Ensuring European transportation works for women

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The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality adopted the own-initiative report by Elbieta Katarzyna UKACIJEWSKA (EPP, PL) on ensuring European transportation works for women.

Different genders have different transport needs and requirements, often due to persisting gender stereotypes and inequalities, using public transport and cars in distinct manners. Women are more likely to have more complicated travel patterns, choosing public transport more often and

making several stops along the way, and are more likely to travel at off-peak hours, in particular because of care responsibilities. Men more often opt to use car transport and are more likely to have a direct daily journey route than women, with 31 % of women using public transport compared to 24 % of men research performed across the Member States has shown that gender-based violence in public spaces and on collective transport is a highly significant problem and that safety measures and victim support remain insufficient.

According to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), up to 55 % of women in the European Union have experienced sexual harassment in public transport. This can have a negative impact on transport choices, employment, education and social and professional opportunities for women in all their diversity.

The average percentage of women working in the transport sector across the EU stands at around 22 %, with these values varying considerably among transport subsectors (land, air, sea) and Member States. Given that women are faced with greater harassment and sexual violence in transport than men, this is likely to be one of the reasons behind women's limited representation in transport.

Members reaffirmed the EU's commitment to achieving gender equality in transport, while noting the progress achieved so far. They underlined that concrete measures are needed to improve the safety, availability, accessibility and affordability of transport services and employment opportunities and working conditions in the sector for women in all their diversity.

Understanding women's mobility and equity in transport

The report called for relevant legislation and a gender perspective in transport to fully integrate women's perspectives, as they currently still perform more care duties in society, so as to increase sustainability and efficiency, and to better respond to society's needs, including those of women with disabilities and from marginalised groups.

Inclusive mobility services and adequate infrastructure

Members called on the Member States and regional and local authorities to ensure that transport infrastructure, in particular when being upgraded, fully takes into account the continuity, accessibility and safety of sustainable pedestrian, bicycle infrastructure and other sustainable connections and seek synergies with these connections in order to promote active modes of transport.

The report underlined that better infrastructure design, such as bus stations within short walking distance, greater bus frequency during off-peak hours, increased availability of services for women living in rural

areas and stroller-friendly infrastructure can increase usability for women and encourage women to use public and more sustainable modes transport.

Members called for new aircraft to be equipped with lavatories with **sufficient space** to permit a passenger with a disability or an adult assisting a child to approach, enter and manoeuvre within the aircraft lavatory with ease and to be able to change the baby or assist a baby while using the facility, as this will better reinforce gender equality.

Ensuring women's safety and security in transport environments

Members called for increased emphasis on safety and security in public transport and urban mobility planning, to be achieved by such means as **adequate and sustainable street lighting and well-lit public transit stops** in order to avoid situations where women have to travel through dark, eerie spots when commuting. They also called for ride-hailing apps to include a **safety toolkit** that would centralise all key safety information and features for riders and drivers in one place on the app. The report highlighted furthermore the need to include panic buttons, trusted contacts, anonymised address history, as well as in-app bike lane and pedestrian alerts.

Members noted that it could be useful to allow bus drivers to stop to let passengers disembark between bus stops within an already determined route in order to allow women and girls to arrive closer to their destinations at night.

Women and employment in the transport sector

Women transport workers at all levels can face barriers, such as gender bias and stereotyping, intersectional discrimination and improper work-life balance, which disproportionately affect women with responsibilities, and lower pay than men for equal work or work of equal value, as well as a lack of facilities or poorly adapted facilities, which enable harassment and violence. The Commission is called on to step up efforts to include gender-related provisions in all relevant legislation, in line with the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy and the Gender Equality Strategy, in order to address gender-based discrimination and inequalities, and ensure a fair, safe and secure working environment for women in all transport modes, as well as the implementation of any necessary preventive and dissuasive measures (e.g. safe and secure parking areas).

Measures should be taken to:

- combat discrimination and ensure the implementation of policies and existing legislation to **address the gender pay gap** and improve working conditions for everybody in the transport sector;

- combat gender-based **occupational segregation** that is underpinned and reinforced by the myth that women are unable or physically unsuited to performing certain duties, tasks or roles.

Raising awareness and encouraging behavioural change

Noting that women are traditionally under-represented in technical education and areas such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics, which are key to the development of the mobility and transport sector, Member States are called on to:

- promote targeted advertising campaigns encouraging women to apply for work in the transport sector;

- promote gender-responsive corporate governance and human resources policies, such as equal wage policies, on-site childcare facilities, flexible work schedules and the option of part-time work.