

Carmen Filipescu, Romania



“I have worked hard, read a lot, and have not indulged in complacency over dull yet comfortable routine. I have dared to change something for the better.”

“I have never asked any questions before having first done my own research, nor have I ever left any question I was asked without an answer!”

Carmen Filipescu’s professional background

- Since 2017 Director of International Affairs “REGIO CALATORI” (Railway Passengers Operator)
- 2013 - 2017, Director of International Affairs “REGIOTRANS” (Railway Passengers Operator)
- 2009 - 2013, International Affairs & International Financing Director, The National Railway Transport Company “C.F.R. Călători”
- Deputy Director General, The National Railway Transport Company “C.F.R. Călători”
- Since 2000 she has been Vice President of CIV (French: Convention Internationale pour le transport des Voyageurs) - Commission of Passenger Transport Law to the International Committee of Transport
- Since 2008 she has been President of SERG (South-East European Group of UIC) – Rail Passenger Activity.
- She is a representative at the General European Assembly:
 - at the Passenger Forum of the International Union of Railways (UIC);
 - a representative of the CER (The European Community of Railway Undertakings and Infrastructure Managers) at the level of “Assistants” and “General Directors”.
- Carmen Filipescu has extensive experience in rail passenger transport, mainly in commercial/ law.

Carmen Filipescu’s story

Born in the family of an ambassador, a family that was always there to support her, Carmen was brought up and educated to cherish and strictly obey moral values and norms. She actually fondly remembers her parents’ advice and guidance: *“Be always up to the mark, be modest, do not boast about your achievements, let the others remark you, and be perfect both professionally and in appearance wherever you may go”*. She considers that the education she received, particularly in her early years, has definitely left its mark on her personality, influencing her destiny and shaping her later career path.

Speaking about the moment of making her career choice, Carmen Filipescu remembers first facing a dilemma over whether to choose engineering or architecture. She admits she owes her career choice mainly to her parents, but ever since, she has been focusing all her energy and effort on her professional development and on building a successful career. With humour and self-irony, Carmen Filipescu tells us about her early years as an engineer in the transport industry, about her vision of the professional world, but also about her commitment and values underlying her entire career.

She considers that “her journey in the railway domain” started when she took the entrance exam at the Faculty of Transport of the Politehnica Institute in Bucharest, and passed it top of the list of admitted candidates (most of whom were young men). After graduating, there followed a one-year internship, at the end of which she passed her exam as a station master. For a while she was employed as a station engineer at the most important supply rail station of the capital, Bucharest. There were years of hard work which came with a big responsibility. She was the only station engineer and the only woman there, in charge of over 150 subordinate men, and of a very complex activity to manage.

She was 27 when she started her career in commercial/law related to passenger rail transport, when, as a result of her winning a contest, she was appointed as an Expert in Tariffs and International Regulations in passenger traffic at the Ministry of Transports. Mrs Carmen Filipescu says this is the first milestone in her subsequent career: *“From then on, I really loved what I did!”*. In parallel, she was also a teacher at a railway profile school, teaching courses on international rail traffic (tariffs, conventions, financial relations), which somehow gave her a foretaste of her later career in commercial/law of rail transport.

Her work and efforts were sometimes hampered by difficulties, firstly related to the rules governing pre-’90s society, when the ‘communist dogmas’ created some problems to her, limiting her access to managing positions, and her right to travel to Western Europe in order to attend international professional meetings organised by the International Union of Railways (UIC), or the International Transport Committee (CIT), although her position, activities and results back then recommended her.

“You can overcome any difficulties in your career as long as you are very knowledgeable about, and serious in everything you do.”

In her early career years, she was sometimes faced with misogynist remarks, or male self-pride, but she considers that only motivated her all the more to perform to her best:

“Of course I was the target of misogynist remarks at the beginning of my career. I was not impressed; I got over them with a smile or a sharp remark, according to the situation. Generally, through my attitude, way of speaking and appearance, I avoided generating such situations. I knew how to be patient, and to prove myself as a serious and well versed professional in my line.”

Nevertheless, she points out that, in spite of the limitations of those times, she was lucky to meet other well-prepared professionals, who supported and guided her. Her colleagues and collaborators acknowledge her as an action-oriented role model who gets good results. She just might be too demanding, too critical, too tough. Mrs Carmen Filipescu says that year 1990 was a turning point in her career. From then on, she was able to stand out in the commercial / law domain without any obstacles. Starting from 1990 she represented the Romanian Railways within The International Union of Railways (UIC), in the domain of tariff, commercial and financial conventions and contracts, as well as of interoperability technical standards.

In 2000, the International Rail Transport Committee (CIT), based in Berne, began to transpose the new inter-governmental convention COTIF (ratified by the Member States in 1999). Carmen Filipescu was one of the 6 people in Europe chosen by CIT Secretariat to be a member of the restricted working group created to that effect. She worked with CIT for 17 years, holding top positions, such as: member of CA CIT, Vice President of CIV Commission of Passenger Transport Law to the International Committee of Transport, President of CIV Commission. In 2004 she also started the collaboration with the Railways Community (CER) based in Brussels. It was a laborious period, in which she gained deeper insight into European legislation in the field of railways, in order to transpose the Convention into the Romanian legislation, in the pre- and post- EU accession period. For 7 years she was the President of the South – Eastern European Group (SERG) in the

field of passenger rail traffic in the region, a group made up of 9 countries. Related to this period, Mrs Filipescu stated: *“I must admit I have benefited from the recognition of my potential also by the international professional organizations. Quite a long time ago, they offered me the opportunity to closely collaborate with them, which motivated and stimulated me”.*

At home, she held key roles in the organizational structure of the national rail system. In 1998, a year of major changes in the Romanian railway system organization, she simultaneously was the Head of two departments newly set up in the organizational structure of the “CFR Calatori” Company, namely: “Tariffs and Regulations in International Traffic” and “International Relations.” Subsequently, she held the position of Director, in charge of 5 departments. She considers it was then that she took on a big challenge, and perhaps her most difficult professional task: to negotiate and sign important loan contracts with international banks in order to purchase rolling stock. Carmen Filipescu’s professional career within the National Company of Passenger Rail Transport reached its climax with her appointment as Deputy Director General of the Trade department, a department with a considerable number of employees, and with numerous and difficult problems to solve, for example the interface with passengers. Guided by a solid value-based philosophy, Mrs Filipescu, permanently eager to learn, adjust and perform her best, managed to successfully carry out each and every assignment.

“The women holding top management positions must combine a male attitude (authoritarian and task-oriented) with a female one (democratic and people-oriented)”.

Speaking of the must-have qualities for a woman to perform a profession to the highest standards, Carmen Filipescu mentioned professionalism

top of the list, doubled by ambition and seriousness. She said: *“The women holding top management positions must combine a male attitude (authoritarian and task-oriented) with a female one (democratic and people-oriented)”.* Mrs Filipescu considers that the modernisation of the rolling stock, as achieved during Romania’s period of pre-accession to the EU, or the digitalization of the sales and of the financial relations were programmes that enhanced the quality and image of passenger rail transport. On the other hand, she considers that the organization of public service in rail transport, a European programme supported by the joint legal framework applied by Romania, (three regulations), could have been successful if rail transport development had been a priority, but public service under-compensation, as well as the lack of investment in rail infrastructure and in rolling stock modernisation have ruined the image of rail transport.

For 4 years, starting from 2013, she was the Director for International Relations at “REGIOTRANS” (private rail operator for passenger transport), and since 2017 up to now she has been holding the same position at another private rail operator for passenger transport, “REGIO CĂLĂTORI”. In this capacity, she coordinates, among others, the company’s collaboration activity with foreign rail enterprises and international rail bodies; the company’s participation in the actions of the international professional organizations (UIC, CER, CIT, SERG, OCCF etc.); follows up the activities derived from transposing European and international legislation, the news, the trends and recommendations at the European level regarding the policy in passenger rail transport, the techniques and technologies in the field, the policies and strategies adopted by rail operators at home or abroad in the field of passenger rail transport. In parallel, she continued her activity within the European organizations and has an

active collaboration with the Railway Club (Club Feroviar) and the Association of the Romanian Rail Engineers, by attending conferences and forums organised throughout the country, as a speaker or a moderator on topics related to passenger rail transport.

During her career, there have been numerous moments that left their mark on her in a positive way, related to professional satisfactions and to the recognition of her merits both at home and internationally. One of these moments was year 1993 when she organised, for the first time in Romania, the Eurail International Conference / InterRail, with representatives from 33 countries attending. It was a success and a big satisfaction. The European Conference regarding GDPR implementation, organised by CIT and Deutsche Bahn in Frankfurt, which she chaired, was another highlight of her career.

“A professionally well versed, ambitious, serious and correct woman can reach the top of the career ladder without any compromise.”

Carmen Filipescu appreciates that *“in the field of rail transport, we can agree we have a relatively balanced gender dimension, particularly because of the diversity of the professions and activities, with both men and women able to find a job to perform in at their best. However, things are different at the management level, where the proportion is no longer the same”*.

With a remarkable career at the national and European level, as well as an exceptional professional experience in the line of rail transport, Mrs Carmen Filipescu is a genuine role model able to inspire and motivate women to choose a career in transport. This brief journey we have made through Mrs Carmen Filipescu’s career, showcases not only some of the key positions she has held, activities she has engaged in, and impressive results she has achieved, but it is also a solid testimony to how fascinating the transport domain can be, and an inspiration to any young woman at the beginning of her career, who must know she can be successful if she takes such pertinent advice offered after long career years.



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