PRESS RELEASE
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Women in Rail – Provisional EU Social Partner Agreement reached

On 30 June, the Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER), representing railway sector employers, and the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF), representing railway workers, reached a provisional agreement in the final round of negotiations at EU level for a binding agreement aimed at promoting employment of women in the sector.

After 7 rounds of intense negotiations in May and June, both parties have managed to come to an understanding. Despite the added challenge posed by the necessity to conduct negotiations in a virtual environment, a positive outcome has been reached thanks to the good preparatory work of the respective delegations.

This agreement aims to attract more women to the rail sector, give women more protection and guarantee equal treatment in the workplace thanks to measures agreed under the headlines of general gender equality policy, which cover areas such as, targets, how to attract more women to the sector, reconciliating work and private life, promotion and career development, equal pay, health and safety and work environment and prevention of sexual harassment and sexism.

The last binding Article 155 TFEU agreement in the context of the European Social Dialogue in the railway sector was 15 years ago, on working conditions of mobile railway workers engaged in cross border interoperable services. This major achievement is particularly significant as it has been accomplished during the European Year of Rail.

While the provisional agreement is a key milestone in the negotiatons, it is not the end of the journey. Both parties now need to finetune the wording of the agreement which then needs to be approved by the respective governing bodies. CER´s General Assembly is expected to vote on the provisional agreement on 20 September and ETF Railway Section in October. A celebratory signing ceremony will then take place later this year.

CER Chair Andreas Matthä (CEO, ÖBB Holding-AG), said: *"It is my goal as CER Chair and ÖBB CEO to achieve more diversity and a more gender-balanced railway sector. An important step has now been taken. The social partners have agreed to increase the proportion of women in the European railway sector. I find it particularly positive that this excellent result could be achieved precisely in the European Year of Rail. The commitment to diversity is also firmly anchored at ÖBB which helped us increase the proportion of women completing apprenticeship training to over 20 percent."*

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The President of the EU Sectoral Social Dialogue for Railways, **Matthias Rohrmann,** said: *"As social partners, CER and ETF have made history these days for the railway sector, for our colleagues, for more women in the railway!*
After almost 3 years and now 3 days of intensive negotiations and numerous virtual meetings, we have created something special with the WIR agreement.
Big THANKS to the members of the negotiating delegation on both sides!
In the European Year of the Railways 2021, this is a positive and important signal to all colleagues in our sector."

Chair of the CER HRD Group, Yves Baden, said: *"Reaching an agreement during the European Year of Rail is a big success, showing how committed we are to promoting more women in the sector. It was a long journey, with constructive exchanges and we believe it will lead to concrete results. I would like to thank all those involved in the process for their hard work and dedication."*

The Vice-President of the EU Sectoral Social Dialogue for Railways, **Giorgio Tuti,** said: *"This agreement is a milestone because the European social parters in the rail sector give a clear sign that they understood the challenges and want to change to make the sector fit for women to work in. Without women, the rail sector has no future. This is the most important contribution of the rail social partners to the European Year of Rail. And we have shown that we have the capacity to negotiate at European level and achieve real change".*

ETF Deputy General Secretary, **Sabine Trier,** said: *"This agreement has the potential to end male-dominated workplace culture in the rail sector. The European rail employers recognise that gender equality in their companies benefits everyone. Next steps: endorsement and swift implementation. Women railway workers have high expectations".*

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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 around 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, 76% of the rail freight business and about 92% 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.