

WOMEN IN TRANSPORT EVENT: SPEECH DELIVERED BY MS SPANOU

Esteemed Commissioner Bulc, dear colleagues, dear participants, I am happy to be with you today, to discuss ways to attract more women to the transport sector.

Gender equality is one of the fundamental values of our Union, but not just that: it is an absolute necessity for economic growth and prosperity.

For the first time, there is a European Commissioner for 'Gender Equality'. Commissioner Jourová has set out to improve gender equality in the EU through concrete actions. To do so, she has defined five priority areas that are relevant across the board, in different economic sectors and areas of our societies.

These priority areas are

- 1) increasing the labour market participation of women;
- 2) reducing the gender pay gap, the gender pension gap, and the earnings gap;
- 3) promoting equality between women and men in decision-making;
- 4) combatting gender-based violence – this includes sexual harassment in the work place, and;
- 5) promoting gender equality and women's rights across the world.

I am sure you recognise these stubborn gaps also in your own sector, as they are persistent in all Member States and in all

sectors and occupations.

However, since you have gathered to discuss challenges and solutions specifically relevant to the transport sector, I would like to tell you of some initiatives that are happening elsewhere:

For example: in the previous years the Commission took several initiatives to encourage more women in jobs in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

As a result, gender equality is promoted in research and innovation through the Horizon 2020 program, where all proposals must concretely detail how they will address gender challenges in their project.

For the third year in a row, the EU Prize for Women Innovators was awarded to give public recognition to outstanding women entrepreneurs, who brought their innovative ideas to the market, and to inspire other women to follow in their footsteps.

Another example is the campaign "Every Girl Digital" campaign which aims to provide women with digital skills, education and to increase their participation in ICT.

On a national level, a great initiative is the Girls Days and Boys Days organised in different Member States, to help boys and girls get familiar with fields of study and work not traditionally associated with their gender.

Gender segregation is a consequence of stereotypes, and expectations of what traditionally is seen as 'women's work' or 'men's work'. Today, I look forward to breaking down some of these ingrained structural barriers and discussing new ways of attracting women to the transport sector, and achieving optimal working conditions for women and men.