

WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT AND GENDER POLICY IN URBAN PUBLIC TRANSPORT COMPANIES IN EUROPE



Conference

17-18 October 2016

Brussels

This Conference has been initiated by the International Public Transport Association (UITP) and the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF), and has been organised by EVA Akademie. It has been a follow-up event to the European Social Dialogue project organised in 2010/2011. Within this project a series of quantitative and qualitative surveys were realized, leading to a comprehensive report on the state of the art, as well as key aspects influencing women's employment in urban public transport (<http://www.wise-project.net/pages/index1.html>).

In 2014, the European Social Partners UITP and ETF signed joint recommendations to promote women's employment in the urban public transport sector, and set the ambitious target to increase the share of women from the average value of 17.5% in 2011 to at least 25% by 2020, and to 40% in 2035.

In order to assess and support the implementation of those joint recommendations, the European Social Partners developed WISE II, on "Women's Employment and Gender Policy in Urban Public Transport Companies in Europe". Within this project this joint conference was held to exchange experiences and disseminate good practices.



Monday 17.10.2016

Alain Flausch, General Secretary UITP, addressed the audience by explaining the background of the joint project and the expectations of UITP regarding women's employment in the sector. He pointed out the benefits for companies with gender balanced staff. Less accidents and incidents happen with passengers, the jobs are less heavy nowadays, and they are more accessible for both genders. It has been shown that a balanced gender representation positively changes the atmosphere in the management board and brings with it a diversity of skills. The conference builds on a study with the state of affairs of women in urban public transport, and in 2014 joint recommendations were drafted.

Sabine Trier, Deputy General Secretary of ETF, highlighted the benefits of the research results of the WISE study. There are many reasons to improve working conditions and the working atmosphere in the companies. This conference was about raising awareness and presenting policies to attract and retain women in the sector. Commissioner Violetta Bulc supports the importance of the topic and of the Conference.

The **Joint Recommendations of the European Social Partners**, presented by **Brigitte Ollier, UITP** and **Sabine Trier, ETF**, laid the basis for activities in this area. The survey of the study gives a good impression of what is happening in Europe. With more women in the companies we have access to more talents and skills, and better working conditions for all; companies have better access to a more diverse workforce which enhances the image of the sector. There are differences in Western and Eastern European countries regarding the percentage of women. In Eastern European countries more women are employed in the sector, the main reasons lie in historical and cultural differences, and maybe in the economic situation, but there is not just one identifiable reason.

The WISE study found that in Western Europe the percentage is about 16%, compared to 20.7% in Eastern Europe; more female drivers work in the rail bound transport, and a high percentage of women work in administration and customers' service.

The main barriers are production specifications, and work organisation (for example rolling shift work), the lack of adjustment to working reality of women (for example lack of toilets along and at the end of lines), and discrimination based on stereotypes (for example single women in workshops experiencing verbal abuse and discrimination). The increasing phenomena of violence, both verbal and physical, from third parties in public transport impacts negatively on the image of the sector as an employer.

One of the aims of the joint recommendations is to increase the percentage of women employed in this sector; this has not risen relevantly so far. Quantitative targets are important to verify if aims are reached and progress is being made.

There are 7 key areas where initiatives have to be undertaken; companies should develop measures in *all areas* and not only in one. Regarding recruitment policy, it is not only about advertisements, but also a comprehensive welcome policy of the company.

The joint recommendations are publicly available on the social partners websites.

Alexandra van Huffelen, CEO of GVB Holding, Amsterdam gave an inspiring speech on her visions of gender policy in urban public transport companies. GVB, as a public owned company is also a social enterprise. That the staff should reflect the population and it's diversity is relevant to the company. Companies that are diverse do better; this also holds true for public transport.

We are living in a rapidly changing world, and public companies have a responsibility in society. We need to encourage more women and set conditions in which they can achieve their maximum career growth potential. When job vacancies are filled in the next 5 years, GVB hopes to have reached the balance. The company does all kinds of things to make women feel they are welcome. The CEO is a strong believer in targets: that only with the introduction of quotas can their goal can be reached. Women have to keep fighting to achieve their ideal careers. The mantra is "Support yourself, do a job you believe in, accept help from a mentor, and make sure everyone sees you". Women too often lack the confidence of their convictions, and lack self-belief . . . men don't do that.

Ekaterina Yordanova, president of FTTUB and vice president of ETF: Trade unions and companies have to react on challenges of trends like digitalization *and automation*, globalisation, demographic shifts and climate change. New topics make gender topics seem less urgent, but *all of them are linked to women participation as a precondition for growth and sustainability*. Working women have to be kept in the sector *and stakeholders have already started acting together*. Gender based violence is one of the main barriers which must be overcome. *Policies on attractiveness of the sector for women and youth has been put on place in Bulgaria with the support of the local authorities*. The social partners have to play a leading role *in creating a women friendly working environment*. 30% of the workers FTTUB organises are women but that differs depending on the type of transport, e.g. 44% of tram conductors are women in Sofia. Employment, *pay and career development* on the basis of equal opportunities are important.

Fabian Lütz, responsible for Equality Legislation at DG Justice and Consumers of the European Commission explained how the legal framework of the European Union can contribute to women's employment. Article 157 of TFEU lays the basis for gender equality. Article 23: Equality between women and men must be ensured in all areas, including employment, work and pay. Article 33: To reconcile family and professional life, everyone shall have the right to be protected from dismissal for a reason connected with maternity, and the right to have paid maternity leave and parental leave following the birth or adoption of a child. The scope of the Charter addresses institutions, bodies, offices and agencies of the Union with due regard for the principle of subsidiarity, and to the Member States only when they are implementing EU law (Art. 51 TFEU).

Effective application of EU law on equal pay at national level currently remains one of the biggest challenges and is crucial for tackling the pay discrimination and gender pay gap effectively. The Commission is constantly monitoring the correct application and enforcement of the existing EU law on equal pay in Member States. The Commission supports Member States and other stakeholders in the proper implementation of existing rules.

Article 157(4) TFEU: With a view to ensuring full equality in practice between men and women in working life, the principle of equal treatment shall not prevent any Member State from maintaining or adopting measures providing for specific advantages in order to make it easier for the underrepresented sex to pursue a vocational activity or to prevent or compensate for disadvantages in professional careers.

The Commission wants to tackle challenges of work-life balance faced by working parents and caregivers. Objective are to address the low participation of women in the labour market. The initiative seeks to promote equality between men and women with regard to labour market opportunities and equal use of occupational rights. The Commission wants to modernise and adapt the current EU legal and policy framework to today's labour market by improving measures to facilitate work-life balance and incentivising their equal use by women and men.

Christina Greenidge, Senior Consultant of McKinsey, presented the research reports “Women Matter”. Since 2007, the “Women Matter” reports give fact based answers to the Why? and How? for more women at the top of organisations. Companies with 3 or more women in their boards have better results on organisational and financial performance. Women tend to demonstrate more often than men, 5 of the 9 types of leadership behavior that improve organizational performance – 3 in particular: people development, expectations and rewards, and role model. Women apply more frequently three of the four types of behavior seen as most effective in addressing the global challenges of the future: inspiration, participative decision making and expectations and rewards.

A Harvard study shows: the collective intelligence is higher if more women are part of a team. The increasing proportion of women among graduates is not reflected in leadership positions: there are leaky pipelines everywhere and not "one" glass ceiling. Corporate culture is the most important driver for women’s confidence in success, twice as much as individual factors. Getting more women to the top is driven at societal, institutional and individual level. Women are “over-mentored” but “under-sponsored”. If you really want to shift the needle, remember this is a long-term journey, not an action list, which requires continuous effort in the coming years; only collective action can make a difference: we must work together to make it happen and treat it as an opportunity to make your firms future proof.

Sylviane Delmas, Inspectrice Generale Honoraire RATP Group, gave an overview of the study results of the first WISE project. She highlighted the still existing obstacles and how to overcome them. Three kinds of obstacles exist: production obstacles (specificities of the jobs in transport), obstacles in advertence (those we pay no attention to, when there are only few women, no female uniforms e.g.) and public perception. Transport has an outdated image, which is true for all genders, especially for young women. Hopefully with future technologies this will change.

Commissioner Violeta Bulc’s speech was held by Andreja Kodrin, expert member of the Cabinet.

Commissioner Bulc is taking several measures to improve the quota of women in transport companies. The Commissioner is a technician herself. The current average of 18% is much lower than the figure for all branches, and the average age of drivers is high. The sector has special challenges and opportunities to attract more women to the sector; it is necessary for example to refurbish bathrooms and changing rooms. The benefit of a gender balance is that women are



more reliable and more able to concentrate (example crane handlers). The Commissioner’s focuses are four main working areas: 1) to increase the share of women: in the cabinet Bulc itself, 50% of the employees are women; 2) the coordination of activities: social partners are at the front line and know the sector best. The WISE project is a good step forward and the recommendations have ambitious targets. The Commissions plans to consult experts, and invest what they have undertaken to promote the employment of women. The G7 meeting will include a gender equality topic, and the Commissioner will bring the topic to the Council of Ministers of Transport. A first meeting in April 2016 produced the first results. Two studies, one with an economic approach and a clear vision on company benefits and a second study on soft measures are in production. Last but not least, a

communication strategy. 3) Implementing a platform of change in the European Economic and Social Committee EESC: The platform will be launched as soon as possible and 4) Combating violence: 2017 is the year of combating violence, Commissioner Bulc wishes that the social partners sign a code of conduct against violence in the sector. Guidelines on combating violence will be published by the end of the year.

Platform economies will change the society. The Commission considers the effects of platform economy in transport. Tax obligations have to be paid in the countries where the service occurs, a redistribution of profit is necessary and social contributions have to remain in the country where the service is executed. The market cannot be opened without any regulation. Infrastructure investments are necessary, but this can only be a recommendation for the countries where infrastructure is old. Europe will see which examples are best practice examples. If the situation does not improve another form of regulation has to be used. "Lead by the role and others will follow" is the motto: make a standard also for young people who look at the working environment.

With personal comments on operational, technical and management jobs in the sector several employees presented "**my job – my message**".



Gaëlle Pedraza joined **RATP** at the age of 21. She is a bus driver and was looking for stability in employment. Working conditions are hard but you get used to it. With a family it is more difficult. In RATP 9% of the bus drivers are women. Women want a fulltime job. It is important to revise working conditions for both men and women. She would like to improve the wages and better take into account the world of man and women.

Jaine Peacock, a **bus driver** for some 11 years. Driving a bus is more than a job, it can be a career for life where you'll make lifelong friendships and have the choice of promotion through in-house and external training programs. Perceptions of a-typical bus-drivers are gradually changing along with equalities legislation. A diverse workforce is slowly growing, with management seeing the benefits of utilising the many and varied skills we have. As women, we do have gender specific needs, and this is where women's committees come into their own. Women's workplace reps. should have an understanding of how rosters and duties are compiled, and sit on the scheduling committee to ensure the needs of women are given due consideration. Jaine recommends an education of people earlier in life for a better behavior in buses and trams.

Albena Asparuhova, **FTTUB and a tram driver**, likes the profession because it gives her security as a single mother of 3 children. "I am the boss in the tram" is the experience to lead the processes during the ride. A lot of changes have occurred in her 28 years of work experience. Her job became her second life, trams have always interested her. She responds with a smile to aggressors, which is the best way to destabilise them. Women have their own charm and power. She started working as a

mentor and helps younger colleagues with their work. Important is the relation to the colleagues and the attitude of the public, some working conditions and wages could also be improved.

Stephanie Schneider, Electro-technician at Wiener Linien: A good job needs good management and support in decisions. For her this is important as she is authorising officer for 28 employees, also older male colleagues. In technical operations 9% of the staff at Wiener Linien are women. Technical know-how is important and has to be proven always. That is also relevant for new colleagues. She thinks that more opportunities for both men and women are needed. Sometimes male colleagues feel threatened and behave in a wrong way, it should not be taken personal.

Michele Boucher, FGTE-CFDT is a bus driver since 2008. From 62 drivers 14 are female. The working time for mothers is the most difficult topic. Training and education is necessary. Decisions should be taken by the social partners to reach an ideal situation.

Jo Humphries, HR diversity change manager at Arriva, started in the bus division and moved to the European division. At the beginning she was concerned more with functional issues than gender issues. For example regarding the succession planning 8 years ago there were no women on the plan. Arriva does not have an equality policy but undertake a lot of efforts to make sure that everybody is welcome and there is no unconscious bias. She is not convinced by quotas, being asked for a job to fulfill the quota can be de-motivating, but on the other hand it can bring the opportunity to prove the good ability to work. There are not enough female applicants for board positions, sponsors are necessary for a career. An example can be “women support other women”. She recommends to have more choices, to increase flexibility to find a way of working how it suits you.

Tuesday 18.10.2016

The first task of the Conference participants was to answer to the thesis **“The quota of women in the urban public transport companies will rise to 25% as an average in Europe until 2020 (aim of the joint recommendations)”** with “I agree”, “I partly agree” and “I do not agree”. Arguments for a positive reply have been that the sector has to reach this aim and if there is a will it is possible. Those who answered that this aim will not be reached argued that there are not enough applications of women in the sector. In some companies this aim has already been reached (Metrorex Bukarest). More measures are necessary to improve the working conditions and to increase the number of women in technical positions.



In working groups the participants discussed the question **“What do you think are the most critical or important measures which should be organised in the companies to increase women’s employment?”** Following answers have been given:

- Attractive working conditions: wages need to value and compensate working late etc., more demanding professions (drivers) should receive better offers, make the profession more attractive, flexible arrangements, specific needs of women, adjust tools to women (uniforms), jobs for both men and women, providing part-time work, enabling life choices, life-friendly time rosters, flexible working conditions regarding working time may change the perception of the jobs, safety at work: women have to feel safe, flexibility, jobs are not attractive for young people, childcare facilities e.g. with sponsorship, combating violence and harassment, childcare, public companies offer stability of working conditions and wages, especially important for women with family responsibilities, foreseeable workplace, flexibility of the work place
- Training and education: Support for women through training, tailor made for women, on-boarding program, welcome program, bus drivers with experience accompany the colleagues, cooperation with vocational schools, educational system is structured that schools cannot supply professionals, career policy, better vocational education, can also be a task of the trade unions on national level, actions of patronage of companies and schools in professions that are needed in the companies, in younger age first driving experiences will change attitude for future generations, professional training, technical schools, financing vocational education and training
- Company culture: Promote women in the company, discover other aspects in the company, current situation is not positive, culture need to be changed, communicate the available support
- Working atmosphere: Improve relationship between colleagues, create an atmosphere that women want to become a driver, stop thinking in terms of professions for women and men, jobs for people
- Corporate policies: Top down approach, public companies should lead by example and put pressure on their supplier, refuse working with those who do not have gender policies, the selection procedure is often biased, in the eyes of the authorities should impose obligations for the companies, diversity problems in France with religious arguments, social achievements and benefits are important, open days for high school students, speak with a mentor
- Infrastructure: new depots, show a good working environment, problem with modernisation, improvement of depots and vehicles
- Communication: annual conferences, put the professions in a better light, involvement with schools, take advantage of promoting family dynamic, communication and customers, Employer branding, improve the perception and image of the sector, best way information campaign about the possibilities that those jobs offer, women are the lighthouses, share the light to the outside world, see women on posters in technical jobs, marketing programs, campaigns attracting younger people
- More initiatives, measures necessary especially for operational staff, more women work as tram drivers than as bus drivers
- Recommendation to the unions: 6 representative unions with no women sometimes at the table, have to represent the same



The panel discussion with Claudia Tapardel, Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialist and Democrats and Member of the Committee on Transport and Tourism, Gilles Bergot, Deputy Head of Unit Coordination of Social Issues in GD Transport and Mobility, Alain Sutour, ETF and Nicolas Blain, UITP discussed the future of women's employment in the sector.

Claudia Tapardel decided to raise the topic of women in transport in the Parliament. Women shall have the opportunity to develop careers in transport. She organized a meeting in the EP with the same topic in June 2016. Measures should be discussed that help women to develop in a man's field. A political strategy is necessary to have more women in transport. Commissioner Bulc considered this initiative as relevant and there will be more and more events on that topic. We are facing new challenges and developments in transport. Cooperation of men and women is necessary: transport is the engine of the European economy. We need a strategy and implement it, promote the policies and the idea that many of the proposals can be done in other areas of public transport. An initiative can be launched to promote good practice; could be supported by the European Parliament and in cooperation with DG MOVE.

Gilles Bergot stated that the topic is very important. In general the framework was presented by Andreja Kodrin. It is a new dossier for DG MOVE and the first time that DG MOVE works on the subject. The reasons for that change is that the DG tries to put into practice the DG Justice topics in transport. The personal commitment of Mrs Bulc is to put into force concrete actions that go beyond her mandate. The second reason is that the sector is going to face a shortage of staff. This will have serious economic implementations and risks for the European economy if we are not able to fill the gaps. The sector will have to attract more women to work there. The unit passenger rights will implement the legislation on gender equality and with it will try to raise the number of workers in the transport sector. A study on the attractiveness of the sector is launched with tools to promote the sector, because psychological aspects are relevant. A second study of the benefits of employment of women in the transport sector shall deliver concrete data which are needed for argumentation. A forum will be established to discuss the topic and institutional actions are planned. The DG MOVE works together with the council and the EP to raise awareness in the member states. DG MOVE needs active participation and contribution from the sector e.g. with data and arguments. The Commission can offer to facilitate the funding of projects, there is a jungle of possibilities and it can help to contact DG EMPL.

Alain Sutour said that it is good to see the will to do something on the side of politicians and the Commission. Important factor are the joint recommendations with UITP. Still there are difficulties in seeing the results, the crisis still effects the transport sector. He believes that the sector can put into

practice the aim of 25% female staff by 2020. The managers have to action, but the trade unions are ready to help the process. An example of good practice at Renault was that they visited engineering schools and increased the share of women in the company by 7.6%. There is one woman out of three candidates for the key positions. Out of 30 managers, 7 are women at RATP, and the general manager is a woman. At Keolis the board of managers are all men. The McKinsey study showed that more women in management are necessary. Trade unions do take account of gender equality in their organisations. In order to get results in the short term, to feminise the jobs, especially drivers' jobs is necessary.

Nicolas Blain emphasised the cooperation with ETF in order to promote working conditions. The gender topic is a voluntary issue and the first time that gender equality appears on the agenda of a Commissioner. Creating sustainable jobs is a joint statement of UITP and ETF. The WISE study, developed together with ETF on the basis of 14 member states, shows that the increase in numbers of women is too slow. There are hurdles in the access of jobs and training for women, and it is important to overcome the glass ceiling effect. Reconciliation of personal and private life, safety, ergonomics, especially in maintenance jobs, and equal pay for equal work is at the fore. At RATP there are 43000 workers in Paris region. With a top-down approach, the general director Elisabeth Bourne aims at feminising the company. Significant disparities exist between the professions: 8% of bus drivers are women, 55% of personnel working in the stations and 1,5% of maintenance staff. Concrete measures to reconcile work and private life are wanted, e.g. the right of disconnection beyond working hours and measures to improve conditions in difficult areas.



The final session of the Conference was the presentation of good practice examples of the companies and trade unions. These examples will be described in detail in the brochure that will be published at the end of the project. At the Conference we had presentations of **Irina Zueva, Berliner Verkehrsbetriebe BVG, Germany**, **Suzanne McGilloway, Bus Éireann, Dublin Bus, Ireland**, **Marine Ponchut, Keolis, France**, **Daniela Zlatkova, Federation of Transport Trade unions In Bulgaria FTTUB** and **Jaine Peacock, Unite the Union, UK**.

Brigitte Ollier, UITP and Sabine Trier, ETF, gave the outlook on the topic for the social partners. The brochure of the project will present good practice examples and how to implement them. It was the first time in the urban public transport sector to have an European event on gender policy. Next year the topic will be violence in the workplace, joint recommendations in the UPT sector already exist. The audience was invited to send further good practice examples on the topic.