CER The Voice of European Railways

JOINT RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR A

BETTER REPRESENTATION AND INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN THE RAILWAY SECTOR

Based on a joint study by the social partners to identify the representation of women in railway companies and various railway occupations, their situation as well as examples for good practices for a better integration of women in the railway sector, the social partners CER and ETF prepared joint recommendations to support equal opportunities for women in the railway sector.

The issue of equal opportunities is widely reflected in the fundamental documentation of the European Union, starting from the EEC Treaty[1], to the Treaties of Maastricht[2] and of Amsterdam[3]. Recently, the Lisbon strategy for growth and employment marked an important stage of this positive path making provisions for an increase of female employment rate to 60% by the year 2010[4]. Today, female employment rate is 57,1%.

In order to achieve the policy goals, employers, trade unions and politics must act and promote equal opportunities for men and women. That is why an integrated intervention at the European level[5] is decisive. In the railway sector, which traditionally is a "male-dominated sector"[6], the social partners CER and ETF want to contribute to better representation and integration of women. Therefore they have established the following recommendations, which are addressed to their affiliated members with the aim to put them into practice at the national and regional levels as well as the corporate level.

1. Charter for Equal Opportunities in the European Railway Companies and Trade Unions

Additionally, modern European societies and the European railway companies will be affected by globalisation and demographic change. The European railways will only enjoy long-term success when they make use of the potential of both men and women. Good cooperation and social partnership of companies and unions is an important prerequisite in this context.

Prompted by a mainstreaming approach and in connection with this Charter, we, the railway companies and the trade unions, will:

1. create a corporate and workplace culture which is characterized by mutual respect and esteem between all parties concerned and in which men and women will work with each other in a partnership of equals;
2. integrate the principle of equal opportunities and "gender mainstreaming" in the work organisation and employment policy of the company;

3. review HR processes and ensure that women will not be denied or hindered in their access to occupations or leadership levels because of their gender;
4. create the general framework that will make it easier for employees to reconcile their jobs and their families;
5. ensure that the existing differences in the remunerations of men and women will be overcome. Men and women shall receive equal remuneration for equal work;
6. create the general framework to protect women against discrimination at the workplace;
7. include gender equality issues in collective bargaining and contractual labour relations;
8. act as advocates for equal opportunities in internal and external media and provide information on positive examples;

2. Recommendations for Positive Action

1. Encourage women to choose technical occupations. Girls can gain familiarity with technical occupations through cooperation with schools and open-house days.
2. Use selection processes which allow an unbiased selection of candidates. Professional ability should have top priority.
3. Establish procedures/benefits in railway companies to improve work-family balance. This includes options for a greater flexibility of working hours in line with the needs of and in consultation with male and female employees and their trade union representatives, support in caring for children or family members in need of care.
4. Develop actions to increase security for shift workers and swing-shift workers. This provides a greater sense of security not only to women and makes them willing to work shifts. These actions will also make our female and male customers feel more secure.
5. Review the suitability rules and adjust them at the European level. Women may not be deployed in certain areas, when they are expecting a baby. At all other times, they can work in all areas, where their physical and mental fitness fulfils the requirements.
6. Offer women employees equal access to all development and qualification measures.
7. Promote a gender equality culture in training and upgrading for all workers by the railway companies and trade unions.
8. Take concrete steps towards the implementation of the Community acquis on gender equality in the workplace.
9. Corporate reporting on the share of women in a company in various fields of activities and levels of hierarchy as well as the corresponding conditions of employment and remuneration and the establishment of equal opportunity action plans in line with EU Directive 2002/73/EC.

3. *Methodological recommendations*

As possible methodological approaches we recommend:

a) to promote an evaluation process (for example through a circular and multi-actor total e-quality policy) in order to guarantee the quality of organizational structures, procedures and resource management within a mainstreaming approach and to evaluate the change effects during the process and at the end of it.

b) to set up measurable targets for women presence in specific professions and hierarchic levels in the company/ies, which have to be agreed with the trade unions representatives and social partners as well as targets for the presence and representation of women in the trade unions.

4. Evaluation and Follow-up

Three years after signing these recommendations, the European social partners will perform a study on the measures introduced by their affiliated companies and unions for the implementation of these actions.
They will perform a second study to analyse the developments that will have taken place since their first joint study (the study period was 2004).

Based on the evaluation regarding implementation of the recommendations the European Social partners will consider further actions such as common objectives for the future and /or the adoption of ad hoc measures;

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[1] See art. 119 of the EEC Treaty of 1957, which affirms the concept of wage equality.
[2] See the Treaty of Maastricht of 1993, which makes provisions for equal opportunities between men and women in the labour market and working conditions at the workplace.
[3] See the Treaty of Amsterdam of 1999, which has considerably strengthened the legal basis for equality between men and women.
[4] Related Directives: Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation; Directive 2002/73/EC of the European Parliament and Council of 23 September 2002 amending Council Directive 76/207/EEC on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions; Council Directive 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004 implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services.
[5] In this context, see the EIRO study, *Gender mainstreaming in industrial relations*, 2005. Moreover, see 'Divers but Equal'. Good practices in public services' CEEP 2007.
[6] Regarding statistics on women employment in the railway sector and the particular situation of women in the sector see the Annex and the joint CER/ETF study from 2005.

Annex to the joint recommendations

1. Why joint recommendations?

Better representation and integration of women is a forward-looking concern. It is in the interest of railway companies as well as its employees.

1.1 Companies and trade unions benefit from women's experiences and skills

Women have different needs due to different experiences in social and professional life. These different views can contribute to the development of products in the company and promote innovation. Women are indispensable for a modern service company. Additionally in technical occupations, it is proven that gender diversity makes an important contribution to the productivity and climate at the workplace. The presence of women in the work place makes the working environment much more friendly within the company.

The transition from an industrial to a service society can only be made with the contribution of women. Today's women are highly qualified and successful in all occupations. Doing without them would be detrimental for any national economy. In Germany for example, 46% of all university graduates are women. In Italy, the situation is the same, especially among young women: 9.6% of 25-34 year-old women are graduated against 8.5% of young men; 44.1% of women obtained a secondary school diploma against 40.7% of men.

There have been many examples in history showing that women can be deployed in all areas of the railways. Especially during the two World Wars, women worked in back offices, workshops, stations (as drivers) and operations.

"There is no occupation exclusively for a woman, just because she is a woman, as there is none for a man, just because he is a man: talents are instead equally distributed between the genders..." Platon (ca. 428 - 348 B.C.) in *Politeia*.

1.2 Demographic development

As a result of the demographic development in Europe, it is already foreseeable that railway companies will be competing with other sectors and companies for qualified labour. It is in the companies' interest to make use of the potential residing in an increasingly better qualified female workforce. Companies with a convincing equal opportunity policy and corporate strategy will be able to win young qualified women at the labour market.

An ageing society is a problem for many European states. Only with qualified young and junior employees, Europe will maintain innovative strength and thus economic power ("The demographic future of Europe - from challenge to opportunity "– Communication of the European Commission, Brussels, 12 October 2006).

- The average number of children per woman is 1.5 and thus significantly below the reproduction level of 2.1, which is required to sustain the population figures;

- The rate of older people increases as a result of higher life expectancy. As a consequence, there is a growing share of older people, who have to be financially supported by a shrinking population of working age.
- Approximately 95% of global demographic growth will take place in the developing countries. Consequently, the EU population's share of the world's total population will decline.
- There are forecasts that the total number of employees on the EU level will decline by 30 million between 2010 and 2050.

1.3 The new paternal role

The life pattern of young people is changing. More and more young men are interested in taking over more responsibility in family. Especially in the mobile professions we can already notice recruitment problems due to a type of shift work that is difficult to make compatible with family life. More attention to work-life-balance issues for men and women is essential for railway companies to ensure their future employment needs. It also increases motivation of men and so promotes productivity. Studies give proof that a better work-life balance including men have positive health effect in the long run. This is part of an integrated company equal opportunity policy.

2. The most significant results of the joint study

The final report of the European joint project (April 2005) still shows significant differences in the various countries with respect to the employment share of women and their areas of deployment. In particular:

- in Western European countries, the average share of women among employees in the railway sector is less than 10% (exception: DB AG: 20.8%), while in Eastern European countries this share reaches an average of 30%;
  generally speaking, in railway companies and trade-unions, women are primarily represented in the service segment and they are underrepresented in technical occupations and at executive levels;
  the average remuneration of women in the railway sector is 10 to 30 % lower than the remuneration of their male colleagues. In posts with supervisory or executive responsibilities, this gap is lower, however.
  nevertheless the "career" employment contract continues to dominate the railway sector, flexible employment contracts are primarily found among female employees (9.8 % of all employment contracts with female employees are contracts for "career" full-time employment).

Moreover, the results of the survey of the CER-ETF partnership project highlight the following critical points which especially involve women workers of the railway sector:

- an evident under-representation of women workers at all levels of the hierarchy, especially in the higher positions and in all the occupations, particularly the technical ones;
  at the same time, women have been "concentrated" in some specific posts considered to be "more suited to the characteristics of the female gender", and marginal with respect to the corporate core business;
  clear difficulties in the access by women to some technology intensive and decision making oriented occupations;

a more difficult and slower career progress for female personnel working in various sectors with respect to their male colleagues;
the clear difficulty in keeping a work-family balance, especially for women, and especially as far as working hours are concerned;
the uneven distribution of 'equal opportunities' organisations and networks established between the Social Partners in the various countries;
scarce or ineffective information on equal opportunities issues, both among personnel and corporate management;
a different use by men and women of the legal instruments for protecting the fam-

a type of training that is basically "neutral", without any gender orientation.

3. Best practices

3.1. Breaking stereotypes

Actions aiming at breaking stereotypes are very important in the railway sector, a "traditionally-masculine working sector", with "masculine professional figures".
In this sense, the Isfort research of 2005 showed that there are still cultural stereotypes and systems of rules (e.g., physical requirements and educational qualifications) that discourage or even prevent access by women to some highly technical and engineering-oriented occupations.
The starting point of this proposal is the widespread awareness of a low level of self-esteem among young women, and, for some occupations, the absence of a "female reference model", and consequently the need to intervene, in general, in family education.
So, the goal of this kind of action is to encourage women to choose and gain familiarity with technical occupations through cooperation with schools and open-house days[1].

3.2. Improving female presence

We are convinced that a larger female component in the railway enterprise could lead to the improvement not only of the working conditions, but also of corporate efficiency and the quality of products and services.
Therefore, one objective of some best practices is to increase the percentage of women in the enterprise, especially in some sectors, by developing non-discriminatory criteria for access to the railway professions, mainly occupied by men, and also by internal training to allow or favour internal corporate transfers.
The search for more balance in the construction occupations can contribute to making this sector more dynamic, taking into account the interest and benefits on working conditions, on the evolution of trade and on the overall image of the sector as a result of the presence of women.
In this sense, the 2005 Isfort report made a positive assessment of some hiring policies based on quotas and concrete objectives, with specific reference not only to

[1] In this context, see the "Girl's Day", supported by the DB: a railways "open house", where young schoolgirls are invited to experience and observe closely the life of railway workers undertaking the various technical occupations. The aim of this annual initiative is to foster the dissemination of an equality-oriented culture in the public opinion and the opening of technical occupations to women. Very promising results are observed above all in the creation of relationships between the world of production and the world of education; these are highly positive relationships, and are particularly important with regard to the cultural change needed to achieve equal opportunities.

the need to establish initial hiring criteria, but also to take into consideration the general public so as to maintain a continuous direct contact with jobseekers themselves[2].
An equitable female presence is required not only quantity-wise, but also quality-wise, in order to guarantee a balanced representation of the needs at all decision-making levels in local, national and European contexts.
To start with, the so-called "glass ceiling" phenomenon should be fought by eliminating the salary gap between genders that is linked to the limited presence of women at higher-management levels and the difficulties in achieving work-family balance.

3.3. Achieving work-family balance

This is an important issue at European level. Many actions can be taken to promote work-family balance at national level, the main being: the promotion of part-time contracts, teleworking[3] and the change in shift organisation.
In addition, it could be important to extend and improve the use of other contractual instruments such as parental leave with the provision of relevant information to women and men. A positive action is supporting the re-entry from maternity/paternity with tutorial assistance.
Another instrument is the creation of social services in the enterprise promoting social-assistance tools, such as company crèches, bonuses for babysitting services, assistance and support to elderly parents, etc.[4]

3.4. Improving working conditions

The first obstacle to overcome in the current models of work organisation is a cultural one.
In this context, training and upgrading of workers is very important to provide them with equal conditions and career opportunities as well as to improve the culture of equal opportunities, especially for women and young people.
With regard to career progress, a pilot project could be a "highly potential programme" aiming to increase the number of women managers[5].
Moreover, the issue of the improvement of working conditions includes not only the internal relationships among the personnel, but also health and hygiene conditions that are important for both men and women. This issue concerns some occupations, especially the technical ones, and the adaptation of the work environment, including the items of comfort available on the job, developed by the railway enterprise through appropriate programmes (e.g., renovation of lodgings for on-board staff, sanitary facilities, modernisation of work uniforms, etc.).
Another issue regards the security on the job, especially for on-board staff, shift workers and swing-shift workers. At the moment, many companies' guidelines are directed towards the fulfilment by women not only of technical and professional tasks,

[2] An example of action in this direction was the SNCF plan aiming to increase the presence of women in the various SNCF Railway Enterprise occupations and, where possible, to search for a better balance between male and female workers.
[3] A teleworking experience mentioned by the 2005 Isfort report regarded DB.
[4] Cases of social assistance instruments reported by Isfort are, for example, the company kindergarten created by FS or the assistance for elderly people created by MAV and DB.
[5] The 2005 Isfort report of cited in this context the SNCF "highly potential programme" making provisions for approximately 30% of women workers.

but also of commercial and customer-related jobs such as those linked to on-board security services and assistance services for train crews. In this sense, it is very important to intervene in favour of female and male workers to make them willing to work shifts and provide more security for customers.

3.5 Improving quality and certification

"E-quality" is part of the quality management system and of the whole business process. Therefore, "total e-quality" concerns the organizational structures, the procedures and the management of the resources in the enterprises and in the unions; moreover, "e-quality" policies are circular and multiactoral[6].
All personnel/members, and the whole management, are responsible for "e-quality" management, because every activity and technical procedure guarantees total "e-quality".

"E-quality" policies are characterized by the following steps:
- Context analysis: promoting statistic and sociological analysis in order to find out problems, needs and inequality in the organizational structure, procedures and resource management;
- Fixing objectives: determining guidelines, methods and instruments of action;
- Implementing several targeted actions;
- Evaluation: promoting statistic and sociological studies in order to supervise change.

The following advantages can be expected from the promotion of total "e-quality": more satisfaction of the railway personnel/members (both men and women); better relationships in the enterprise/union (e.g., between men and women, personnel and management, etc.); corporate/union image enhancement; more prestige and credibility; more guarantees of quality for the customers/members of the unions.
Another positive action concerns the certification process: specific registers can be created in order to certify total "e-quality" systems. In addition, awards can be established for the best performing companies and unions. Through this kind of instruments, employers' organizations and unions may express their commitment towards gender mainstreaming and equal opportunities policies[7].

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[6] In this context, see the V.I.S.P.O (Valutazione Impatto Stategico Pari Opportunità – Evaluation of the Strategic Impact of Equal Opportunities) model path, an Italian proposal aiming to incorporate equal opportunities within the global policy and to influence the use of national and European funds.

[7] An example in this context comes from Austria, where ÖBB Planung & Engineering (technical division of the Austrian Railways) was awarded the "Equality Inside" certification in December 2004. "Equality Inside" is a special award in Total E-Quality/Gender Mainstreaming based on key data in business processes. "Equality Inside" guarantees permanent complying with equality and Gender Mainstreaming topics in monitoring and controlling systems.