a post-pandemic world.

Successful experiences of worker consultation and involvement in post-COVID-19 transport

Throughout this project, it has become clear that worker participation in the transport sector, especially in the post-COVID-19 context, is essential to ensure safety, efficiency, and equity in the industry. Here we highlight some of the successful experiences of worker consultation and participation in post-pandemic transport that have been discussed in this initiative.

1. Health and safety committees: In many transport companies, worker-led health and safety committees were established to address COVID-19 concerns. These committees participated in the development of safety protocols and helped implement preventive measures such as social distancing and the provision of personal protective equipment.

2. Teleworking and work flexibility: The pandemic led to the widespread introduction of teleworking in the transport sector. Companies that involved workers in the planning and implementation of teleworking policies had better acceptance from their employees. Consultation on how to balance work flexibility with operational efficiency was key.

3. Training and capacity building: Many transport companies invested in training and capacity building for their workers to adapt to the new health and safety protocols post-COVID-19. Involving workers in the design of training programmes helped to ensure that they were effective and relevant.

4. Transparent communication: Transparent communication between management and workers was crucial during the pandemic and remained important afterwards. Companies that established open and regular channels of communication to discuss workers' concerns achieved a more positive and safer working environment.

5. Innovation in transport services: In the public transport sector, some operators consulted with users and workers to adapt services to the changing needs of the community. Flexible transport services were created, and timetables adjusted to ensure that essential workers could reach their workplaces safely.

6. Mental health support: The mental health of transport workers was affected by the pandemic. Some companies consulted with their employees and provided psychological support, including counselling and resources to manage stress and anxiety.

7. Trade unions and collective bargaining: Trade unions played an important role in protecting workers' rights during the pandemic and in planning for the post-COVID-19 transition. Collective bargaining was key to addressing labour issues and ensuring safe working conditions.

8. Technology and automation: In some freight transport companies, workers were involved in the implementation of technology and automation systems that increased efficiency and reduced the risk of infectious diseases.

The success examples discussed in this project highlight the importance of active consultation and participation of workers in the transport sector to adapt and thrive in the post-COVID-19 world. Cooperation between employers, workers and regulators is essential to ensure safe, efficient and sustainable transport in the future.