

# Making the Transport Sector Fit for Women to Work in



Findings from a survey of women transport workers by the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF)



Author: Dr Barbara Helfferich

Contributor to the online survey and the data analysis: Dr Paula Franklin

Design: Louis Mackay / [www.louismackaydesign.co.uk](http://www.louismackaydesign.co.uk)

Contact: ETF Women's Committee Secretariat ([women@etf-europe.org](mailto:women@etf-europe.org))

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

Galerie Agora

Rue du Marché aux Herbes 105, Boîte 11

1000 Brussels – BELGIUM

Tel: +32 2 285 46 60 – Fax: +32 2 280 08 17

[www.etf-europe.org](http://www.etf-europe.org)

[www.facebook.com/ETFwomen/](http://www.facebook.com/ETFwomen/)

@ETF\_women

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 and docks, tourism and fisheries.

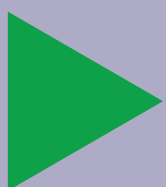




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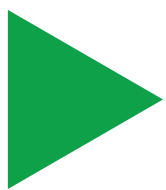
Findings from a survey of women transport workers by the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF)





# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Women transport workers' experiences of the workplace</b>	<b>7</b>
Overview	7
Survey results	7
<b>1. A dominant culture of masculinity and gender stereotypes</b>	<b>10</b>
Survey results	10
<b>2. Discrimination and unequal treatment</b>	<b>13</b>
Survey results	13
<b>3. Work-life balance or the care trap in transport</b>	<b>17</b>
Survey results	17
<b>4. Women's health and safety</b>	<b>20</b>
Survey results	20
Sanitary conditions	21
Workplace safety	22
<b>5. Gender-based violence and harassment in the transport sector</b>	<b>23</b>
Survey results	23
<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>26</b>



## Introduction

**T**his report presents the main findings of a large-scale survey among women working in the transport sector, initiated and conducted by the Women's Committee of the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF).<sup>1</sup> It reveals an urgent need for substantial changes to make the sector genuinely fit for women workers.

The survey investigated working conditions for women transport workers, including workplace safety and the accessibility and quality of sanitary facilities. The survey has served to uncover the real reasons for the low female employment rate in transport and thus provides a sound basis for the development of recommendations on what needs to be done to promote fair, healthy and violence-free workplaces.

### KEY FINDINGS

- **50%** the respondents felt that their job did not provide them with good opportunities for promotion and development.
- **35%** of the respondents were unhappy with the degree to which employers or managers failed to treat employees equally, and 23% were dissatisfied with the gender imbalance in the sector.
- **25%** of the respondents thought being a woman had a negative impact on their wages.
- **Close to one-third** of the respondents did not feel that their working environment supported them in doing their job well.
- **49%** of the respondents thought that their workplace did not prioritise a safe and adequate work environment for women. These concerns were expressed by 1/3 of women under 40 years of age; and more than half (53%) of older women workers.
- **23%** of the respondents identified sanitary issues as one of the major problems in the workplace.
- The survey uncovered previously invisible forms of workplace discrimination that specifically affect women's physical health and well-being.

<sup>1</sup> The ETF survey, "Making the Transport Sector Fit for Women Workers", was carried out between 7 October and 29 November 2019.

## KEY FINDINGS

### Concerns of women transport workers ranked according to perceived adverse impact

- 1** Masculine culture (makes it harder for women to progress professionally) (n= 852)
- 2** Working hours (n= 770)
- 3** Sanitary issues (e.g. availability of toilets and toilet breaks) (n= 621)
- 4** Negative attitudes towards women managers/supervisors (n= 478)
- 5** Safety (violence, harassment, etc.) (n= 398)
- 6** Gendered jobs (e.g. division of work roles into “women’s” and “men’s”) (n= 378)

The main challenges uncovered by the ETF survey include masculine culture in the workplace, pay inequality and discriminatory working conditions affecting, among other things, women’s health and safety at work. According to the ILO, “the primary causes of women’s low participation in the transport sector are not difficult to identify and can be (over) simplified to just two factors: (i) working conditions (including the time, timing and place of work), and (ii) gender stereotyping.”<sup>2</sup>

**Table 1. Responses to the survey, by language**

Language of survey	Number of responses
Bulgarian	176
Dutch	147
English	981
Finnish	192
French	137
German	452
Hungarian	212
Italian	323
Spanish	146
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,776</b>

2 International Labour Organization, “Promoting the employment of women in the transport sector - obstacles and policy options”, Transport Policy Brief, Dec. 2013.  
[https://www.ilo.org/sector/Resources/publications/WCMS\\_234880/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/sector/Resources/publications/WCMS_234880/lang--en/index.htm)

**Table 2. Responses to the survey, by sector**

Sector	Number of responses
Civil aviation	530
Dockers	83
Maritime Transport	95
Fisheries	10
Railways	933
Road transport (bus and coaches included)	419
Logistics	213
Urban public transport	255
Inland waterways	21
Tourism	69
Other	138
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,766</b>

**Table 3. Respondents' age distribution**

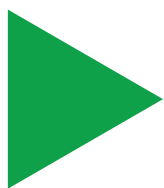
Age group (years)	Number of respondents
17 or younger	6
18–21	23
22–25	95
26–29	151
30–33	192
34–37	233
38–41	260
42–45	281
46–50	440
51–55	390
56–60	289
61–65	97
66+	13
Age not disclosed	296

More than 2,770 women transport workers from across Europe responded to the survey, providing a rich and verifiable source of information as well as first-hand testimonies of what obstacles and conditions women face working in the sector.

The survey was disseminated in 9 different languages, reaching 200 ETF affiliates in 41 European countries and covering the following sectors: civil aviation, fisheries, inland

waterways, logistics, maritime transport, ports and docks, railways, road transport, tourism and urban public transport. 85% of the respondents (n=2,356) stated that they were trade union members.

The largest number of responses came from the railway sector (n=933), followed by civil aviation (n=530) and road transport (n=419). The great majority of respondents answered in English (n=981), followed by German (n=452) and Italian (n=323). The respondents came from all transport sectors and represented the whole range of available positions in the sector, from top-tier jobs such as flight captain down to trainee. They provided valuable information about working life in the transport sector, and the predominance of shift work and irregular working hours. 93% of the respondents were permanently employed; 66% were working full-time.



# Women transport workers' experiences of the workplace

## Overview

Only about 22% of all transport workers in the EU are women, compared with just over 44% in all services.<sup>3</sup> The percentage is increasing, and women are becoming an important part of the workforce in transport. However, career prospects remain substantially better for men than for women.

The low number of women working in the transport sector has been attributed to multiple factors, each reinforcing the other. Together, they present a formidable barrier to women wanting to enter or remain in the transport sector.

## Survey results

There has been little real change in the conditions for women transport workers, despite what employers may claim. Working conditions and the workplace culture in many transport industries are still male-focused, and health and safety policies rarely take account of gender-specific issues.

### KEY FINDINGS

#### Specific factors preventing women from entering and remaining in the transport sector

- Lack of appropriate work-life balance in shift work
- Workplace and equipment not being adapted to meet women's needs (e.g., lack of sanitary facilities for women, safety clothing not available in female sizes)
- Insufficient targeted recruiting of women in a sector that has the reputation of being dominated by men
- Lack of training and life-long learning opportunities

3 European Commission. "Business case to increase female employment in Transport", 2018. <https://ec.europa.eu/transport/sites/transport/files/2018-business-case-to-increase-female-employment-in-transport-final-report.pdf>

Respondents to the survey have highlighted a persistent **lack of individual locker rooms, lack of access to decent sanitation facilities – or the complete absence of any facilities at all** for women transport workers. Furthermore, the transport sector still fails to ensure that women have equal access to employment and career opportunities. Equal pay and promotion are also important issues that need to be tackled. Nearly one in three of the respondents to the survey thought that they had fewer opportunities to advance in their career than their male colleagues had.

Women transport workers also face shocking levels of sexual harassment and violence at work.<sup>4</sup>

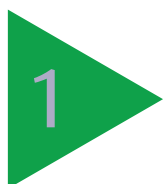
The ETF survey findings highlight five areas, which need tackling if the sector is to become a place where women really want to work:

- 1 The dominant culture of masculinity** and the associated **stereotyping** of women. The culture of masculinity at work exhausts women workers and harms everyone's performance. It is "gender-intensified" in as much as it affects both sexes, but bears down on women most. Women workers, in particular, can suffer from depression, low psychological safety, lack of work-life balance, gender discrimination, and sexual harassment. One out of three respondents to the survey (n=852) indicated that the masculine culture of the transport sector makes it harder for women to advance professionally.
- 2 Discrimination and unequal treatment**, including wages, training opportunities and promotions. 35% of the respondents said that they were unhappy because of unequal treatment of women employees by managers and supervisors.
- 3 Work-life balance** issues and the associated needs for flexibility and for being able to build a career alongside family responsibilities.
- 4 Women's health and safety**, in particular the fact that there are often no, or too few, **acceptable sanitary facilities**. 32% of the respondents indicated that they were unhappy with the sanitary conditions at work, and many others lamented the reality of mixed locker rooms with no access to women-only locker rooms. In addition, issues related to menstruation, menopause and child-bearing/lactation, are largely or completely ignored by the employers and male co-workers in the sector.
- 5 Gender-based violence and sexual harassment** at the workplace. More than one-third of the respondents (n=988) reported that their workplace did not support a zero-tolerance policy for abuse of staff.

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4 ETF, *Violence against Women in Transport: Summary Report of Findings from a Survey by ETF*, May 2017.

Respondents were also very clear about what should and must be done to improve the workplace: to ensure equal treatment, equal access to promotions, equal pay, flexibility around issues of care, clean and accessible facilities, zero tolerance for violence and sexual harassment, and a change away from the dominant culture of masculinity.



## A dominant culture of masculinity and gender stereotypes

The transport sector is one of the three most male-dominated employment sectors, along with construction and mining.<sup>5</sup> Female employment, while still low, has been steadily rising over the last ten years. The widespread culture of masculinity in the transport sector, however, continues to be tolerated despite the great emotional and sometimes physical costs that women workers have to bear.<sup>6</sup> The results of the survey give clear indications how the culture of masculinity adversely affects women working in the transport sector. This survey has uncovered many previously ignored ways in which the dominant culture of masculinity prevents women from developing their full potential in the transport sector.

**31% of respondents said that masculine culture makes it harder for women to progress professionally**

### Survey results

When the respondents were asked to list the main problems at the workplace that make it harder for women to work in the sector, the dominant culture of masculinity took first place.

***“Masculine culture makes it harder for women to progress professionally”***  
(Docker)

Respondents were clear in their identification of the sector’s masculine culture as the number-one problem for women working in the sector. This was followed by the issues of odd working hours and the myriad problems relating to sanitary facilities and facilities specifically intended for use by women.

5 The Upshot, “As Labor Market Tightens, Women are Moving into Male-Dominated Jobs”, *New York Times*, 14 December 2018; <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/14/upshot/as-labor-market-tightens-women-are-moving-into-male-dominated-jobs.html>

6 “Women in Male-Dominated Industries and Occupations: Quick Take”, Catalyst, 5 February 2020; <https://www.catalyst.org/research/women-in-male-dominated-industries-and-occupations/>

***“Unfortunately, in the past, despite having studied, I have not been preferred to male colleagues. Each time [there were] different excuses, like, ‘you’re young, you will have other opportunities, etc.’ whose aim was the deliberate exclusion of my skills from any serious and objective process of evaluation. Because it was preferred to advance men of lower professional value by by setting selection criteria according to which only seniority and not skills made the difference.”***

*(Railway worker)*

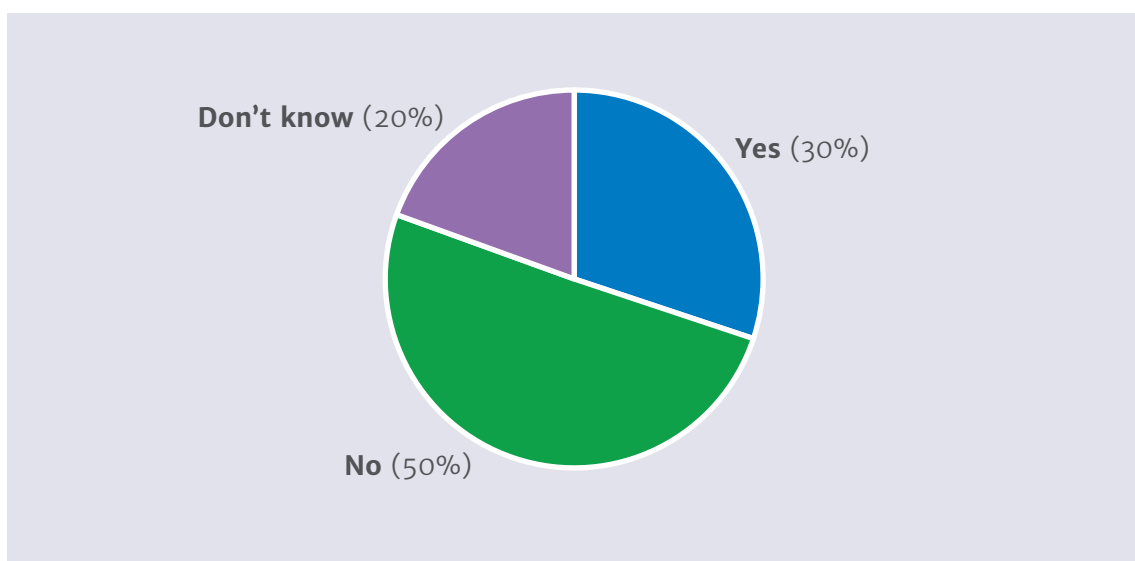
An important finding of the survey is that the culture of masculinity in the transport sector is a resilient obstacle to women entering or remaining in the industry. The predominance of male decision-makers exhibits plainly the weight of a masculine culture exemplified by violence, non-respect, and harassment in all its forms.

***“My manager was very into promoting male colleagues, and called them his brothers. Only one woman was in a managerial position.”***

*(Logistics worker)*

The dominant male culture adversely affects each phase of the career development of women in the transport sector. It permeates all aspects of working life, as the survey reveals so vividly. The testimonies of women responding to the survey speak of the lack of mentoring and career development opportunities – for example, promotions – of having to be better than male colleagues, of refusal by management to acknowledge specific needs and problems that women face in the workplace (pretending they don’t

**Figure 1. Do you think that women have fewer opportunities to advance than men at your workplace?**



exist, or ridiculing women who raise them), as well as of verbal and physical abuse including violence and sexual harassment, which is considered “normal” and tolerated by the hierarchy.

*“I am the only woman in the company with a driver’s licence class C. I had to beg to be assigned a bigger vehicle, while some of my colleagues (who had obtained the licence after me) had been immediately assigned one without much trouble... Also for the moment I have not been allowed to work the night shift (which is paid more)... the supervisor tells me that ‘because you are a woman, I will not send you’”*

*(Road Transport Worker)*

## 2

## Discrimination and unequal treatment

The areas in which women are disadvantaged by discrimination and unequal treatment in the transport sector are vastly unexplored. ETF's survey opens a window onto the wilful neglect of the discrimination that still exists against women in the sector. Loss of promotions, less pay, lack of training opportunities and exposure to violence and sexual harassment are merely some of the examples of the active and "passive" discrimination and unequal treatment that women transport workers suffer. Women responding to this survey lamented the limited means available to remedy their situation. While more hard data needs to be collected, hundreds of the respondents gave concrete testimonies highlighting the practices of discrimination and unequal treatment in the transport sector.

**35% of the respondents said that they were unhappy with the treatment of female employees by managers and supervisors**

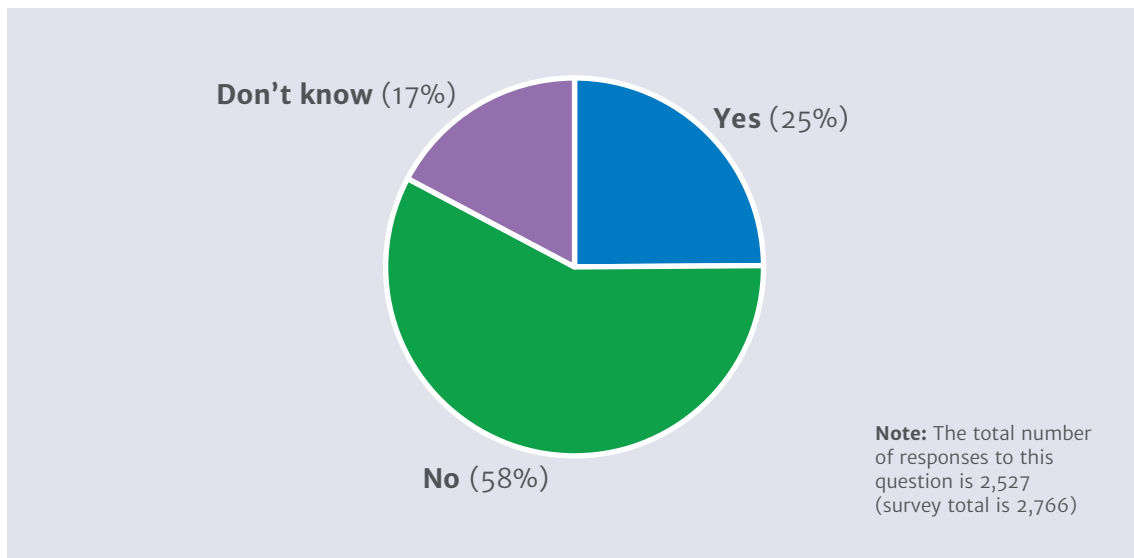
### Survey results

The survey shows that 35% of the respondents were very unhappy or somewhat unhappy with the treatment of women employees by managers and supervisors. When asked about specific forms of discrimination, respondents identified the areas of equal pay, promotions, and pay rises as concrete issues. The survey results bring to light the fact that women workers in the transport sector are not being treated on an equal footing with their male colleagues. Nearly one in three women workers in the transport sector think that they have fewer opportunities to advance in their current workplace than their male colleagues have (see Figure 1 on page 11); and one in four report that being a woman has hindered their opportunities to advance over the course of their career (see Figure 2 on page 14).

***"I applied for a higher position which has never been held by a woman. Despite 8 years onsite experience, including three at the relevant level, I failed even to reach the interview stage."***

*(Docker)*

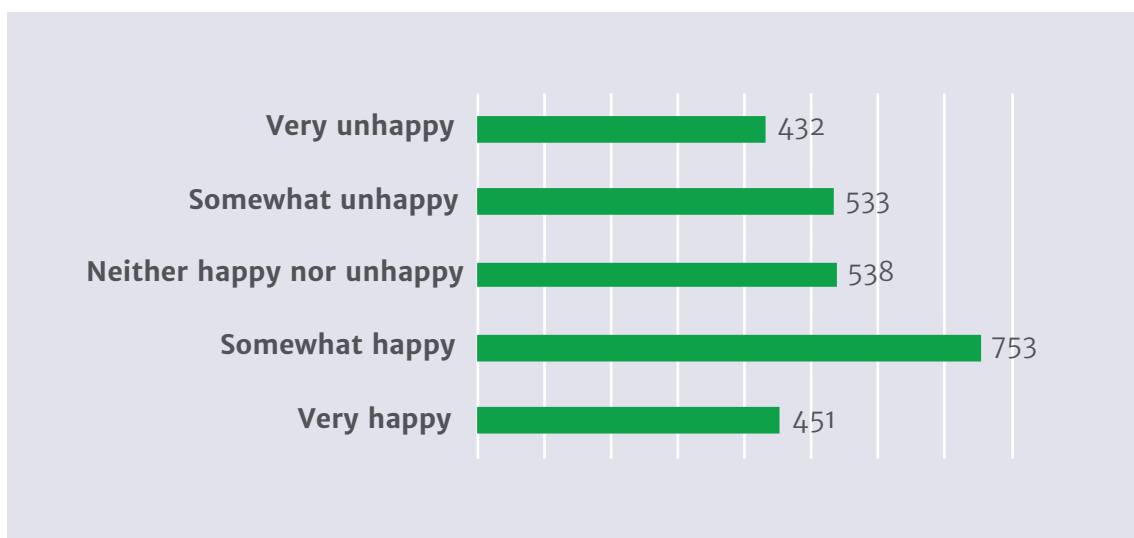
**Figure 2. Have you ever felt that being a woman worker has played a role in missing out on a wage increase, promotion, an assignment or any other chance to advance your career?**



*“The problem is wider than the industry – it is deeply embedded in the power structures of our society. The solution is political as well as industrial. The perception my industry (the railway) has of women is by and large typical of wider society: the same tropes and stereotypes are perpetuated, as they are everywhere, with the added pressure and fatigue involved in doing shift work, along with the likelihood that women have primary caring roles when they are not at work.”*

*(Railway worker)*

**Figure 3. How happy are you that all employees are treated equally by superiors (managers and supervisors)?**



***“I applied to become a driving Instructor, as did three men. I had equal qualifications, no customer complaints, accidents etc., and several years’ more driving experience. A man got the position and I was brushed off with assurances that it had been a close call.”***

*(Urban public transport worker)*

The issue of equal pay for equal work – let alone for work of equal value – haunts the sector to this day. Anecdotal evidence suggests a serious gender pay gap, but there are no recent studies that provide concrete data about the pay gap, nor any analyses of why and how this occurs in the transport sector. Pay provides livelihoods, and quality of life way beyond working life and into old age. Gender pay gaps have significant negative effects on women workers and need to be eliminated urgently.

***“As a long-serving and experienced driver, I found out that I was paid 3,000 pounds less than my male colleague with less experience. I raised a grievance, but was made to feel like I was wrong.”***

*(Bus Driver)*

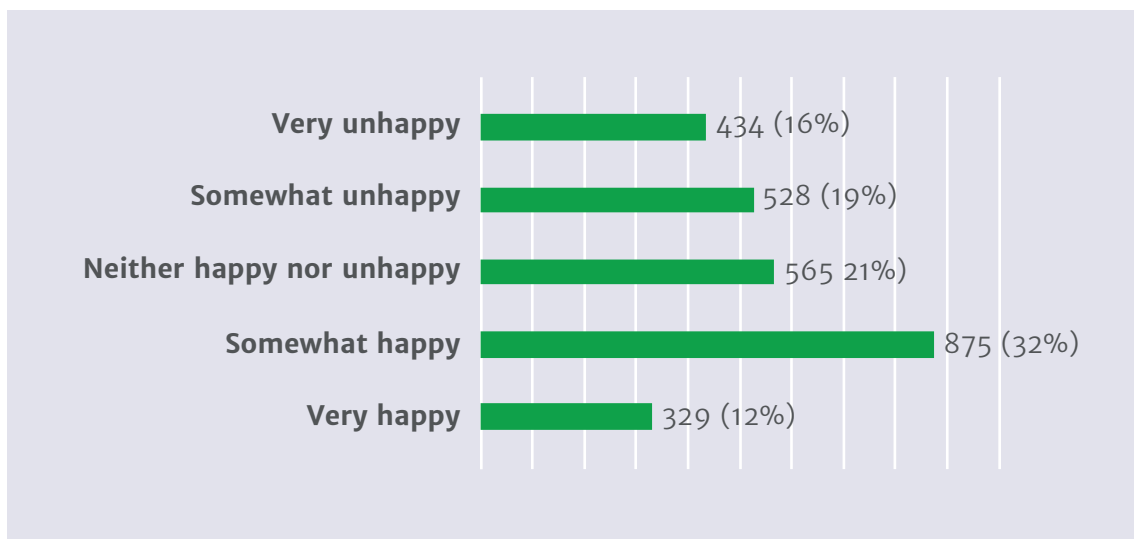
Simplistic assumptions may seem to explain the situations by pointing to women’s take-up of part-time work, and work segregation within the sector. Testimonies from this survey, however, show that conclusions regarding pay discrimination in other sectors apply equally, if not more, to the transport sector. The World Bank concludes that “even when women have characteristics that should make them better paid, such as more years of education, they still earn less than men. In other words, there is a sizeable “unexplained” portion of the earnings gap that persists even after taking into account the usual factors.”<sup>7</sup>

***“My male co-workers are on a higher wage than I and my female co-workers. The men who carry out the same job role also receive a night rate and night premium. This has been known to my boss for years, but he refuses to acknowledge it.”***

*(Civil aviation worker)*

35% (962) of the respondents said that they were very unhappy or somewhat unhappy with wage levels for their work. Most of them also reported that the entry-level salaries were more or less equal for women and men, but that women’s salaries stopped rising sooner, or increased more slowly, than men’s salaries throughout their working careers. Abundant evidence shows that there is an urgent need for specific studies on wage levels and their gendered aspects.

7 Inchauste, G., Munoz-Boudet, A M, and Buitrago Hernandez, P. “Trying to explain the gender pay gap in Europe”, 2018. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/developmenttalk/trying-explain-gender-pay-gap-europe>

**Figure 4. How happy are you with the wage levels for your work?**

*“The basic salary levels are equal between men and women when the contracts are signed. Then, women remain blocked at this level, with no possibility of advancement, while men merely undergo some simple additional training and their level is increased.”*

*(Railway worker)*

## 3

## Work-life balance or the care trap in transport

According to a recent report, “In the EU the employment rate for women is 11.6 percentage points lower than the rate for men, and women, on average, earn less than men, despite the fact that in the EU a higher proportion of women complete higher education than men.”<sup>8</sup> The fact that women continue to shoulder the majority of caring responsibilities has been recognised as one of the major reasons for this employment gap: “Caring for others or being cared for at different stages of our lives are two of the central emotional and taxing experiences of our shared humanity.”<sup>9</sup> The invisibility of caring responsibilities contributes in no small measure to the invisibility of the problems workers face when called upon to perform these tasks in the transport sector. The survey shows that 35% of the respondents said that they were very unhappy or somewhat unhappy with their work-life balance.

When respondents were asked for their reasons for working part-time, **39% indicated caring responsibilities.**

### Survey results

The ETF survey shows that 39% of the respondents who worked part-time indicated care responsibilities as a reason. Part-time work has been identified clearly as a trap for women that significantly affects their pay and future pensions. There is also a clear indication from the survey that maternity, maternity leave or sick leave for parents carry unforeseen penalties at the workplace.

***“As soon as I got pregnant my salary was frozen”.***

*(Road transport worker)*

***“Part-time work for a woman in a supervisory position is still a rarity – part-time work is unfortunately still equated with less commitment.”***

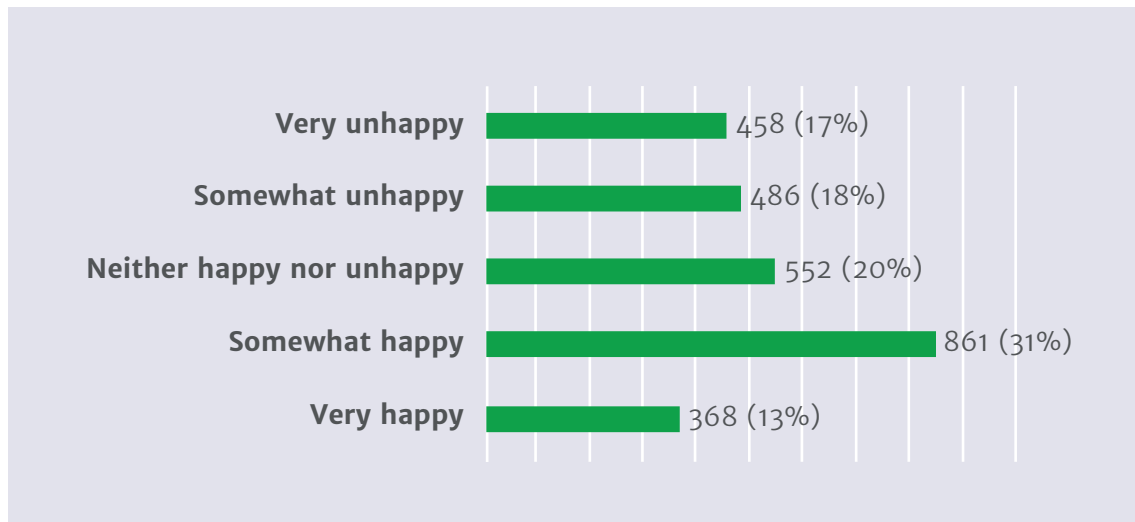
*(Railway worker)*

8 European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), “Challenges to gender equality and the transport sector – the key issues discussed by the Consultative Committee of the European Economic Area”, 2018. <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/news-media/news/challenges-gender-equality-and-transport-sector-key-issues-discussed-consultative-committee-european-economic-area>

9 European Women’s Lobby. *The Purple Pact: A Feminist Approach to the Economy*, 2nd edition, 2019.

The survey also investigated women's perceptions of their work-life balance, and 35% of the respondents said that they were very unhappy or somewhat unhappy with their work-life balance.

**Figure 5. How happy are you with the work-life balance at your workplace?**



The survey also revealed a variety of options that employers have to improve the work-life balance of their workers. The majority of these supportive measures, going beyond legal obligations, involved granting leave of absence (41%), or extending existing maternity leave provisions (24%). Job sharing, teleworking or subsidies for children were less common.

**Table 4. Support options**

Use of the following support options, going beyond legal entitlements, was reported by the respondents working in the transport sector:			
A	Leave of absence	n=413	(41%)
B	Extended maternity leave	n=238	(24%)
C	Job-sharing opportunities	n=82	(8%)
D	Teleworking (with the right to disconnect)	n=100	(10%)
E	Subsidies for childcare	n=174	(17%)

Becoming pregnant and having family responsibilities has a particular impact on women workers. Women transport workers have reported, for example, that pregnancy may mean that they are not allowed to drive at work. Other issues include, inter alia, the care of young children and how to reconcile this care with irregular shift work, including night work, without help from other family members. And while maternity leave helps, it also often means a cut in salary or unpaid leave, if the leave is extended beyond the statutory minimum. Women transport workers also report that women may have to

drastically reduce their working time, because no satisfactory childcare is available or affordable. This may result in longer absences from work, and has long-term effects on wage development as well as pension rights.

***“At the annual meeting, my manager asked me if I would like to participate in some projects. Before I could answer, he said I wouldn’t be interested anyway because I have children.”***

*(Railway worker)*

***“It is still assumed that women are unwilling or unable to reconcile family life and work. It is still very rare for women with children to be in management positions.”***

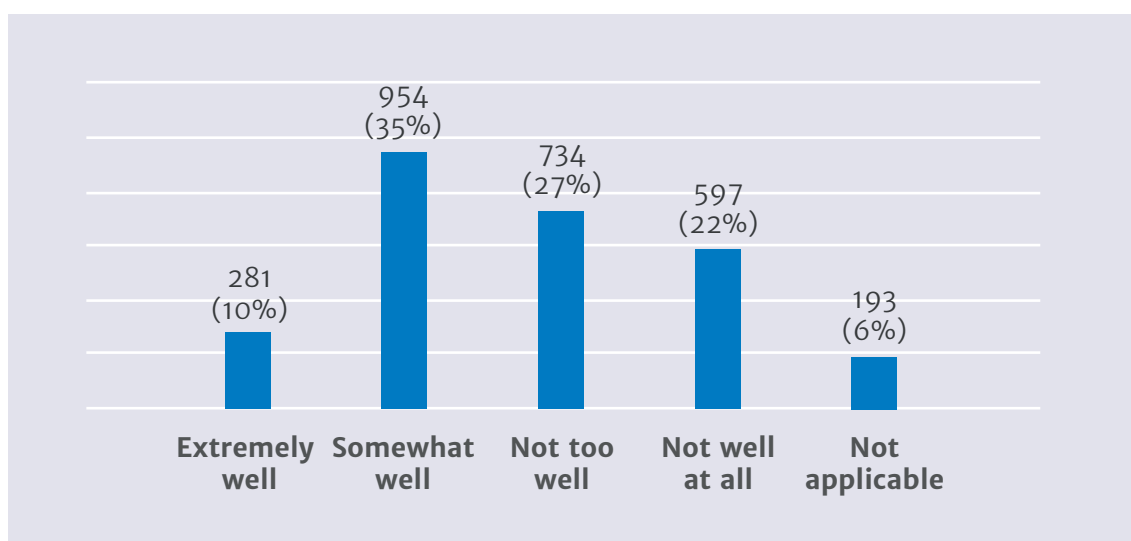
*(Railway worker)*

## 4 Women's health and safety

Women's physical concerns are too often generally absent from occupational health and safety policies across most sectors; the implicit and explicit hazards for women are either unknown or underestimated. They are, in any case, poorly documented. This is a barrier to achieving effective policies on occupational health and equal opportunities.<sup>10</sup> This survey brings to light previously invisible forms of workplace discrimination in the transport sector that specifically affect women's physical health. It identifies sanitary issues, including the availability of accessible and clean toilets. It reveals that menopausal concerns are at best ignored, if not denied their proper treatment, both medical and employment-related. Women in this survey have stated that menopausal issues are often not acknowledged as medical problems and consequently not considered as health issues with the related rights to take time off work. Even trade unions have not yet come around to making these issues part of their agenda.

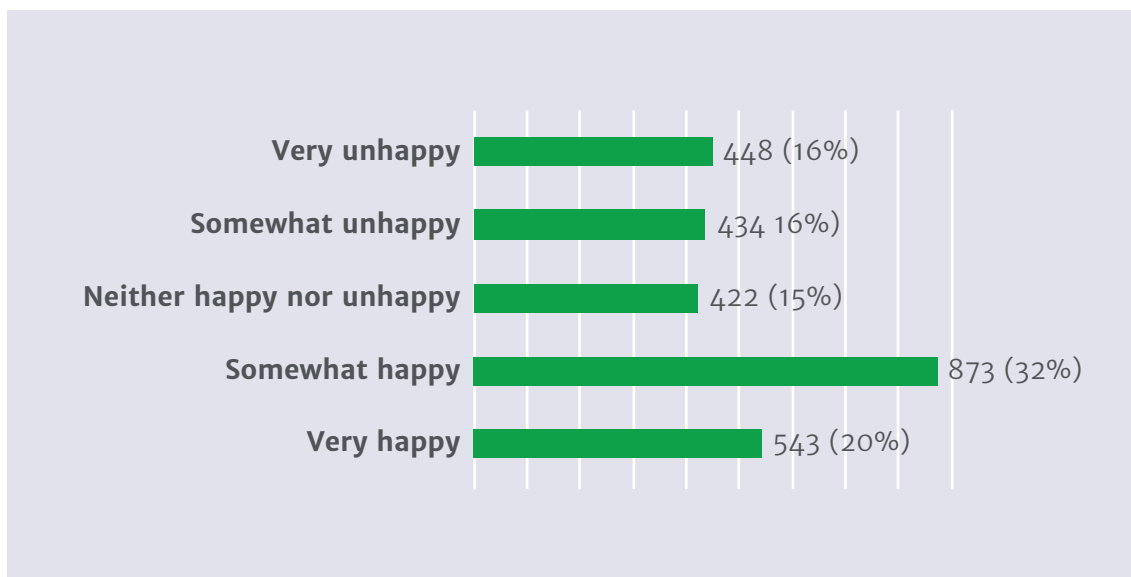
**32% of respondents were either very, or somewhat, unhappy with the sanitary conditions at their workplace**

**Figure 6. How well does your employer succeed in giving top priority to the provision of a safe working environment for women at your workplace?**



10 <https://www.etui.org/publications/books/the-gender-workplace-health-gap-in-europe>

**Figure 7. How happy are you with the sanitary conditions at your workplace (e.g., toilets, locker rooms)?**



## Survey results

49% of our respondents thought that their workplace did not prioritise a safe and adequate work environment for women, while 32% of them said that they were unhappy with the sanitary conditions at work and 19% of the respondents said that they were unhappy with work place safety.

While 45% of the respondents thought that their workplace prioritised a safe work environment for women, 49% thought this was not a strong priority at their workplace.

## Sanitary conditions

Part of providing a safe and adequate work environment for women is having and providing access to decent sanitary facilities. One-third of the respondents indicated that they were not satisfied with the sanitary facilities at their workplaces. Problems identified in their responses included not having any access to female-only facilities, the dirty and unsanitary condition of toilets, and working shifts that prevented them from using the facilities when they needed to.

Many respondents were also unhappy about the provision or adequacy of women's access to locker rooms, in particular to women-only locker rooms.

Access to toilets during working hours emerged from the survey as an issue affecting the health and safety of women workers.

***“Toilet breaks are hard to get when we are short-staffed during peak season. (In my case) this resulted in severe kidney infection (and) actually passing urine with blood.”***

*(Tourism worker)*

While the survey did not seek out specific health issues, responses revealed that menopausal concerns have been largely overlooked or even been made subject to disciplinary actions by employers.

***“Menopause-related illness is subject to disciplinary action.”***

*(Railway worker)*

Similarly, issues related to maternity after maternity leave, such as breast-feeding, have been largely ignored, leaving women in the transport sector to find their own, often difficult, solutions.

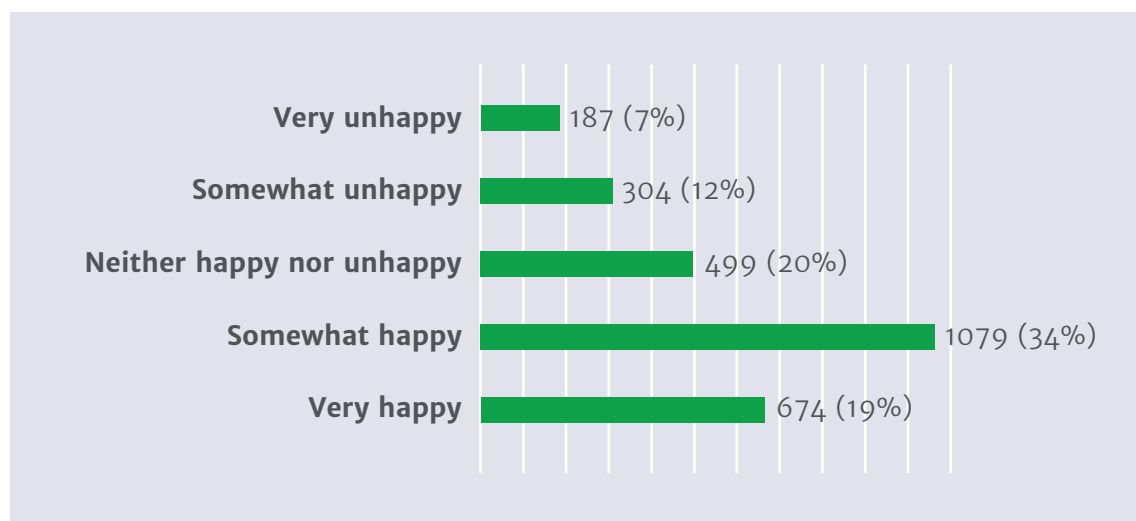
***“I was not able to extract milk after returning to work from maternity.”***

*(Bus driver)*

## Workplace safety

19% of the respondents said that they were very unhappy or somewhat unhappy with the level of workplace safety.

**Figure 8. How happy are you with the safety of your workplace?**



## Gender-based violence and harassment in the transport sector

One of the barriers to careers for women in transport is workplace violence and harassment. Women working in the sector are often subject to repeated, hostile and offensive verbal, non-verbal and physical forms of violence, including sexual harassment by colleagues, managers and third parties.

ETF's previous survey mapping violence against women in the transport sector provided alarming evidence that violence against women is a regular occurrence in the transport sector. It has devastating effects on women's health and well-being and on their motivation to remain in jobs in the transport sector. New risks of violence were also identified, which may result from changes in work organisation, staffing shortages and job insecurities.<sup>11</sup>

**36% of the respondents felt that their workplace did not support a zero-tolerance policy on abuse of staff**

Responses to this latest survey validate previous findings and include graphic descriptions of what can happen to women working in the transport sector when well-tested policies to combat violence and sexual harassment in the workplace do not exist, or are inadequately applied.

### Survey results

Violence and harassment against women working in the transport industry are widespread and have been committed by colleagues, managers, customers, passengers and vehicle owners. The ILO has identified violence against transport workers as one of the most important factors limiting the attractiveness of transport work to women, and consequently the recruitment and retention of women in transport jobs.<sup>12</sup>

The survey shows that, despite the documented violence against women in the transport sector, transport companies are not doing enough to protect women transport workers against violence. One in three respondents to this survey said that their workplace did not actively pursue a zero-tolerance policy. 53% of those who felt that way were above

<sup>11</sup> ETF. "Stronger together. Ending violence against women in transport". Our campaign against workplace violence and harassment. <https://www.etf-europe.org/activity/violence-against-women/>

<sup>12</sup> ILO, *Women in the Transport Sector. Promoting employment by preventing violence against women transport workers*. Transport Policy Brief, ILO, Geneva, 2013.

## KEY FINDINGS

- **More than one-third** (988) of the respondents felt that their workplace did not support a zero-tolerance policy on abuse of staff.
- **More respondents** (39%) were *not* aware of harassment and violence procedures at their workplace, than were aware of such procedures (35%).

the age of 40. It is also striking that almost 40 per cent of the respondents were not aware of any procedures for dealing with harassment and violence at the workplace.

*“When we are alone as women on a ship with only men, they are not nice. They think they can say and do anything! Like sending text messages with pictures and wanting to...”*

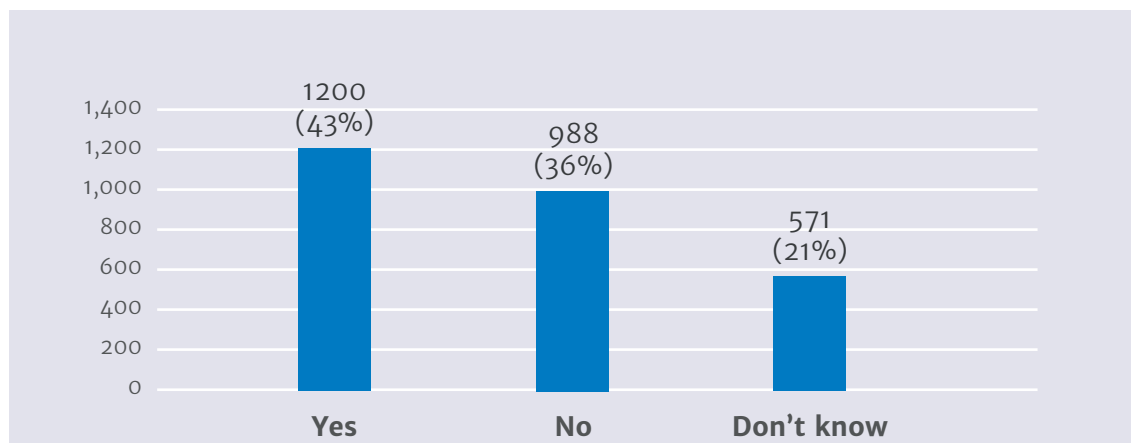
*(Maritime Worker)*

Social norms play a role in reinforcing societal attitudes about women not “belonging” in the transport sector. These act as a powerful force in keeping women silent about their experiences of violence.<sup>13</sup>

*“I have been working for 15 years in a public urban transport company in Madrid, during which time I have suffered 12 instances of sexual and labour harassment by a superior in command. I have received public humiliations and insults, such as ‘tomboy’ for being a bus driver – ‘a profession for men’. I have been constantly denigrated, humiliated, harassed, persecuted.”*

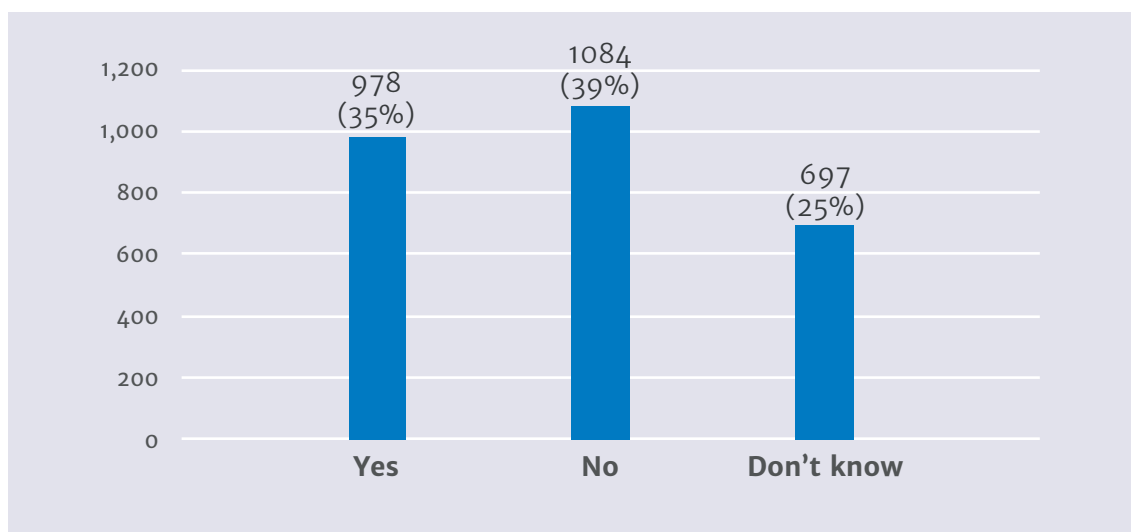
*(Bus driver)*

**Figure 9. Do you feel your workplace supports a zero-tolerance policy on abuse of staff?**



13 UN Women, *HANDBOOK Addressing violence and harassment against women in the world of work*, 2019

**Figure 10. Are you aware of procedures for reporting and redressing sexual violence or harassment in your workplace?**



The survey was designed primarily to probe into working conditions, and generally to help tackle the gender-based violence and discrimination that are current aspects of those working conditions; but it did not strive to collect evidence on specific cases of violence and sexual harassment. ETF's survey of 2018 has already provided ample evidence requiring action. Respondents to the current survey were asked about policies as well as awareness of policies and rights. The results are sobering.

More than one-third (988) of the respondents felt that their workplace did **not** support a zero-tolerance policy on abuse of staff.

Despite the high rate of violence and sexual harassment, which is known, only 19% of the respondents indicated that they had ever filed a complaint, which is in line with the finding that only 35% of the respondents knew about procedures for reporting and redressing sexual violence or harassment at the workplace.



## Conclusions

The survey reveals that women working in the transport sector often face two competing realities. On the one hand, the sector offers interesting long-term employment. In this respect, it is not surprising that 82% of the respondents indicated that they enjoyed working at their workplace, and 45% felt that their jobs provided them with good opportunities for promotion and development. 68% felt very happy with their job security.

But, the survey brings to light the degree to which workplace and working conditions fail to meet women's specific needs. It also points to unacceptable working conditions, and hazards, for women and men alike.<sup>14</sup> Close to one-third of the respondents did not feel that the workplace environment supported them in doing their jobs well, and 50% said that the job did not provide them with good opportunities for promotion and development.

37% of the respondents also remarked that coming from a minority cultural or ethnic background was not at all an asset at their workplace and 13% indicated that coming from such a background had caused them problems at work. Such findings, indicating that issues of ethnic origin and discrimination are not being adequately tackled by current company policies, need further investigation.

The survey paints a vivid picture of the scale of the challenges that exist in the sector, including those relating to (night) shift work, long working hours, irregular working hours, inflexibility, weekend and holiday work, and 7/7 availability. More than 44% of the women who answered the survey indicated that they were doing full-time shift work, whereas 26% were working full-time with regular hours from Monday to Friday, and 15% were working part-time. 39% indicated that they had decided to work part-time for family reasons, while only 14% indicated that the position they were holding was a part-time position in the first place.

Thus, the ETF survey reveals that women workers in the transport sector encounter specific barriers. It has shown that many of these barriers result from gender inequalities and gender stereotypes in the sector. The survey probed into the various ways in which women were disadvantaged and discovered the numerous hidden factors that make it difficult for women to enter or remain in employment in transport.

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<sup>14</sup> For example, many respondents from the aviation sector indicated an urgent need for more information about fume events on aircraft, which can have a disastrous effect on crew and passengers.

Failing to realize women's potential in the transport sector is no longer acceptable. Values, rights and good business sense all demand otherwise.

The survey shows that there is an urgent need to eliminate the entrenched male culture, and to provide safe workplaces where women are not exposed to violence and harassment, have full access to proper sanitary facilities, and can achieve a good work-life balance. In the words of women in transport, the necessary changes would bring – along with other benefits:

*“A clean driving cab, time between trains to go to the loo (not on the train); flexible working hours; more than 6 weeks’ maternity pay (if you’re sick, you get 16 weeks); a privacy policy where your personal file isn’t openly discussed with your colleagues; a zero-tolerance policy towards bullying and sexual harassment; and a less toxic work culture would be appreciated.”*

*(Railway worker)*

