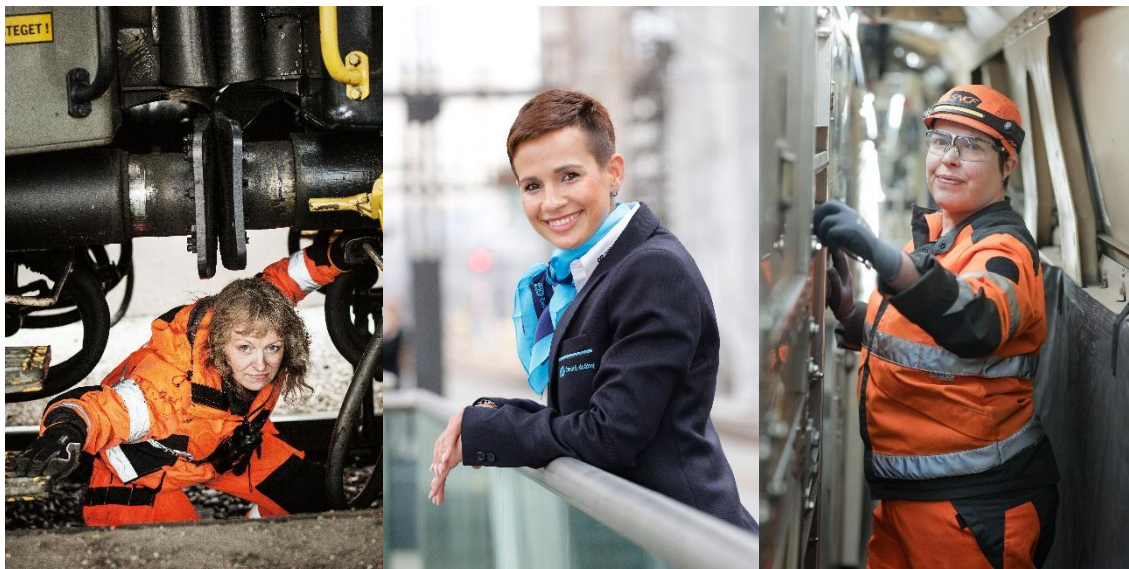




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# NEW WOMEN IN RAIL (WIR)-REPORT 2025

*At a Glance*

Implementation of the European Social Partner Agreement  
on Women in Rail (WiR Agreement)



## IMPRINT

This executive summary was prepared for the European Social Partners in the rail sector, the Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) and the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF; hereinafter jointly referred to as the European Social Partners) within the framework of the project "Implementation of the European Social Partner Agreement on Women in Rail (WiR Agreement)" by L&R Social Research.

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4 September 2025

# NEW WOMEN IN RAIL REPORT 2025: FACT & FIGURES AT A GLANCE

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With approximately 1.5 million employees, the European railway sector is a major employer that plays a pivotal role not only in the European economy but also in reducing carbon emissions and promoting eco-friendly mobility for people and goods. Despite its crucial role, the railway sector faces major challenges, including a strong gender imbalance within its workforce, ageing staff, and a labour shortage. The under-representation of women in the railway workforce is increasingly being challenged by both structural trends as well as explicit policies of the railway companies themselves. National and EU-wide policies are also taking significant steps to promote gender equality on a broad scale, in addition to specifically focusing on the transportation sector.






Within the framework of the European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Rail, the Community of European Railway and Infrastructure companies (CER) and the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) have been playing a particularly crucial role in supporting women's employment in the European railway sector and putting gender equality on the agenda. In November 2021, the European Social Partner Agreement on 'Women in Rail' ('WiR Agreement') to promote gender equality in the railway sector was signed.

## WIR AGREEMENT AND THE WIR NEGOTIATION TEAM



The WiR negotiation team from ETF's side includes Giorgio Tuti, Jedde Hollewijn, Jolanta Skalska, Katarina Mindum, Maria Cristina Marzola, Maria Rathgeb, Marie Poincel, Michelle Rodgers, Plamena Zhelyazkova and Sabine Trier; from CER's side, Matthias Rohrmann, Yves Baden, Alberto Mazzola, Barbara Grau, Claudia Kürzl, Jitka Ceskova, Roberta Tomassini, Susanne Elfström and Wladyslaw Szczepkowski.

The WiR Agreement defines principles across eight policy areas and supports the implementation of tangible measures to attract more women to the railway sector and ensure equal opportunities for all employees. The eight policy areas to address are:

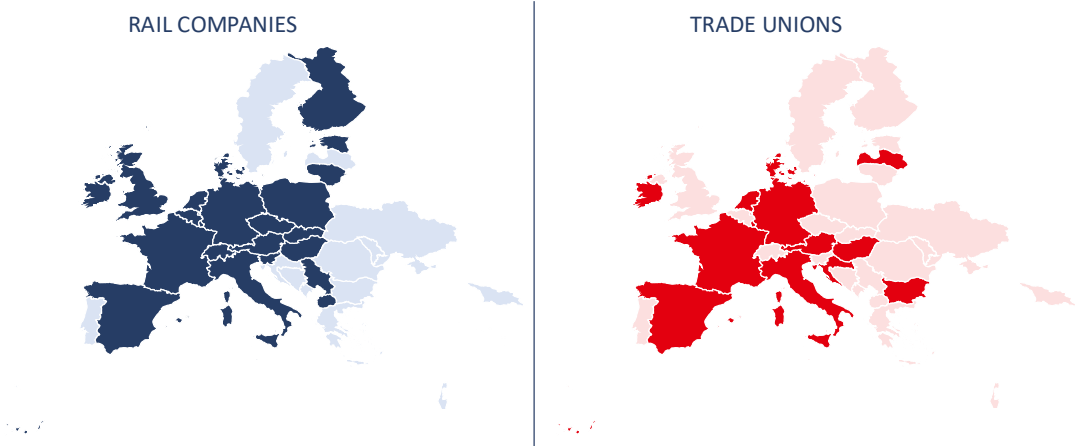
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|---|---|---|---|
|  | Overall gender equality policy          |  | Career development                      |
|  | Gender balanced representation          |  | Equal pay and gender pay gap            |
|  | Recruitment                             |  | Occupational health and safety          |
|  | Reconciliation of work and private life |  | Preventing sexual harassment and sexism |

The Agreement also included a commitment to conducting an overall assessment of its implementation and impact. This assessment began in 2024 and was completed in August 2025. The 2025 New Women in Rail (WiR) Report is the first to present the current state of gender equality within European railway companies following the signing of the WiR Agreement. The facts, figures, and assessment of the implementation of the various measures are intended to help the railway companies and trade unions recognise their successes and identify additional challenges in order to further promote gender equality and women’s employment in their respective companies.

**WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF 29 EUROPEAN RAIL COMPANIES AND 21 TRADE UNIONS**

Within the framework of the 2025 WiR Report, a mixture of various methodological approaches was employed, focusing on two online surveys conducted between January and April 2025, one of rail companies and one of trade unions. One of the key tasks for the scientific experts was to develop meaningful gender indicators; based on the principles and measures defined in the WiR Agreement, indicators were derived for each policy area in order to monitor progress.

A total of 29 European rail companies participated in the survey, representing a total of 696,113 employees in the survey data—nearly half of the rail sector’s 1.5 million employees. As an important voice for the implementation of gender equality measures, both as partners and as representatives of the impacted workers, a total of 21 trade unions took part in the relevant survey.



Overall, more than 90% of the surveyed rail companies have adopted the WiR Agreement within their organisation, either as members of CER or as non-EU partner companies that voluntarily apply the agreement. Another two companies chose to participate in the survey on a voluntary basis.

All participating companies and their key characteristics are listed below.<sup>1</sup>

| COUNTRY         | COMPANY NAME  | NUMBER EMPLOYEES | BUSINESS FIELDS<br>(Data referring to)                                     |
|-----------------|---|------------------|--|
| Austria         | ÖBB-Holding   | 40,452           | Freight Transport, Passenger Transport, Infrastructure Management, Holding |
| Belgium         | Eurostar  | 2,691            | Passenger Transport  |
| Belgium         | Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer Belges/Nationale Maatschappij der Belgische Spoorwegen (SNCB/NMBS BELGIUM) | 17,512           | Passenger Transport  |
| Czechia         | České Dráhy (CD)  | 13,388           | Passenger Transport  |
| Denmark         | Danske Statsbaner (DSB)   | 6,500            | Passenger Transport  |
| Estonia         | Eesti Raudtee (EVR)   | 703              | Infrastructure Management  |
| Finland         | VR-Yhtymä Oy (VR Group)   | 8,416            | Freight Transport, Passenger Transport                                     |
| France          | SNCF-Holding  | 153,456          | Freight Transport, Passenger Transport, Infrastructure Management, Holding |
| Germany         | Deutsche Bahn (DB)  | 231,080          | Freight Transport, Passenger Transport, Infrastructure Management, Holding |
| Germany         | e.g.o.o. Eisenbahngesellschaft  | 55               | Freight Transport  |
| Germany         | eurobahn GmbH Co. KG  | 866              | Passenger Transport  |
| Hungary         | Magyar Államvasutak (MÁV)   | 16,734           | Infrastructure Management  |
| Ireland         | Iarnród Éireann (IÉ)  | 4,689            | Passenger Transport, Infrastructure Management                             |
| Italy           | Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane (FS Italiane)   | 68,444           | Freight Transport, Passenger Transport, Infrastructure Management, Holding |
| Italy           | FNM Group   | 210              | Holding  |
| Lithuania       | Lietuvos Geležinkeliai (LTG)  | 5,697            | Freight Transport, Passenger Transport, Infrastructure Management, Holding |
| Luxembourg      | CFL Group   | 5,125            | Freight Transport, Passenger Transport, Infrastructure Management, Holding |
| Netherlands     | Nederlandse Spoorwegen (NS)   | 20,559           | Passenger Transport  |
| North Macedonia | ŽRSM Infrastructure   | 795              | Infrastructure Management  |
| Poland          | Polskie Koleje Państwowe (PKP)  | 12,331           | Holding  |
| Serbia          | ŽS Infrastructure   | 5,786            | Infrastructure Management  |
| Slovakia        | Železnice Slovenskej Republiky (ŽSR)  | 12,707           | Infrastructure Management  |
| Slovakia        | Železničná Spoločnosť Cargo Slovakia (ZSSK Cargo)   | 3,771            | Freight Transport  |
| Slovakia        | Železničná Spoločnosť Slovensko (ŽSSK)  | 5,240            | Passenger Transport  |
| Slovenia        | Slovenske Železnice (SŽ)  | 7,102            | Freight Transport, Passenger Transport, Infrastructure Management, Holding |
| Spain           | Renfe Operadora (RENFE)   | 15,872           | Freight Transport, Passenger Transport                                     |
| Switzerland     | BLS   | 3,930            | Freight Transport, Passenger Transport, Infrastructure Management          |
| Switzerland     | Schweizerische Bundesbahnen / Chemins de Fer Fédéraux Suisses / Ferrovie Federali Svizzere (SBB CFF FFS)        | 32,002           | Freight Transport, Passenger Transport, Infrastructure Management, Holding |
| United Kingdom  | Rail Delivery Group (RDG)   | n.D.             | Freight Transport, Passenger Transport                                     |

<sup>1</sup> The companies are listed in alphabetical order of the country they are operating in.

All participating trade unions and their key characteristics are listed below.<sup>2</sup>

| COUNTRY     | TRADE UNION  | REPRESENTING EMPLOYEES OF COMPANY  |
|-------------|--|--|
| Austria     | Vida   | ÖBB-Holding  |
| Austria     | Vida   | Fachverband der Schienenbahnen (WKO)   |
| Bulgaria    | Federation of Transport Trade Unions in Bulgaria                                     | BDŽ Holding  |
| Croatia     | Railroad Engineer Trade Union  | Hrvatske Željeznice Infrastructure (HŽ Infrastructure)                             |
| Croatia     | Railroad Engineer Trade Union  | Hrvatske Željeznice Passenger (HŽ Passenger)                                       |
| Denmark     | Dansk Jernbaneforbund  | Danske Statsbaner (DSB)  |
| France      | CGT Cheminots  | SNCF-Holding   |
| France      | FGTE CFDT (Fédération Générale des Transports et de l'Environnement)                 | SNCF-Holding   |
| Germany     | EVG  | Deutsche Bahn (DB)   |
| Germany     | EVG  | Verband Deutscher Verkehrsunternehmen (VDV)  |
| Hungary     | Trade Union of Hungarian Railwaymen (Vasutasok Szakszervezete)                       | Magyar Államvasutak (MÁV)  |
| Hungary     | Trade Union of Hungarian Railwaymen (Vasutasok Szakszervezete)                       | Győr-Sopron-Ebenfurti Vasút/Raab-Oedenburg-Ebenfurter Eisenbahn (GySEV/Raaberbahn) |
| Ireland     | SIPTU (Services, Industrial, Professional and Technical Union)                       | Iarnród Éireann (IÉ)   |
| Italy       | FILT CGIL (Federazione Italiana Lavoratori Trasporti CGIL)                           | Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane (FS Italiane)  |
| Italy       | FILT CGIL (Federazione Italiana Lavoratori Trasporti CGIL)                           | FNM Group  |
| Latvia      | Latvian Rail and Transport Industry Trade Union (Latvijas Dzelzelnieku Arodbiedriba) | RailBaltica (RB Rail)  |
| Latvia      | Latvian Rail and Transport Industry Trade Union (Latvijas Dzelzelnieku Arodbiedriba) | Latvijas Dzelzceļš (LDZ)   |
| Luxembourg  | FCPT-SYPROLUX  | Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer Luxembourgeois (CFL)                          |
| Luxembourg  | FCPT-SYPROLUX  | CFL Cargo  |
| Netherlands | FNV  | Nederlandse Spoorwegen (NS)  |
| Spain       | FeSMC-UGT  | Euskotren  |

Additionally, representatives of the Ukrainian Trade Union (Trade Union of Railwaymen and Transport Construction Workers of Ukraine) gave us insights into their field of work.

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<sup>2</sup> The trade unions are listed in alphabetical order of the country they are operating in.

## RESULTS IN A NUTSHELL

The most significant figure is the percentage of women across all railway employees, which stands at 23%, while the percentage of women among new hires is 25%. Another significant finding is that 80% of the companies surveyed have adopted a policy document outlining their corporate values concerning gender equality. The findings of the 2025 WiR Report indicate that a number of developments have been successfully initiated or are currently in progress. A comparison with the most recent figures from 2018 (CER, ETF 2018)<sup>3</sup> shows an increase in the overall percentage of women, which was 21% in 2018. The same trend is evident when examining specific occupations (e.g., locomotive drivers, traffic management, or on-board personnel) or the percentage of women at various levels of management.

Nevertheless, there is still little movement towards a workforce structure that is balanced in terms of gender composition in certain areas, particularly in the core domain of professions related to the railway sector, which indicates that initiatives are still necessary and need to be strengthened. The analysis supports and highlights the importance of further joint work between the European Social Partners CER and ETF, as well as their members, and of driving forward the implementation of the WiR Agreement to foster gender equality and diversity through targeted measures.

## KEY FINDINGS OF THE NEW WOMEN IN RAIL REPORT ACROSS THE EIGHT POLICY AREAS

Regarding the implementation process, more than half of the surveyed companies consider the WiR Agreement to be fully or highly implemented, and an additional 26% consider its implementation to be partially complete. Conversely, only one-third of the surveyed trade unions consider the agreement to be fully or highly implemented by the companies that employ their members. As to joint efforts towards achieving gender equality and diversity in the rail sector, close cooperation between rail companies and trade unions is essential. However, only 35% of the surveyed companies and 29% of the surveyed trade unions rated the current level of this cooperation as 'very close' or 'rather close'.

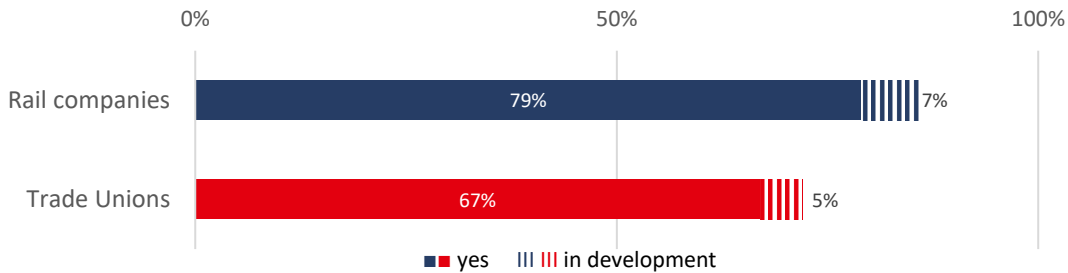
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<sup>3</sup> CER, ETF (2018): 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Report on the Development of women's employment in the European railway sector. Data of 2018. Available online: <https://www.etf-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Women-in-Rail-6th-Annual-Report.pdf> (last accessed: 07.07.2025).

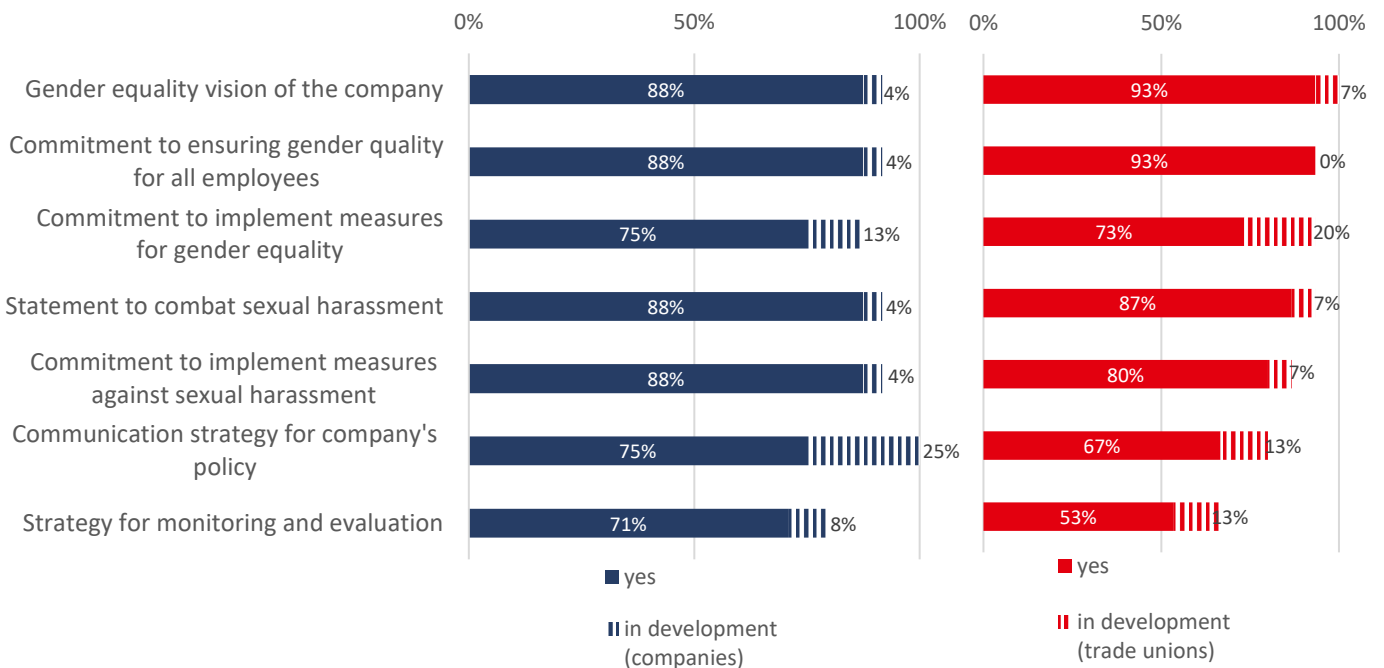


## POLICY AREA 1: OVERALL GENDER EQUALITY

79% of the surveyed rail companies confirmed that they have a policy document, such as a strategy or policy paper, which reflects their corporate values concerning gender equality, while an additional 7% are currently working on developing such a document.



With high scores of 88% each, the vast majority of surveyed companies confirmed that their policy document includes a gender equality vision and a statement to combat sexual harassment, as well as commitments to ensuring gender equality for all employees and implementing measures against sexual harassment. These findings are mostly in line with the responses of the surveyed trade unions: a striking majority of 93% confirmed that the companies' policy documents already incorporate a corporate vision on gender equality as well as a commitment to ensuring gender equality for the entire workforce.



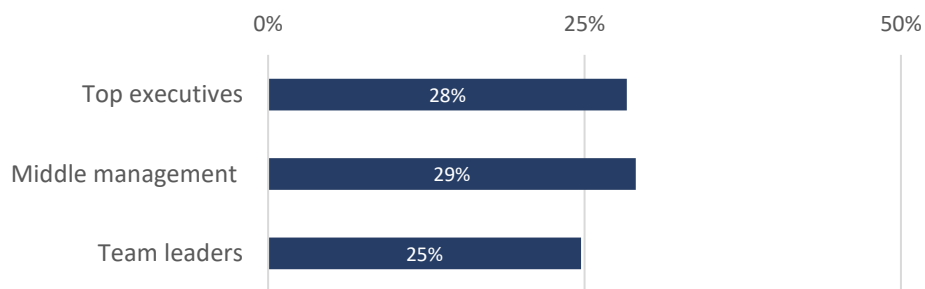


## POLICY AREA 2: GENDER BALANCED REPRESENTATION

Based on data from 28 railway companies employing around 693,000 people in 2023, the overall share of female employees in the railway sector is 23%, indicating that there is still a large majority of male employees (77% to 23%). Compared to the overall share of female employees of 21% measured in 2018, a slight increase can be observed five years later (CER, ETF 2018).



Compared to the overall picture, a more balanced gender representation can be observed at different management levels in rail companies: the overall share of female employees in middle management reached 29% in the surveyed rail companies, followed by 28% among top executives and 25% among team leaders. Women's representation in companies' boards is slightly higher, standing at a share of 34%. In 2018, the shares ranged from 25% among top executives to merely 18% among team leaders (CER, ETF 2018), suggesting a considerable improvement of women's representation in leadership positions.

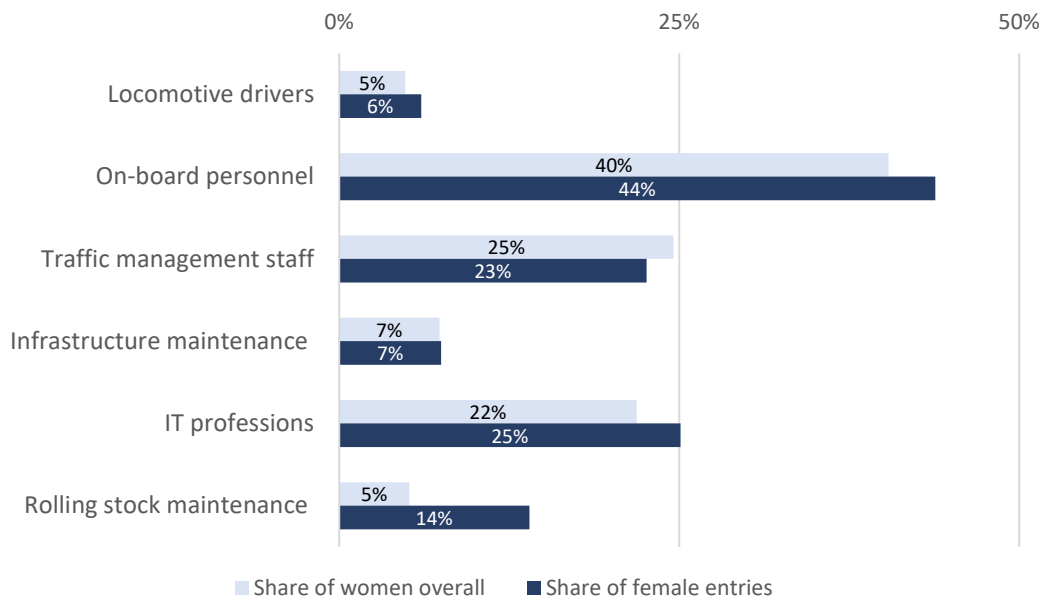


When comparing female representation in specific occupations, considerable differences emerged. Exceptionally low shares of women could be observed among locomotive drivers and rolling stock maintenance (5% each), as well as in infrastructure maintenance (7%). Higher shares, roughly corresponding to the sectoral average, were found among IT professionals (22%) and traffic management staff (25%). The highest share of women was registered among on-board personnel, standing at 40%. Once again, slight improvements can be observed compared to 2018 figures, when women's proportions measured 3% among locomotive drivers and 37% among on-board personnel (CER, ETF 2018).



### POLICY AREA 3: RECRUITMENT

Among new entries, the overall proportion of women is slightly higher than the sectoral average, with a share of 25%.



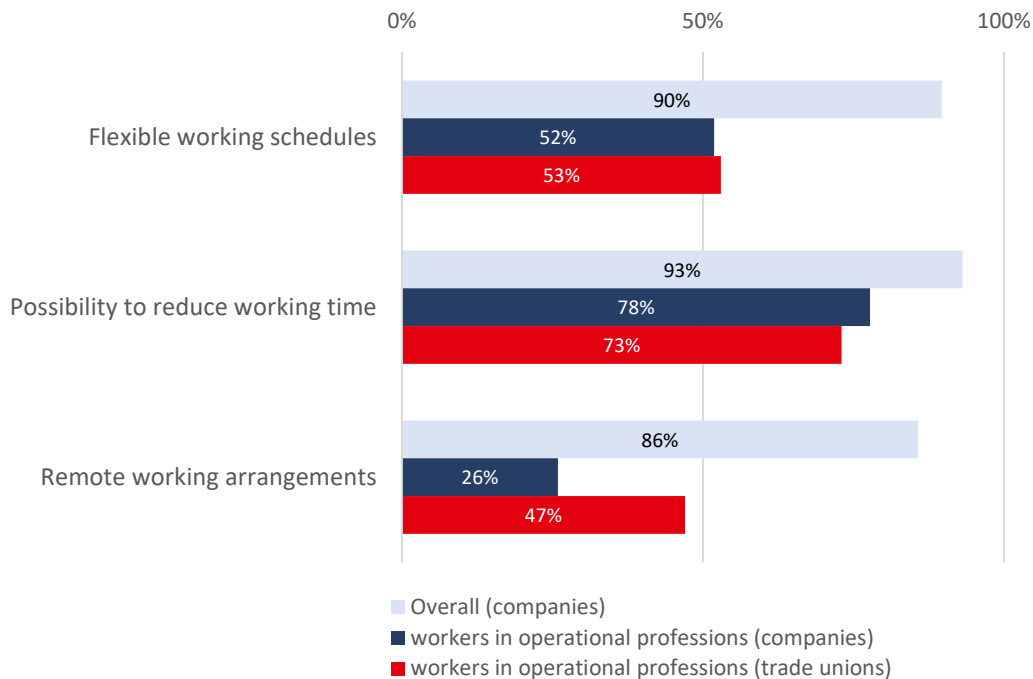
When broken down by occupational categories, slightly higher figures were once again registered among new hires compared to the sectoral averages. The lowest shares of women can still be found among locomotive drivers (6%) and infrastructure maintenance (7%). In contrast, there is a clear upward trend for female representation in rolling stock maintenance, with 14% of new hires being women. The percent of women among new hires was 25% in IT professions and 44% in on-board personnel.

To a large extent, the surveyed companies implement measures for reinforcing gender equality in terms of recruitment. Specifically, 61% of companies offer regular training for non-discriminating recruitment, and 75% have standards for conducting job interviews in a non-discriminating manner and review the description of job profiles to eliminate gender stereotypes. The assessment of the surveyed trade unions notably diverges from this picture: only 43% agree that regular training is being implemented in companies, and only 57% agree that job profiles are being reviewed regarding gender stereotypes. Approximately one quarter of the participating trade unions state that they do not have any information on the measures taken in this area.



## POLICY AREA 4: RECONCILIATION OF WORK AND PRIVATE LIFE

Female employees generally make more use of measures directed at improving their work-life-balance. For instance, in 2023, only 5% of all employed men worked part-time, compared to 19% of all employed women. For employees on parental leave, the share of female employees stands at 4%, which is twice as high as that of male employees (2%).

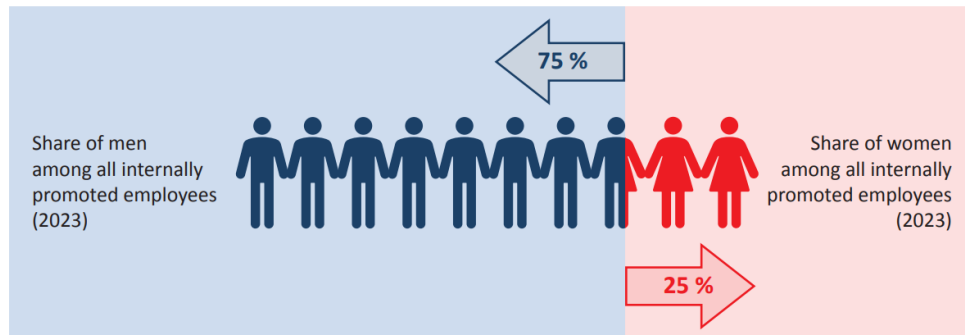


Most of the surveyed rail companies offer working arrangements aimed at supporting better reconciliation of work and care duties, such as the possibility to reduce working time (93%), flexible working schedules (90%) or remote working arrangements (86%). This claim is also largely confirmed by the surveyed trade unions. Nonetheless, particular challenges emerge in regard to workers in operational professions, where it is necessary to be present on the work site and to have fixed working hours. For this employee group, 26% of surveyed companies indicate they are able to provide remote working arrangements, while 52% said they could provide flexible working schedules. However, reduced working time is still a regular occurrence among operational professions as well, standing at 78%. Trade union representatives emphasise that not all measures taken succeed in improving work-life balance for all job categories. This is notably the case for the core railway sector, particularly in operational roles, where solutions like smart working are not widely available and part-time options are uncommon.



## POLICY AREA 5: CAREER DEVELOPMENT

In 2023, 75% of all internally promoted employees were male and 25% were female. Compared to the overall share of women in the rail companies, which amounts to 23%, this result could cautiously be interpreted as an indication that women are encouraged to take up leadership roles.



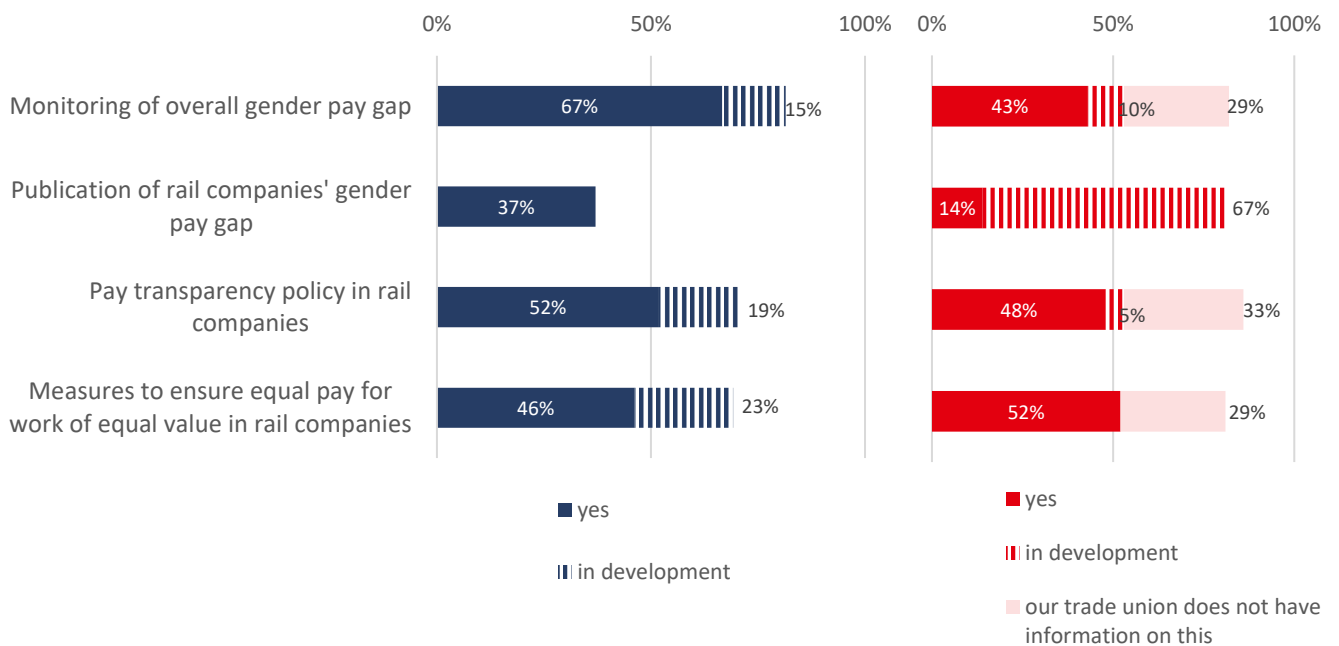
When asked for specific measures to ensure gender sensitivity in promotions, 56% of the surveyed companies stated that they have guidelines or policies in place for non-discriminating promotions, while half offer training in non-biased promotion interviews, and 41% have specific strategies to encourage women to apply for higher positions. The surveyed trade unions once again take a more sceptical stance, with around half of them being aware of existing guidelines for non-discriminating promotions and slightly fewer (43%) stating they are aware of strategies to encourage women to apply for higher positions.

Women's representation in both initial and continuous vocational training adds another dimension to career development. With women accounting for 23% of all employees in continuous training and 26% of those in initial vocational training, these figures correspond to and lie slightly higher than the sectoral average, respectively.



## POLICY AREA 6: EQUAL PAY AND GENDER PAY GAP

Essential for achieving equal pay, systems for monitoring remuneration policies in rail companies already exist in many of the surveyed rail companies. A total of 67% of companies indicate they are currently monitoring the overall gender pay gap, while another 15% are working on developing a monitoring system for this purpose. At the same time, only 43% of the surveyed trade unions are aware of rail companies monitoring the overall gender pay gap, with another 39% having no information on this matter.



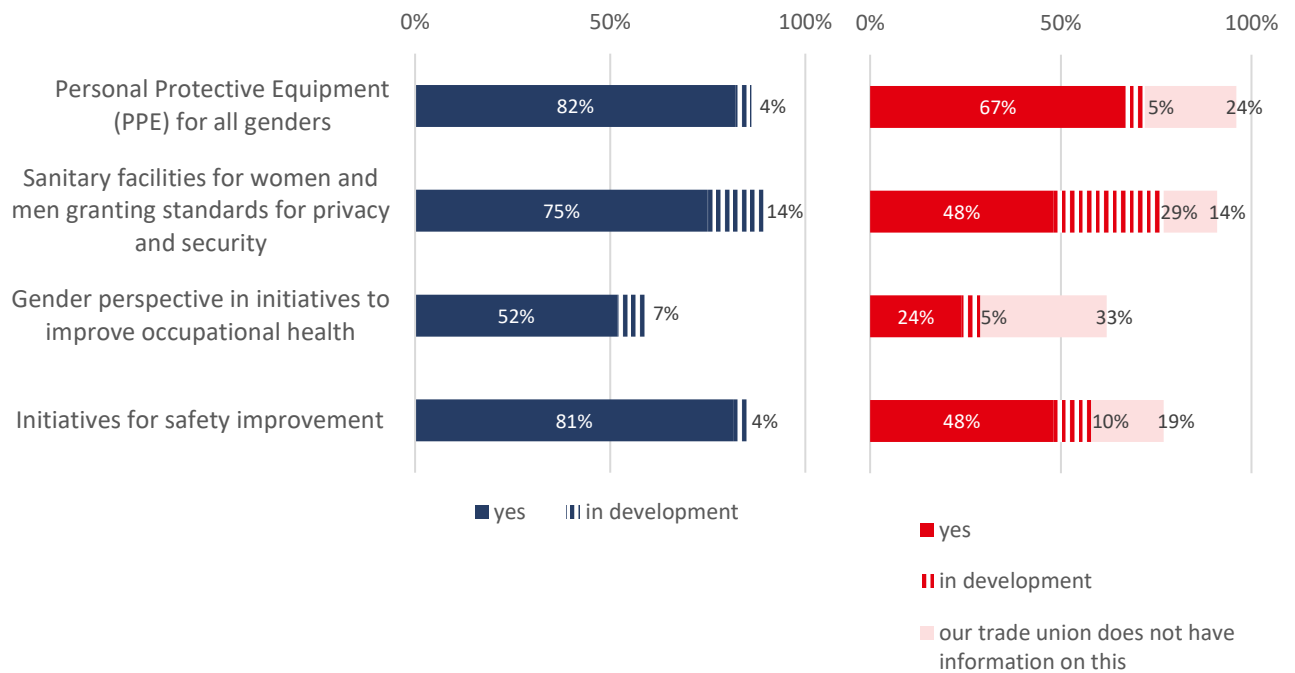
Further indications that transparency is lacking in regards to pay policies are the relatively low shares of surveyed rail companies that publish their gender pay gap (37%) and that have pay transparency policies in place (52%). Moreover, only 14% of the surveyed trade unions reported being aware of rail companies publishing gender pay gap data, while 48% were aware of companies' pay transparency policies.

At the same time, rail companies are striving to close existing gender pay gaps, with 46% of the surveyed companies already reinforcing measures to ensure equal pay for work of equal value, while another 23% are currently developing such measures. These findings are largely corroborated by the surveyed trade unions as well.



## POLICY AREA 7: OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK

Placing a particular emphasis on occupational health and safety, the surveyed rail companies have highly implemented measures to this end: 82% of companies reported providing personal protective equipment (PPE) that meets the needs of all genders, while just 75% have installed appropriate sanitary facilities. The overall commitment to workplace safety appears to be strong, with 81% of companies indicating that they have launched general safety initiatives.

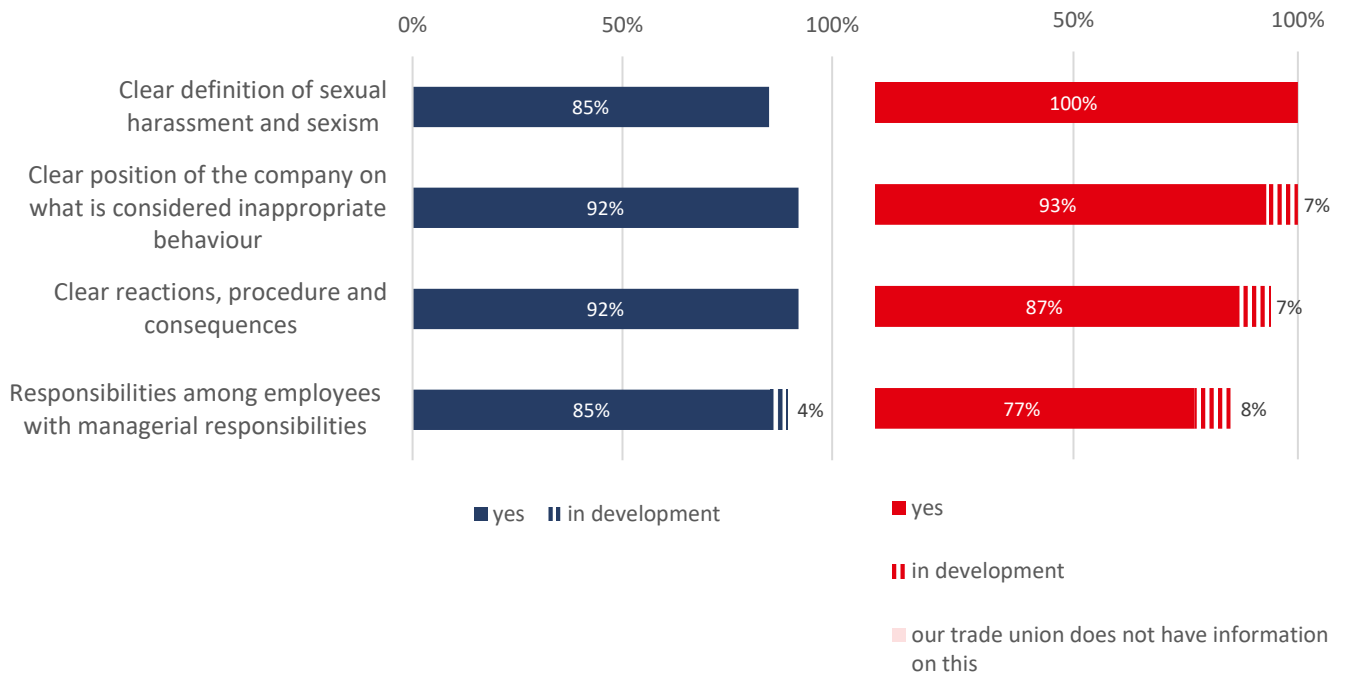


According to the surveyed trade unions, the most widely implemented measure regarding occupational health and safety in rail companies is the provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for all genders, with 67% confirming its availability. Sanitary facilities that meet the privacy and safety standards for both women and men are confirmed by only 48% of the participating trade unions, and the same share claims that rail companies are conducting safety improvement initiatives.



## POLICY AREA 8: PREVENTING SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND SEXISM

In addition to adopting policies against sexual harassment and sexism, the surveyed rail companies also design and implement associated measures to this end. As such, 89% of the companies agreed that granting privacy to victims when reporting an incident is of the utmost importance, and 82% indicate they have established a reporting office or person of trust for such incidents. Reporting systems for collecting data on sexual harassment and sexism as well as measures to raise awareness among all employees are in widespread use among rail companies, with shares of 68% and 75%, respectively. In comparison, fewer rail companies have implemented monitoring mechanisms for procedures or measures against sexual harassment and sexism (64%).



The results of the trade unions' survey could confirm the implementation of these measures only to a small degree, with high shares of trade unions indicating a lack of information about such actions. For instance, only half of the trade unions could confirm the existence of monitoring systems against sexual harassment and sexism, with a striking 45% being unaware of such measures. Similarly, 55% of trade unions were able to confirm that rail companies had reporting systems in place for collecting data on sexual harassment and sexism, and only 45% could confirm measures to raise awareness among all employees had been implemented.