**Meeting re Platform Directive, Platform Workers and Employment Status.**

**Friday 23rd of June, 2:30. Room 12a Kildare St.**

**Attendees:**

Matt Lynch, Special Advisor to An Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar

Dermot Mulligan, Assistant Secretary, Dept. Enterprise, Trade and Employment

Gerald Harty, Assistant Principal, Dept. Enterprise, Trade and Employment

Fiachra O Luain, English Language Student Union (ELSU), Platform Worker advocate

James Farrar, App Drivers & Couriers Union (ADCU) U.K., Platform Worker advocate

**Meeting Note:**

Mr Lynch opened the meeting by welcoming attendees and referring to the previous meeting held with, then Tánaiste, Leo Varadkar T.D. and Deliveroo workers, in March 2021.

Mr O’Luain spoke to the need to support platform workers and suggested that established trade unions should advocate for these workers, suggesting that expert representation is needed in what is a very complex area.

Mr O’Luain referenced the declining payments per trip delivery riders are receiving in comparison with recent years and suggested that platform apps can offer reduced fees to workers depending on the level of rider availability.

Mr O’Luain spoke to the health and safety implications of substandard accommodations and the dangers associated with fires caused by electric batteries.

Mr O’Luain also referred to the unfortunate deaths of delivery riders and the need for Government to do all it can to support fair working conditions while acknowledging the contribution that the delivery workers made during the pandemic, their continuing contribution to the economy, and to the rising costs of living.

Mr O’Luain then made several proposals whereby conditions for delivery platform workers could be improved. These are listed below.

1. Follow the example set by Spain, by increasing the maximum working hours on a student visa (Stamp 2) to be increased from 20 to 30 hours per week.
2. Allow Stamp 2 vias holders to own their own platform account (e.g., Deliveroo accounts). Currently only Stamp 4 visa holders can own an account. Suggestion that individuals earn passive income by renting these accounts to Stamp 2 visa holders.
3. Follow positive models from elsewhere, such as, New York where a minimum payment per trip / minimum wage has been introduced.
4. Introduce a baseline delivery fee of €6. This would allow riders to earn a good hourly wage. (Suggested 3 trips per hour as average)
5. Include riders in tax refund scheme for bicycle/ebike purchases.
6. If delivery accounts are closed, account owners should be entitled to redundancy or a form of compensation in acknowledgement of their loss of livelihood and contribution to the platform company.
7. Role for the WRC in informing riders (account holders and those rent these accounts from) of their rights and entitlements.
8. That delivery workers should have locations and facilities to congregate, take shelter, have use of a bathroom and shower. Suggested that Government should play a role in the provision of such facilities, potentially in line with the remote workers Hub Network. Gender issue here which discourages participation in these roles, also prevalent in the taxi industry.
9. Stamp 2 delivery workers should be provided with access to tax schemes or costs of living measures.
10. ELE courses and associated visa should be increased from 8 to 12 months, so that holiday times align with the times that all students can work 40 hours legally.
11. A register of official agents who work on behalf of ELE sector should be established, and escrow accounts made use of.
12. Ensure that each course place offered includes access to appropriate student accommodation.
13. Allow Stamp 2 visa holders, who are not covered by platform companies’ policies, access to the Public Liability Insurance Scheme.

Mr Lynch closed the meeting by thanking the attendees, acknowledging that several Government Departments, such as Dept. of Education and Dept. of Justice, would have a role to play, and advising that he would follow up on the proposals made.