

# STRONGER TOGETHER

Ending violence against women in transport



## GUIDANCE

for social partners at company and sector level

The European Transport Workers' Federation is campaigning to end violence against women as part of its Fair Transport Europe Campaign



All women have the right to work in conditions free from violence, regardless of their employment status – whether they are employees, trainees, interns, temporary workers or interviewees. In the male-dominated transport sector, women are frequently subjected to high rates of gender-based violence and harassment, by customers, colleagues and managers.

Gender equality, where women are treated and valued equally, decent work, good conditions of employment and a gender-balanced workforce are important pre-conditions for safe, healthy and dignified workplaces. Improving safety and security for women transport workers is an important part of the provision of good quality transport services free from violence benefitting all passengers and customers, and particularly women passengers and customers.

This guidance for social partners at company and sector level draws on the findings of the ETF's 2017 survey on violence against women transport workers in Europe,<sup>1</sup> which found that violence against women is a regular occurrence in the transport sector, often having devastating effects on women's health and wellbeing and their motivation to remain in jobs in the transport sector.

*“Verbal attacks... sexual assaults and the like. Touching of the rear and breasts, threats on the part of superiors if I complain, [I am told], ‘A woman must be able to cope when she works in a man’s profession.’”*

— *Railway worker*

*“The worst is, they don’t even think they are being inappropriate.”*

— *Civil aviation worker*

*“I feel worse. I sleep worse. I have become afraid. I have not regained the energy I had before the sexual harassment... and the constant harassment from passengers breaks you down. The great lack of support from the employers makes it sometimes very heavy.”*

— *Bus driver*

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<sup>1</sup> See the separate summary and supplementary reports that ETF published in 2017 under the title *Violence Against Women at Work in Transport*. Summary report: [www.etf-europe.org/resource/violence-against-women-at-work-in-transport-summary-report-of-findings-from-a-survey-by-etf/](http://www.etf-europe.org/resource/violence-against-women-at-work-in-transport-summary-report-of-findings-from-a-survey-by-etf/). Supplementary report: [www.etf-europe.org/resource/violence-against-women-at-work-in-transport-supplementary-report/](http://www.etf-europe.org/resource/violence-against-women-at-work-in-transport-supplementary-report/)

## What is violence against women?

Violence against women includes verbal, non-verbal, physical and other forms of sexual harassment, stalking and sexual abuse. It also includes harassment through technology during work hours and outside of work hours – by text message, email, social media etc.

The most prominent form of violence against women is sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that the victim perceives has the purpose to offend or humiliate her that it interferes with her work and/or creates an intimidating, offensive or hostile workplace. Sexual harassment arises because of discrimination and unequal gender roles and relations.

*“An attempt to rape me was unsuccessful, I had attended self-defence classes and was able to defend myself.”*

— Docker

*“It is the normal state of affairs that comments are made openly about certain parts of the body. You get asked about your (sexual) experiences ... I have reported nothing.”*

— Civil aviation worker

*“On a restricted Facebook account at work I was threatened and name called.”*

— Railway worker

*“The general public seem to think it’s OK to intimidate or harass female workers.”*

— Urban public transport worker

In the transport sector women are particularly exposed to violence and harassment because they work in a male dominated sector, their work is often in public places where there is regular contact with the public, and often they work in mobile or isolated work situations.

It is important that everyone plays their part in ending violence against women.

***Working together, workers and employers, women and men, we can end violence against women and create a workplace culture of respect and equality***

## Ten things to do to prevent violence against women workers in transport

- 1. Treat violence against women transport workers as a serious workplace issue** and integrate it into collective bargaining, workplace social dialogue and occupational safety and health risk assessments and prevention programmes. Ensure that everyone – every manager, colleague, and customer – understands that **violence against women is not tolerated in the world of work**.
- 2. Draw up a joint union-employer workplace policy**, or if you already have one, review the policy and check that it is ‘fit for purpose’. Ensure comprehensive steps are taken to prevent and tackle violence against women at work (refer to the ETF model policy for best practice guidance on what should be included in a policy).
- 3. Tackle the underlying causes of violence and harassment against women**, including wider gender equality issues, such as getting more women in transport jobs.
- 4. Put in place a joint trade union-employer confidential complaints procedure** that women workers understand, trust and feel able to use. Ensure that women and workers who witness acts of violence can make confidential complaints. Ensure that this procedure is publicised widely and that women workers understand how to make complaints.
- 5. Treat complaints seriously**, carry out independent investigations and ensure there are consistent ways in which perpetrators are held accountable. In particular, it is important to make sure that senior managers or other ‘high value’ employees are not treated differently. Use complaints as a form of organisational learning about what to change and ensure that there is follow-up action to tackle problems highlighted in complaints. Avoid putting in place confidentiality agreements (‘gagging orders’) in the resolution of complaints, as this keeps the issue hidden.
- 6. Consult with women workers about their safety concerns at work** and put in place practical measures to ensure that workplaces are free from violence against women. Ensure that these consultations consider the impact of work organisation, lone working and other changes in the workplace. Carry out ‘safety walks’ and regular feedback sessions with women and act on their suggestions.

- 7. Carry out training and an awareness raising campaign in the transport company**, making sure that managers, co-workers and customers understand that violence against women is not acceptable. Ensure that the campaign puts responsibility on everyone, including men, to play their part in ending violence against women.
- 8. Provide confidential support to women by training workplace advocates** to give help, guidance and information, and to encourage women to disclose and report violence.
- 9. Provide support and training for colleagues on how to take on a role as active bystanders in the workplace** so that, when they witness violence and harassment, they know how to intervene, how to support a victim, and how to report the violence confidentially. Intervention can include holding co-workers to account when they tell sexist jokes, or make remarks about a woman's physical appearance, clothing or her private/social life.
- 10. Provide information, support and assistance for women** experiencing violence and harassment.

## Further information and materials

### **ETF model workplace policy on violence against women transport workers**

The ETF has drawn up a model workplace policy with detailed guidance that can be used and adapted by trade unions in their negotiations with employers to make sure that workplace policies are gender-responsive and prevent violence and harassment against women. The model workplace policy can be found here: [www.etf-europe.org/activity/violence-against-women/](http://www.etf-europe.org/activity/violence-against-women/)

### **ETF report “Violence against women at work in transport” and supplementary report**

On the occasion of the UN Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on 25 November 2016, the ETF launched an online survey about workplace violence against women transport workers in Europe. More than 1400 women transport workers responded and the shocking testimonials they contained, revealed the unacceptable scale of violence against women transport workers.

On basis of the survey outcomes, Dr Jane Pillinger compiled a report, which is the first of its kind. It documents a pervasive culture of sexual harassment and sexual intimidation in the workplace.

As the survey prompted such an extensive range of comments from women transport workers, ETF drew these comments together into a single document. The supplementary report brings together the written comments of more than 300 women transport workers from all sectors who responded to the ETF’s survey. Both reports can be found here: [www.etf-europe.org/violence-against-women-transport-workers-etf-study-reveals-the-facts/](http://www.etf-europe.org/violence-against-women-transport-workers-etf-study-reveals-the-facts/)

### **ETF training module on violence and harassment against women transport workers**

In the frame of the EU-funded project “Women in Transport – Education for Valuable Employment (EVE)”, under the coordination of our Bulgarian affiliate FTTUB, a training module on violence and harassment against women transport workers was developed. The training module can be found here: [www.etf-europe.org/activity/gender-training-package/](http://www.etf-europe.org/activity/gender-training-package/)

### **Training materials for a harassment and bullying-free workplace in shipping**

In the framework of the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Maritime Transport, the recognised European social partners – ETF and ECSA – carried out a joint EU-funded project which aimed to eliminate workplace harassment and bullying in the shipping sector. The training materials developed by the project can be found here: [www.etf-europe.org/how-to-eradicate-harassment-and-bullying-in-shipping/](http://www.etf-europe.org/how-to-eradicate-harassment-and-bullying-in-shipping/)

### **ETUC report “Safe at home Safe at work”**

This report – produced as part of the “Safe at Home, Safe at Work” project of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) – draws together evidence collected from interviews carried out as part of 11 detailed country case studies of European-level developments on gender-based violence and harassment at work, including domestic violence at work. The country reports and the final report can be found here: [www.etuc.org/en/document/safe-home-safe-work-final-report-national-country-studies](http://www.etuc.org/en/document/safe-home-safe-work-final-report-national-country-studies)

### **International Transport Workers Federation**

Ending violence against women transport workers is one of the priority areas for ITF Women. The work includes a number of key areas that are integral to delivering the strongest possible outcomes for women transport workers. This includes:

- the development of global women’s advocacy – a workplace response to endemic gender-based violence in transport (based on a model originally developed by the trade union Unifor in Canada)
- exposing and fighting the impact that domestic violence has on workers and workplaces
- campaigning for an ILO convention and recommendation on violence and harassment in the world of work (as part of the global campaign being led by the ITUC).

More information on these different aspects – including resources that might be useful to support union campaigns and activity on ending violence against women transport workers – can be found here: [www.itfendvaw.org](http://www.itfendvaw.org)

### **ITUC campaign toolkit “Stop gender-based violence at work – support an ILO Convention”**

As part of its campaign for a strong ILO Convention to stop gender-based violence in the world of work, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) has published a campaign toolkit for trade unions. The campaign toolkit can be found here:

[www.ituc-csi.org/campaign-toolkit-stop-gender-based](http://www.ituc-csi.org/campaign-toolkit-stop-gender-based)



### **The European Transport Workers' Federation**

The ETF represents more than 5 million transport workers from more than 230 transport unions and 41 European countries, in the following sectors: railways, road transport and logistics, maritime transport, inland waterways, civil aviation, ports & docks, tourism and fisheries.

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