EESC / POLIS Conference

« Advanced public transport systems and services »

Innovation in public transport from the perspective of the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF)

Sabine Trier, ETF, 29 November 2011, Bruxelles

Bus Drivers in public transport

70-80 % of work force in urban bus companies

(less % in integrated urban public passenger transport companies)

Drivers are the "face of the company"

- Customer relation / information
- De-escalation in case of aggressions
- Safety / punctuality

➢ **The image of the driver's job and attraction to the profession is essential for urban public transport companies**

2007: **QSTP* project** of the European Social Partners in the urban public transport sector (UITP and ETF) with scientific support from SFS University Dortmund and AIF-IFTIM

One element: Impact of new technologies on the driver's job

(others: service orientation; career paths)

*QSTP - Competence based service quality in urban public transport

Changes in the drivers profession through new technologies		
	past/today	today/future
Work place (e.g. identification with the profession)	high degree of autonomy	lower degree of autonomy
Technology • **Traffic** • **Ergonomics** • **Customer relation** • **Communication with company**		
Customer	more direct customer contacts	less direct interaction with customers

New technologies: positive and negative tendencies from a driver's perspective:

Positive elements:

- Assist to save driving (does not eleminate stress due to congestion)
- Supports save customer entry / exit; supports easier access to the vehicle (less driver's task)
- Better personnel security through no cash policy, video cameras
- more healthy work place **(when properly designed)**
- better information about traffic situation, delays, support in the case of bus break down **for competent customer information**
- electronic diagnosis of vehicle failures
- better communication with company / home bases

Negative elements:

- Dashboard: more complicate driver/machine interface; possibility of distraction (ergonomics, training)
- Higher work density through more efficient traffic flow (productivity increase); impact on time table planning; impact on work organisation;
- less (mini) breaks to relax (e.g. at red traffic light)
- Less knowledge and mastering of the bus itself (e.g. small repairs); less autonomy;
- Higher supervision / less autonomy;
- Less interaction with customers (information and ticket selling replaced by technology)

As summary:

- **Can be anticipated as devalorisation of the profession (less tasks, less autonomy, less mastering of the vehicle)**
- **On the other hand: high technology product, more comfortable work place, new tasks in service orientation**

Conclusions

- Introduction of new busses/technology and new traffic management systems shall always be discussed with the trade unions; it has no use for the company, public authority and passengers when they are not properly used by the drivers;
- The impact on working conditions (working time, shift schedules, breaks) have to be considered within a social dialogue; might require new collective agreement provisions

Conclusions

Training is essential:

Training needs have to be analysed, training has to be provided;

Technology assists the driver and takes over a number of functions;

However: in the case of failure a driver needs more knowledge and more competences in oder to competently deal with the failures;

Women as bus drivers

ETF suggestion:

Seminar with European trade union reps on

EBSF project (drivers' work place; ergonomics)

And COST project

Dialogue with the trade unions is important when investing in modern bus systems