

Women in Rail Award 2025: A Growing Legacy of Inclusion and Diversity

Kraków, Poland, 1 October 2025

The 2025 edition of the Women in Rail Award was held today in Kraków, Poland, as part of the European Rail Safety Days. Organised by the European Commission, the European Union Agency for Railways (ERA), Europe's Rail Joint Undertaking (EU-Rail), CER, UNIFE, EIM, and the Federation of European Train Drivers' Union ALE, the ceremony honoured outstanding individuals and organisations driving progress in gender equality, technical innovation, and educational empowerment across the railway sector.

The award represents a cornerstone initiative that celebrates excellence, empowers future leaders, and drives systemic change across the industry, encouraging more women to join the rail sector. The 2025 edition featured four categories, each reflecting a strategic priority for a more inclusive and sustainable rail industry. This year, the scope has been expanded to include a new category: the Next Generation Rail Award, reflecting a growing commitment to nurturing talent from early education through to professional careers, ensuring that girls and young women are empowered to thrive in this sector.

After evaluating all the applications from across the European Union and associated countries, the jury awarded these exceptional professionals for their initiatives and involvement in promoting women in rail:

- **Federica Santini**, from Trenitalia, in the *Leadership and Mentoring* category, for her exemplary role in creating tangible opportunities for women in rail.
- **Jeanne-Marie Dalbavie**, from IKOS Lab consulting, in the *Research and Innovation* category, for her significant contribution advancing railway engineering and innovation
- **Diana Binnenpoorte**, from ProRail, in the *Women Empowerment* category, for their commitment to fostering a workplace where women can thrive and advance.
- **Kerstin Wagner and Franciska Manck**, from DB, **Ciaran Masterson**, from Irish Rail, and **Angeles Tauler Alcaraz**, from Fundación de los Ferrocarriles Españoles, in the *Next Generation in Rail* category, for their educational initiatives that inspire girls and young women (ages 6–25) to explore careers in rail.

The winners presented their projects during the [European Rail Safety Days](#), gaining visibility and support for further development within the sector.

Commissioner for Sustainable Transport and Tourism, Apostolos Tzitzikostas, stated: *"Promoting greater participation of women in the rail sector benefits the entire industry and its passengers. This award reminds us that railways must be open and fair to everyone, in how we design trains, build them, and run them. When more women join and take part, rail becomes stronger, more modern, and better at serving society."*

Oana Gherghinescu, ERA's Executive Director, emphasised the importance of continuity and collaboration: *"The Women in Rail Award is more than a recognition of outstanding professionals and emerging talents that dedicate their knowledge and passion to the rail sector. It is a movement. A movement towards a better future for railways, marked by equality, inclusion, and opportunity. By celebrating role models and fostering inclusive practices, we are reflecting the diversity of Europe itself. This initiative, if sustained collectively and continuously by institutions, industry, and the education system, can help build a railway sector where women bring their vision and drive to the European project."*

The [2025 Women in Rail \(WiR\) Report](#) shows progress has been made: women now represent 23% of all railway employees, up from 21% in 2018. This comprehensive study assesses the implementation of the Women in Rail Agreement between European rail companies represented within CER and trade unions. Encouragingly, 80% of



surveyed companies have adopted gender equality policy documents. Gains are also visible in key roles like train drivers, traffic management, on-board staff, and across management levels. While these trends are positive, there is still a lot to be done. The European Commission, ERA, EU-Rail, CER, UNIFE, ALE and EIM remain committed to advancing gender equality, driving change to build a more inclusive and balanced workforce across the rail sector.

As the industry looks ahead, the Women in Rail Award will continue to serve as a beacon of progress, innovation, and shared responsibility. For more information on the winners and the Women in Rail Award, please visit the dedicated website: <https://www.era.europa.eu/content/women-rail-award-2025>

Background information:

The objective of the [Women in Transport - EU Platform for change](#), launched in November 2017 by the European Commission, is to strengthen women's employment and equal opportunities for women and men in the transport sector thanks to the actions brought about by the Platform members. It also serves as a forum where stakeholders committed to improving female employment in transport discuss and exchange good practices. The platform also regularly cooperates with the transport industry to launch initiatives to increase the attractiveness of the sector. In 2022, it cooperated with the rail industry in the framework of the European Year of Rail to launch the first [Women in Rail award](#).

Organising entities

The **European Union Agency for Railways** was established in Valenciennes in 2004 and has more than 200 employees representing more than 22 European Member States. ERA has been providing EU Member States and the European Commission with technical assistance in the development and implementation of the Single European Railway Area. This comprises enhancing technical interoperability and harmonising rules, promoting simplified access for customers, developing a common approach to safety and safety culture, advising on telematics applications and ERTMS (European Rail Traffic Management System), monitoring National Safety Authorities and Notified Bodies and facilitating the exchange of information between the railway actors in Europe. Since 16th June 2019 the EU Agency for Railways is mandated to issue single safety certificates and vehicle (type) authorisations valid in multiple European countries and to ensure an interoperable European Rail Traffic Management System.

The **Europe's Rail Joint Undertaking (EU-RAIL)** is the European partnership for rail research and innovation under the Horizon Europe programme (2020-2027) and the successor to the Shift2Rail Joint Undertaking. The partnership aims to accelerate research and development in innovative technologies and operational solutions. It supports EU policies and objectives for the rail sector, its competitiveness, and the European rail supply industry. EU-Rail accelerates the use of integrated, interoperable and standardised technological innovations necessary to support the Single European Railway Area.

The **Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER)** brings together 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 78% of the rail network length, 81% of the rail freight business and about 94% of rail passenger operations in EU, EFTA and EU accession countries. CER and its members made history in 2021 by signing the Women in Rail Agreement with the European Transport Workers' Federation, the first sectoral agreement of its kind promoting gender balance. For more information, visit www.cer.be or follow @CER_railways on [X](#) or [LinkedIn](#).

UNIFE represents the **European Rail Supply Industry** in Brussels since 1992. The association gathers more than 120 of Europe's leading large and medium-sized rail supply companies active in the design, manufacture, maintenance and refurbishment of rail transport systems, subsystems and related equipment. UNIFE also brings together 12 national rail industry associations of European countries. For more information, visit www.unife.org or follow UNIFE on [X](#) or [LinkedIn](#)



ALE, the Federation of European Train Drivers' Unions, is made up of 13 train drivers' unions from different member states, representing more than 45,000 workers, aiming for harmonisation in the EU railways, adequate training in our sector, high safety standards and the promotion of social dialogue with the different social partners in the European railway sector. For more information, please visit <http://www.ale-org.eu> or follow @Aledrivers on [X](#) or [LinkedIn](#).

EIM, the association of European Rail Infrastructure Managers, was established in 2002 to promote the interests of the infrastructure managers in Europe. EIM counts 18 members in 12 countries, representing more than half of the rail network in Europe. EIM's primary goal is promoting growth of rail traffic and the development of an open sustainable, efficient, customer-oriented rail network in Europe. To find out more about EIM, visit www.eimrail.org.