

**Andreea Alice Govor, Austria**

**Education to teach young women the benefits of technical curricula starting at high-school level should be on the agenda.**



**Public procurement expert – EU-based multinational railway construction company.**

*Andreea Govor has a Bachelor's degree in Mathematics and a Master's degree in Public Policy from the University of Bucharest. She also has an MSc in Transport Infrastructure Engineering from Bucharest Civil Engineering Technical University. She has worked for an Austrian railway construction multinational for the last 15 years and has specialised in the area of public procurement tenders.*

**Could you briefly tell us something about your background, and your area of expertise in the field of transport with gender and diversity? What field are you currently working in?**

I have a Bachelor's degree in Mathematics from the University of Bucharest and I hold a Master's degree in Public Policy from the same university and another Master's in Transport Infrastructure Engineering.

Over the past 15 years, I have been working for a multinational dealing in railway infrastructure contracting. I began to specialise in public procurement processes 10 years ago and for the last five years I have been the main public procurement expert in the company's Romanian branch, being involved in drawing up tender documents for minor (+ €1 million) and major projects (+ €200 million).

Given my professional background, I was asked to join a team to prepare tender documents on behalf of public authorities (one of the projects is worth over €1 billion).

In terms of my experience with gender & diversity, I

can say that my present job is in a predominantly masculine company and sector, i.e. that of railway infrastructure construction. The majority of my colleagues are men, with women representing less than 5% of key staff (engineers and technical support) and 0% when we talk about workers on construction sites.

As a public procurement expert, I consider myself to be in the ranks of key technical staff and my work counterparts are generally men.

I cannot say anything about cultural segregation as, apparently, this is not the case. On the other hand, I can say that older people are encouraged to join the company as key experts (experienced engineers can keep working up to 70 years of age). The experts I have been in contact over the years have all been men. When we talk about on-site workers, they are generally young people as these jobs are considered to be very labour intensive, with major challenges coming from extreme weather that may occur in the field.

If we talk about professional mentorship and professional relationships, I can say that one of my first bosses was a female minister (before joining this company) who was very demanding with her team but also shared her experience.

In the construction company, my colleagues share their experience and they are building a really good project team. I have never had the feeling that my professional opinion has been disregarded due to gender. My role as a procurement expert (for bidding teams) and as a technical expert (for implementation teams) is respected and my advice is followed by the implementation teams.

### In your area of expertise, what have been the greatest breakthroughs with regard to increasing gender and diversity in mobility?

Over the last few years, I have seen an increasing number of women enrolling in transport degrees at technical universities. However, most of them are more interested in road infrastructure and the automotive industry as these two sectors are promoted in Romania as being less labour intensive and affording more opportunities for female engineers. The number of female railway engineers is increasing very slowly.

### In your area of expertise, what have been the greatest breakthroughs with regard to increasing gender and diversity in mobility?

The biggest challenges seem to be in the area of mentality and education. As I am dealing mainly with a transport infrastructure industry, I can say that in this area the image that these are tough projects in a harsh working environment is pushing away potential candidates, in general, and young women in particular.

### What road maps need to be set out to increase gender and diversity in mobility at national and EU level?

In our specific field, the communication of modern values should be increased. Education to teach young women the benefits of technical curricula starting at high-school level should also be on the agenda. In addition, financial incentives should be awarded to companies actively involved in these campaigns.



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This project received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement № 824349

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