

Skills shortage 'must be addressed'

EUROPE

Strategies to attract new talent to the rail sector were discussed at the Next-Gen Rail: Building The Workforce Of Tomorrow For the Rail Sector conference which was hosted by UNIFE in Brussels on March 27.

Ideas discussed included retraining staff from other industries such as the automotive sector, developing targeted campaigns to inform young people and women about the benefits of a career in the rail sector, establishing better relations with technical universities and forming partnerships with EU institutions.

According to the European Commission's Eighth Rail Market Monitoring Report, in 2023 22% of rail sector employees were women and more than 40% of the

workforce was aged 50-plus.

UNIFE said this was creating a skills shortage that needed to be addressed to avoid hindering Europe's ability to build the high speed, regional, metro and light rail systems needed to connect the continent and provide a near carbon-neutral transport option. It was also vital to attract the best digital-based talent to prevent cyber threats to critical rail infrastructure from state-based actors and criminal groups.

'The rail supply industry is the place to be, as we work to make it more inclusive and diverse,' said UNIFE Head of Public Affairs Jonathan Nguyen. 'The rail supply industry will help Europe achieve its Green Deal targets, and help ensure the safe digital transition of the rail sector.' 