

PRESS RELEASE
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Railway companies and trade unions start negotiations to promote the employment of women in the sector

Today, the Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER), representing railway sector employers, and the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF), representing employees, are starting the negotiations of an EU level agreement aimed at promoting the employment of women in the sector.

Women account for less than 20% of the railway workforce, much below the economy wide participation rate of women in the labour market (46%). For some professional categories, this figure is even lower.

Railway companies and trade unions are convinced that the situation should be changed in order not to miss out on the valuable contribution of women, to promote diversity at the workplace, and eventually bring the railway sector image closer to the one of the society in which rail customers live.

CER and ETF have addressed the topic of women's representation with several initiatives over the last decade and monitored progress for the past six years¹. In the light of limited evolution in women's share among employees, CER and ETF decided to step up their commitment with the decision to negotiate an EU social partners' agreement on this issue.

The President of the EU Sectoral Social Dialogue for Railways, Giorgio Tuti, said: *“The demographic situation in the rail companies all over Europe no longer allows the railway sector to do without the abilities, skills and talent of women. The European Social Dialogue is the right place to negotiate effective measures to attract women to all professional areas of the rail sector.”*

The Vice-President of the EU Sectoral Social Dialogue for Railways, Matthias Rohrmann, said: *“Diversity, and in particular the promotion of women's employment, is a major concern of railway companies. The envisaged agreement of the social partners CER and ETF can support the development of positive actions by companies, make their commitment more visible and thus make the sector even more attractive to employees”*.

ETF Deputy General Secretary, Sabine Trier, said: *“The ETF believes that the only way ahead is to guarantee equal opportunities and good working conditions meant to attract women in rail professions. What benefits women workers, is a benefit to all workers. It is in the interest of the sector and its employees to increase efforts and commitment to reach this goal.”*

CER Executive Director, Libor Lochman, said: *“CER members take the objective to improve the gender balance in the sector very seriously. For this reason we are keen to embark on the negotiations, aiming to a result that promotes good practices and tackles the remaining challenges”*.

¹ Detailed statistics about women's employment in the sector are available in the CER-ETF annual reports 'Women in Rail': <http://www.cer.be/wir>

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The European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) represents 5 million transport workers from more than 200 unions in 41 European countries, in civil aviation, fisheries, inland waterways, maritime transport, ports and docks, railways, road transport and tourism. For more information, visit www.etf-europe.org or follow @ETF_Europe on Twitter.

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The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) brings together more than 70 railway undertakings, their national associations as well as infrastructure managers and vehicle leasing companies. The membership is made up of long-established bodies, new entrants and both private and public enterprises, representing 73% of the rail network length, 77% of the rail freight business and about 93% of rail passenger operations in EU, EFTA and EU accession countries. CER represents the interests of its members towards EU policymakers and transport stakeholders, advocating rail as the backbone of a competitive and sustainable transport system in Europe. For more information, visit www.cer.be or follow @CER_railways on Twitter.