

PROJECT WISE • EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Women Employment in Urban Public Transport Sector

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WISE



Supported by the European Union

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1) The WISE project – Background, Objectives and Methodology



The public urban transport sector is a highly male dominated one: the average percentage of male employees is 82.5%. In accordance to the employment goal of the European Union of 75% until 2020 with a greater involvement of women in the labour market, the EU-Social Partners' project WISE (Women Employment in Urban Public Transport Sector), which is designated in the Work Programme of the European Social Dialogue and therefore funded by the European Union, aims at examining the employment situation of women in public urban transport sector in Europe in order to contribute to a better representation and integration of women in the sector.

The project's objectives range from the better access of women to all public transport professions, including technical ones and management functions to the thorough implementation of relevant EU equal opportunities' legislation in the transport sector. To achieve these objectives different measures have been realized. These include a quantitative survey (carried out by questionnaires sent to transport companies, associations and trade unions in the EU-27 countries), a qualitative survey (carried out by interviews with women in the work meeting cities) as well as by work meetings in five different cities: Antwerp, Berlin, Bucharest, Helsinki and Sofia.

Apart from supporting women to achieve economic independence by giving them easier access to professions and careers in the sector, the beneficial aspects of an increasing women employment for the companies were stated from the project's start:

- ↑ Facing demographic development with a decreasing number of young potential personnel to hire, recruiting more women appears to be one solution to answer the upcoming need of staff.
- ↑ The recruitment of women, who, in society, are still seen as the ones taking care for children and/or elder family members, may lead to strategies to improve the work-life balance of professions, thus, the working conditions for both genders.
- ↑ Finally, the often well existing de-escalating effects and communicative qualities of women bring forth a new quality of public transport and a better fulfilment of the (female) customer requirements.

2) Women Employment in the Urban Public Transport Sector – State of the Art

So far, the collected data from responded questionnaires of 14 EU-countries (14 of 27 EU-countries approached have returned the questionnaire) reveal that, although the companies, trade unions and associations involved in the project are aware of the benefits of women employment and have mostly tried in various ways to increase the share of women among the staff, the numbers remain unbalanced: The percentage of female employees in the companies varies from 5 to 31 % with an average of 17.5%. In technical or operational divisions such as driver's professions, the number of women is especially low – often under 10%.

A number of different (estimated or evaluated) reasons were revealed in the project's course: The lack of corporate initiatives for work-life balance of employees was detected as one of the main barriers to women employment as well as cultural aspects such as a "male working culture" and existing gender stereotypes. Also missing political strategies to augment the share of female staff members has to be taken into account as a reason.

The number of female employees is not only constantly low but has also been stagnating for some time in every country visited during the project. Nonetheless, it was apparent that women employment is slightly higher in Eastern European countries than in Western European ones. The lack of gender diversity in technical or operational (and often better paid) divisions, however, fits in the overall European pattern.

The collected data also showed that women are under-represented in all age groups, but especially in the age group of employees older than 60 years. Also, a visible segregation according to functions takes place. Especially in the Eastern countries, women are much better represented. For example, in one Eastern European transport company visited, 44% female tram drivers are employed. Other departments in Eastern European countries, where women are well-represented are administration and customer service (in which the deescalating and communicative qualities of women are highly valued). In these divisions, women are with a share up to 77.1 % sometimes in definite majority.

The results of the companies of all countries having responded to the quantitative questionnaire show that, in management, low gender diversity is in place: Men are the definite majority in the sector's leading positions. There seems to be the tendency that, the higher the positions in the company hierarchy, the fewer women are represented. The same applies to the board of directors. Nonetheless, compared to the low numbers of female employees in the sector, the share of women in management – with an average of 23.8% – is relatively high.

The small number of women in technical jobs has already been mentioned, but it has to be pointed out that the significance of technical jobs in urban public transport companies is still considered as high. The women's lack of interest in technical professions and the sometimes assessed absence of skills in this area have been established as a common point of view. It appeared in the project's course that this stereotype has been well adopted and generally accepted and that it therefore might cause a major obstacle to women employment. However, not only the urban public transport sector has to cope with this challenge. Indeed, it also affects many other sectors offering technical jobs.

One of the interesting outcomes of the project study showed a pattern: By far more women work as tram or metro drivers than as bus drivers in companies providing all services. The absence of a need for qualifications (bus driving licence) and the issue of perceived insecurity at workplace have been named as probable reasons.



3) Key Aspects and Instruments influencing Women Employment

The following indicators shaped up as to have a high importance for women employment:

- ↑ Reconciliation of work and family/social life: work organisation
- ↑ Reconciliation of work and family/social life: work-life-balance
- ↑ Health and safety at workplace
- ↑ Working culture
- ↑ Wages
- ↑ Career, qualification and trainings
- ↑ Recruitment

Therefore, these key aspects have been analyzed and described in detail within the WISE project and will be highlighted in this summary.

Reconciliation of work and family/social life: work organisation

Managers and researchers explain the lack of women in staff due to insufficient measures for female employment, for example an insufficient flexibility in arrangements that enable women to reconcile work and family life, the possibility to work part-time is to be mentioned among others.

It has often been established that work organisation should, under preservation of the operational and internal needs of a company, alter in order to meet new demands. Improving the productivity is of high significance for business (and employment) survival. Therefore both, companies and employees, need flexibility. Working time arrangements and work-life balance are becoming more and more important issues, also on the EU agenda. For an increase of women employment, more working time flexibility appears to be crucial.

From an employers' point of view, the flexibility of working hours offers many benefits: One positive effect is binding employees to the company to increase job tenure – an important criterion for new employees to choose a profession or an employer. Furthermore, the improvement of the employers' attitude and morale, which leads to a reduction of absenteeism and staff turnover, while it increases the effectiveness of recruitment and the productivity, are desired implications.

Many of the companies surveyed or visited during this project (75%) offer working flexibility, amongst which part-time work and flexible working hours are favourably mentioned. Other measures named were tandems, long-term work accounts, workplace planning based on ageing structures, individual duty schedules, part-time work for managers and telework. Some companies established mentoring of women. However, despite the relatively high number of companies with implemented regulations, not even half of the companies (46.4%) consider these measures as to be effective for boosting equal opportunities of their employees. Individual duty schedules have been discussed as one aspect of working time flexibility for increasing employees' work-life balance, thus job motivation and satisfaction.

The survey showed that working hours' regulation differs much from country to country, whereas many company representatives shared the opinion that the sector's working hours are often not convenient for women.

The demand for part-time work therefore depends on several aspects, such as the size of the company, the working time demands (shift or night work) or, especially, the number of female employees, as much as the number of female workers is connected to the demand of parental leave. The following thesis seems valid: The more the women share increases in companies, the more demand of part-time work is to be expected.

86.2% of the surveyed companies have already implemented measures of part-time work but only 48.3% think of the regulations as being effective, although they are demanded, especially by women: When taking into account only the total number of female and male employees, the share of female part-time workers exceeds the share of male part-time workers. The example of two cities visited showed that for elder employees part-time work prior to retirement is attractive. Therefore, the demand among this target group is increasing.

In addition, it has been surveyed that in Western European countries the number of part-time workers is higher than in Eastern European countries. Reasons for that might include different wages implying that part-time work cannot be as easily afforded in Eastern countries. The lower payment of part-time work has, also in Western countries, often be considered as a barrier to this form of flexible working-time especially for single mothers, who are afraid not to be able to sufficiently earn a living.



Shift work cannot be avoided in public transport seeing that it is a necessary measure in the sector in order to ensure passenger's mobility on different times of day and night. Anyhow, the demographic development affects many European economies so that the recruitment and binding of a decreasing number of young potential personnel becomes more and more important. It is common opinion that, future needs of personnel can be met better by increasing the number of female employees. Therefore, it seems necessary to readjust working conditions and employment policy including strategies of work-life balance which is an overall important issue for both, male and female employees.

The system of shift work is mentioned by more than half of the companies (51.7%) and most trade unions (78.6%) as an obstacle to women employment. Interestingly, many of the interviewed women in driving profession do not share that opinion. If assessed as an issue, it appears to be mainly a problem when women have very young children.

All in all shift work is considered attractive for monetary reasons. Most collective bargaining agreements between companies and trade unions include extra payments for night, weekend and/or holiday work. As an alternative to offer equal and fair working conditions for every employee, "rolling shifts" have been mentioned in more than one country. The so-called rolling shifts provide the opportunity to work in favoured shift but also maintain the obligation to take on less-favoured ones in order to ensure a balanced shift work among employees.

Additionally, giving employees the possibility to change shifts among each other via internal corporate communication media (e.g. intranet), under supervision of team leaders and/or the management, might lead to an improved satisfaction of employees. The definition of individual schedules on employee's personal request, though, depends on factors such as the company's size and has to be carefully analyzed also according to the corporate needs.

Reconciliation of work and family/social life: work-life-balance

In order to discuss work-life balance, one has to consider the aspect of parental leave, which until today is still mainly executed by women and whose regulations differ not only from country to country but often reflect the companies' corporate policy. Nearly three quarters of the questioned companies use a combination of parental leave with part-time work, other measures are rather secondary. Discussions of professional perspectives prior to parental leave are executed by 40.7% of the companies. Offers of training programs and/or consultation after parental leave are furthermore mentioned.

In terms of childcare, legal possibilities to get exempted from work or to get a special leave at short notice in case of a child's sickness as well as subsidization of costs for childcare exist in all visited countries. Yet, regulations for childcare vary from country to country. As an especially varied and sophisticated example, Finland has developed very comprehensive regulations with state-subsidized childcare fees. Representatives mentioned the municipal obligation to arrange childcare for every child until the start of primary school and state support of municipalities for morning and afternoon childcare during the first and second year in primary school. Moreover, the right to full-day childcare for children under 3 years is mandatory.

On company level the corporate measures in terms of childcare differ strongly. Action varies from part-time possibilities for parents to company kindergartens that were mentioned in the questionnaires and during the work meetings or the interviews. While private or public kindergartens are available in all visited cities, the opening hours are very different even from facility to facility. In some countries, the numbers of kindergarten facilities as well as the opening hours have been assessed as to be insufficient for full-time workers and incompatible to shift-work.

It has been already mentioned that no visited company has a corporate kindergarten or childcare centre, which is based on the fact that the state does subsidize public but not corporate kindergartens. In one city visited, earlier existing facilities were closed due to few requests by employees. Nonetheless, the companies' cooperation with local kindergartens in order to improve accessibility and affordability of childcare for employees has been suggested during the meetings. Especially the interviewees stated that kindergarten infrastructure could be better in terms of quantity and opening hours.

In addition to childcare, the issue of elder care becomes more and more important in consideration of an ageing population. Measures taken and subsidization of costs vary from country to country and among the companies, but should be carefully kept in mind.

Health and safety at workplace

Next to flexibility of working time, health and safety at workplace are seen as an important issue in public transport sector. In the past, many measures to secure health and safety at workplace have been implemented, most of them with small impact on the equality between men and women. It is therefore valid to raise the question if counteracting measures are indeed effective as tools for improving gender equality.

In order to optimize future measures and activities in view of effectiveness, one deems it is necessary to further analyze this aspect.

In view of infrastructure, the condition of vehicles is very important for driving staff. The quality of infrastructure and vehicles varies not only from country to country but often enough from company to company. Also, the lack and/or state of sanitary facilities has been named as a huge problem in many cities and companies, the same goes for the number and state of break rooms, dress rooms, lockers and canteens. These facilities are often not existing or viewed as not satisfactory though highly demanded. Even though mentioned by some interviewed women, companies and trade unions, that have answered the questionnaire, do not see this topic as a reason for the lack of female employees in the sector – in contrast to many women interviewed.

Another reason mentioned is the image of the public transport sector as an unsafe workplace in regards of violence against employees. Violence cases have a negative influence on the companies' image and on the image of the entire sector. This issue increases when cases are reported and widely spread in media. As a consequence, the negative image can have counter-productive effects on women employment. The WISE surveys show that companies take the topic indeed very seriously and that activities to increase both workplace safety (term in relation to a healthy workplace) and security (in the sense of provision against aggression) have high priority. In fact, 89.6% of all surveyed companies have already improved hygiene factors at workplace and 62.0% name introduced measures to protect employees from the violence of others.

The aspect of workplace security in respect of violence cases is often mentioned in connection with the drivers' workplace as well as with the inclusion of third parties and/or passengers. As a consequence, counteractive measures have been taken. In one of the visited cities for example, an agreement for a joint action on prevention of work related harassment and violence of women in the capital's public transport companies has been signed in 2009. It contains a collection of data, a thorough analysis and proposals of measures such as self-defence courses for women. In other cities, different measures are chosen. Examples include the implementation of a social workers project and school projects to sensitize target groups towards a better demeanour in view of both personnel and equipment. Some companies also offer deescalation trainings for employees.

In addition, technical solutions to prevent violence against drivers are in place such as emergency buttons or closed cabins in vehicles and private or business mobile phones for employees.

Sexual harassment between colleagues is often not perceived as such, although some cases of bad jokes and unacceptable behaviour exist – especially in the workshops. Most of the interviewed women feel that they need to be tougher in facing these situations, but value the working atmosphere in mixed teams as a more relaxed one, other than the atmosphere in a women-only working environment.

All in all, sexual harassment has not been considered as a big issue. More than once women have been confronted with a variety of stereotypes such as the opinion that women are not capable of handling certain responsibilities. Other than that most women stated that they feel generally well treated. In the project's course not only (sexual) harassment between colleagues, but also between driving personnel and passengers have been mentioned though only a few.

In light of the increasing challenges of day-to-day work, the installation of a body or person to report about violence cases and/or harassment seems to be crucial, especially as many interviewees mentioned that the fear of violence and aggression belongs to the disadvantages or critical aspects of their job as a driver in the sector.

All visited companies and cities had either different contact bodies or persons installed that can be approached; the action procedures differ, though. It has been opinionated that the position in regard of the hierarchical level of either body or person for complaints is important. The wish has been issued that companies should avoid linking the department for complaints directly to the department that is in charge of employment decisions. This might be a barrier to set complaints. As an overall estimation it has been issued that, the easier the access to the contact person, the lower the barrier to contact might be.

Working culture

The topics “corporate culture” and “working culture” turned out to be of high importance when addressing women employment. When facing issues of working culture, one continuously stumbles across gender stereotypes; these items are highly linked to one another.

Diversity of and tolerance towards different people and their individual background are often assumed to have a positive impact on the company’s attractiveness for women. A so called “male working culture” is often described as a corporate culture oriented on male attributes and focused on men as an internal and external target group to the effect that female employees feel that they have to show more masculine than feminine characteristics, also in order to succeed in their careers. It is generally said that women perceive the necessity to perform better than men in order to be accepted in their job; this is also the case in the public transport sector.

The quantitative survey shows that more than half of the companies’ representatives (55.2%) esteem that a male working culture is an obstacle to gender equality, which is expressed by female staff numbers. Nonetheless, measures to improve the working culture towards a more diversified one are scarcely taken, the promotion of women’s networks for example are not common at all. During the course of this study, the term “male working culture” could never be clearly defined but high gender segregation often results of historical development and of the fact that the sector provides more jobs in the operational (e.g. drivers as a service-oriented job not focused on techniques anymore) and technical field than in the commercial and administrative one.

All in all, the issues of male working culture and gender stereotypes have to be further analysed in order to propose accurate measures to overcome the posed barriers to women employment. Generally speaking, the sensitization of employees, managers and trade union members for this issue is important, though it might be helpful including this aspect in training offers.

In order to approach the topic of working culture, some recurrent, exemplary aspects are to be mentioned in the following.

Regarding the working clothes, companies have made good experiences with providing them to both genders. If the corporate uniforms are made available to women, this will have a positive influence on women employment because working clothes are of high importance for all employees’ identification with the company. Consequently, women do not need to critically mention this aspect of missing or inappropriate working clothes anymore, as it was done by some interviewees.



The issue of working atmosphere stays a highly subjective one and is not otherwise handled in this report. However, most women assess the working atmosphere in their company as positive. Comments like “The public transport sector is a great place for women.” have been issued more than once and mirror the women’s all-in-all pleasure at work: “I like driving!”

Social contacts with colleagues and passengers were often viewed as positive and enjoyable for women and lead to the general perception that “Women are well-suited for the sector”. Women in the sector value the work independence and responsibility for passengers and esteem that the driver delivers an important transport service for the customer.

Stereotypes are “perceptions about the qualities that distinguish groups or categories of people”¹ exist – very strongly – also in the public transport sector; they have been confirmed in all visited countries and companies. A variety of statements on the prescriptive and descriptive behaviour of men and women were given in work meetings, interviews and surveys. There is certain consensus between employers and trade unions that gender stereotypes and a male working culture have significant influence on the sector’s women employment.

Regarding cultural differences there is no absolute evidence, if stereotypes are stronger at hand in one country or the other, or, where they are more or less obvious. Stereotypes exist in a descriptive (How does a person behave?) and prescriptive (How has the person to behave?) way. They are an important factor for women employment and are widely spread. The strongest stereotypes are similar in different European countries, but the occurrence of some other stereotypes differs per country.

¹ Different Cultures, Similar Perceptions: Stereotyping of Western European Business Leaders; Martha Maznevski (Ph.D.), Karsten Jonsen, Institute for Management Development (IMD), Lousanne, Switzerland; published by CATALYST, New York, 2006, p. 5-8.

Wages

Concerning the concept of equal pay, it was said that, within the urban public transport sector – at least within the same tariff payment groups – the principle “same wage for same work” is valid. However, it needs to be pointed out that the WISE survey among companies only asked for starting salaries and does not include questions of professional advancement. As a consequence, the results do not lead to knowledge about wage development of male and female employees. In addition, the salaries of employees, who belong to the non-tariff payment group, are not included in this survey.

As always, adequateness of payment has to be seen as very subjective. The focus of this study lies therefore on extra payment for weekend, night and holiday work, which is granted in 61 % of all companies taken part in the survey. Since, compared to other sectors, the basic salary for driving personnel in urban public transport companies is relatively low – at least in some European countries – extra payments are attractive so that these corresponding employees are motivated to work additional shifts. Regarding advantages for employees, different incentives as a measure of employee motivation exist in some of the companies.

Career, qualification and trainings

Well qualified employees are the key for entrepreneurial success. In this context, qualification needs to be updated for example towards a need to know the changing customers’ attitudes in order to react correspondingly. From the employees’ view, it is important to be able to maintain employability and to be “fit” in the job they are doing.

Regarding continuous qualification, it can be generally said that the European urban public transport companies apply the continuous training for bus drivers based on the EU-directive 2003/59/EC on the initial and continuous qualification and periodic training. In most cases, the employers finance the training; sometimes the drivers themselves have to co-finance it. Only in a few cases, there is financial support by state or regional authorities.

In Germany apprenticeship is one option to recruit new and young staff. The system designs the visit of a vocational school, on two days a week in a period of three or three and a half years, while learning on the job in a company the other days of the week. This combination of theoretical and practical education (dual professional apprenticeship) helps many young people to learn detailed tasks and to gain background information and knowledge. If they are further employed, companies save money and time for the apprentices’ job familiarization. Apprentices of the sector receive professional education in three company fields of activity: commercial, technical and service-oriented activities.

Concerning driving staff, initial and other trainings are offered in cooperation with an external training and development institute. In Finland, the training for vocational qualification, as youth education, normally lasts three years and, as an apprenticeship, two until three years. As far as the professional training for drivers is concerned in Bulgaria, they mostly need to complete a theoretical and practical training lasting of six months each. After they have successfully completed the training and the examination, they work as practical assistant for drivers. Only after this procedure they are allowed to drive trolleybus or tram.

Considered separately by gender, differences in educational degrees are in favour of male employees in the categories of „school leaving certificate“ and „initial vocational education“. However, the differences are low. In comparison to men it needs to be pointed out that, within female workforce, a larger proportion (10.5%) of employees has a university degree (men: 5.8%). So, the qualification of women is often better than those of men. Therefore, it is even more astonishing that they are hardly represented in higher or leading management positions. This aspect of qualification on the one hand and a lack of presence in certain job positions on the other hand, can be stronger tackled by companies including the implementation of counteractive measures such as career support and promotion for women.





In most of the companies, there is no special distinction in trainings between the offers for women and men. Apart from one company (BVG, Berlin), where special trainings for women (language courses, application training) are offered, the companies do not offer specific training courses for female employees because mostly they do not distinguish between genders regarding training offers. Thus, the majority of the companies do not offer functional courses or trainings for improving personal skills or dealing with gender issues. For employees, who want to develop a career in their company, different possibilities exist. Still, the most frequent one is the classical vertical management career. Improvement of equal opportunities for both, women and men, also means to enable career progression for women, whether in classical management careers or comparable horizontal careers with responsibility for personnel, special subjects or projects. Regarding the possibilities in the companies and the desires of employees for a career progression, there are big differences between the enterprises and the women interviewed in the project. When looking at career development possibilities for women, there are no special ways or career paths. In most of the cases, there are not any fixed career paths at all but similar instruments such as succession plans. Even though, sometimes there are no women represented in such programs, it is considered that only qualification and not gender is the decisive factor for being part of them.

It has been estimated by company representatives that clear career paths and opportunities tailored specially for women might inspire more women to urban public transport companies, so that this could have an influence on recruiting.

In many companies, there are regular development discussions. They usually take place annually and are offered to the entire personnel. In some countries, a periodic personal feedback discussion between employee and supervisor is mandatory. Many female employees in all companies visited would appreciate if there is a regular feedback by their boss and a transparent way of communication. Many studies from other sectors have delivered comparable results.

A topic very controversially discussed is a quota for women. In the interviews with female employees, the number of female proponents and opponents in the company is rather balanced. Patterns of opinions can be found such as that proponents of the quota are rather women with many years of professional experience. Academically educated women generally tend to belong to the quota's proponents. Among the female bus drivers the opinion are balanced. Opponents of the women's quota are relatively young and self-confident.

The decision of quotas for any given sector, however, does not lie in the range of the social partners' legitimization. Their activities of facilitating the women's access to a career in a company on a disburdening as well as on a mandatory basis can only be expressed in a call for voluntary action of the concerned parties within the companies. It actually needs to be considered that every decision leading to a fixation of quotas is of a political nature. Consequently, they can only be presented by political instances, in this case the European Parliament and the European Council (contingently with recommendations of the European Commission). If such an approach should arise, the social partners will work together on the means for implementation. On a corporate level, based on company policies and strategies, target figures are possible – also without official European or National political strategy.

A precondition for corporate target figures is that the companies will make gender equality a key issue of their corporate mission, and, thus show such commitment strategically.

Recruiting

There are many reasons for recruiting more women. One of the most important in view of the demographic development has already been mentioned. Also in qualitative terms, there are much more arguments for women as employees. The aspect of the women's qualification regarding their driving behaviour, which is often perceived and assessed better (more conscious, more sensitive and sensible) than male drivers does mostly not take part in customer surveys so far. However, it could be an option for the future.

The surveyed companies answered that they – so far – do not make distinctions between the instruments for recruiting women or men. In addition, most of the instruments are used for all job levels/professions. Only a small amount of companies specially addresses executives or other special target groups.

Interesting in this context is the fact that 57.1 % of the companies affirmed that they want to encourage more women to work for their company – but only 29.4% offer specific trainings, e.g. for job interviewers to be aware of this topic and for managers, who make personnel decisions. Although, in general there is no strategy or campaign for recruiting more women, which (independent of gender stereotypes) is necessary for the increase of the women share, female employees, who are already employed, can be multipliers to recruit new female colleagues. For many companies, it is still an important source of recruitment, if a family member already works for the company. This means that, within families the employer is often recommended to the family members. Also, younger women are a considerable potential for recruiting female working force. This refers especially to young women, who are not sure what to do after school, for example whether they want to apply for an apprenticeship or whether they want to start studying. If these women are addressed at an early stage in school, the possibilities seem to be higher to encourage them to work in the urban public transport sector.

It has already been stated that the image of the urban public transport sector implies that the sector is perceived as being male-dominated. Specific promotion and communication highlighting positive aspects such as employment security have to be improved in order to attract women. Moreover, this sector has the image of being rather old-fashioned and conservative. Therefore, companies are often not present in the applicants' minds as potential employer. In young peoples' conception of a future employer, the public transport sector hardly plays any role. Additionally, at least in some countries, the sector's salaries do have perceived disadvantages compared to those in other industries. Moreover, many of the sectors' existing professions are unknown to young people. The implementation of special campaigns might be of help to fight these drawbacks strategically.

Campaigns or projects to attract young potential employees for the technical sector in Germany are called "MINT-activities", which aim at promoting the sectors Mathematics, Informatics, Natural Sciences and Techniques for potential personnel. In addition, the "Girls Day" taken place annually in Germany, in which companies can take part, aims at encourage girls or young women to learn technical professions. These activities can be added with the aspect of hiring female working staff. As one measure, the "Women Employment Scheme" implemented in one company visited aims at attracting more women to apply for a job in the sector and to heighten the share of women. This scheme is based on a regional law including gender equality, which defines the obligation for companies to analyse the company's employment structure and possible employee fluctuation.

In the interviews with female employees, there was a consensus among the women that the companies need to develop more marketing and communication measures targeted for recruitment. It has been suggested, for example, that female employees introduce and present their work in schools in order to eliminate existing concerns and stereotypes about the sector and its professions.

In many companies, there is cooperation regarding recruitment with external institutions like job centres or schools and universities. In some cities it has been mentioned that the majority of women do not ask for a job in the urban public transport sector. The retailer industry, for example, has a big demand for women and often seems to be more attractive to them.

Conclusively, there are many possibilities to cooperate with either local or regional work agencies or universities and schools to attract young women for working in the public transport sector. It always depends on local structures, strategies of the company and potential applicants, which way of cooperation needs to be chosen.

4) Future Prospects on Women Employment

Apart from the companies and cities visited within the scope of the WISE project, there are examples of companies, which successfully have implemented measures on women employment.

In one German city, the urban public transport company which has also answered the WISE questionnaire of the quantitative survey, has increased its overall women share up to 30.6%, with 33.05% female drivers and more than 20% female employees in technical departments like maintenance and infrastructure (in December, 2010). Here, a voluntary strategic approach of gender equality (incl. integrating the topic into the corporate mission and defining single measures) was initiated and successfully realized. In another company from France, whose representative have been invited to one of the WISE Steering Committee Meetings, the women share in operator and executive positions could be increased. Moreover, there is the recruitment goal of 10% set for the departments under this threshold. This objective is accompanied by a diversity-enhancing campaign on operator and executive recruitment as well as by communication actions in secondary schools before vocational counselling. Further corporate measures include the creation of a diversity observatory with exchanges of good practices between departments and the launch of a women's social network in the railway maintenance sector.

These examples show that companies can play an active role in promoting gender equality and reducing the barriers of women employment. In cooperation with the Social Partners, positive impulses for the Europe wide future development of the sector's companies with regards to gender equality can be generated.



To follow-up the WISE project, the Social Partners UITP and ETF recommend using the project results in order to initiate a broader and more intense discourse between the European transport companies, their associations and trade unions. It is aimed 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.

As a Kick-off, UITP and ETF propose to realize a conference titled "Women Employment and Gender Policy in European Public Transport Companies", which will take place in spring 2013.

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