



Social partners in the local public transport sector UITP and ETF¹

JOINT RECOMMENDATIONS: STRENGTHENING WOMEN EMPLOYMENT IN URBAN PUBLIC TRANSPORT

This version constitutes the sole authentic text

Introduction

The European social partners in the urban public transport sector (UPT), UITP and ETF agree that strengthening women employment in their sector is to the benefit of the whole sector, the companies and their employees.

- More women means more talents integrated in the company, a broader view on innovation, more additional and complementary skills like people orientation or communicative skills of women;
- More women working in typical male dominated sectors usually improves the working conditions for all: it contributes to a better work environment and sense of respect and thus an improvement of the attractiveness of the job;
- The demographic change creates problem for companies and they cannot afford to do without women;
- And last but not least it is a matter of equal opportunities: more women in public transport contribute to enhance the image of the public transport companies and the sector.

It is the interest of both, the companies and the workers to attract more women to and retain them in the sector.

General outcome of the UITP / ETF WISE project

In 2011/2012 the European social partners in the local public transport sector carried out joint project called WISE – Women Employment in the Urban Public Transport Sector.

- *The proportion of women employed in the urban public transport is relatively low since it is only 17, 5% in average of the analysed companies (ranging between 5% and 30% in individual companies).*
- *The “male domination” is evident for two employment categories: in top leadership positions and in the “technical professions”; less than 10% of the drivers are women (a bit more in Eastern Europe than in Western Europe) and less than 6% of the employees in other technical functions are women (Western Europe) or 11,1% (Eastern Europe);*
- *In two employment categories women are more or less equally represented or even over-represented:*
 - in the administrative professions (business administration, human resources, marketing or communication) which can offer good jobs and career opportunities for women in the sector;
 - in “low skilled professions” (ticket office/cashier, cleaning service, gate staff...) which are potentially precarious jobs, jobs that are either disappearing due to technological developments or being outsourced.

¹ So-called in the document below as UPT (Urban Public Transport) social partners.



- Public transport is a sector that is largely dominated by a male working culture since the technical or operational professions constitute the biggest employment category in public transport companies.

The WISE project tried to identify the main barriers for women to access the urban public transport sector and to stay in the sector. Basically women have to cope with three groups of obstacles/barriers:

1. "Contextual barriers" related to the specific forms of work involved on the ground. The specificities of the production and of the work organization in urban public transport seem to constitute a bigger barrier for women than for men: (rolling) shift work, early morning / late night working hours, weekend work; lack of consideration of work-life-balance or reconciliation of work and private life requirements.
2. "Barriers of inadvertence" or lack of attention related to shortages of equipment and, more generally, related to the absence of policy adjustments to business and to the working reality of women. That means specifically a lack of facilities and hygienic requirements in maintenance workshops and depots and a lack of toilets along and at the end of lines which is often under the responsibilities of the municipalities as owner of the land. Those elements would improve working conditions also for men.
3. "Barriers of discrimination", which seems to be persistent, despite changes in legislation and social mores. Discrimination is usually based on stereotypes concerning the "natural state" of women and the difference between men and women. These stereotypes are often rooted in mentalities of both, men and women and are considered as norms that contribute towards social discrimination. That means specifically a lack of recognition and support of co-workers and supervisors, situation of being the single women in a workshop up to open and direct gender discrimination (e.g. verbal disrespect and discrimination).

Additionally the increasing phenomena of verbal and physical violence by third parties in urban public transport damages the image of the sector as an employer in particular for women.

JOINT RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SOCIAL PARTNERS TO PROMOTE WOMEN EMPLOYMENT IN THE URBAN PUBLIC TRANSPORT SECTOR

Based on the EU legal framework on equal opportunities and based on the Europe 2020 employment strategy including an increase of the employment rate of population aged 20 – 64 years from 69 % achieved in 2009 to 75 % in 2020 with the greater involvement of women, **the share of female employees in European urban public transport companies should increase from the current average value of 17.5% to at least 25% until year 2020 with the objective to reach at least 40% in 2035. The UPT social partners share the opinion that the necessary renewal due to the demographic changes should foster the increase of the share of women in UPT.**

A better representation and integration of women in the urban public transport sector and its companies requires a bundle of activities and measures as expressed in the paragraphs below in order to attract women to the sector and its professions and to retain them.

The necessary measures and activities for attaining this objective are not only to the benefit of female employees. According to the notion of gender equality both, women and men can profit from these activities.

Recruitment policy

Companies need a recruitment policy that directly addresses women and welcomes them to the company. The presentation of the different professions and in particular the technical professions and career opportunities has to include women and their needs.

It is necessary to review and to elaborate jointly with the trade unions and workers' representatives the recruitment procedures and the selection criteria in order to value a broad variety of skills and

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competences, to ensure equal access to all professions and hierarchical levels and to ensure that within the process women are encouraged and not discouraged.

Qualification, training and career opportunities

A qualified professional education is the foundation for required competencies and good work performance. As professional initial training and vocational training are the foundation for the employees' career planning and career development.

More young women need to be recruited for a professional education and companies should develop corresponding offers, especially in the technical professions.

The sector's vocational training includes manifold approaches and offers for different target groups. The proclaimed objective is to make sure that female employees have equal access to internal and external vocational trainings. Training content, training methods and the timing of training courses shall take into consideration specific requirements in order to encourage women.

Companies should be fully aware that corporate possibilities of life-long learning are an important factor for binding women employees (but also men) to the companies of this sector.

The UPT social partners appeal to the companies' responsible persons, decision-makers and executives to invest more in policies and their implementation towards the development of women careers in all fields, management and operations within the companies (i.e. time and financial means). In order to avoid the so called "glass ceiling effect" a decisive corporate policy in favor of women integration in the company and a top-down approach based on a variety of instruments is highly recommended.

Such vocational training and career development policies shall be agreed in the process of social dialogue and developed in cooperation with the trade unions and workers' representatives.

Work-life balance / reconciliation work and social life

Urban public transport companies need a policy on the organization of working time that allows all employees a better reconciliation of work and social/family life. Such an active policy does not only attract and retain women to the urban public transport sector but also young workers.

In particular in urban public transport companies, in which shift work is indispensable in order to meet the mobility requirements of European citizen, such a policy should include more flexible and individual components and variations, which is not yet the case today.

The possibilities of part-time work for all groups of employees, when wished for, also on a temporary base, taking into consideration different life-phases with different needs for child or elderly care, can be an instrument for realizing working time flexibility according to the needs of the employees.

Reconciliation policies have to be developed in cooperation with the trade unions and workers' representatives and include instruments that allow integrating individual wishes and needs.

We recommend to urban public transport companies to offer or to help with finding child care possibilities for female and male employees.

Health and safety at work

In order to integrate more women in particular in the operational and technical professions, occupational health and safety, workplace ergonomics as well as workplace security need to be adapted. This includes for example the design of the drivers' work place or investment in tools for maintenance workshops that facilitate physically heavy work.

The UPT social partners point out the importance of social facilities for employees in urban public transport companies and for the realization of a gender-oriented corporate culture. Consequently,

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companies have to provide for example working clothes for women and men, a sufficient number of clean toilets, modern and pleasing break rooms and canteens, appropriate (separate) dressing rooms For toilets along and at the end of the lines, solutions should be found with the municipalities as owner of the land.

For protecting employees in driving operation and other customer-related professions from violence cases of third parties, companies need to create further appropriate measures. This and the constant development and realization of these measures will be a major challenge in future years.

UITP and ETF underline that all employees benefit from such measures.

Equality in wages

Urban public transport companies should assure the principle of wage equality, analyse within the company the extent of a "gender pay gap" and develop policies to eliminate it.

Although in the public transport sector the principle "same wage for same work" is valid in the several tariff payment groups for the different professions negotiated through collective bargaining agreements, wage discrimination usually occurs in subtle ways e.g. through the evaluation of different skills. In particular at management level wage differentiation is quite common.

Working culture and gender stereotypes

The corporate culture of companies is a major issue for their attractiveness. Sectors and companies, in which the majority of employees are male, tend to gradually create a typical „male working culture“. This also applies to the sector of public transport companies. This "male working culture" with all their implications like gender stereotypes (e.g. "technique is nothing for women") or sexual harassment still is a considerable barrier on the way to increase this sector's attractiveness for women and their employment share. Moreover, changing an established culture is hard work and requires a lot of efforts from companies, associations, trade unions and works councils. They need to sensitize first of all management at all levels, from top level to line/team managers but as well all employees for this work.

Gender stereotypes are the most persisting barriers to create a women friendly work culture, also in day to day working life. Stereotypes are based on misconceptions about natural differences between men and women. The natural differences are changed through the stereotypes in cultural and social differences as justifications of discrimination's facts but hiding these discrimination's facts behind references to the nature. Such vicious circle from the nature to the culture and from the culture to the nature can be fought by:

- The recognition and denunciation of the discriminatory action of the stereotype;
- The lack of reality of the natural differences in working relations as social relations;
- References to cons-examples, issued from the working and social relations, on the facts describe by the stereotype in order to keep the stereotype in the cultural field and not the natural one.
- Specific training for all management levels including team managers in order to be sensitized, being able to identify stereotype behavior and to introduce counter measures.

Corporate policy

Attracting more women to urban public transport companies and gaining the image of a women friendly company is possible only when the top management itself is convinced.

The European social partners recommend a top down approach in which the top management sets clear targets for women employment and career development in different areas and develops instruments to realize those targets. Preferable are measurable targets with clear time objectives that are regularly monitored and published. These targets should become part of the company's strategic targets. This corporate policy should be guided by the principle of equal opportunities and "gender mainstreaming". A top-down approach is necessary because the middle and low management has to realize those targets what is not possible when it is not convinced (see work culture and gender stereotypes).



Follow-up

The European UPT social partners will promote these joint recommendations and commit to monitor their implementation on a regular basis.

UITP und ETF will use the results of the WISE project, in order to initiate a broader and more intense discourse between the European transport companies, their associations and trade unions. The objective is to commonly discuss and to validate the proposed measures as well as to define further fields of activity, which help to further increase the share of female employees.

Three years after signature the European UPT social partners will organize a follow-up project to evaluate the progress of the implementation of these recommendations and to strengthen them if necessary.

Signed in Brussels on the 8th of April 2014.

For ETF

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The **European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF)** is a pan-European trade union organisation embracing 243 transport trade unions from the European Union, the European Economic Area and the Central and Eastern European countries. The ETF is the recognised Social Partner in seven European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committees and represents the interests of more than 2.5 million transport workers from 41 European countries vis-à-vis the European Institutions.

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UITP is the international organisation of public transport, based in Brussels. In the European Union, UITP represents the views of the public transport undertakings of the 28 member countries. It is closely following and participating in the elaboration of the different European policies and initiatives that have an impact on urban, suburban and regional public passenger transport.

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