

Spanish hub

INTERNAL JOB PROMOTION PROCESSES
WITH A GENDER – PERSPECTIVE

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Executive summary:

Despite the great effort that Spanish institutions put in fostering equal job opportunities for all the population segments, companies are still struggling in finding their way to turn legislation into reality.

To set up and implement an equality plan is the first step towards the achievement of a gender balance within the company. The assessment of the current company situation and a deep analysis of its processes are key to detect barriers for equal opportunities

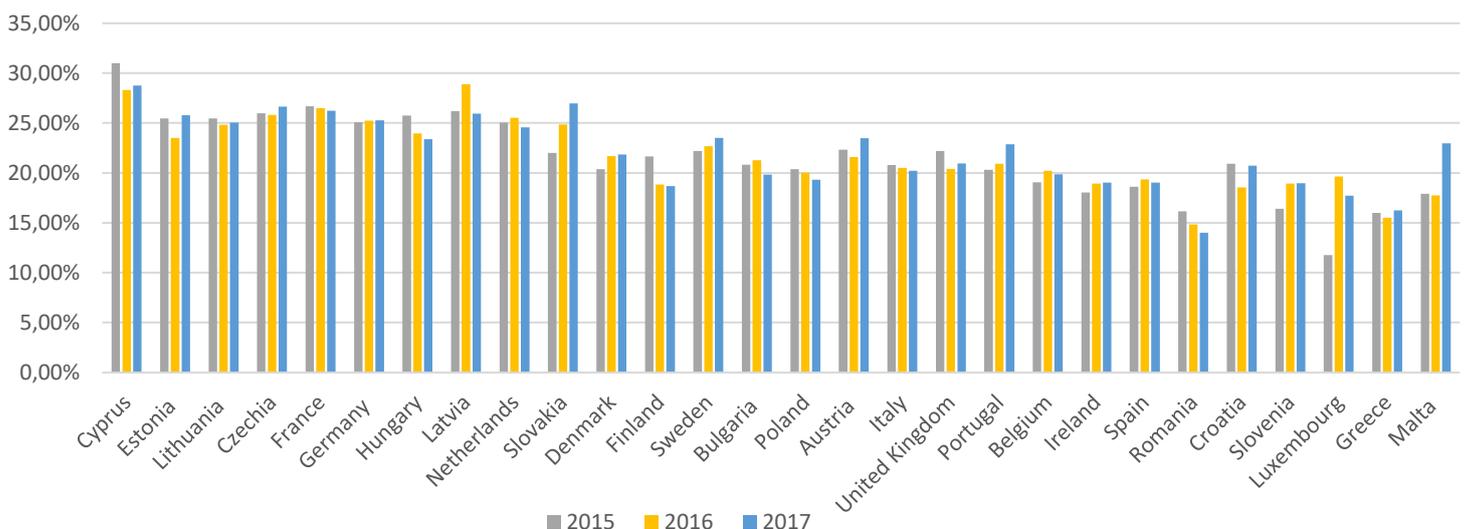
This policy brief gives an example of a study developed in collaboration with a Spanish transport company that has an Equality Plan in place, but where managerial positions were still male-dominated due to certain internal promotion criteria.

This study showed how gender bias in the internal promotion process was detected and modified, thanks to the introduction of gender-smart criteria and indicators.

Key messages:

- **OVERVIEW:** The transport sector is highly male dominated, that is, only the 23% of European employees are women (Fig.1). At managerial level, the percentage of women is even lower.
- **CHALLENGE:** In many companies the internal promotion programs are gender-biased and indirectly benefit men. The main challenge is to avoid the invisible barriers that makes higher positions male dominated
- **PURPOSE:** To provide recommendations to encourage companies to implement an internal promotion process with a gender perspective.
- **PRECEDENT:** The Spanish Royal Decree-Law 6/2019 of 1 March 2019 states that all companies with more than 50 employees should implement a Gender Action Plan.
- **AUDIENCE:** Transport companies, that have or will implement a Gender Plan following the Spanish Royal Decree-Law 6/2019 of 1 March 2019.

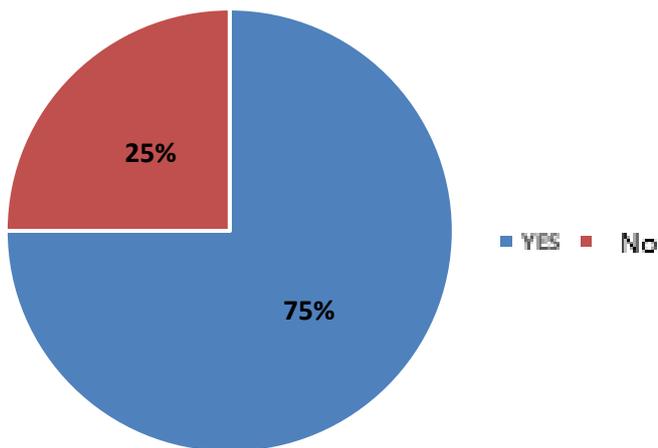
Women employed in the transport sector



• Overview of the research

The transport sector is male dominated, and the management positions are not gender balanced. Many companies already have set up an Equality Plan. However, some crucial aspects are not considered, such as the internal promotion process. One of the most common criteria for promotion is the length of service in the company. This is an example of gender bias, since male employees normally have longer service periods due to the company history. As a result, the management positions are male-dominated. In addition, there are invisible barriers that increase the gender bias (glass ceiling).

Do you consider your working environment low diverse in terms of gender?



Source: survey of employees in the Spanish transport company

• Examination of the findings

Since the promulgation of the Spanish Royal Decree-Law 6/2019 of 1 March 2019, many transport companies have been implementing an Equality Plan. Equality Plans need to ensure equal promotion processes inside the company to avoid gender bias in management positions.

The initial study has been done with a transport service provider that already had an Equality Plan, although this had not removed internal promotion gender biases.

Firstly, the company baseline scenario was assessed, through a survey (see Fig. 2), that assessed employees' perceptions of gender and integration aspects.

Taking into consideration the employees' needs and perceptions is a good practice that benefits the working environment and preserves the talent in the company.

The employees feel valued, since their opinions and needs have been taken care of.



Based on the employees' perceptions and taking into consideration the existing gender bias, the promotion process was accurately analyzed and adapted to include a gender perspective.

The criteria that caused the gender bias was removed or reduced in importance, and new ones were proposed. These new criteria were egalitarian and benefit all the employees in an equal way.

These criteria required the implementation of an action plan to ensure correct implementation. Key Performance Indicators were crucial to assess the set up process and the foster the usability of the new criteria.

All the new promotion processes and criteria were accompanied by deadlines to implement the actions and ensure validation.

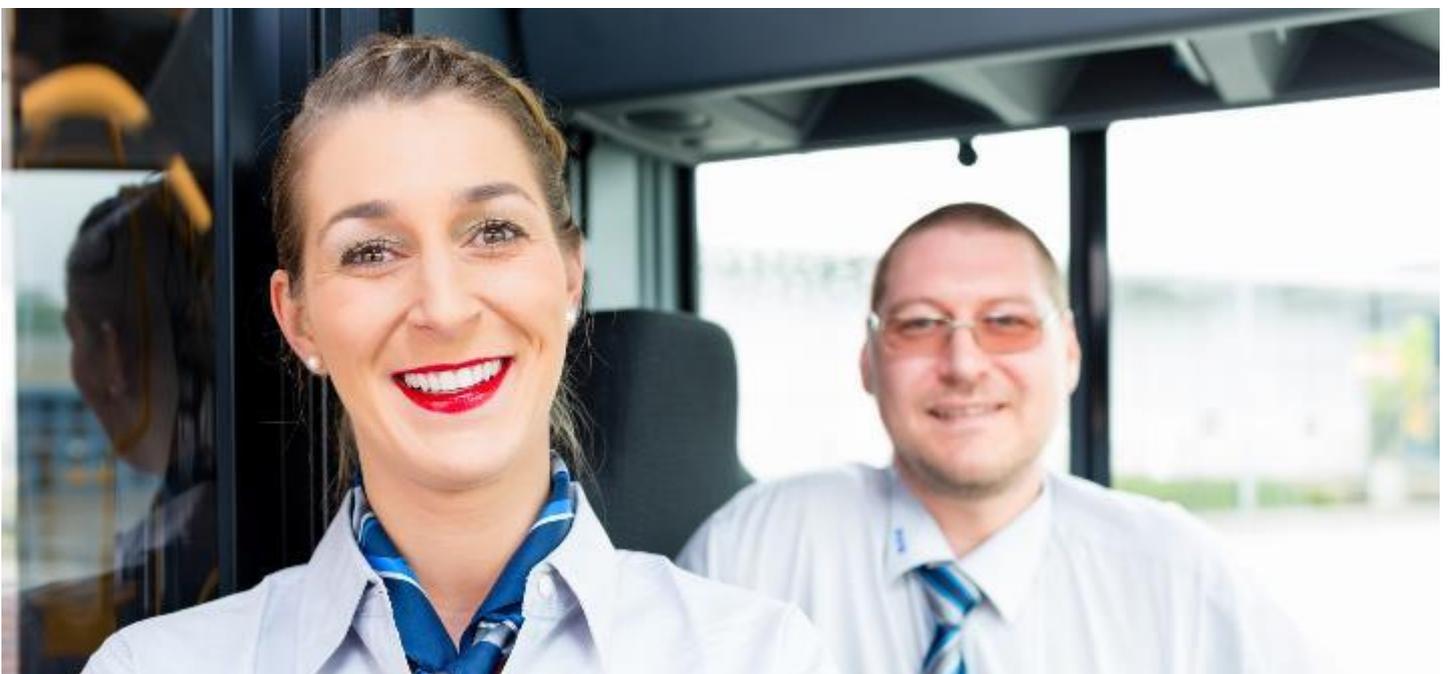
The adapted internal promotion process will be kept neutral and based on the activities done by the employees. Each employee will have the same chances to climb the career ladder and join management positions based on their skills.



The Equality Plan is a strong tool that could be even more powerful when supported by a detailed review of all the internal processes in the company. Besides, knowing the employees' perception is useful to detect hidden gender biases and general needs.

The modification of the evaluation criteria for internal promotion will improve the gender balance in managerial positions.

All these actions will contribute in avoiding the gender bias, which will favor integration and diversity inside a company.



Conclusions and recommendations:

It is important to set up and implement an Equality Plan in the transport companies. It is needed to establish processes to favour the gender balance in management positions.

In order to achieve that, the following steps should be followed:

1. Assessment of the current situation in gender aspects in the company.
 - Analyze the gender balance in the different positions in the company and the contributing factors.
2. Assessment of perceptions within the company:
 - An anonymous survey can help to know the perceptions of the employees in the company.
3. Once the assessment is done, select the measures that can benefit the gender balance and improve the internal promotion processes in the company in a neutral way, without favouring any gender.
4. Development of actions with deadlines and Key Performance Indicators to follow and assess the accomplishment of the process is useful to ensure the implementation and application of the new criteria.

Since many companies in the transport sector are not gender balanced, but rather favour some groups (men), the implementation of neutral criteria equal to all can benefit the promotion of integrated and gender balanced companies in the future. The gap can be closed, and the next generations of employees will work in companies formed by a diverse group of people where the promotion process will be neutral ensuring that the management positions are accessible to all.



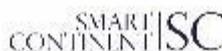
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