

Statement of Solidarity

of the European Works Council of DB AG with the demonstration against the fourth EU railway package in Strasbourg today, Tuesday, 25 February 2014

The EWC of DB AG declares its solidarity with the colleagues of the railway undertakings of Europe in their protest against the fourth EU railway package.

The EWC of DB AG greets all colleagues from railway undertakings all over Europe who have gathered in Strasbourg today to protest against the fourth EU railway package.

The EWC of DB AG contradicts the majority of the EU Transport Committee which has declared that a minimum level of transport services must be provided for passengers in case of strikes at publicly funded regional transport undertakings. The reasons quoted by the EU Transport Committee are nonsense. The mere fact that regional transport is (partly) funded by taxpayers' money does not make passengers' rights to carriage any more important than the right of the employees to come out on strike in order to assert their legitimate demands. We resist the erosion of our democratic rights.

The EWC of DB AG demands that the European Parliament and the European Council pay due attention to the interests of the employees of railway undertakings. Disadvantages for these employees have to be prevented. They are doing a good job. The valuable expertise of railway employees has to be preserved.

The EWC of DB AG explicitly opposes cut-throat competition at the expense of the employees. The EWC of DB AG is not blind to reality. It does not fundamentally oppose competition in the rail sector. The employees of DB AG and its subsidiaries work outside Germany in countries throughout the whole of Europe in competition to the incumbent railway undertakings.

The EWC of DB AG rejects non-regulated open access to the rail market for railway undertakings. If there is to be competition in the market, it should be competition in the form of tender procedures which stipulate certain quality levels and employment conditions which are binding upon the winner of the tender. To ensure that rail services are also provided on financially less lucrative routes, tender procedures must cover groups of routes, as that is the only way to ensure good work and fulfilment of the state's obligation to provide public transport services.

The EWC of DB AG endorses simplified and faster European procedures for the approval of rolling stock. This would enable railway undertakings to save time and money, as the technical requirements for approval are harmonised in order to achieve uniform standards. However, the high level of expertise of the national approval authorities must not be ignored. Close cooperation is vital in that respect. Under no circumstances should standards be harmonised "downwards" to result in a poor technical level. Technical regulations which apply throughout Europe must be able to stand comparison with the highest previous national level.