



European
Commission



“TRANSPORT HAS TO BE COMFORTABLE, CLEAN AND ON TIME. THE FACT THAT IT MUST BE SAFE IS BEYOND DISCUSSION.”

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The initiatives of the Vienna public transport companies Wiener Stadtwerke, Wiener Linien und Wiener Lokbahnen may not address the causes of violence against women, but they are a good example of what actors in public life can do to avert the risk of experiencing violence for women among their work force and customers. As such, they make a valuable contribution to ending violence against women. The practical steps they have taken include installing additional lights in previously dark spaces, making alarm and assistance buttons easily accessible, taking the security of female into consideration when assigning night shifts, increasing security staff, and other measures.

53% OF WOMEN IN THE EU AVOID CERTAIN SITUATIONS OR PLACES FOR FEAR OF BEING PHYSICALLY OR SEXUALLY ASSAULTED.

These include parks, bars, clubs and dark streets as well as places that women can hardly avoid, such as public transport. In recent years, there have been a number of widely reported cases of women being assaulted on public transport. How can this be stopped? What immediate measures can be adopted to ensure that women feel safe on public transport at any time of day?

One example that illustrates possible answers to these questions comes from Austria, where a publicly owned transport company has decided to act of its own initiative.

**NON.
NO.
NEIN.**

#SayNoStopVAW

“We have reduced risks in places potentially unsafe for women: installed extra lights, employed extra security staff, etc.”

Alexandra Reinagl, CEO of Wiener Linien.

In Vienna, local public transport is in firm female hands: Gabriele Domschitz, Alexandra Reinagl and Monika Unterholzner are the three CEOs of Wiener Stadtwerke, Wiener Linien and Wiener Lokalbahnen, thereby representing almost all of Vienna's local public transport. Even though the companies' main task is not the protection of women's rights per se, it has made contributing to women's safety in Vienna a priority. “We women should feel safe everywhere, at any time. Providing our female passengers and employees with a high degree of security has always been a great concern for our company.” – says Gabriele Domschitz (Wiener Stadtwerke).

Although the transport sector is a primarily male-dominated field, the company has always been very eager to fight the causes of violence directed at women – such as engrained gender inequality or gender stereotypes – on the company level (female employees) and beyond (female passengers).

“Because women often still are and feel unsafe in certain circumstances, for instance in dark or deserted places, the best we can do is to eliminate the risk for them in these places,” explains Alexandra Reinagl (Wiener Linien). As such, the measures undertaken by the company include installing additional lights at stations and in car parks; the deployment of mobile staff and additional security guards during night-hours on trains, at stations and in car parks; making emergency or alarm buttons on trains, metros and trams easily accessible; and ensuring that female personnel do not work at night.

Monika Unterholzner (Wiener Lokalbahnen) concludes: “Since introducing additional safety measures, we have received very positive feedback both from our female employees and passengers. The measures we have adopted mean that women are now safer on public transport in Vienna.”



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