

CALL FOR ACTION: Preserve the work of taxi drivers!

Dear Mr Pehrson,

We send this letter to draw your attention to the serious risks that the Commission's proposal on improving working conditions for platform workers is posing for the taxi industry.

From our numerous meetings with European policy makers, it became clear that taxis were never intended to be the target of this directive and therefore should not be affected by it. As there is some uncertainty with the current wording, **a clear exclusion of the sector would be the best solution.**

In many European cities, street hailing represents the majority of taxi rides, even where drivers work with dispatch centres on non-exclusive basis. A broad scope of the new law obligating taxi dispatch centers to employ taxi drivers, would have negative consequences for the taxi market and urban mobility as a whole, as it could eliminate the possibility of street and rank hailing, reducing the number of taxis available in hospitals, railway stations, and airports.

[Taxis4SmartMobility \(T4SM\)](#) and [International Road Transport Union \(IRU\)](#) welcomed the Commission's proposal to fill the legal vacuum created by global digital platforms and to **guarantee platform workers the working rights they are entitled to.** However, the current text risks having serious consequences for the concept of urban mobility as a whole, **leaving already vulnerable consumers behind.**

T4SM and IRU believe that in order to ensure adequate social protection for all as well as enable a safe and sustainable mobility framework for all European citizens at local level, a balanced and targeted approach to the Platform Work Directive is needed.

Therefore, we call on the Council of the European Union to:

- **Sharpen the definition of Digital Labour Platforms (DLPs)** so as to avoid a one-size-fits-all approach. More specifically, we call for clarification and **exclusion of the taxi sector** from the definition of DLPs. **Taxis provide a public service with street-hailing obligations.** Many customers would be excluded as a direct result of the current proposal, as street-hailing would be reduced. This would result in the end of taxi as a public service as we know it today.

Members of the European Parliament recently reached a consensus regarding the distinction between taxi dispatch services and ride hailing digital labour platforms. After careful consideration and examination of the specificities and particular working conditions of self-employed taxi drivers, the Parliament agreed that taxi dispatch services should be treated differently. In this respect, **we ask you to consider following the same approach as the European Parliament in the new recital 17(b) of the adopted text.** This distinction will ensure that the rights and livelihood of taxi drivers are protected, while promoting a fair and competitive marketplace.

- **Clarify the criteria establishing employment.** The text as currently drafted, brings into question the historic intermediation professions such as taxi reservation centres, whose contractual conditions are based on national working law. Hence, Member States and national social partners are competent for matters related to working conditions based on their social model. What makes the taxi sector successful is its adaptability to national and local realities. As taxis do not function across borders, they have developed in accordance with each unique culture to adapt to the needs of every customer. **In this respect, we very much welcome the new article 4(2a) proposed by the Council on fulfilling the criteria of the presumption as a result of compliance with national law.** We believe that the proposal should not unnecessarily complicate the relationship between workers and platforms when is already satisfactorily regulated by the law in force in a given Member State.

Our challenge is to keep offering an innovative economic model, capable of competing with large multinationals, while being sustainable and guaranteeing high-quality standards in terms of efficiency, punctuality, and safety. As inseparable part of day-to-day life across Europe for decades, taxis are central to public transport ensuring mobility for all, including pupils, the elderly, tourists, commuters and people with special needs. They have always played a key role in providing an essential public transportation service in cities as well as peri-urban and rural areas.

We call on the Swedish Presidency of the Council of European Union to consider our concerns and make sure that the taxi sector does not fall under the scope of the directive. We count on you to embrace these recommendations and ensure a safe, efficient, and sustainable future for the taxi industry.



Gregor Beiner
Chairperson of Taxis4SmartMobility (T4SM)



Raluca Marian
Director EU Advocacy and General Delegate of IRU to the EU