# The Necessity of Implementation of Diversity Management Caused by the Actual Development of Cross-border Labour Mobility in EU

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## Abstract

*The article refers to the problemacy of international labour mobility seen as a response to many changes in political as well as in economical and social development in Europe in the last decade. In the first part of the article there is a short summary of the mentioned development in the area of immigration and labour mobility in Europe. The second part of the article deals with diversity in general and with managing of diversity in particular, there are some practical examples of possible problems as well. The last part of the article offers some suggestions for successful implementation of diversity management in enterprises.*

## Key words

*Immigration, cross-border labour mobility, diversity, diversity management, enterprises, implementation*

**JEL Classification:** J58, J61

## Introduction

The international migration is one of the most visible "symptoms" of globalisation processes. Almost each county is either a source or a destination of migrants. Their mobility is supported by economical and political integration; the migration is much simplier than it was in the past. According to UNO`s estimation there was more than 150 million migrants in 2000, nowadays there is probably more.

The mobility of international capital and the financial investments in "new found" territory of middle and east Europe lead to the rising number of workers from these countries willing to work abroad because of better possibility to earn some decent money. Another source of labour mobility is immigration from politically unstable regions seeking asylum and chance of living of normal life.

All above mentioned factors result in the increasing number of foreign (and in many cases cheaper) employees in European countries. The capital travels to the east but the labour force paradoxically to the west.

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There are differences, for example, among 21-year-old Caucasian women, 21-year-old African American men, and 21-year-old Hispanic women. A statement such as "those who arrive at the same time think the same way" does not consider the many potential identities (e.g., race, sex, sexual orientation, etc.) that affect people's opportunities, outcomes, and interactions in organizations or the evidence that, depending on the circumstances, some differences make more difference than others. (Bell & Berry, 2007, p. 23)


## 1    Cross-border labour mobility in EU

In a flexible labour market, a high degree of labour mobility is desirable to help employment adjust favourably to changing demand conditions. An inefficient allocation of labour resources may negatively affect the longer-term level and growth rate of potential output and, in the short run, limits the pace at which an economy can grow. Therefore, the free movement of labour constitutes one of the central principles of the EU and is an important component of the completion of the single market.

Policy-makers have generally recognised the benefits of increased cross-border labour mobility within Europe, both to individuals (in the form of offering new opportunities and perhaps better career prospects) and to regions and countries (through its benefits for promoting sustainable growth and developing less advantaged areas). International labour migration may allow worker skills to be matched more effectively with job vacancies, and may facilitate the general up-skilling of European workforces.

Despite the background of a generally low level of labour mobility within the EU-15, and the recognition of the possible benefits of increasing labour mobility, the expansion of the EU to 25 Member States in May 2004 was accompanied by concerns over the possibility of a wave of migration – particularly of the low-skilled – from the ten new Member States to the EU-15. The major concerns for receiving countries included a potentially negative impact on wages and employment of the native population and the increased use of social security systems, particularly by migrants. In response, most EU-15 Member States (with the exception of the United Kingdom, Ireland and Sweden) took the decision to maintain restrictions on the cross-border mobility of labour from the EU-8 (Malta and Cyprus were excluded from these restrictions), which delayed the migrant flow between the EU-8 and EU-15 Member States for up to seven years. From 1 May 2006, Greece, Portugal, Finland, Spain and from July 2006 also Italy decided to lift restrictions, while Belgium, Denmark, France, the Netherlands and Luxembourg decided to alleviate them. The restrictions remain unchanged in Austria and Germany.

**Table 1**  Examples of policies towards migrants from the EU-8 for the period 1 May 2004 to 30 April 2006

| BE | Belgium imposed restrictions on labour migration from the EU-8, applying its system of work permits. |
|---|---|
| DE | Germany imposed restrictions on labour migration from the EU-8. It maintained its existing system of work permits. Existing deals with EU-8 members, such as with Polish seasonal workers, continued to apply. Quotas continued for temporary workers in construction and agriculture. |
| IT | Italy imposed restrictions on labour migration from the EU-8. An immigration quota was in place which limited the number of migrants from the EU-8 to a maximum of 20,000 per year. |
| NL | The Netherlands imposed restrictions on labour migration from the EU-8. For EU-8 nationals, access to the labour market through the issue of a work permit was granted only when Dutch nationals were unavailable to fill a position. |
| UK | The United Kingdom opened its door to immigrants from the EU-8, but restrictions on the receipt of welfare benefits applied. EU-8 nationals had to register under a Workers Registration Scheme if they wished to work and only received unemployment and income support benefits following continuous employment for one year. Other benefits were available immediately for those in work. Workers could bring their family with them, who then had full access to the labour market. |

Source: European Central Bank: Occasional paper series No. 52.

These restrictions are about to drop and as we are aware now, they were not necessary. According to analysis the annual migration rate from east and middle European countries was around 350 000 up to the total of 2,1 million people (3 % of the population). They have effectively restricted the migrant flow between the EU-8 and the EU-15 since 1 May 2004 for up to seven years. The restrictions led to an increase in illegal undeclared work, bogus claims of self-employment, contract work and service provision. This said, what are the key economic determinants of migration? The most frequently mentioned determinants follow:

- The costs of migration including transport costs, income losses during migration and psychological costs. This suggests that migration can be interpreted as an investment, since the present costs have to be paid off in the future. Costs are therefore negatively related to the probability of migrating.
- The expected income from work, which is a function of wage and the probability of getting a job. Therefore, even if the probability of getting a job is small, an individual may migrate if the wage differential is sufficiently high.
- The existence of social security systems, which means that unemployment does not necessarily equate to no income.
- Information/search costs: this may be a function of the distance from the receiving country and "network" effects, i.e. connections between individuals in a host country and friends and relatives left at home.
- The age of the individual: the probability of migration has been found to decrease with age.

- Skill levels: strong demand for particular skill groups may encourage migration.
- Expected developments in home and receiving country: it may be disadvantageous to migrate if the development in the home country is positive or negative in the target country.

**Table 2** Average wages in EU countries (2006)

| Country | Total | Men | Women | % of average (EU - 27) | Country | Total | Men | Women | % of average (EU - 27) |
|---------|-------|-----|-------|------------------------|---------|-------|-----|-------|------------------------|
| EU - 27 | 2222 | 2468 | 1932 | 100,0 | LT | 472 | 528 | 421 | 21,2 |
| EU - 16 | 2313 | 2545 | 2015 | 104,1 | LU | 3325 | 3471 | 3061 | 149,6 |
| BE | 2830 | 2997 | 2592 | 127,4 | HU | 630 | 682 | 577 | 28,4 |
| BG | 197 | 210 | 183 | 8,9 | MT | 1276 | 1345 | 1157 | 57,4 |
| CZ | 726 | 811 | 614 | 32,7 | NL | 2573 | 2911 | 2184 | 115,8 |
| DK | 3268 | 3668 | 2888 | 147,1 | AT | 2342 | 2624 | 1909 | 105,4 |
| DE | 2770 | 3079 | 2368 | 124,7 | PL | 672 | 739 | 597 | 30,2 |
| EE | 627 | 770 | 529 | 28,2 | PT | 1161 | 1228 | 1089 | 52,3 |
| IE | 3327 | 3789 | 2882 | 149,7 | RO | 334 | 347 | 319 | 15,0 |
| EL | 1651 | 1837 | 1400 | 74,3 | SI | 1203 | 1254 | 1143 | 54,1 |
| ES | 1691 | 1843 | 1468 | 76,1 | SK | 529 | 606 | 446 | 23,8 |
| FR | 2474 | 2693 | 2204 | 111,3 | FI | 2571 | 2904 | 2267 | 115,7 |
| IT | 2099 | 2271 | 1865 | 94,5 | SE | 2856 | 3088 | 2635 | 128,5 |
| CY | 1830 | 2077 | 1555 | 82,4 | UK | 3284 | 3811 | 2760 | 147,8 |
| LV | 465 | 511 | 428 | 20,9 | | | | | |

Source: Labour market statistics, Eurostat, 2009.

In the following text we will closer examine the wage and income differences in European countries. Gross earnings are the most important part of labour costs. Gross earnings cover remuneration in cash paid directly by the employer, before tax deductions and social security contributions payable by wage earners and retained by the employer. All bonuses, whether or not regularly paid (13th or 14th month, holiday bonuses, profit-sharing, allowances for leave not taken, occasional commissions, etc.) are included in data.

An interesting fact is that the countries with the highest average wages (for example Denmark and Luxemburg) are not necessary the countries of first choice for migrants. The most attractive and desired countries are Germany, Austria, UK and France. The majority of immigrants are from Poland and Hungary.

We include information about the average wage in Slovakia for the period 1994 – 2009. The table follows.
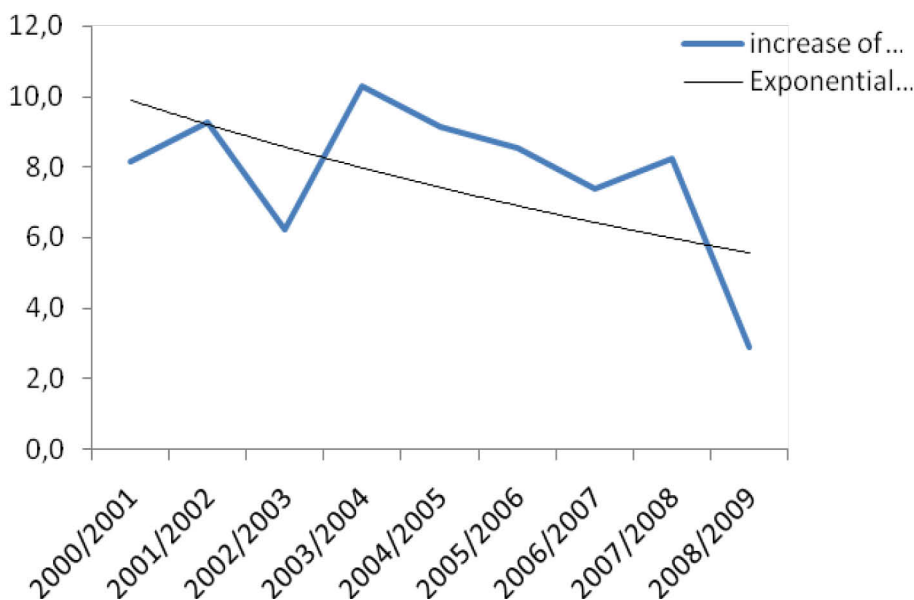
**Table 3** Average wage in Slovakia 2000 – 2009

|  | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Average wage in SR** | 379 | 410 | 448 | 476 | 525 | 573 | 622 | 668 | 723 | 744 |
| **Chain index** |  | 1,08 | 1,093 | 1,0625 | 1,103 | 1,09 | 1,09 | 1,074 | 1,0823 | 1,03 |

Source: Slovstat.

The following picture illustrates the increase of nominal average wage in Slovak Republic. It is relatively steady, oscillating between 3 % and 9 %. The absolute increase of the average nominal wage in 2009 in comparison with 2000 is 96 %.

**Figure 1** Increase of average wage in %



Information about migration in Slovak Republic follows.

**Table 4** Migration in Slovakia 2000 – 2009

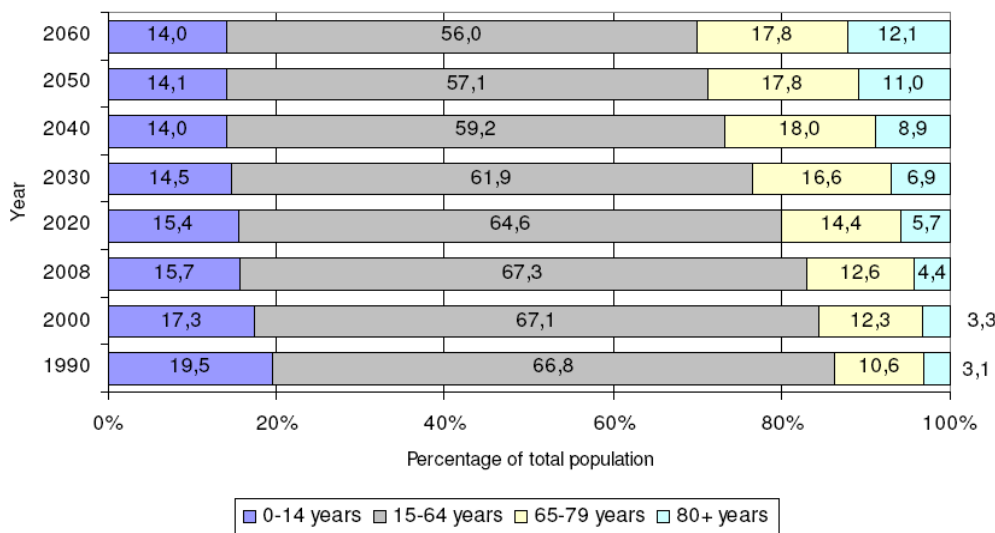|  | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Immigrants** | 2 274 | 2 023 | 2 312 | 2 603 | 4 460 | 5 276 | 5 589 | 8 624 | 8 765 | 6 346 |
| **Emigrants** | 811 | 1 011 | 1 411 | 1 194 | 1 586 | 1 873 | 1 735 | 1 831 | 1 705 | 1 979 |
| **Balance (I − E)** | 1 463 | 1 012 | 901 | 1 409 | 2 874 | 3 403 | 3 854 | 6 793 | 7060 | 4 367 |
| **Chain index** |  | 0,692 | 0,890 | 1,564 | 2,040 | 1,184 | 1,133 | 1,763 | 1,039 | 0,619 |

Source: Slovstat.

The majority of immigrants were men (68 %). Almost 90 % of immigrants are from the states of the European Union. It is necessary to point out, that not all of

them are the legal ones (only 62 %). In 2007 Romania became the leading source of immigration. Together with the immigrants mostly from the states of former Yugoslavia the number of foreign employees was 4 times higher in 2008 than in 2004 (the share of foreign employees on the total number of employees increased from 0,15 % to 0,6 %).

The future holds even more challenges, when, as Europe ages, it will need not only the existing large ethnic and religious minorities but tens of millions more immigrant workers in the decades to come – according to UN and EU policy institutes. The population profile is projected to become older in almost all regions. This is likely to happen due to the combined effect of three factors — the existing population structure, fertility lower than replacement levels, and the steadily rising numbers of people living longer. In the coming decades, the high number of ageing baby boomers will swell the number of elderly people.

**Figure 2** Population structure by major age groups, EU-27



Source: Eurostat - Demographic statistics.

Between 1960 and 2008, the proportion of older people (65 years and over) in the EU-27 population has risen from 10 % to 17 %. According to Eurostat's 2008-based population projections (convergence scenario) this trend will continue. The proportion of people aged 65 and more in the total population is expected to rise in the period to 2060. In the EU-27 it is expected to go up from 17 % in 2008 to 30 % in 2060, reflecting an increase in the number of older persons from 84,6 million in 2008 to 151,5 million in 2060. The largest percentages of elderly people in 2060 are expected in Poland (36,2 %), Slovakia (36,1 %), Romania (35,0 %), Lithuania (34,7 %), Latvia (34,4 %) and Bulgaria (34,2 %), and the lowest in Luxembourg (23,6 %), the United Kingdom (24,7 %) and Denmark (25,0 %).

## 2    Dealing with diversity

One of many side effects is increasing of number of workers who differ on nationality, temper, religion, habits or respected values from the native ones. This situation could possible result in conflicts if not dealt with. One of the EU agendas is respecting of diversity and social inclusion. The diversity of our population is an increasingly striking feature of today's Europe. Diversity means several things but the term is generally used to describe entities with members who have identifiable differences. In the European context, diversity can be defined from a policy and legal perspective across at least six clear 'strands':

- gender,
- age,
- race and ethnic origin,
- sexual orientation,
- religion and belief,
- disability.

As an example there is a well known anecdote:

| Occupations in an ideal world: | |
|---|---|
| policeman | English |
| car mechanist | German |
| cook | French |
| doorkeeper | Swiss |
| lover | Italian |

| Occupations in a nightmare world: | |
|---|---|
| policeman | German |
| car mechanist | French |
| cook | English |
| doorkeeper | Italian |
| lover | Swiss |

New laws prohibit discrimination, harassment and victimisation of employees. But it is not only the new legislation that is driving organisations to think about managing diversity. Other social and economic changes also play their part. All European countries have undergone (and are still undergoing) a dramatic change in their populations and this affects the kind of people we employ; those to whom the products and services are delivered; and those from whom we buy goods and services.

In order to understand the significance of diversity for business, however, it is also important to go 'under the surface' of the strand-specific approach and to consider the 'learnt' aspects of difference — such as the attributes of individuals and even communities' different types of knowledge acquisition, communication styles, personal skills, professional abilities and leadership expertise.

Through the twin processes of globalisation and localisation, the business horizons of European companies continue to shift and expand beyond national boundaries. Although the vast majority of European small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) operate at the local level, the opportunities and challenges they face are inextricably linked to processes taking place across regions, countries and continents. Regardless of whether a company operates at global or local level, a more diversified society, cus-

tomer base, market structure and workforce is becoming an increasingly central aspect of doing business.


## 3    Business benefits of diversity management

Diversity Management is clearly something more than diversity as such. The main question is how a company can actively and strategically deal with diversity. To be more concrete, what activities need to be placed into motion, in order to implement effectively a company strategy which integrates diversity as an asset into its identity? What are the benefits of managing diversity effectively? Diversity management strategies can help to create a link between the internal and external aspects of the work of an organisation. Whilst each organisation needs to work out its own priorities, these benefits can include:

– Attracting, recruiting and retaining people from a wide "talent" base.
– Reducing the costs of labour turnover and absenteeism.
– Contributing to employee flexibility and responsiveness.
– Building employee commitment, morale and "discretionary effort".
– Enhancing creativity and innovation.
– Improving knowledge of how to operate in different cultures.
– Improving the understanding of the needs of current customers or clients.
– Assisting in the development of new products, services and marketing strategies.
– Creating opportunities for disadvantaged groups and building social cohesion.

It is not necessary only to recognize relevant differences and similarities within the company and in its environment, but it is also important to manage all of this. Diversity management integrates the idea of managing differences and practice the learning processes within a company and its environment. Business decisions need to be taken in an atmosphere of appreciation and knowledge economy. In order to achieve a competitor's advantage, managers need to understand the connections between the company's mission, vision, strategy and external environments.

Knowing different capacities of the staff, technologies and customers, production capacities and environment helps company to manage cost effectively (Chebeň, 2009, p. 58).
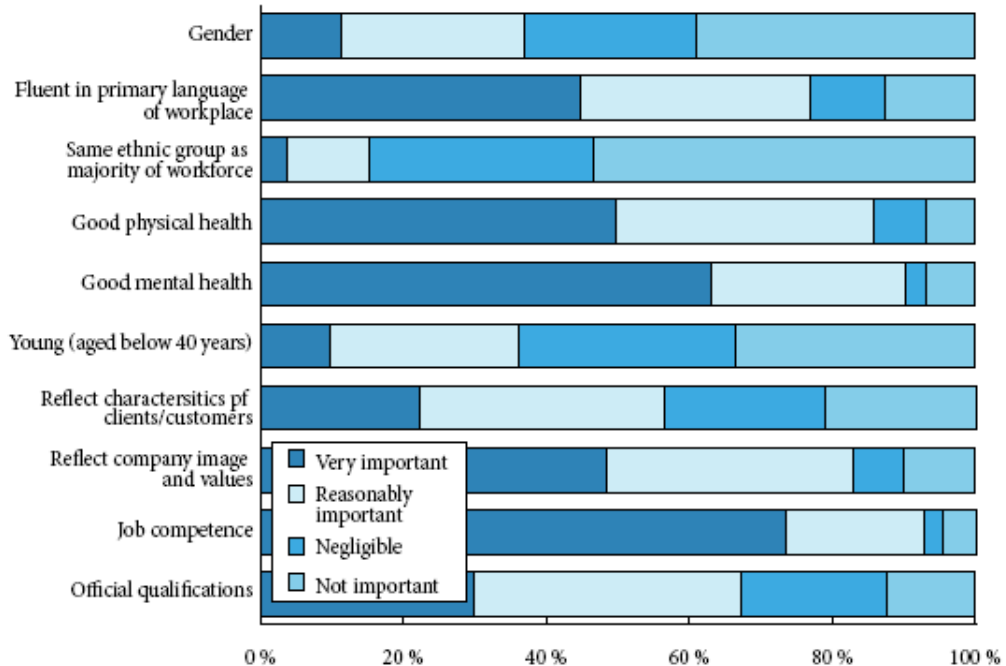
Keeping all of the above in mind, we can define Diversity Management as follows: *Diversity Management is the active and conscious development of a future oriented, value driven strategic, communicative and managerial process of accepting and using certain differences and similarities as a potential in an organisation, a process which creates added value to the company.*

Last but not least, Diversity Management cannot exist without being embedded in a moral and legal climate. The ethics and law concerning anti-discrimination are not just a part of the company's environment; the company's identity itself has to reflect our human rights traditions.

In 2008 a research with European Business Test Panel took place. Some interesting results follow. By far the most prevalent argument for adopting a diversity agenda

continues to be that it significantly broadens the pool of talent from which to employ staff, or helps to retain the best staff.

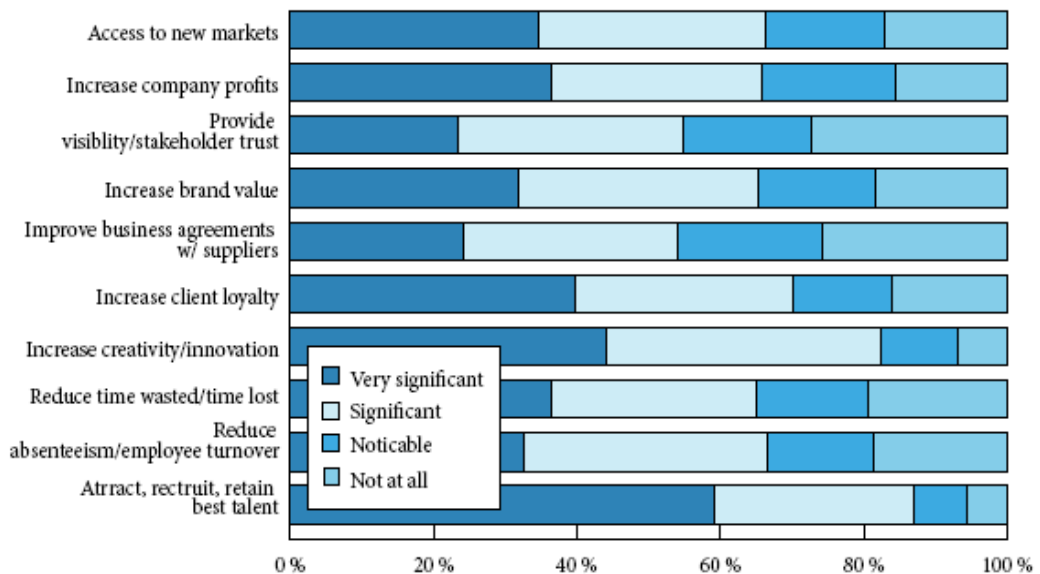**Figure 3** Characteristics that SMEs look for in employees



Source: 2008 SME diversity survey.

During the recruitment of minority employees, organizations face two major challenges. The first one is to reach the minority group members who meet the position's selection criteria. Often, these minority groups don't use the same networks as the majority groups. The second challenge is to get those potential candidates to submit their applications (Panaccio & Waxin, 2010, p.58)

One of the areas was benefits of diversity. Some of them we listed above, others can be seen in the following chart.

**Figure 4** Benefits associated with diversity



Source: 2008 SME diversity survey.

Some empirical researches on the effects of diversity on organizational performance have found mixed results. Recently, researchers have reported that the actual effects of diversity under complex organizational conditions are much more complicated than they had predicted, suggesting the need for a more nuanced interpretation of diversity and for research that analyzes the impacts of diversity taking into account the complex reality of organizations. (Choi & Rainey, 2010, p. 116)

However, one of the most important benefits associated with diversity is the increased potential of innovations. Innovation is a multidimensional term, displaying both 'subjective' and 'objective' traits. Subjective traits of innovation include the processes of creativity and original thinking, the communication of creative and original thinking to others, and the uptake of those ideas by others. Here, thinking relates to all areas of company activity, including everyday operations and problems through to the research and development of new or existing products, and the sourcing of new suppliers and expansion into new markets. Objective traits of innovation include the structures within which such ideas are thought about, transmitted to, and taken up by others, and the output and outcome in terms of definable benefits.

The success that a company has with encouraging innovation depends upon the ways in which the subjective 'raw materials' of innovation — creative thinking by individuals or groups — can be harnessed by the objective structures of innovation. For the purposes of this report, innovation, then, is best defined as 'the generation and introduction of new ideas that lead to the development of new products and services, processes and systems in all areas of business activity'.

The ability of diverse individuals to communicate creative and original thinking to others, and the willingness of those others to listen and respond to such ideas, might be constrained by institutional and non-institutional forms of discrimination. These

could include the degree to which the company has a culture of 'inclusion' and the objective organisational structures within which creative and innovative thinking takes place. As such, any attempt at encouraging 'latent' creativity and innovation within and through diverse workforces must be linked with wider management processes and practices of the businesses themselves. Another research identified need for cognition as an important personality trait that broadens understanding of when and how the performance potential of diverse teams can be unlocked and what organizational and team leaders must pay attention to when assembling and managing diverse teams. Findings suggest that the mean need for cognition in a team is an important determinant of the degree to which a team stands to benefit from age and educational diversity.

A final dimension relating to 'diversity - led' innovation is that its occurrences and benefits are seldom 'seen'. If the innovative potential of diversity is to be properly leveraged by companies, it is essential that they develop systems of measurement that capture it and thus help to shape future activities to promote it.

## 4   The diversity management change process

The increasing complexity in the company's environment in terms of diversity of the stakeholders, customers, suppliers, colleagues, and shareholders and the changing political and economical context requires conscious steps to actively manage this diversity.

According to the methodology of Synetz the implementation consists of following steps:

**Step 1** Diversity Steering Committee

Since most companies have a mono-cultural background, there is a risk that analysis of the environment will be conducted in a restrictive manner and the requirements for any change a viewed through a narrow perspective. In order to overcome these limitations a project team (Diversity Steering Committee) of committed people with diverse backgrounds could be formed by top management to widen this perspective.

**Step 2** Scenarios of the future

Together with the top management, key stakeholders and representatives of various departments of the company, the Diversity Steering Committee should organise a so-called Scenario Building Workshop. As a rule of thumb three different scenarios of how the business world would look like (externally and internally) 10-20 years hence should be created – with an emphasis on the impacts and effects of diversity factors.

**Step 3** Vision and strategy

The next step should be to formulate a vision and mission of the company from the scenario selected previously. This exercise should involve the top management and key stakeholders. It should focus on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the company emanating from the scenario. In the end, vision and mission

statements should be formulated. The next step is to formulate the company´s strategy, emphasizing the way Diversity Management is to be implemented. A clear strategy will allow the company to move forward. Once a vision, mission and strategy have been formulated, the company should now go back to the present situation and identify its current status quo. This requires a Diversity Audit.

**Figure 5**  Diversity management implementation



Source: Synetz – the management consultants, published on www.synetz.de

**Step 4** Diversity Audit

The Diversity Audit is a useful tool to analyse the company's current situation. The questions to be asked include: What is the attitude of the top management and its workforce regarding diversity? What is the company's culture today? How "inclusive" are the structures and processes? The Diversity Audit is conducted through semi-structured, personal interviews with all stakeholder groups and may be accompanied by a standardized questionnaire to explore attitudes toward Diversity.

**Step 5** Company Goals

As a next step, the Management together with the Diversity Steering Committee should define the overall goals of the company according to the implementation of Diversity Management. These goals should be clearly related to the previously formulated overall strategy and ensure participation of all relevant divisions and departments. Each of these should be invited to adjust these goals to its own context and define clear measurable criteria for achieving them.

**Step 6** Diversity Management Implementation

During the implementation process, the Steering committee plays a crucial role: it oversees, steers and accompanies the various activities. It serves as a central intersection of communication.

Some suggestions, what to do when developing and implementing diversity and equal opportunities policies:

- Do use the support offered by government, business networks, business organisations - they possess knowledge and can give advice when dealing with diversity issues.
- Do keep up to date with the national legislation - this can save lots of time when questions and issues emerge.
- Do make in-job training possible - people with disabilities can improve their motor skills and different linguistic groups can improve their language skills.
- Do offer work–life programmes - these can encourage working mothers or people with disabilities that can only work part-time to join the company.
- Do set behaviour standards by using role models - exemplary behaviour of managers and older employees will be adopted by others.
- Do always employ someone because they are the most qualified person for the job.

Some suggestions, what not to do when developing and implementing diversity and equal opportunities policies:

- Don't make the identity of the company a top priority - create space within the identity to make people feel at home and increase interaction between employees.
- Don't make diversity seem like a cost but part of running the business in an effective and customer-friendly way - identify how diversity leads to business benefits.
- Don't stick to old policies if they are not working - talk to employees and external organisations to create new strategies.
- Don't discard cultural differences: it is important that there is good understanding between employees - this will help to develop and maintain mutual respect.
- Don't have a closed mind: try new things - and be prepared for surprises.
- Don't recruit someone just because they have a different background.


## Conclusion


Diversity has been the agenda of the European Union policy for the last 10 – 15 years. Undisputedly there are some successes (at least on the official level). The new reality of EU legislation banning discrimination on grounds of racial or ethnic origin, gender, religion, disability, age and sexual orientation has had a major impact on businesses across the EU.

But the diversity has got more dimensions, not just the business one. Demographical development and the ageing of population leave a lot of space for future immigration. Our children will face a reality of different European Union. For sure there will be more Muslims. For sure there will be a lot of elders. Can we manage? Are we tolerant enough to accept the increasing number of workers from former Eastern Europe? Are we ready to deal with our differences and turn them to our advantage?

Are the employers able to deal with the diversity of employees, buyers and competitors?

One of the possible ways is to implement the diversity management and to profit from its benefits. It is not a simple choice. Sometimes the differences are far too great to deal with them quickly, it takes some time. But we have to try our best. Tolerance is the key. To create a tolerant society we must start from the beginning – education and media.


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