

Dalia Zecchi



Dalia is one of the founders and Vice-President of Women in Mobility, Infrastructure, Transport (WiMIT), a voluntary organization dedicated to empowering women and addressing gender disparities in Italy's transport, infrastructure, and mobility sectors. Established in January 2025 after two years as a community, the non-profit promotes gender equity in transport and amplifies underrepresented voices in a sector where women make up only 14% of the workforce. With WiMIT, Dalia seeks to foster sisterhood among women professionals and create a powerful network that supports professional growth. At a time when leaders are reshaping cities and transport systems, WiMIT is committed to ensuring that these spaces reflect the needs of all people, regardless of gender, background, or ability.

Currently, she is a project manager at a national institutional entity in Switzerland, where she works on strategic projects for the management of road infrastructures. Dalia obtained a cum laude MSc degree in Civil Engineering at Politecnico di Milano; she focused her earlier career in Italian transportation consulting markets. Since 2020, she has also been part of the Association for European Transport. Dalia's passion for transportation was born from traveling frequently between cities since early childhood, as she was born from a Florentine father and a Zurichese mother. She was and is fascinated by transport infrastructures and the possibilities of interconnection between cities.



Zürich, Switzerland and Florence, Italy



Transport systems can be considered inclusive only if...

... it adequately serves the diverse needs of all community members. Our society is composed of individuals with varying backgrounds, abilities, and requirements, including but not limited to differences in age, gender, socioeconomic status, and physical ability. Therefore, an inclusive transport system must be designed with these diverse needs in mind, ensuring accessibility and effectiveness for everyone. To achieve this, it is crucial that transport planners and decision-makers actively engage with various stakeholders, including marginalized communities, to gather insights and understand their unique challenges. This engagement helps to identify barriers—be they physical, economic, or social—and develop strategies to address them. Furthermore, the challenge lies in recognizing and mitigating unconscious biases that may influence planning decisions. It is essential that those involved in shaping transport systems approach their work with an awareness of these biases, actively seeking to include perspectives that may be overlooked. Ultimately, an inclusive transport system is one that not only connects people but also fosters a sense of belonging and equity. By prioritizing inclusivity, we can

create transport systems that empower all individuals to participate fully in society, thereby enhancing the overall quality of life for everyone.

If I was in power of our transport systems, the first thing I would do is...

... ensure equal representation of women as professionals at all levels within the industry. In Italy, women comprise half of the population and the workforce, yet they represent only 14% of the transport sector. This significant underrepresentation indicates a systemic issue—an industry that often overlooks the professional needs of both men and women. I firmly believe that increasing women's participation will not only enhance the diversity of perspectives but will also lead to better solutions and innovation within the community. This vision aligns with the mission of WiMIT, which advocates for greater inclusion of women in these fields. While I may not currently hold the power to make systemic changes, I am committed to dedicating my time and efforts toward this cause. By actively advocating for women in transport and engineering, I believe we can collectively work toward a more equitable and progressive future through our small, yet impactful actions.

How does the current situation for women in your city influence your work?

The current situation for women and girls in Italy significantly influences my work and personal reality. Italy ranks among the lowest in Europe for female workforce participation, with only 51% of working-age women employed—substantially lower than Germany (75%), France (68%), and Spain (64%). In the southern regions, employment rates for women dip below 40%. Growing up in this environment, I've seen firsthand how societal attitudes can impede gender equality in the workplace. As an engineer, I particularly notice the stark underrepresentation of women in STEM fields—only 17% of women pursue these studies compared to 39% of men. Furthermore, women hold just 31.5% of board member positions in listed companies, making the employability of Italian women among the lowest in Europe, lagging behind the EU average by about 13 percentage points. Entering the engineering field often means being the only woman in the room. While I've had the privilege to collaborate with companies and colleagues who share my values, my journey hasn't been without challenges. I've encountered instances of harassment and discrimination, which

profoundly impacted me. These experiences highlighted the additional hurdles that female colleagues face daily to prove their worth. It's crucial that we are judged purely on our competencies and not our gender.

What's the main challenge that you face in your daily work?

The main challenge I encounter in my role with WiMIT is the recurring question from both men and women: "Do we really still need organizations like this in 2025?" My answer is a resounding yes, and the statistics support this assertion. Despite progress, we are still significantly behind in achieving gender equality. Women continue to be underrepresented in many sectors, including transportation, and this disparity has lasting effects on our society. Promoting gender equality is not just beneficial for women; it frees us all – men and women alike – from the constraints of gender expectations. By fostering an environment where everyone has equal opportunities and representation, we pave the way for a brighter and more inclusive future. This challenge highlights the importance of ongoing advocacy and education. Each time I encounter this question, it serves as an

My work aligns with the
Hamburg Charter Principles!

Principle #2 Inclusivity in
Transport

Principle #3 Fair and Dignified
Jobs

WiMIT's mission closely aligns with Principle 2 and 3. Our goal is to bridge the gender gap that Italy currently faces in the mobility, infrastructure, and transport sectors. We aim to actively involve women, who remain an underrepresented group, at all professional levels within the industry. This includes promoting their participation in decision-making roles while addressing the critical issues of violence and harassment that hinder their progress. Recognizing existing gender disparities, we are committed to fostering women's representation

in planning and operational roles within the sector. Additionally, we advocate for equitable treatment across the industry by championing fair wages, labor rights, social protections, and safe working conditions for all workers. To navigate the challenges of job displacement, we emphasize the importance of a just transition – one that develops relevant skills and career pathways in the transport industry. Our approach prioritizes a seamless workforce transition that embraces accessibility, diversity, dignity, equality, and gender equity.

opportunity to engage in meaningful conversations about the value of diversity and the necessity of organizations like WiMIT.

Why is it important to listen to young people?

Firstly, we bring unique and unexpected perspectives to the table. Our experiences and outlooks are shaped by a rapidly changing world, and our insights can lead to innovative solutions and fresh ideas that might not be considered by older generations. Additionally, individuals aged 20 to 30 represent approximately 30% of the global population. This significant demographic must be involved in the decision-making process to ensure that our needs and aspirations are taken into account. Engaging with us allows for policies and initiatives that are more reflective of the realities faced by younger generations. Moreover, involving young people in discussions and decisions fosters our confidence and helps us develop essential professional skills. By encouraging our participation, we empower us to become proactive leaders and change-makers in society. This, in turn, cultivates a generation capable of driving positive change and addressing the challenges of the future.

What would you tell other young people working in the transport field?

It's actually two pieces of advice! "Don't be afraid to step up and express your thoughts" and "Don't underestimate the power of networking." As a young woman navigating a traditionally male-dominated field, I have often found it challenging to have my voice heard and to assert my professional identity. It can take time and patience, but perseverance and maintaining faith in your abilities can help you overcome obstacles and find the courage to speak up when it matters. In addition, my experience has shown me the immense value of networking. Building connections with mentors and peers can provide invaluable support throughout your professional journey. If you're not already part of a network, I encourage you to consider joining one. You may be surprised by the strength and inspiration

that these relationships can provide. Through organizations like WiMIT – Women in Mobility, Infrastructure, Transport, I've witnessed how many Italian women have benefited from networking opportunities and the connections they forge with other incredible women. It's fascinating!

