GOOD PRACTICES IN NON-DISCRIMINATION AND IN ENFORCEMENT OF DIVERSITY IN EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS
This publication is issued within the project „Equal Opportunities is Worthwhile“ (a series of activities promoting identification of examples of good practices in preventing discrimination and promoting equality (VS/2009/0418), supported under the European Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity PROGRESS (Call for proposals VP/2009/004). Information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission.

This publication does not represent the position or opinion of the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights. The views and interpretations expressed herein are exclusively the authors’ responsibility.
GOOD PRACTICES IN NON-DISCRIMINATION AND IN ENFORCEMENT OF DIVERSITY IN EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS

(A Comparative study)

Bratislava
2010
© Slovak National Centre for Human Rights, 2010

Lead author: PhDr. Sylvia Porubánová
Authors: Mgr. Barbora Holubová, Institute for Labour and Family Research
         PhD. Sylvia Porubánová, Institute for Labour and Family Research
         Mgr. Milan Fico, Institute for Labour and Family Research
         Mgr. Michaela Hirčková, Slovak Disability Council
Editor: JUDr. Anna Zachová
Translated by: Renáta Proková
Translation proofreader: Mgr. Jana Galbavá
Cover design: Marián Podlesný
Layout: Daniela Bieliková
Print: Jozef Pavlak – OPTIMA

CONTENT

Introduction and Definitions ................................................................. 6
Assumptions and a Basis for Promotion of Diversity in Employment Relations – Equal Opportunities, Partnerships, Corporate Social Responsibility ........................................... 12
Good Practice Examples in Promoting Equal Opportunities in Slovakia ............................................ 22
Good Practices in Non-discrimination – Example of Sexual Harassment ..................................... 50
Good Practices in Enforcement of Diversity – Example of Fatherhood Promotion .............. 54
Risks of Discrimination Against Disabled People ........................................................................ 61
Equal Opportunities as a Target Agenda for Roma Children ................................................. 68
References ....................................................................................................................... 78
Other sources .................................................................................................................... 81
Annexes ............................................................................................................................. 82
Introduction and definitions

Barbora Holubová, Institute for Labour and Family Research

At the beginning we provide some essential framework definitions in order to better understand the following text. What are we talking about when we speak about diversity and non-discrimination? Are those concepts related to each other, and if yes, how are they related? And what is really a good practice?

The concept of diversity is used in the EU member states in different and multiple meanings that are not necessarily mutually exclusive and often coexist side by side even within one country (SEN, 2010:50). Diversity could have the following main meanings:

a) diversity as “a new concept” meaning inclusion, tolerance, non-discrimination and used as an equivalent of “plurality”,

b) diversity directly associated with disadvantaged groups who are at higher risk of discrimination, e.g. immigrants, elderly people, ethnic minorities, women or sexual minorities,

c) diversity in traditionally “homogeneous countries” represents a certain equivalent in the meaning of “cosmopolitanism” and tolerance towards others, e.g. religion, national traditions, and could represent a certain national dilemma,

d) diversity as multiculturalism (or racial/ethnic diversity) is important mainly in the strategies for integration of foreigners, mainly in making some minorities visible, and is materialised e.g. in language education. However, it can also be an obstacle for social cohesion and equal opportunities.

In the business sector, diversity is used in the meaning of “corporate management”. It applies mainly to large multinational companies. At the level of economic and social corporate policy is the diversity, as the management of diversity, supported by the implicitly main idea: the world is diverse and the countries need to stress the importance of diversity management in order to develop innovativeness and competitiveness at the global market. Perception of diversity solely as a pragmatic discourse which creates a culture of competitiveness without emphasizing the rights and eligibility of minorities and needs of inclusion is, however, considered to be negative and counterproductive.
Moreover, the culture of diversity can be “afforded” only by some multinational and strong companies, while local companies will be exposed to conflicts in relation to religion, sexual orientation and ethnicity. It is therefore recommended, in the framework of the diversity management, to emphasise and introduce into practice also the concept of equality, equal opportunities and non-discrimination. (SEN, 2010:50 – 53).

Generally, diversity management is about integration of ideas and methods of diversity promotion into daily management and educational processes in the society and its surrounding environment. (Keil, 2007:9).

Generally, non-discrimination means to observe the principles of equal treatment and to avoid any exclusion or limitation or discrimination of people solely because of their gender/sex, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity/race, origin, disability, religion or any other factor of discrimination. Non-discrimination at workplace relates mainly to prevention of discrimination, mainly through implementation of diversity, equal opportunities and non-discrimination policies. However, implementation of diversity management is not always an effective strategy for non-discrimination at a workplace. Implementation of diversity at a workplace may be faced with discriminatory attitudes and behavior of male and female workers. This creates “opposition” at the workplace, which can be a serious obstacle. Here, diversity is addressed as a process of change of culture drawing on the knowledge of change management. (European Commission, 2005:8).

Nowadays, good practice, is a frequent, popular and modern concept used in different areas but its meaning is not defined properly. Generally, it is a process, method or activity that has proved to be effective for achieving the defined objective, something that works well, achieves good results and is recommended to be taken as a model.

In a more detailed definition the following demands are required from a good practice: (a) successfulness, (b) innovation, (c) multiple effect and transferability into other areas, (d) sustainability.

a) successfulness – procedure gives good results for the given area, the definition of good results may represent exact or less exact quantitative or qualitative determination of the level of indicators; the more accurate the indicators are defined, the better assessment of the good practice is achieved,
b) innovativeness – procedure is a new or different solution of already existing procedures or combination of multiple procedures or incorporation of procedures from quite
different areas (contexts), innovativeness could relate to processes (measures, content, methodology, approach, tools), subject (new social groups, new areas of interest) or context (adjustment or improvement of current conditions, start of new networks)\(^1\),

c) multiple effect and transferability into other areas – the given good practice has a potential of horizontal action or transfer, i.e. visible, communicable and shared dissemination or/and vertical action or transfer, i.e. the procedure can be integrated or applied in systems or regulations,

d) sustainability – good practice should be self-supporting, i.e. creating a need, considered to be a service and/or able to bring benefits for the society.\(^2\)

A higher level of quality or validity is the *best practice*, which is defined as follows: *Best practice* means technique, method, activity, purpose or result (benefit) that is considered to be more effective for achieving a concrete result than other technique, method, activity, purpose, etc. if introduced – implemented under concrete conditions and concrete circumstances. It is based upon the idea that by using the adequate procedure and methodology, by control and testing could be the required result reached with smaller problems and complications. It is defined also as the most efficient (by smallest effort) and most effective (achieves the best results) way to solve the task (problem) or achieving the objective, based upon the re-validation in time for a maximum number of people. The given best practice is applicable only under certain circumstances and conditions and could be modified or adapted for similar circumstances. Even the best practice could be, however, further developed when new improvements emerge.\(^3\)

From the individual attributes defining a good practice or a best practice, it is evident that whether the given practice is considered as a good practice or a best practice, depends upon the set up system of assessment, monitoring or testing of those practices. Research of

---

\(^1\) In this connection we would like to point out the difference between the social and technical innovation – used in technical or natural sciences where mostly the scientific knowledge is applied in order to be used in a special apparatus, equipment, patent, etc. at the market. Social innovations are perceived as new ideas and practical solutions that respond to current and future developments and propose measures for addressing the current needs of people leading to improved living conditions. Social innovations should contribute to changes that will improve the living conditions of people from the point of view of global trends and emerging societal needs. (CESIUK). Social innovation is “an innovative solution of social problem that is more effective, more sustainable and more reasonable as current solutions and the whole society rather than only individuals, benefit from the created value.” (Center for Social Innovation, Stanford Graduate School of Business, Stanford University. Source: Lubelcová, G.: Sociálne podnikanie ako sociálna inovácia. Available at: http://www.fphil.uniba.sk/cesiuk).

\(^2\) Definition used in the framework of the Equal Initiative project www.equalset.org.

\(^3\) BusinessDictionary.com.
good practices in implementation of diversity on the corporate level showed, however, that mainly assessment of results is the stumbling-block. What is lacking is a **systematic monitoring and evaluation of progress or benefits from enforcement of diversity and its impact**. Almost 70% of companies which have introduced measures to promote diversity at a workplace did not regularly monitor them (European Commission, 2005:8). In doing so, evaluation is often just substituted by listing of existing measures or set up mechanisms, however, their real use and change of quantitative indicators before and after their implementation is not monitored and followed. Despite of non-existence of an exact monitoring, several companies with established diversity management have introduced a series of monitoring and feedback mechanisms which allow them to respond flexibly and follow the current developments and results of the set up diversity programme processes. Efforts either on the corporate or national levels lead to setting up measurable indicators (performance indicators) and their mutual standardisation and elaboration of unique complex tools for measurement of benefits and losses (cost-benefit models) (European Commission, 2005:32).

In Slovakia, there does not exist a unique system for development, dissemination or implementation of good practices due to the fact that their definition is not standardised. For those reasons, we often waive demands on the anticipated attributes of good practices or best practices. Good practice (best practice) is considered to be as follows:

- initiatives of winning and best positioned companies/offices in regional, national or supranational competitions, rankings or rewards aimed at the issues of diversity,
- initiative with the aim to promote diversity with expected benefits,
- pilot project implemented by various actors often based upon experience and knowledge from abroad,
- well-publicised and documented project, in which often inadequately evaluated results (benefits) of project activities are formulated into conclusions.

---

4 There exist several studies which define the method to assess and measure indicators of diversity at a workplace. See e.g. Methods and Indicators to Measure the Cost-Effectiveness of Diversity Policies in Enterprises. Centre for Strategy & Evaluation Services, 2003. Available at: [http://www.pedz.unimannheim.de/daten/edz-ath/gdem/03/cbfullrep_en.pdf](http://www.pedz.unimannheim.de/daten/edz-ath/gdem/03/cbfullrep_en.pdf).

5 In general, all initiatives concerning implementation of diversity at workplace are welcomed and mutual learning, sharing of experience and discussions about risks and advantages of diversity as a way of implementation of own diversity management, are preferred.

6 Examples of such complex models for identification of tangible and non-tangible factors that have impact upon the result indicators of diversity implementation are e.g. Harvard Balanced Scorecard, European Quality Model, Framework for measurement of diversity as a part of methodologies and indicators of the European Commission (European Commission, 2005:28).

7 (Bednárik, R. - Brychtoň, L. - Repková, K., 2009:17).
There are legal, ethic and mainly economic reasons for implementation of diversity policies, programmes and measures at workplaces. Research of opinions and attitudes on diversity showed that the business sector expects always besides ethical benefits also tangible economic benefits. (European Commission, 2005:7). The most common real or expected benefits of diversity are:

a) recruitment and retention of qualified work force (42 % of companies),
b) increased reputation and image of the company and its position within the local communities (38 %),
c) innovation leading to new products and services and to new markets (26%).

The studies clearly show that internal diversity at a workplace leads to development of marketing and products for new market segments where the needs of the traditionally excluded social groups like elderly women and men, ethnic minorities or non-heterosexual women and men are taken into account. Companies by promoting and enforcing diversity deliberately try to increase their profit, customers satisfaction and their corporate image. In some cases, they try to use the current developments in elimination of social exclusion and discrimination against some concrete social groups in the society (European Commission, 2005:8).

Initiatives to promote diversity at workplace could be, when talking about complexity or orientation on an exact attribute of diversity, very different. Sometimes the initiatives or programmes are aimed at diversity as a universally positive value, sometimes only as integration of disabled people or gender diversity. Project could be designed also to address the very specific problem that has emerged at a workplace (e.g. bullying or sexual harassment, discrimination on the grounds of age, etc.). Most often the initiatives for enforcement of either specific or complex diversity are, however, inspired by established structures of competitions/rewards on national, regional or sectoral levels. An important role is paid also by setting of the Structural Funds and their individual Operational Programmes which financially support initiatives aimed only at a specific type of diversity or non-

---

8 Sometimes it is recommended to identify also weak, ineffective practices in order to prevent their repetition, unnecessary losses and ineffective spending of funds. Several compendia of good practices include also barriers or difficulties encountered during implementation of measures which should be avoided in the future.

9 In-depth interviews and questionnaire survey of 919 respondents from the business environment from 25 EU Member States in 2005; 49% responses from Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark and Poland, 23% from new member states and 7 from Southern EU countries.
discrimination resulting from wider analyses of societal problems and often also from defined structural objectives on the European level.

Examples of good practices given in this study have a different level of real result evaluations, even though they are mentioned as good practices or as positive and inspirational examples. In case of qualitative evaluation we will point out also the defined indicators and ways of their measurement.
Assumptions and a basis for promotion of diversity in employment relations – equal opportunities, partnerships, corporate social responsibility

Sylvia Porubánová, Institute for Labour and Family Research

At present, equal opportunities is an official and respected public policy agenda and also a declared value and collateral condition for the EU to achieve its objectives of growth, employment and social cohesion. Anti-discrimination on whatever grounds is a paradigm and fundamental value principle of the new Europe. The European Commission believes that to outlaw discrimination is not sufficient to ensure equal opportunities for everybody. Explicit prohibition of discrimination does not solve many real problems, it is necessary to develop mechanisms, to create policies and implement measures to address specific situations.

Therefore the issue of existing unequal life chances is in the centre of interest of the current European Community (and its political and practical priorities). Related problems of integration, economic growth, sustainable development, “raised to life” the topic and agenda of social cohesion, social inclusion and social integration. It is a change in the overall philosophy and approaches to solving social problems and challenges - prioritize the optic of the complex social integration and participation, the consequences of disruption of social ties, the effects of insufficient resources (exclusion) with symptoms of isolation, limited participation in the ordinary course of life.

From the point of view of international and domestic context as well as from the point of view of expected social impacts and volume of measurable results, a stimulating as well as limiting framework is the relevant “hard” and “soft” European and national legislations. At least in terms of topics and issues in any way related to the public policy with the ambition to remove or correct the historical and socially continuing inequalities.

In accordance with the policy of the European structures (and also in accordance with the relevant aspirations and strategic documents of SR) the agenda of equal opportunities should have a complex and integral character. It penetrates and intervenes also into other agendas, issues and challenges of public policies. Although the area of equal opportunities is framed by European commitments and recommendations for a fair implementation of the
agenda into social practice and everyday life, the activity of all domestic actors is necessary and highly welcomed.

It is assumed (and expected) that activities in each country will be designed and implemented also with regard to the specific national, regional or local problems and priorities in terms of substantive, public political point of view, as well as in term of the time urgency of dealing with individual controversial or problematic area and themes of equal opportunities. Equality within an economic context, equality at the labour market, equality at the workplace could be considered as a basic, fundamental equality – any other level of equal opportunities assumes a thorough economic equality.

The current financial and economic crises have posed many questions and challenges for the European policy makers which are not comparable with challenges in the past decades. A part of experts dealing with equal opportunities indicate a legitimate concern about the “destiny” or possible stagnation of the contents of the equal opportunities agenda. The concerns origin from the expected loss of jobs as well as an imminent lack of motivation of employers to continue with creation of measures and provision of benefits supporting gender equality, equal opportunities and harmonization of work and family life.

A quite significant accompanying phenomenon of various economy and reduction measures could be also the fact that the so far solved areas of equal opportunities would be considered for trivial and minimal with reference to the “importance” of the so called fundamental questions. As an counterargument or one of the possible system solutions is often mentioned that the crisis could or would be an opportunity for transformation, modernisation of the labour market with continuous promotion of equal opportunities - regarding the structure of future jobs and their recreating.

Thus equal opportunities should be not only an integral agenda, but also a “parallel” strategy concerning e.g. investments into new technologies and modernisation of infrastructure. Of course, the real meaningfulness and effectiveness of similar thinking requires qualitative and sensitively set up analysis. Thus crisis could be (without an intention) an opportunity for new “setup” of policies and measures for harmonization, respectively for a new formulation and approach to equal opportunities in general.
Usually, concrete initiatives to achieve equal opportunities and diversity at work place concentrate mostly on the following areas:

- **Labour organisation** taking into account family and personal needs and diversity of individual workers,
- **Support of service development** in harmonization of work and family,
- **Support of programmes**, which help women and men to get back to the labour market (re-qualification, specialised employment services, mentoring and tutoring, further education during interruption of participation at the labour market, etc.).

The European recommendations and experience in this area stress the need to **modernise organisation and form of work combined with strong partnership and cooperation of all actors** (national governments, regional and local self-governments, employers and self-traders organisations, trade unions, non-governmental organisations, individuals).

*Partnership* is a key tool of local administration. It represents a management framework which enables the local and regional actors to cooperate in development of a common strategy and to implement tools relevant for specific territories. Primarily partnerships concentrate upon employment, social issues and economic development.

Local partnerships help to implement programmes and services which are in line with the local conditions and have their potential to distribute sources in a way suitable for sustainable development. Among others, they facilitate cooperation and coordination of activities and so they are a tool for management improvement. A successful partnership reduces duplication of programmes, improves effectiveness of measures through a combined, more effective use of sources, supports innovation.

Objective of a partnership is to make the administration and management more effective via improvement of dialogue and cooperation among policy makers and other actors on local, regional and national levels. This results into strengthening of the economic development, social cohesion, environmental sustainability and quality of life and consideration of local and regional needs. The purpose of partnership should be an integration policy of national, regional and local programmes, coordination of employment policies and the labour market with entrepreneurship, creation of infrastructure and development.
The aim of mobilisation of all actors is also development of a model that does not reproduce gender stereotypes, xenophobic and homophobic prejudices. A model that takes into account family circumstances, family responsibilities, social and personal need of employees. A model that promotes diversity at a workplace while respecting individual and group restrictions and limits of employees.

In Slovakia, application of equal opportunities, promotion of diversity in employment relations is a relatively new area of interest, development and “popularization” of which was heavily supported by its current prioritization from the side of the European structures. Organisation of work and working time, the variety of its forms, is an area with big reserves in Slovakia. At present, flexible forms of organisation of work are still on the level of intentions. Slovakia belongs among countries with the lowest level of flexibility of work organisation forms; part time employment of men and women was in Slovakia the lowest one among all EU member states.

Despite of the rhetoric of individual chances and objective assessment of an employee on the basis of his/her performance, the equal opportunities policy as consideration of his/her personal and family situation does not work properly. Barriers and stereotypes are visible both in the public as well as the private spheres. Employers prefer to support a traditional course and organisation of work prior to evaluation of the work results. Any changes in the organisation of work are considered as a deviation from the norm. E.g. when it is allowed to shorten the employees working hours to part time, it is often accompanied by reduction of his/her valuation or opportunities for promotion to higher positions within the workplace, his/her performance is not considered of full value. Reluctance of employers may also origin from their insufficient knowledge about advantages of such organisation of work models, from their concerns about increasing demands on operating conditions, administrative difficulty, etc.

Low proportion of the use of flexible forms of work is besides the objective barriers subject to concerns of employees themselves. Subjective reasons are mainly the economic ones derived from the need of a household model with two incomes; a certain role can be played also by the ignorance of legislative and other possibilities. On all social and economic policy levels it should be required to improve framework conditions which should take into account various requirements and needs of employees, also concerning concrete possibilities for harmonization of work, family and personal life in different stages of the life cycle.
On the contrary, the more developed EU countries encourage social partners through a coordinated employment policy to negotiate and sign such agreements on all levels which respect the new models of work organisation and working time. The result is that the EU countries use gradually less and less standard-time jobs, standard employment contracts and standard lifelong work career. The economic benefit of such measures is for employers also significant. Awareness of all stakeholders has an important role in this process. It is necessary to have knowledge about the real situation in the area of organisation of work and working time in Slovakia and other EU countries, to monitor developments in the field as well as attitudes of employers and employees.

For example, specifically the part-time work in the current situation in Slovakia can, on one side, be a way out of the gender segregation at the labour market, long-term unemployment of women, etc. Especially for women, mothers of small children, it can be a chance to maintain their work habits, skills, it can be a stage which will help them to smoothly start full-time work after they get rid of their family responsibilities. On the other side, part-time work is a potential risk of lower valuation of the employee, limited promotion in his/her career, exclusion from participation in education and other benefits.

New forms of organisation of work and working time should be therefore (optimally) accompanied by a wide range of social and family-friendly measures in support of women and men taking into account the various possibilities, backgrounds and limitations of employees. From the economic point of view, it is also a long-term question of competitive advantages since in the future mainly the young people will search for new jobs in other companies that will demonstrate flexibility and will consider the needs of family. The fact that the forms of employment differ has to be taken into account by all actors. The area of equal opportunities, promotion of diversity at workplace does not show immediate and definite victory. However, activity and involvement in this field may bring to individual subjects, including specific and production ones, concrete improvements, benefits, permanent benefits applicable also from the point of view of sustainability and prosperity of the company.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is considered as one of the most effective promotion and enhancement of diversity in the employment relations. Corporate Social Responsibility tends to indicate a new way of doing business which corresponds to the ethical, legal, commercial and social expectations or goes beyond them, plus voluntary integration of social and ecological considerations into everyday company business operations and interactions.
CSR is an umbrella term for a variety of activities starting from ecology and community work, through employers rights, business ethics, to equal opportunities for men and women and harmonization of work and family life. Their common denominator is a general social benefit and the fact that the initiator and executor are commercial companies. Cooperation with non-profit sector, government, municipalities, etc. is required. Specifically, CSR is expressed by reflecting positive attitudes, practices and programmes in business strategies of companies on the level of higher management. The attitude towards the social role of a company from “profit only” (to create profit only) to the notion of a broader context that is hidden under the 3Ps: People, Planet (where we live), Profit, is changing. While it is still the matter of economic growth, emphasis is simultaneously placed on environmental and social aspects of business, the so called Triple-Bottom-Line. The three pillars are:

1. **Economic sphere:**
   - Code of business conduct of a company
   - Transparency, rejection of corruption
   - Principles of good governance
   - Relations with shareholders
   - Relations with consumers, customers, suppliers and investors
   - Protection of intellectual property.

2. **Social sphere:**
   - Promotion of equal opportunities for men and women, e.g. by promoting participation of women in the top management
   - Rules for occupational safety and health of employees
   - Human capital development
   - Compliance with labour standards
   - Work-life balance of employees
   - Human resource diversity at the workplace (ethnic minority, handicapped and disabled people, elderly people)
   - Ensure further use of redundant employees
   - Promotion of human rights
   - Corporate philanthropy
3. *Environmental sphere:*

- Ecological production, products and services
- Ecological corporate policy (recycling, use of ecological products)
- Protection of natural resources

Other frequently mentioned direct benefits for a company in accordance with the principles of social responsibility:
- More attractive for investors
- Better transparency
- Credibility
- Long-term sustainability of the company
- Increased loyalty and productivity of employees
- Strengthening of reputation and resulting into strengthening of the market position
- Competitive advantage, better potential for recognition of brand by the consumer
- Creation of background for a successful commercial operation
- Decrease of costs for managing risks
- Building of political capital (improving the position for current and future practice)
- Establishment of dialogue with surrounding resulting into mutual support
- Direct financial savings associated with ecological practice.

The trend of corporate social responsibility policy is growing and at present it is focused mainly upon the above mentioned new partnerships.

*Council of Europe* considers social conditions that are created for families to implement their basic functions, as a very important pre-condition for social cohesion. Focusing on promotion of “good” family while respecting principles of gender equality and equal opportunities in general, is therefore striking:

- Measures to support boy and men in decision making concerning education and employment in areas predominantly represented by women and vice versa, in order to eliminate gender segregation at the labour market
- Taking concrete steps to eliminate differences in remuneration of men and women
- Recognition of gender mainstreaming in the health area: projects and services to support health should be modified, as required, to (different) needs of women and men
• Implementation of a wide range of policies for harmonization of work and family life for men and women on all levels of employment, taking into account a large number of different types of families in the current society and the best interest of the child.

• Key role of social partners and enterprises in the harmonization policies, in promotion of schemes for increase of awareness in enterprises and in promotion of the use of flexible work opportunities, mainly by men including professions, where men prevail.

The year 2010, from the point of view of the future of equal opportunity policies, is extremely important. Already in 2009, outputs of the EU working committees whose agenda was related to gender equality and equal opportunities, tried to formulate expected priorities and challenges for future activities in the next period, i.e. after 2010. New challenges and group, marked as “cross cutting” challenges, are specified.

From the new specified challenges we bring those having connection, impact and effect on equal opportunities at the labour marker, respectively promoting diversity in employment relations:

Equality of men and women in the framework of environmental and sustainable development - activation, promotion of innovative environmental policies including gender aspect, respectively need of the fundamental role of women in production and management of natural resources for a purpose of sustainable development and quality of life of current and future generations. The current evaluation of gender dimension in the environmental areas is being assessed as insufficient. It requires focus of professional attention to:

- If and to which extend will women be involved in decision-making in the environmental area,
- If and to which extend their needs, interests, attitudes are and will be integrated into sustainable development policies,
- Which effects, impacts of environmental policies and sustainable development policies upon women are estimable, predictable and forecastable,
- That gender mainstreaming is one of the principles and tools for good “management” of public affairs in this area.

Different impact of economic and finance breakdown upon women and men – in respect to their different positions in economic and social spheres. It is necessary to obtain
data about the situation of groups of women and men and present the revealed differences to responsible European and national political actors. The interest must focus on potential different impacts of financial and economic crises upon women and men, in terms of both direct and indirect promotion of gender equality including issues related to public expenditure. In many EU countries, in the context of significant reduction of public expenditure in social services, education, health, social protection are women more vulnerable, because in those sectors works a high percentage of women and a significant part of them work in part-time jobs.

**Intercultural dialogue, integration, migration and asylum policies from the point of view of gender perspective** – points out at the lack of knowledge and data in this area with the regard to the fact that implementation of the above mentioned issues is one of the main social challenges of the future. In this context it is urgent to overcome the cultural stereotypes of the roles of men and women. So far, the immigration policies are set up gender neutrally what has ultimately indirect discrimination effects upon women (preference for highly skilled migrants, selective systems favouring men). Thus the integration policies have to pay more attention to women-migrants with the objective to strengthen their integration at the labour markets of the host country.

**Support of women and men health** – many important documents adopted on the EU level speak about the need of recognition and highlighting the gender equality in the issues of public health as an important part of health policies. In the next period, the gender agenda in the health area must be more specific, more concrete, with long-term objective of achieving longer life expectancy and more years lived in good health conditions.

The so called cross-sectoral challenges for the future period:

**Elimination of gender stereotypes across sectors** – gender stereotypes are also an obstacle to transformation processes, hinder the full exploitation of human capital and social resources. Stereotypes are seen in various forms and on different levels of economic, social and individual life conditioning various forms of segregation and not full participation. It is reported that cultural stereotypes in relation to men are a barrier of their full participation, even excluding them from family life and educational processes related to their own children. It is especially strongly emphasised that the future interventions should pay attention to the
role issues of boys, men, fathers using the role and impact of mass media in overcoming the traditional role stereotypes.

**Multiple, cross-sectoral discrimination** – gender is a social construction – as such it is always connected with social class, ethnicity, race, religion, culture, disability, gender and age. Specific groups of men and women are much more at risk from multiple discrimination (lesbians, gays, migrant-women, disabled women and men). Multiple discrimination is spoken about too generally, in abstract terms – therefore we need to concentrate upon specific effects and implications of this phenomenon.
Good practice examples in promoting equal opportunities in Slovakia

Sylvia Porubánová, Institute for Labour and Family Research

New and very successfully growing forms of “good practice” in the area of equal opportunities are different types of competitions, awards and audits in various countries with the aim to raise profile of those companies and employers who do not behave to their employees only economically but also take into account their family situation, social and personal problems including open promotion of diversity at a workplace.

Such competitions started approximately in the middle of 90th – especially in Germany, later in Austria, Belgium and other countries. They are very popular and their development goes towards creation of comparable pan-European criteria with possibility to implement European audit. The idea to measure and assess the companies measures in terms of, firstly, family-friendly (and now also gender-positive policy and policy of equal opportunities in a broader context) personal policy was established in the United States of America. The Families & Work Institute (FWI) developed and in 1991 published the so called “family-friendly-index” (FFI), which indicates to which extend the company, institution and administration is behaving family-friendly. BFA®, berufundfamilie® audit is also based upon FFI. The German company Berufundfamilie owns the pan-European copyright of this audit, guarantees its professional implementation and secures continual public promotional activities. BFA® is a multifunctional tool for evaluation and promotion of family-friendly personal policy in all branches and sizes of companies, in public and private sphere, that evaluates family-friendly measures existing in companies by the help of wide range of criteria.

The catalogue of criteria consisting of 10 areas was developed on the basis of long-term cooperation of different experts and tested on dozens of companies. The catalogue tries to capture all areas in which actions and tools can support harmonization of work and family life, gender equality, equal opportunities at work. All activities in the catalogue have allocated points based upon which the individual companies are compared and evaluated.

The ten relevant areas of evaluation were taken over as a basic (in this case inspiring and preparatory) framework for evaluation and were included into the questionnaire of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family SR competition titled Family-friendly, gender-positive and equal opportunities employer. The areas are as follows:
1. Working time
2. Job description, working process
3. Workplace
4. Information and communication policy
5. Management
6. Staff development
7. Assessment of employees, system of services
8. Services for families
9. Corporate and personal policy data model
10. Company specifics

The audit, however, does not exclude involvement of other areas, criteria which correspond to the indicated problem areas in a particular country. Individual areas are monitored also from the point of view of:

- costs effects
- impact on performance
- impact on human capital

The level of audit captures implemented measures as well as depth of their implementation. The system allows measurements on the following levels:

- institutionalisation
- target groups
- use and transfer
- actual support

The first two levels describe the **framework**, the second two **experienced culture of the society**.

In Slovakia, the competition **“Family-friendly employer”** was initiated on the occasion of the International Family Day (15 May) in 2000. It was launched by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family SR (hereinafter MOLSAF SR) who became also the guarantor of the competition. The main objective of the competition is to motivate employers to create such conditions that are sensitive to the family responsibilities of employees, and public
appreciation of those employers who systematically pay attention to harmonization of work and family life, as well as to promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities.

Because of the comprehensive approach and appreciation, this year, which is the year of its 10th anniversary, the competition will be held already for the third time in an innovative form and content what is reflected also in its title *Family friendly, gender-positive and equal opportunities employer.*

**Basic topic of the competition:**
Family friendly, gender-positive and equal opportunities employer = triple benefit: for the employer, employee and the society.

**Forms of awards:**
- award Family friendly, gender-positive and equal opportunities employer,
- entry into the List of employers (entitled are only those employers who in the framework of the competition won award at least three times).

**The information in the questionnaire required from the registered employers:**
- in what are the assessed conditions for employers above the standard of those conditions that are guaranteed by the Labour Code (and related legislation),
- what is the range of measures and benefits that are provided to the employees,
- how is secured the use of provided measures,
- structure of employees by sex, application of equal opportunities and non-discrimination.

**Assessment procedure:**
- assessment of compliance with formal criteria (adherence to the deadline, compliance of the material),
- analysis of provided data (processing of questionnaires),
- presentation of the analysis results to the Commission responsible for the competition,
- check and verification of data by the members of the Commission,
- elaboration of proposals for award and their approval by the Commission,
- submitting of information on the proposals for award to the top management of MOLSAF SR,
- award given by the Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the SR.
Structure of the Commission:

The Commission for implementation of the competition consists of representatives of:

- Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the SR
- Centre of Labour, Social Affairs and Family
- Employers associations and unions of the SR
- Trade unions of the SR
- Institute for Labour and Family Research
- Institute for Public Affairs
- Slovak National Centre for Human Rights
- Women ´s Lobby of Slovakia

Over the past decade, the agenda of equal opportunities significantly accelerated - in term of the scope of its “expansion” and deepening of themes and objectives. On the following pages we provide a selection of concrete measures mentioned in the questionnaires by the employers involved in competition.

We would like to point out that it is more a summary of examples of measures and services, than the formal and contextual innovation of the competition. Moreover, (compared to the current state and priorities) the stress upon financial benefits, reductions, loans, as well as health programmes, leisure and recreational activities, benefits for family members could be better seen. In any case, this concerns the procedures, methods or activities which proved to be effective for achieving the defined objective, something that works well, delivering good results as is recommended to be taken as a model. Those are therefore good practices which in the most cases meet the requirements defined (at the beginning of this publication) under the title good practice:

1. Working time and its flexibility

- Flexible working day (moved start and end of the working time) in non-productive entities
- Flexible working week available to all employees
- Flexible working week – for a selected group of employees
- Flexible four-week working period at those workplaces where the character of production allows it
- Flexible four-week working period based upon the decision of the chief of the enterprise
- Part-time work for employees with changed work capacity (with disabilities)
- Part-time work (shortened working hours) in individual legitimate cases
- Part-time work (shortened working hours) at workplaces where the nature of production allows it
- Shortened working day or week – in legitimate cases
- Shortened working day or week at workplaces where the nature of production allows it
- Uneven distribution of working time for employees commuting from distance bigger than 100 km
- Uneven distribution of working time for a specific group of employees (in shops)
- Individually optional working time for selected employees between 6.00 am - 8.00 pm.
- Break in protected workshops according to the personal needs of employees with reduced work capacity and health restrictions
- Break for employees working in contaminated workplaces, needed for hygienic purification before the end of the shift

2. Time-off

- Group time-off with wage compensation during organisation of significant events, trainings
- Individual time-off with wage compensation for lecturing in the interest of increase of qualification
- General time-off with wage compensation for all employees during the company day
- Group time-off with wage compensation for participants of sport games representing the company
- Day off with wage compensation for participants of companies’ events (sport or social)
- Individual time-off (1 – 2 days) with wage compensation for mowing of an employee
- Individual time-off (2 days) with wage compensation for mowing of an employee from one municipality to another one and 1 day for moving in the same municipality
- Time-off without wage compensation for moving of the employee (1 – 2 days)
- Time-off with wage compensation for medical investigation or treatment of an employee in medical facility
- 1 day off for women employees whose child begins to attend compulsory education – the first day of the school year
• Individual time-off (10 working days) with wage compensation per year for accompanying a child with disabilities to social care facilities or special boarding school
• 1 day-off per year for single women or men taking care of a child under 10 years of age
• 1 day-off in a quarter of a year with wage compensation for single parents of children under 12 years of age
• 2 days-off in a calendar year with wage compensation for all single parents (women or men) taking care of at least one child under 15 years of age
• 1 day-off with wage compensation for all women who worked in the company for at least one year
• Group time-off with wage compensation for women – 1 day in May
• Time-off with wage compensation on the occasion of the birth of the employee’s child (various: 2 days...)
• Time-off with wage compensation on the occasion of the employee’s own wedding
• Time-off with wage compensation on the occasion of the employee’s child wedding – 1 day
• Time-off with wage compensation when a family member dies - 4 days and 1 further day for participation in the funeral
• Time-off with wage compensation when a family member dies in the range of 1 – 2 working days
• Time-off with wage compensation when a family member dies – 3 days
• Individual time-off with wage compensation in order to attend a funeral of a staff member
• Time-off with wage compensation for a member of wind orchestra or choir for participation at a funeral
• Depending on the operational conditions, interruption of work during the working day in legitimate cases
• Time-off without wage compensation in serious family or other reasons, if it cannot be handled outside working hours
• Time-off without wage compensation for unseen interruption of traffic or public transport delay
• Time-off with wage compensation for employees with severe disabilities in case of problems to get to work in bad weather conditions
• Unpaid time-off to the maximum of 3 months for the relevant calendar year after using the relevant time of holiday for relaxation
- 14 days-off without wage compensation for students of universities who receive no concessions and 2 days to prepare for the exam and do the exam
- Provision of time-off for study for a period of 1 week in a school year
- Provision of time-off in a period of 1/2 days per week during notice period

3. Flexibility of work organisation and support from the side of the employer

- Mobile telework for top managers and other managers while the employer provides the technical equipment and reimburses costs (telephone, internet)
- Telework and mobile telework for company sales representatives, provision of technical equipment and reimbursement of costs by employer is included in the individual contract between the employee and the company.

4. Personal development of employees

- Lifelong learning for all categories of employees in the working time – vocational and professional education and training of employees in the company and outside the company, while the employer funds increase of qualification in full
- In case of interest to participate in further education during maternity/paternity leave
- Increase of qualification in working time – depending on the needs of the company (professional, technical, language, PC, statutory training)
- Financing of increase of qualifications, if it is “in interest of the company”
- Possibilities for distance study on a company university, while the best students shall be reimbursed for the total costs of study
- Signing an agreement with a university, thus ensuring by the organisation the bachelor’s and engineering study directly at the workplace for all groups of staff
- Possibility to do secondary study during working time
- Re-qualification courses during working time for scarce/critical professions
- Established system of periodical education via training taking into account the performed activities, seminars and trainings focused at improvement of management activities – on the costs of the employer
- Language courses free of charge for workers and technical and economic workers
- Financing of language courses
- Organisation of language courses in company educational facilities
• Organisation of language courses for all employees according to their interest – 70 % of costs funded by employer
• Study stays and training abroad in branch offices of the company
• Possibilities to work in branch offices abroad
• Individual agreements of employers with employees – setting of special goals for which an employee receives a bonus of 1 000 SVK (5 times a year)
• Working with talents, creating databases of talents and management of career development
• Career plans – preparation of employees for more demanding managerial positions in corporate education: an individual action plan for career development of an employee including stays and forms of education will be prepared, that the employee has to undergo
• In case of dismissal of an employee, the employer helps them find a new job in the region.

5. Assistance with care for children and family members

• Corporate kindergarten
• Operation of a private kindergarten
• Assistance with placement of employees’ children in nurseries or kindergartens in the municipality
• Organisation of events for employees’ children with presents, games and refreshment (International Children’s day, Open Day, Santa Claus...)
• Organisation of cultural and sports events for employees’ children (e.g. Sports Day)
• Contribution for domestic spa stays and spa stays abroad for employees’ children
• Soft loan from social fund for spa stays of the employees’ children
• Contribution for children’s camp in the amount of 40 % of the total costs
• Contribution for children’s camp organised/co-organised by the trade unions in the amount of 50 % of the total costs
• Contribution of 1 000 SVK for organised stays for employees’ children, as well as organisation of own children recreations
• Contribution for “school in nature” or domestic children’s camps organised by the employer – in the amount of 100 SVK per child per day
• Contribution from the social fund for purchase of holiday stays for children
• Privileged purchase of holiday stays for employees’ schoolchildren in specialised travel agencies (in summer and winter)
• “Summer project KYTIČKA” – aimed at care for employees´ children under the age of 10 years in private kindergarten operated by the company during summer holiday
• In case that both parents work for the same employer – allow to rotate shifts so that they can take care of their children
• Lump-sum social assistance or loan during care for a sick family member
• Assistance at organisation of funeral of an employee or a family member
• Support of the civic association “Úmrtná svojpomoc” – execution of funerals and related activities

6. Assistance with house keeping

• Company shop
• Catering facility in the company premises with non-stop operations where it is possible to buy food
• Lending of instruments to employees of the company
• Lending of company car on the occasion of wedding of an employee
• Provision of transport and mechanical equipment for private purposes
• Lending of car or bus and machines for cleaning
• Discount of 40 – 50 % for the purchase of company products
• Possibility to purchase company products in company shops for overheads
• Bargain of industrial goods in own shops at the agreed interest-free instalments
• Discount of 5 – 12 % for purchase of company products after one year of employment
• Possibility to purchase company products on lease
• The so called European purchase programme – discount of 27% for other company products (3 products per year)
• Possibility to buy white and brown technique from contractual dealers with a substantial discount
• Interest-free loans for purchase of flat, or repair and reconstruction of a flat (in various amounts)
• Interest-free loan for purchase of furniture and other facilities
• Loan from the social fund for purchase of flat in private ownership
• Interest-free loan for purchase of car for managers and executives
• Sale of computers, office furniture or waste for a symbolic price
• Lending of medical devices (bio lamps, heaters, sunlamps...)

7. Financial benefits for employees and their families

• Contribution at the occasion of death of a family member
• Contribution to family on the occasion of death of the company employee
• Possibility to provide non-repayable social assistance to the survivors in case of fatal accident of an employee
• Contribution to an employee at his/her 50th birthday
• Contribution on life anniversaries (50th birthday and then every 5 years,...)
• Contribution at retirement
• Contribution at the first retirement (for each year worked in the company in continuous employment at least for 5 years = 200 SVK per each year)
• Contribution on employment anniversaries (25 years of work in the company and each 5 years, or after 10 years in company and then each 5 years, or 20 years in the company and then each 5 years...)
• In addition to financial contributions at life and company anniversaries the employees receive checks which they can use for the family purposes
• Child birth allowance
• At family and life anniversaries (wedding, child birth, name-day, birthday...) colleagues buy presents to which contribute also the manager from his/her social fund
• Contribution for transport to work
• Contribution for transport of employees using contractual transport services
• Contribution for accommodation of employees using contractual accommodation facilities
• Financial benefit at long-term sick-leave of an employee
• Non-repayable contribution for employees in extraordinary serious situation caused by natural disasters or long-term civilisation diseases
• Based upon the request, contribution in case of social need of an employee (up to the amount of 20 000 SVK)
• Interest-free loan in case of social need
• Increased interest-free loan in case of emergencies
• Social loan or non-repayable social assistance at occupational accident, death in family, long-term sickness absence or unavoidable financial distress (5 000 SVK, exceptionally 10 000 SVK)

• The so called retirement pension – in case of social distress of the family, the employer insured in supplementary pension insurance can receive the amount of contributions paid by the employer and employee for the last 12 month

• Lump-sum social assistance

• From initiative of employees, financial collection for employees affected by natural disasters (floods...)

• Establishment of a foundation with the objective to provide social assistance to families of employees

• Possibility to provide interest-free loan for study costs of the employees’ children

• Financial contribution for each blood donation

• Contribution for blood donation (prof. Jan Jánsky plaquette)

• Christmas bonus on the level of 100 hours of an average monthly salary

• Christmas allowance of 5 000 SVK to all employees

• Holiday bonus on the level of 50 hours of an average monthly salary

• Holiday salary for all employees

• Summer holiday allowance of 5 000 SVK for all employees

• Reimbursement of holiday costs up to 25 – 30 %

• Contribution for supplementary pension insurance in two insurance companies in the amount of the level of contribution of the employee (1 – 4 %)

• Contribution of the employer for the supplementary pension insurance in the amount of 1,9 – 4 % of the gross salary of an employee

• Provision of contribution for supplementary pension insurance in contracted insurance companies

• Counselling for employees in supplementary pension insurance

• Once a year, meeting with pensioners including presentation of the company results, cultural programme, plant tour, ceremonial lunch and presents

• Financial contribution of 500 SVK to each pensioner – former employee

• Possibility of catering provided to pensioners – former employees

• Provision of contribution for catering to former employees of the company, at least for one meal per day
8. Support of leisure and recreational activities

- Establishment of a playground for collective sports, tennis and premises for table tennis – free accessible to all employees and their family members
- Possibility to use company fitness centre (employees and their family members)
- Possibility to use tennis court in the areal of the company (employees and their family members)
- Contribution for use of contracted sport facilities (swimming pools, fitness centres ...)
- Possibility to use free of charge leased sport facilities
- Free of charge season tickets to the swimming pool
- Possibility to use gym in the city, village
- Organisation of sports games with international participation of the CEO cup
- Provision of prizes and refreshment during sport tournaments
- Corporate recreational facilities that can be used by all employees during the whole year
- Wellness for employees and their family members organised in the company’s own recreational facility twice a year with a possibility to use services of the rehabilitation centre free of charge
- Contribution for use of services of the company rehabilitation centre
- Contribution for regeneration of the work force for each employee twice a year
- Possibility to use a massage centre
- Company pays for 2/3 of the season ticket to the relax centre and solarium
- Purchase of tickets for employees to relaxation facilities (swimming pool, sauna, rehabilitation procedures,...)
- Provision of re-condition stays for employees of chosen professions
- Contribution of 50 – 100 % for cultural events
- Organisation of cultural events with a majority financial contribution from the side of the employer
- Provision of tickets for cultural events for employees and their family members
- Provision of transport for cultural events
- Financial contribution for company recreation in contractual recreational facilities
- Organisation of exchange recreational stays with domestic and foreign partners
- Purchase of recreation stays from travel agencies for employees
- Discounts for all excursions in selected travel agencies
• Contribution from the social fund for all forms of recreation in the amount of 40 – 60 % of the stay
• Contribution of maximum 50 % of the stay in case of a selective trade union domestic recreation or recreation abroad or purchase of trips organised by the travel agency (max. 5000 SVK per employee per year)
• Contribution of maximum 2/3 of the value of the company recreation in facilities of other employers or exchange recreation or in leased premises
• Free of charge use of company recreation facilities
• Personal accounts for all employees with possibility to use it according to their own needs – for cultural events, sports activities or excursions
• The so called “facultative check” from the social fund in the amount of 1 000 SVK per year – the employee decides how he/she will use it.

9. Health care for employees

• Cooperation with medical centres – provision of professional investigation and treatment for employees
• Based upon contract on cooperation with 5 medical centres, the employees and their family members can receive on their request preferential health care
• Special health care also for family members
• Establishment of a programme of preventive health care with financial contribution from the side of the employer (complex preventive medical checks)
• Multivitamin programme for all employees
• Free of charge vaccination against flu
• Vaccination against flu in a company medical centre
• Once a year, free of charge oncological examinations for women (mammography) in a company medical centre
• Medical checks above the Labour Code
• Preventive gynaecological examinations also for wives, or daughters of employees
• Free of charge provision of any medical confirmations for employees by the company doctor
• Contribution for outpatient medical care
10. Relationship of family members and the company

- Family members are welcome to participate in company events (Open Day, International Children Day, Santa Claus, sports events...)
- Possibility to attend company university also by the family members
- Participation of family members in sports tournaments: indoor football tournament of individual departments, football tournament for the CEO cup, tennis tournament, volleyball tournament, table tennis tournament,
- Olympic games of employees – summer, winter
- Participation of family members in cultural events: theatre performances, concerts, musicals
- Possibility to use company playgrounds also by family members
- Participation in the so called company day (once a year)
- Annual carnival in masks
- Company balls and May carnival
- Christmas celebration
- Christmas concert
- Possibility to use clubs and other premises free of charge (family celebrations, social meetings, etc...)
- Weekend stays for employees and their families
- Organisation of sightseeing tours
- Trips to Poland including cultural events or shopping
- Professional practice for children and other family members of the employees
- Possibility for employees’ children to take practical exercises in the company
- Technical assistance in writing thesis and seminar papers
- Possibility to copy documents for children, binding of documents, provision of office material
- Organisation of excursions for family members
- When recruiting new staff, the so called family “tradition” is taken into account, if possible, (family members working in the company)
- In the event of unemployment of family members, they can be preferentially employed in the company
- Provision of counselling in the event of unemployment of a family member and assistance in problem solving
11. **Information of employees about possibilities for receiving support, about activities**

- Information about possibilities at the admission to the company in the framework of the so-called adaptation programme
- Collective agreement
- Regular information to employees about programmes and existing advantages provided personally by the staff of the human resource department
- Information panel located at the entrance into the production
- Company newspaper
- Twice a year published the so-called company information
- Notice board
- Posters on information boards
- E-mail
- Intranet – in-house information system
- Information centre
- Brochures
- Summer and winter catalogue with holiday offers
- Company radio
- Once in 2 months meeting of employees with the top management (or at any significant event)
- Regular meetings with the heads of individual departments
- Production consultations

12. **Involvement of the company management in support of families**

- “Face to face” interviews – personal discreet conversation of the manager with the employee about his/her work, comments, proposals, requirements, situation in family, problems
- Management participate in creation of collective agreement, plans and proposals
- Management regularly meet with employees at the workplace and outside the company (celebrations, dinners, goulash parties)
- Management regularly participate in company events
- Management participate in creation, evaluation and check of social care provided to employees
- Inquiry aimed at detection of employees’ needs
- Cooperation with a trade union organisation
- Call for submission of ideas, comments for creation of collective agreement.

**Basic objectives of the innovated (since 2008) competition:**

- to increase awareness and sensitiveness of the society about issues of mutual relationship of labour and family,
- to motivate employees to implement family-friendly, gender-positive measures and measures for equal opportunity,
- to disseminate application of new models of corporate culture, ideas about helpfulness and their effects for increase of productivity, creativity, loyalty, satisfaction and reliability of employees,
- to increase awareness about a flexible organisation of work and working time, family-friendly social programme including services for family, as well as about corporate social responsibility,
- to promote gender equality in access to employment, working conditions, professional growth and career, remuneration, and to eliminate gender stereotypes,
- to disseminate ideas about helpfulness and its effect on increase of productivity, creativity, loyalty, satisfaction and reliability of employees.

We would like to point out that the innovated competition cancelled division of participating companies into categories – those companies who register for competition have to fill in a questionnaire, aspire to a complete assessment and evaluation (which responds to the European commitment of equal opportunities as an integral and inclusive agenda, as well as future emphasis upon other areas of equal opportunities (age, ethnicity, race, health disadvantage, etc.)

At the same time, each year the Commission grants a special, always “predetermined from a different optics”, award, what on one side increases the competitiveness and creativity and on the other side brings to the competition “a moment of expected surprise”. In this case, the competing companies are informed only after evaluations for which of the extraordinary activities they were awarded.
At present, the basic framework of the competition in Slovakia is its compatibility with the current content and priorities of the European family-friendly and gender-positive agenda as well as ambition of “escalating” and joining the competition with the relevant European audit. The currently prioritised areas and aspects of family-friendly or gender-friendly policies by the EU are:

**Working time** – measure aimed at creation of flexible working time:
- Flexibility in scope of work,
- Possibility to modify working time,
- Flexible working day,
- Flexible working week,
- Shortened working time,
- Organisation of breaks during work,
- Rules for spending time-off - breaks,
- Release from work,
- Individual time-off with or without refund of wages,
- Group time-off with or without refund of wages,
- Possibility to interrupt work during day ...

**Job description, work procedures** – elements and methods of flexible work organisation:
- flexible configuration and distribution of work tasks,
- team work,
- shared job,
- possibility to work at home,
- work on call ...

**Working place**:
- use of new information and communication technologies as a means for saving time, costs as well as a factor helping to develop creativity of employees ...

**Information and communication policy**:
- ways and forms of internal awareness about family-friendly activities and measures in enterprise,
- internal information and public benefit work through activities supporting family,
- continual awareness about possibilities and use of family-friendly measures,
- original and specific forms,
- use of internet, discussion and information forums, corporate magazines, open days, information leaflets, brochures, areas ...

**Competence of managers:**
- family-friendly behaviour of top employees as a reflection of modern corporate culture,
- couching,
- corporate rules and philosophy,
- development of social competencies of top managers,
- mentoring programmes ...

**Personal development:**
- consideration of family circumstances,
- opportunities for further education and career development and helping employees with family responsibilities,
- measures to ensure equal access of women and men to employment and career development,
- measures for increase of qualification,
- lifelong learning,
- promotion and mobilisation or personal competences ...

**Financial and social support for employees with family responsibilities:**
- remuneration above the legal provisions,
- various types of bonuses,
- bonuses depending on performance,
- financial benefits to families of employees on the occasion of special family events,
- forms of support to employees during taking care of sick, elderly family members,
- contribution to leisure, cultural activities,
- parental contributions from the company ...
Services to families:
- provision and scope of services (care) for children and other family members who need/require care,
- company (kindergarten) school,
- contribution for use of similar facility in the vicinity of the organisation,
- summer programmes and stays for children,
- support of free time activities for children and parents,
- in-house consulting for family,
- centres and consulting for youth,
- promoting relationships of family members with the organisation...

Enterprise and personal policy data model:
- in-house statistics,
- surveys, evidence for the purpose of streamlining the management and decision-making process,
- relevant and up-to-date data on motivation, satisfaction with job, readiness to perform,
- information and data on personal structure of employees, on utilisation of working time, on planning of labour costs ...

Specifics of the company, enterprise, organisation:
- under which the employers can use different innovative benefits which they can use according to their type of business.

Under the actual conditions in Slovakia, it should be taken into account also the potential asymmetry, respectively not obvious complementariness of needs, expectations of employers and employees, as well as not yet integral character of related and conditional areas as e.g. corporate social responsibility, cooperation, “networking” of decision-makers, diverse state of equal opportunities for men and women. Therefore the following points are explicitly included in the assessed areas, as e.g.:

Paternity leave and model of shared parental leave:
- promotion of active fatherhood,
- participation of employees in parental leave,
- consideration of partner in personal development activities,
- adjustment of working time because of family obligations...

**Corporate social responsibility:**
- in terms of the above-standard working environment, above-standard working conditions for employees,
- in terms of promotion of diversity of employees,
- in term of extra investments into development of human capital, environmental activities of the organisation in municipality, region of its seat,
- in term of corporate philanthropy ...

**Cooperation “networking”:**
- actors/actresses on state, sectoral, regional, local levels who are the best partners of the organisation in the area of family-friendly policy and policy of equal opportunities for men and women,
- ways, forms of cooperation or “networking”,
- ideas, experience from the actually implemented projects – both domestic and international – with effect upon the family life and personal satisfaction of employees ...

**Intentions and challenges in the area of family-friendly policy and policy of equal opportunities for men and women:**
- ideas, suggestions, action plans, which from various reasons are not implemented, or there is no opportunity to implement them,
- ideas, suggestions, action plans, which were not mentioned but despite of it are considered to be interesting or important ...

The form of questionnaires is also European compatible and it:
- includes the mentioned “obligatory” dimensions
- places emphasis on open questions
- leaves room for self-expression of employers
- respects original approaches given the different size, financial possibilities, regional and local relevancy of enterprises
• Stresses diversity of the staff composition of entities applying for recognition as an aspired value
• Eliminates possibilities to ask superfluous respectively declarative and unverifiable affirmations in the questionnaire

Examples of newer, original measures implemented by employers in Slovakia:

• **Directives on further education** – subject to certain conditions and approval process, employees have a possibility to get funds for his/her further education in the amount of 3000 EUR per year
• **Information on newly created positions in the company** – regularly sent to all employees (including women on maternity leave) by e-mail, all employees can apply, there is no exclusion based on age or sex, the only criterion is the experience, education and practice in the given specialisation
• **Catalogue of vacancies** – accessible to all employees
• **Salary and benefit surveys in the company** – personal consultation of an employee with manager, individually reflecting employee’s performance and needs
• **Regular annual survey in organisation** – about satisfaction of employees
• **Contribution for pre-school facilities** – 100 EUR per child and employee per year
• **Compensation money and discharge benefit beyond the law** – up to the amount of 16 times the average wage
• **Bonus extra vacation days for each employee**
• **Loyalty programmes**
• **Bonus paid days-off** – according to the internal company guidelines
• **Benefit compensation of net income** – up to 100 % for temporary sickness absence or care of a family member maximum up to 60 days in a calendar year
• **Mobility programme** – mobile telework + work at home + work at client premises according to the employee’s composition
• **Discussion, information forums, round tables, workshops** on pre-defined or arbitrary topics
• **Projects for increase of awareness on cultural diversity among employees**
• **Week of health, Week of balance of work and personal life** – activities focused at promotion of a balanced, healthy life style of employees
• **Above-standard health care** – including year-long care by all specialists
• Rehabilitation service packages
• Wellness weekends
• **Relaxation centres** directly at workplace
• **Mum and Dad Mixer** – focused at exchange of experience, information about preparation for parenthood, education of children, pre-school facilities, return to the company after maternity leave
• **Women network Group** – voluntary association of women in the company with the aim to create open environment where all employees can reach the best regardless their origin, culture, age, sex
• **Tehotlates** – special exercises in company fitness centre for pregnant women
• **Programmes for support of mothers leaving for maternity leave**
• **Child-birth allowance** – 15 000,- SVK as expression of company support
• **Playgrounds for children** – with supervision which can be used by employees e.g. during 1-day vacations so they do not need to take holiday or other type of days-off
• **Unique communication tools and applications**, which support team work and innovations
• **Video conferences**
• **Electronic medical cards**
• **Electronic discussion forums**
• **Training on typology of personality, conflict solution, time management, etc. ...**
• **Mobile telework** – work at different places using new telecommunication technologies
• **Internal company “Facebook”** – allowing to share skills, experience, interests
• **E-learning education and on-line courses** (also during maternity leave)
• **Trainings through mobile telephone** (Blackberry) – which enable employees to have access to education anywhere and at any time
• **Mentoring** – programme aimed at individual development of employees in the working process
• **System of career development** – a tool for medium-term and long-term career planning
• **Internal code of ethics** – including equal access of men and women
• **Voluntary codes of ethics** – aimed at coherence of ethical and company values
• **Code of conduct** – obligatory for all employees

• **Ethical counselling** – lead by an expert – how to avoid “burn-out”, conflicts, etc. ...

• **Days of diversity** – series of workshops focused at the topic of equal opportunities including disabilities

• **Training on gender differences** – with the aim to optimize communication and working styles in regard to the needs and expectations of both sexes

• **Company action plan of gender equality** – assessed once a year, including relevant report

• **Anti-discrimination agreement** – support of women at maternity and parental leave through education, information and involvement in activities of the company

• **Low-costs company projects**, supporting e.g. balance of work and family life – mutual sharing of ideas and activities

• **Targeted company philanthropy**

• **Development of voluntary activities**

• **Support of the third sector**

• **Strategy of community investment and commitment**

• **Activities of the company useful for the general public**, focused on the most vulnerable groups of population with stress on active involvement of employees

• **Programmes focused on devoting time for charity purposes**

• **Continuous blood donorship in companies**

• **Books24x7** – site which allows 24 hours a day, 7 days per week access to digital books, research reports, documentation, articles

• **Future Leaders** – annually organised program for several months with the objective to improve performance of key talents at managerial positions through development of their professional skills, deepening their overview about business, motivation for their further development and growth

• **Action plans for improvement of key indicators of employee satisfaction and motivation.**

Beside the above mentioned, “lessons learned” from both bad and good experience and practice from the previous years of competition, as well as stress upon the regional scope
of the competition and regional and local specifics and limit, recognition of unequal background of competing subjects, needs to be taken into account.

For a better illustration of all requirements on implementation of the equal opportunities measures in the new, innovated competition, we introduce description of activities, respectively justification of assessment of winners of the last, 9th year of competition (May 2009).

1st place:

IBM International Services Center, s.r.o. Bratislava - for matchless fulfilment of all monitored dimensions. For a complex and synergic approach and implementation of values and objectives to support family and diversity at workplace, for innovative creation of original products (e.g. in 2009 project (Mentoring for Cultural Intelligence Program) focused at building of awareness and respect to cultural diversity at workplace and trust among multicultural teams. For the new project A more Intelligent Planet, which internally links individual, group and social assumptions and effects in the framework of the CSR philosophy (the programme synergically links e.g. aspects of health care, banking, transport, public administration, IT infrastructure.)

Especially for very strong promotion of the equal opportunities for men and women policy in the company – concretely e.g. for a series of workshops for women (2009) Taking the stage – focused at improvement of managerial skills of IBM women, strengthening of ambition to became strong leaders. For the developed complex programme supporting women titled Maternity leave and return program, which solves a wide range of issues – starting with concerns of women to become pregnant, problems with loss of contacts due to maternity/parental leave, up to loss of skills in the technological environment and interest of women for part-time job.

For innovative measures/programme Work Life Balance, which allows employees to reconcile work, family and personal life, to integrate work, family, educational interests and interests of personal character (individual tools are e.g. mobile telework, work at home, form of divided work, individual work schedule, condensed working week ...)

ACCENTURE, Bratislava – for systematic and continual development and support of all monitored areas/dimensions with special stress upon use of elements and methods of
flexible organisation of work and creation o “friendly working environment” for working mothers.

For creation of special jobs for working mothers under working conditions and working time accommodated to their needs. For modification of working time and possibility to work at home for employees whose child is very ill. For special training that develops leadership capabilities of women. For programme to support women after maternity leave including rendering of career counselling. For special training “Making aware of gender differences” with the objective to improve communication and cooperation of both genders in teams. For the subsidy for kindergarten or school for children of employees. For providing psychological services (paid by the company) in crises situations of employees in work and privacy.

In the framework of corporate social responsibility, for development of corporate philanthropy, donorship and voluntarism – concretely for implementation of a unique project of re-socialisation of prisoners, for long-term support of organisation focused on fight against trafficking, for annual provision of grants to employees for their non-profit projects, for active participation of employees in renovation of monuments.

**GlaxoSmithKline Slovakia, s.r.o. Bratislava** – for creative, universal and long-term promotion of harmonization of work and family life, especially for support of mothers on parental leave, and for targeted development of flexible forms of work organisation.

Concretely for the two-year development programme Development forum, for talented colleagues from the non-managers where they can via training, work on projects and with mentors get education and experience facilitating their path to managerial positions.

For enabling women on maternity/parental leave to participate in annual management development programmes. For promotion of women into higher managerial functions during maternity leave (in 2008 two cases and in 2009 one case). For the repeated support of parents taking turns with the parental leave.

In the framework of the corporate social responsibility, for already the fourth year of grant call of the GSK fund *Give a hand and you will receive back the whole heart* (allowances to individual recipients in critical social and health conditions) – in 2009 in the amount of 40 000 EUR.
2nd place:

Sanofi-Aventi, s. r. o. Bratislava – for targeted and complex fulfilment of all monitored dimensions, with special emphasis on very strong financial and social support of employees with family obligations.

Especially for allowing work in “home office” several days a week for pregnant women and mothers with small children. For modification of working time (shortening) after maternity/parental leave. For regular anonymous surveys of employees satisfaction including monitoring of aspects of equal treatment and equal opportunities. For implementation of interesting pro-gender measures – e.g. contribution for a nurse for children or trainings during maternity leave in order to “keep the pace” with changes in the company (for support of those children who have a professional caretaker).

SLOVNAFT, a. s. Bratislava – for targeted and complex fulfilment of all monitored dimensions with a special emphasis on very strong financial and social support of employees with family obligations.

Concretely for various forms of financial and social assistance that have to improve the quality of life of employees and their families, to harmonize work, family and personal life of employees, mitigate stress, pressure and their effect upon the health of employees and life of their family. For a special holiday allowance paid in May to be used together with the family members. For Cafeteria System – optional social contribution based on the choice of the employee (relax – rest, sport) also for members of the family. For monthly lump-sum contribution above the Cafeteria system framework for social purposes based upon the decision of the employee. For the possibility for parents to take turns with the parental leave, for supporting fathers on parental leave.

In the framework of the corporate social responsibility, for assistance to the most vulnerable groups of population, for active involvement of employees in work useful for the public. For long-term partnership and support in the area of family policy and policy of equal opportunities: a protected workshop, social services home, Nota bene, (a streetpaper) Liga proti rakovine (League against cancer).

3rd place:

AQUASTYLE Slovakia, s. r. o. Považská Bystrica – for endeavour to fulfil all monitored dimensions under the conditions of small production company, for targeted support
of gender equality and preparation of women for managerial positions, for development of couching and methods of flexible organisation of work.

For a gender-balanced share of men and women at managerial positions in a highly technical production environment. For applying the methods of organisation of work using multi-professional skills of employees. For support of team cooperation in company under supervision of professional couches. For provision of company car for private and family purposes (transport on family holiday, wedding, moving, transport to doctor).

For mutually important and developed cooperation with technical universities (not only on theoretical but also on practical levels, participation in professional seminars and for holding lectures on selected topics).

Special award:

UNION, zdravotná poist'ovňa, a.s. (a health insurance company) Bratislava – for authentic and self-sacrificing promotion of equal opportunities in practice far beyond the obligations and “good practice”.

Mainly for long-term implementation of the project Healthy community in Roma settlements in Eastern and Central Slovakia related to more than 45 000 inhabitants (team of 102 doctors and 87 nurses disseminate health education, try to improve the health situation and accessibility to health care in 68 Roma settlements in Slovakia). Human resources for the project implementation (medical assistant) are selected for the first time in Slovakia directly from the inhabitants of the settlements. Part of the activities is also a permanent training and motivation trainings. Based upon the results, such institutions as the European Commission and the World Health Organisation expressed their interest in implementation of the project and its practical achievements. (*Among other things, 12 mil. SVK were invested for vaccination above the compulsory vaccination, they managed to increase vaccination and preventive medical checks at the sites of action by more than 20 % - the average is approximately 16% in Slovakia).

AV MOBILITA, s.r.o. – protected workshop Bratislava – for creation of work opportunities and integration of citizens with disabilities into working process.

It is a daughter organisation of the AutoValušek holding (the protected workshop represents, however, nearly a quarter of all holding employees). For the support of a regime of a shortened working week/day and possibility to work at home. For possibility to schedule the
working time of mothers with children according to their personal needs. For 50% representation of women in managerial functions, for gender-fair promotion of employees career development in conditions of multiple discrimination. Also for networking of protected workshops in Slovakia, their presentation and promotion to clients, for efforts to create know-how for disabled and long-term unemployed.

As it was mentioned above, the purpose of this and similar competitions is mainly to motivate and stimulate employees in creation and implementation of policies, measures, benefits which enable the employees to reconcile more effectively their work, family and personal life. It is anticipated that this will also manage to meet expectations of employees in connection with their satisfaction and loyalty as one of the guarantees of sustainable development and prosperity of the company.

It is also noteworthy that the constantly stronger emphasis of the competition regarding the needs of concrete disadvantaged groups under Slovak conditions (employees with disabilities, Roma men and women from marginalised environment), emphasis on aspects of multiple discrimination that occurs in practice. Thus, there is a gradual transfer from the attention of monitoring and assessment of family-friendly and gender-positive purposes to other aspects of (potential) discrimination.

In Slovakia, a big challenge is the absence of an authentic professional and political attention (in relation to the situation at the labour market, respectively with employers) paid to other groups (migrants, gays, lesbians, elderly employers). That means those groups without fair participation and full respect at the workplace of which we cannot speak about real diversity.
Good practices in non-discrimination – example of sexual harassment

Barbora Holubová, Institute for Labour and Family Research

Implementation of measures against sexual harassment at work is an example of gender non-discrimination, which is applicable also against bullying on other discrimination grounds. Before the proven measures for prevention and elimination of sexual harassment are presented, it is necessary to provide basic information on the character of this phenomenon.

Definition of sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is not classified as crime, but it is a form of gender discrimination and violation of the principle of equal treatment in employment relations, which is regulated by the Anti-Discrimination Act (Act. no 365/2004 Coll., as amended).

**Sexual harassment** is verbal, nonverbal or physical behaviour of a sexual nature, the purpose or effect of which is or may be violating the dignity of a person and which creates an intimidating, degrading, humiliating, hostile or offensive environment.

We differentiate two basic forms of sexual harassment:

- **Harassment for something** (sexual blackmailing, quid pro quo) – occurs when provision of sexual favours is demanded as bribery to get access to a job or to maintain it or some particular position or demanded under the threat of preventing promotion (part of the glass ceiling)

- **Hostile sexist and sexual environment** – includes all types of behaviour and acting of sexual or sexist nature, which make the work performance uncomfortable and difficult or create an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment (explicitly also sexual writings, pornographic pictures, calendars or magazines displayed at workplace)

Occurrence in Slovakia

Researches of sexual harassment in Slovakia have shown\(^{10}\) that it is quite a frequent and latent phenomenon at workplace. In a survey on a representative sample of working

---

population it was found out that 66.4% of the working population has experience with at least one manifestation of sexual harassment, 36.7% a direct personal experience and 55.5% of the respondents have an indirect experience. Women are subject to direct or indirect manifestations of sexual harassment twice as often as men. The three most common forms of sexual harassment are sexual jokes, comments of a sexual nature and inappropriate addressing; however, physical contacts (intimate touching and unwelcome familiarities) occur also quite often. The most frequently indicated initiators of sexual harassment were men – colleagues working on the same work position, sexual harassment by a supervisor occurred in approximately 17% of the cases.

Consequences of sexual harassment, reactions of victims and the course of cases

Although more than 80% of respondents with a personal experience have suffered from a psychic or even physical problem as a result of sexual harassment, only 13% of them have taken steps to defend themselves. Mostly these were passive defensive reactions in the form of ignorance and avoidance of the person. The three most common reasons for not defending oneself are these ones: the respondents did not consider it necessary to defend themselves (23% of responses), they took the view that defence would not solve anything (20% of responses), or even would aggravate the situation (16% of responses).

General views on sexual harassment

In assessing which sexual behaviour in the workplace can be considered sexual harassment, it was found out that sexual jokes, comments and inappropriate addressing is seen as sexual harassment by around 1/3 of the working population, while other manifestations by more than a ½ of the working population. Meanwhile women have indicated statistically significantly more manifestations of harassment than men and are generally more sensitive to issues of sexual harassment. The reasons for sexual harassment are seen by men mostly in the human nature, while women see them in the misuse of the superior position at workplace. The solution, according to both men and women, would be a more precise definition of sexual harassment in law and working regulations.

**Best practices in non-discrimination by sexual harassment**

If a case of sexual harassment as a form of gender discrimination occurs in the workplace, the employer is legally responsible for its incidence, persistence and method of handling the case. It is therefore in the interest of every employer to take due care to prevent sexual harassment, but also to have established specific procedures for dealing with the cases.

It is recommended to apply the means of primary prevention, thus reducing the risk of occurrence of sexual harassment in the workplace. The risk can be reduced by providing information to ordinary employees, but also to managers about what is prohibited sexual conduct\(^{11}\) in the workplace and about their rights not to be sexually harassed. At the same time the information is used also to prevent the employees becoming harassers. The employer should also inform about complaints procedures and who and how will be responsible for dealing with complaints and what are the possible consequences and sanctions for perpetrators of sexual harassment.

Even in Slovakia, there are companies, which handle the policy against sexual harassment by the adoption of internal codes of conduct such as internal guideline or a part of the working regulations. An example would be the Code of Conduct of the Bratislava Water Company, in which sexual harassment is defined as follows:

"Sexual harassment is any form of behaviour with sexual content or undertone the other party does not want. The Code of Conduct of BWC, Inc. includes into sexual harassment direct sexual advances, allusions to the sexual life of another employee, jokes with erotic themes, any touching of other person, if the person does not wish it, if it offends him/her or is for him/her mentally and physically uncomfortable."

Another good example is the Code of conduct of the Slovak Electricity Company, in which sexual harassment is defined as follows:

"Sexual harassment is not allowed nor tolerated and no forms of behaviour or verbal expression are allowed, which might unsettle the feelings of the individual (such as displaying images with a clear sexual reference or insistent and incessant sexual innuendo)."

Most of such adopted codes of ethical conduct are associated with a policy against harassment and discrimination on other grounds than gender, anti-corruption policy and business ethics.

In addition to the formal adoption of internal guidelines and incorporation of policies against sexual harassment, it is recommended to determine an employee or department, where

---

\(^{11}\) It is recommended to exhaustively list all possible adverse manifestations of sexual harassment.


one can ask for help or make a complaint. Often, the Personnel Department is entrusted with these duties. An important aspect is that the ordinary employees trusted in the competent employee and would not fear a subsequent persecution and victimization. A consequential implementation of a policy against sexual harassment in the form of repeated trainings for all employees is recommended, as well as investigation of each case of sexual harassment, including advice to employees how to provide evidence of sexual harassment.

Part of the prevention and detection of the degree of tolerance toward sexual harassment is the use of a questionnaire for the detection of the sensitivity of the employees towards manifestations of sexual harassment. Sensitivity and the ability to detect manifestations lies in the degree of tolerance and the most common stereotypes and myths related to the phenomenon of sexual harassment. For detection of sexual harassment are used several questionnaires. In the USA the SEQ test has become common. It is recommended to identify the kind and frequency of sexual harassment.

**The involvement of trade unions** into the strategies against sexual harassment may be the initiative of ordinary trade union members or of the trade union as a whole. Arguments for the announcement of a policy against sexual harassment are based on the negative consequences of not adopting such a policy and not solving the cases of sexual harassment for the employer. The consequences include lower productivity, lower job satisfaction, less motivation to work, lower loyalty to the employer, avoiding the harassing employee (non-communication), high stress levels, prospective sick leave and voluntary resignation from the job. Involvement of trade unions as a major player in the defence against sexual harassment in the workplace is also possible through special clauses or parts of collective agreements.

At organizational level, carefully prepared guides against sexual harassment are not rare, which can be applied to other types of enterprises or companies as well. Mostly these are guides of different commissions, NGOs, but also of educational institutions, which have had negative experience with the cases of sexual harassment.14

---

Good practices in enforcement of diversity – example of fatherhood promotion

Barbora Holubová, Institute for Labour and Family Research

Relatively marginalized so far, but still an essential and innovative theme in promoting diversity in the workplace, is the promotion of fatherhood as a part of gender diversity and part of the harmonization of work and family life. Before we present the best practice examples it is necessary to get to know the social context as reasons and argumentation for enforcement of the promotion of fatherhood.

Support of fatherhood – meaning and context

Fatherhood is, in comparison to motherhood, perceived and practiced significantly less, if at all, as care for the children in the sense of everyday attention and time devoted to creation of a relationship with the child, meeting his/her daily needs and providing him/her “service”.

Fatherhood is perceived and practiced rather as securing finances for the “buying” of care from the partner, state and other persons. For long time already, the share of men - fathers on parental leave ranges between 2 % – 2,5 %\(^\text{15}\) and the distribution of time devoted to childcare and household is almost twice as high for women than for their partners (Filadelfiová, J., 2008:242).

Family policy measures and measures for harmonization of work and family life are gender neutral in Slovakia – i.e. both parents may benefit from them after mutual agreement. Gender neutrality, however, significantly contributes to the preservation of unfavourable and discriminatory situation.

The Slovak society is namely significantly deformed towards glorification of maternity and displacement of men – fathers from their parental role.\(^\text{16}\) Men are just as women being held captive by traditional expectations. Thus gender neutrally formulated

\(^\text{15}\) From all the beneficiaries of conditional parental allowance.

\(^\text{16}\) In international studies, the degree of traditional character in gender roles is elicited using the statement: “The mission of men is to earn money, the mission of women is to care for the household and family”. In 2002, 49,2 % of Slovak population agreed with this statement fully or rather (ISSP, 2002), in 2006 it was already only 44,7 % (Bahna, 2006:43). Although in the recent years there has been a slight shift, it can be observed that in the European context Slovakia with about half the population conforming with the traditional mission of men and women belongs to the conservative countries. In comparison, for instance in Sweden only 7,6 % of population agreed with this statement in 2002, in Norway 9,5 % and in Finland 11,8 % of the population (ISSP, 2002).
measures do not promote fathers in their more active participation in childcare and do not create time for their fatherhood.

The prevailing model of gender division of labour in Slovak families is the “model of double burden”, i.e. when both parents earn money, but most of the childcare and care for the household bears the mother. The research on attitudes on the barriers preventing the men to fulfil their paternal role has shown that the biggest barriers are seen both by men and women on the employers’ side and in the financial aspect. Approaches of employers, working conditions and demands of employers on fathers are perceived as a barrier by 64 % of all respondents. The loss of a higher income when taking parental leave by fathers, due to gender income difference, is considered barrier by 62% of population (Filadelfiová, 2006:26).

Other explanation of the lower participation of fathers is, besides socialization into the traditional and for men dysfunctional gender identities, also the unwillingness and distrust of mothers to free up the space for their partners (maternal gate-control theory). Several studies provide evidence that the change of behaviour of men towards their children, as well as the breaking of gender myths is dependent on the quality of the partner relationship and on the ability of women to give up some of their basic attributes of their female roles.

Frequently used and to some extent rational argument of the “advantage of lower income loss” in leaving women and not men for parental leave has its justification. In case of a lower income of the woman the financial loss is lower and does not pose such a great reduction of family income in comparison with the loss (sacrifice) of the higher income of the man. Here, however, effect is mistaken for cause. The causes of a lower participation of fathers in childcare are gender income differences, and not vice versa. Therefore, promotion of fatherhood should be always connected with elimination of gender income differences, while also increasing the financial valuation of childcare. In countries, where the level of refund of wage during parental leave is almost as high as the wage itself (e.g. 80% in Sweden), the participation of fathers is more balanced.

Another explanation of the lack of engagement of men in childcare is simply their own reluctance resulting from greater freedom in deciding who will take care for children. Among partners the alternative – the advantages and disadvantages of a balanced childcare – are not discussed, it is automatically expected that the women will take parental leave (often also as “natural” continuation of maternity leave). Men-fathers do not exercise their right to take their paternity leave, not only because of the gender rigidity of the labour market, but also because

\[17\] The “opportunity costs” theory.
they generally have more power in comparison with their power in deciding to what extent they will participate in childcare.

The concept of active fatherhood

With respect to the aforesaid, the concept of active fatherhood has developed, which is the normative and desirable practice of fatherhood of a committed and for his children caring man. Although the contents of active fatherhood may be different and creative approach of the fathers themselves is expected, generally it means the involvement of fathers in the everyday care for his own children from their early infancy, but also a more fair distribution of housework, time availability for the needs of the child and family, a permanent creating of a close relationship between the father and child.

Besides this, promotion of equality between partners is expected, and this by removing rigid gender labour division and by carrying out of such activities by men, which have been considered utmost feminine so far. If men did participate in childcare, it mostly were only leisure activities, while some other ones like changing nappies, ironing etc. were carried out almost exclusively by women. On the other hand, active fatherhood places also higher demands on women, on their employment, involvement at work with the aim of professional growth, income growth and maximizing their professional potential.

Thus active fatherhood means also for women a major turning point in the sense of not relying on predominant financial security from the partner’s side and producing “only a supplementary” (pocket) income, but an equivalent participation on the financial securing of the family.

Should we specify active fatherhood, the matter is to ensure the rights of fathers to care for their own children by the following activities and measures:

- provide the fathers with possibility to get involved even before the birth (accompanying their partner to prenatal clinic, during exercises, during the birth itself and directly after the birth),
- enable the fathers to spend their own, non-transferable time on parental leave,
- emphasize the equivalent role of fathers with mothers and not reconfirm gender stereotypical parental roles,
- where appropriate, encourage fathers and provide advice to their involvement as fathers,
- on employer’s side, enable flexible spending of parental leave when needed (escorting a child to kindergarten, school, in case of illness) – e.g. possibilities of time accounts,
adapt working hours and duties of the fathers to the needs of the daily course of a family with children (school holidays, kindergarten hours of operation) in such a way that they would not be disadvantaged with respect to remuneration and professional career and also childless or older employees would not feel discriminated in comparison to the advantages for fathers.

**The benefits from the promotion of active fatherhood**

Several studies and researches have confirmed positive impacts of active fatherhood on the reduction in occurrence of number of undesirable social phenomena, as well as significant personal gains for the men themselves, their children and partners. Here are the examples of positive effects (relations, correlations) found by studies carried out so far:

**a) Benefits for the whole society**

Higher participation of men in childcare increases the degree of gender equality in families, which secondarily affects the increasing employment of women and in turn the increase in fertility.\(^{18}\) Since the disadvantage of women on the labour market and gender income differences are caused mainly by a significant imbalance in the degree of participation of men and women in childcare (Olsen, Walby, 2004. Source: Burgess, 2006:71), it is expected that exactly by increasing the participation of men in childcare these negative effects will be reduced.

Low employment rate of women and gender income differences correlate namely secondarily with child poverty rate and in a long-term perspective affect the pauperization of older women. Researches have also confirmed correlation of high involvement of fathers with a higher stability of the family. High level of taking paternity leave in Sweden is associated with a lower rate of divorces/separation of partners (Olah, 2001, Hohnamm-Marriott, 2006. Source: Burgess, 2006:43).

**b) Benefits on the individual – personal level**

Findings from developmental, but also social psychology currently confirm the positive influence of the presence and availability of the father in the early life stages of the child on the emotional development of not only the child, but on the man himself and the couple as well. For the child the father poses another and different source of stimulation and

---

\(^{18}\) Taking parental leave by men correlates with the tendency of the partners to have second or third child (Burgess, 2006:71).
another object of love, and thus it reduces the risk of immuring oneself only to one relationship with the mother.

Especially for the sons the positive role model of a caring father is very beneficial. It is expected that the boys due to the emotional bond with their father formed in early childhood will not tend to adopt gender stereotypical beliefs and behaviour patterns (Badinter, 1999). Non-participation and non-using the opportunity of paternity leave, leaving the whole childcare on their partner are associated with a higher risk of developmental problems of the children. In case of divorce of the parents, active fathers are more inclined to not breaking the contact with their children and they try to keep the relationship with them, which makes it easier for the child to cope better with the stressful family situation (Dex-Ward, 2007. Source: OECD, 2007:111).

Involvement of men into the childcare is clearly correlated with their marriage and life satisfaction (longitudinal research of the involvement of fathers into the routine daily childcare and into their leisure activities until their adolescence has been shown to explain as much as 21% of the variance in marriage satisfaction of men). Similarly, the change in self-perception of men due to childcare towards their greater personal complexity, empathy and perception of the needs of others has been confirmed, such men have scored higher in the socio-moral development as well (Snarey, 1993. Source: Chorvát, 1999:16).

c) Benefits on the company level

Increasing the involvement of men in childcare leads to change of working culture for the benefit of employed women, mothers and fathers as well. While women tend to compromise in their careers in order to manage both their work and childcare, men more often change their job to achieve their career priorities (Haas–Hwang, 1995. Source: Burgess, 2006:71). The influence of taking paternity leave on the increase of costs for the employer has not been explored yet. Most men combine their fatherhood with a flexible job or adapt their leisure time to the childcare (Dermott, 2006. Source: Burgess, 2006:73). Flexibility of work is perceived by some employers as a factor of increasing productivity, improving recruitment and retention of quality employees (Jones, 2003, Reeves, 2004. Source: Burgess, 2006:73). The benefits in the countries with a higher participation rate of men in taking paternity leave have been quantified only recently.

The researches indicate that the highest benefits lie in the acquisition of skills and competences useful for further work of men: better interpersonal and communication skills, ability to do multitasking, higher “complexity of personality”. Negative impacts of taking
paternity leave on the employment rate of fathers in long-term perspective have not been found (O’Brien, 2004. Source: Burgess, 2006:73).

**Best practices in promoting fatherhood**

These relate to all initiatives to promote harmonization of work, family and private life, which are provided to fathers and mothers and do not reproduce gender stereotypes in the sense of “protection” of mothers and their preferring as primary caretakers. At the same time initiatives, which focus on the protection or support of women in early or smooth return from maternity or parental leave addressing women – mothers, do not necessarily have to exclude men – fathers.

However, experience has shown that if a programme is not designed specially for fathers, their participation in initiatives or their benefitting from these programmes is only minimal. It thus is recommended either to implement specific programmes, or to emphasize also men in the target group of parents, or specifically set participation of men – fathers as a criterion.

a) **Compass of parental leave**

IKEA has developed a programme, which should facilitate understanding and effective communication of line managers towards men and women going to take maternity, parental or paternity leave (protection of future parents). Moreover, measures are in place to allow maintaining a close contact with the employee during the maternity or paternity leave. Corporate philosophy of the perception of family namely applies to both genders – that is both parents. If a male of female employee is expecting a child, he or she is requested to communicate to their supervisor their plans on starting date and duration of maternity or paternity leave. The indicator is then the real number of men – fathers and duration of paternity leaves. Similar procedures to motivate men – fathers in their care for newborn babies are applied in other companies as well, e.g. in Assecurazioni Generali s.p.A. or Stomberg AS. (Heckl, 2010:115)

b) **Workshops for fathers**

The company Accenture (UK) Ltd. organizes meetings focusing on new and future fathers. By participating in the workshop men can acquire a package of necessary firsthand knowledge – from a children’s nurse about what can be expected, what other support
programmes they can get involved in and what help, sharing of experience and knowledge with others they may be provided with (Heckl, 2010:115).

c) Awards for modern men

The competition introduced in the Netherlands only as late as in 2009 awards men in three categories: (1) men who may be awarded as role models in harmonization of their work and fathers’ responsibilities, (2) organization actively involved in discussion of male and female roles, (3) company promoting creative and healthy solutions to combination of work and family. The objective of the competition is cultural change, which is a long-term issue indeed. In 2009, the winner was the organization “Papa Plus”, which is a lobby group within the Trade Union FNV for young people. The aim of the group is creation of opportunities for young parents, especially fathers, to take care of their children. The winners of the competition will be throughout the year its ambassadors and they will promote involvement of men into childcare and a more balanced distribution of tasks. Role models are also important for the increase in acceptance of employers and their support of men in childcare (Plantenga, J., Remery, Ch.. Source: European Commission, 2010).

d) Maternity leave for men as a specific topic of the audit Labour and Family

In Austria, the best known initiative with more than 600 awarded companies so far, “Audit Beruf und Familie” is designed as a dynamic process of sustainable improvement of harmonization of work and family life. The 150 evaluated criteria for the achievement of the award include such, which are related to the topic of involvement of men in maternity leave (Heckl, 2010:72).

e) Participation of fathers in the programmes “Women- and family-friendly employer”

In Austria the award for private, non-profit and public organization called “Women- and family-friendly employer” is known, which from a regional event became a nationwide one. It started by setting of criteria for the increase of participation of women in companies through family-friendly measures. Gradually, however, the criterion of participation of men in the programmes facilitating the taking and return from the paternity leave. In addition to a precise assessment of 26 set indicators interviews with male and female employees, who have used the benefits, are conducted and their point of view is elicited (Heckl, 2010:80)
Persons with disabilities form one of the vulnerable groups, towards which the majority tends to behave differently than towards people without any disability. Examples are compassion, zealous care, but also fear, contempt, indifference, or misunderstanding. Such behaviour, which can take different forms of discriminatory conduct, results primarily from the attitude towards them, characterized by the idea of their incapacity and incompetence.

The label “the disabled” is often considered pejorative. Current trends in disability agenda do not focus on the disability, but on the person, while the term disability is only secondary, more important is the person, citizen.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities characterizes them as persons with long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory disabilities, which in synergy with other barriers may prevent their full and effective involvement in the life of society on an equal basis with others.

The disability itself may be further defined according to current Slovak legislation according to whether we see the disability from the perspective of reducing working capacity or from the perspective of the degree of functional disorder as lack of physical, sensory or mental capabilities.

Thus it is not possible to precisely determine the share of persons with disabilities, only based on provision of services arising from the right to them given by law.

Disability can be of various intensity; we distinguish between lighter and harder levels of disability.

According to the types of disability we generally distinguish 5 types. The most common ones include chronic diseases and physical disability. Chronic disease is often invisible or associated with a different type of disability, e.g. when diabetes affects sight or causes inevitability of limb amputation. Although we do not see the chronic disability, it causes serious problems to their carriers. To less common health impairments belong sensory disabilities of vision and hearing. Another common disability is psychic disability, which in contrast to mental disability is not so often associated with accompanying disabilities. The difference between these two disabilities is that while the psychic disability includes disturbance of retrospection of
the environment and the person himself/herself, mental disability is related to the level of intellectual abilities, which in this case are on a low level.

Persons with disabilities constitute a very diverse group of citizens, approximately 10% of the Slovak population. They live with us and not next to us. They have always been a part of the society, their life and life conditions depended largely upon the attitude of the majority towards those, whose lives have depended in different extent on the help and support of others. Perception of people with disabilities has thus undergone various stages in the history of humanity, from repressive, enslaving, charitable, to socializing one (Kurhutová, et al., 2005).

The period of the first Czechoslovak Republic can be considered as the first major step towards acceptance of people with disabilities in the society. Disabled people were placed into institutions and received disability pensions. Great importance especially for the care for the poor disabled people had associations like the Czechoslovak Red Cross.

The period before 1989 is characterized by segregation of disabled people in institutional care. As the then monopolistic ruling party was denying the real needs and even the very existence of some types of disabilities, the rights of people with disabilities were contested. The disabled people were marginalized in the society. Educational opportunities – especially for the disabled – social care or services, support of families with disabled members, all were on a very low level.

To meet a disabled citizen in a wheelchair on the street was impossible. If any rights of disabled people existed at all, they were restricted to the so-called social service. The ruling political party did not deem it necessary to take care of this group, because theoretically it did not even exist. Disabled people were taken care of in sanatoria, where they had secured food, accommodation and social care. As they were isolated in sanatoria, there was no need to build barrier free accesses or other tools for integration of disabled people. Only the labour market with its levelling conditions of remuneration posed for disabled people a certain chance to get job, which is nowadays more complicated. People with less extensive disabilities had chance to work in the so-called production cooperatives of invalids.

Changes in the perception of disabled people occurred only after establishment of the Slovak Republic and the subsequent accession to EU. With respect to disabled persons the European Union has progressed over the last decades from the philosophy of paternalism to the philosophy of strengthening the responsibility for the decision-making about their own life. Procedures, which were largely based on compassion and emphasized the helplessness of disabled persons, are nowadays deemed unacceptable. Activities focusing on rehabilitation of
the individual with the aim of adapting him/her as much as possible to the society are gradually replaced by the philosophy stressing the necessity of social changes, which would enable meeting the needs of all citizens, including the disabled ones. Persons with disabilities demand more equal opportunities and access to all societal resources, which include education, new technologies, health and social services, sport and recreation, but also consumer goods, products and services.

Most notorious cases of discrimination based on disability lie in non-creation of conditions and non-implementation of measures, which would enable accessibility and usability of places, services and facilities for the disabled. Examples are barrier free buildings, acoustic traffic signals on crossroads, labelling of numbers in lifts by Braille script, audio ATMs etc. Discriminatory behaviour towards people with disabilities may take several forms.

In people’s life various situations occur, sometimes the person with disability suffers discrimination in more forms at once.

Common examples of discrimination appear in cases, when people with disabilities should decide upon their lives. The majority perceives people with disability as those who should be directed continuous care. Their needs are not met based on what they really need, but based on what the society usually thinks they would need. Thus, for people with disabilities is decided where and how they would live, how their accommodation would look like, where they would study, who would take care of them, how they would spend their free time etc.

The sphere of labour is often an environment where people with disabilities encounter discrimination. For instance, even in the case the employee with disabilities manages his tasks well, is responsible and initiative, she/he has a lower salary than her/his colleagues, she/he does not receive Performance Linked Incentive etc. A frequent argument is that she/he receives disability pension. Another example of discrimination is a situation when in the social care facilities or in hospitals it is not talked directly to the person with disability, but through his/her attendant or assistant.

The diversity of types of disability, but also of the other characteristics of human nature as such results in multiple discrimination occurring towards people with disabilities.

These are situations when the effects of a disability are reinforced by some other characteristic of the person.

To particularly vulnerable groups belong women and girls with disabilities (the factor of disability combines with the factor of sex). Benefits from the social changes related to the
living conditions of disabled people is not evenly distributed between men and women with disabilities: different wage conditions for men and women, weak protection against violence and maltreatment, missing measures in the sphere of support of interpersonal relations, parenthood, family life, sexuality. There are problems with self-assertion during the preparation for the profession, work, political and public life.

Particularly vulnerable group are disabled people with a high degree of reliance on the help of other person, be it maltreatment within the family or in the institutions providing care outside their family or community circle. Often they do not even have the possibility to decide on the person who should take care of them.

Children and youth with disabilities and elderly disabled people are often discriminated due to their age. Elderly disabled people are in healthcare often treated as unpromising patients, the costly treatment of whom is useless.

Persons with disabilities within minorities – especially in the Roma population and among migrants – form a specific subgroup of disabled people. Primarily they are discriminated due to their ethnic origin. The disability exacerbates their position even more, because it causes their discrimination even within the community they live in. In relation to the majority these are often situations when they are not provided with some services, compensations or other means to improve their well-being, which are, however, accessible to other people with disabilities. Citizens with severe disabilities are according to Law on Social Assistance entitled to the compensation of social consequences of their disability. For instance, it is impossible to provide the allowance for the adjustment of bathrooms to be barrier free to Roma persons with disabilities living in dwellings, where there is no bathroom at all.

The society (not only the Slovak one) has so far failed to create a climate of “friendly” effort to employ citizens with disabilities. The society still considers it natural that the disabled do not work. The problem lies also in that a significant proportion of citizens with disabilities does not have sufficient education, which is in turn caused by inaccessibility of education for some groups of disabled (be it financial inaccessibility, or unavailability due to barriers – architectural ones, but also those in the minds of people).

Although conditions for employment of persons with disabilities have been created and they are promoted through various mechanisms and by state, the truth is that a mutual motivation is still lacking.

In many cases the very people with disabilities take the position “Why should I look for a job, if the healthy ones do not even have one”. Another problem, especially with the
higher paid positions, is that when exceeding the triple of the subsistence minimum the disabled people get their allowance for assistance, necessary for the exercise of their profession, reduced. Thus they have two options, either to run into debt or not to work.

Examples of unequal treatment by employers are many indeed. They can be found during job search, recruitment, change in working conditions.

**Examples of discrimination in the workplace due to disability:**

- the applicant meets all professional or qualification requirements, but his/her position is taken by some other applicant – without qualification, but without disability as well,
- adapted, hard-working and successful employee with a disability does not have a high chance of promotion – a better position is often taken by a healthy colleague, although his/her work performance is often worse,
- knowledgeable and enthusiastic employee with a disability does not get the opportunity to implement his/her projects, ideas etc., which are of a high quality, reflect the needs in the field, but with their commercial use or final realization another employee is entrusted, who often lacks creativity or expertise, but his/her image is deemed more acceptable,
- during downsizing in organization, often the employees with disabilities are made redundant as first ones, or their contract of employment is not renewed, even though they do not violate labour discipline, have good results and are loyal to the organization,
- refusing to employ disabled citizens, who, under the assumption of the employer, tend to be sick more frequently and their employer will have to pay a certain part of the wage during their sick leave. This is often the hidden cause of dismissal – the employers force the employees to ask themselves for a termination of employment – otherwise it is deemed as bullying of employees.

Employers are nowadays much more cautious and usually do not dare to tell the applicant directly that they reject him/her due to his/her disability. On the contrary they try to refuse him/her from other reason and hide the real one.

Problems with access to goods and services often begin in the design phase already. For example:
- ATMs that are installed too high and thus are not accessible to wheelchair users or ATMs, which have only touch screens and thus cannot be used by people with visual disabilities,
- aisles at stores that are too narrow for wheelchair users,
- remote controls to TVs or video players with too small buttons, which require fine motor acts,
- invoices with tiny text on the reverse side, where instructions are given to customers how they can claim the invoice.

In the sphere of services one of the causes of discrimination is inaccessibility of buildings (restaurants, museums, shops), however, equally problematic are the policies of care for customers, which do not take into account the needs of people with disabilities. For example, the restaurant owner, who as a general rule prohibits entrance with an animal, creates a difficult position for staff and customers with disabilities, if s/he fails to state that assistance dogs are exception and access with them is permitted.

**Discrimination in the sphere of computer technologies**

An extremely relevant example in today's information society is the web site design. Access to the internet can be extremely beneficial for people with disabilities, who wish to take advantage of electronic shopping and buying, have access to information on public transport timetables, sports results, news, television and radio programmes etc. Unfortunately, even in cases when disabled people have compensatory devices, which allow them to use the computer, often they encounter the problem with inaccessible web sites. Blind and partially sighted people rely on web sites with a good coding enabling the use of technologies reading for them the content of the screen, or the change in font or background colour, or reading alternative text for the pictures they can not see. If the used coding does not meet the acceptable standard, the web site becomes inaccessible.

**Discrimination in access to education**

People with disabilities, who want to get educated in an environment with people without disability, often face discrimination from the institutions providing education, as well as from their peers without disabilities. The result is that they cannot fully develop their potential, they achieve a lower level of education and subsequently are disadvantaged in the
labour market. Anti-discrimination legislation requires educational institutions to provide necessary compensatory devices and carry out relevant adjustments so as to enable people with disabilities be educated in such an environment in such areas, for which they have skills.

Discrimination occurs in many cases; however, here are several particular examples:
- unavailability of sign language interpretation for hearing impaired students during lectures or educational programmes,
- unavailability or lack of support for persons with mental disability in non-academic activities involving all students,
- inaccessibility of school facilities for people with severe disabilities using wheelchair.

**Discrimination in accessibility of transport**

Many people with disabilities are dependent on public transport. Nevertheless, they face many barriers, like inaccessible buses or stations, poorly audible announcements and poor marking. For a wheelchair user the identification of barrier free stations and change between different modes of transport often turns into a logistical nightmare.

People with disabilities rely on an accessible public transport to be able to participate in all activities as citizens with equal rights. It is not possible to achieve accessible transport overnight. Anti-discrimination legislation takes not of this fact by setting deadlines for achieving accessibility and monitors progress towards reaching this goal.

**An example:**

**Accessibility of train service**

The user of a wheelchair willing to travel by train can do so only in express trains, which are equipped with lifting platforms. Even here it happens that the staff is not sufficiently trained to operate this equipment. Ordinary passenger trains are not equipped with lifting platforms.
Equal opportunities as a target agenda for Roma children
(In the context of placing Roma children into special schools)

Milan Fico, Institute for Labour and Family Research

Idea of equality and equal opportunities – history and current understanding of those concepts

Before the law we should be equal – this is the basic idea that in the past was not obvious and its legitimate enforcement started at the beginning of the modern age. The formal equality before law is in current (post)modern societies perceived as certainty; however, the idea of equality has its own development and went through various difficulties. It results into development of antidiscrimination legislation of the European Union where the equal opportunities are reflected. Struggle for equality (not only a formal one) has been implemented in USA and in the western Europe for several centuries together with the struggle for women’s rights, fight against slavery, later also against race, ethnic and religious segregation. The concept itself is one of the ideological basis of social-democratic parties and helped to rise new social movements which gradually took over the requirements for equality as a part of recognition of independency qualified not only by ethnicity19 (women, gays, people with disabilities).

At present, the dispute is not about the fact, if equality as such is good or not, but rather about in which areas, situations, where it should exist among people. (Liga lidských práv, 2007). After all, in sociology it is not always considered negatively. As Petrusek writes: Equality does not need to be “more moral” than “inequality” – inequality is associated with every human being. In the world, there should not exist higher or lower, everybody should have secured a decent human existence. This postulate does not assume equality” (Petrusek. In: Canneti, 2008).

Or the well known theory of John Rawls: “Inequality in wealth and competences are fair only if they result in compensation and welfare for the least disadvantaged members of the society” (Rawls, 2007).

19 Fight against discrimination of individuals on the basis of ethnic or racial stigma, respectively struggle for civil equality and unity turned also into struggle for political separateness of ethnical groups what was in contrast to the vision of Martin Luther King, who proclaimed struggle for equality of human beings independently from the idea of different racial and ethnic origin (Hirt. Source: Subrt et al., 2008).
In other words – if we speak about equality it is necessary to exactly define, which attributes, features and areas we want to fall below it and which approach we will take to the selected attributes - depends also upon our political believes. When seeking such a definition, we can get many answers, and the current answer on the EU legislative level is the appearance of the Anti-Discrimination Act that defines the concepts associated with gender and specifies the areas (which includes education) and the grounds (ethnicity) in which the common legal obligation of equal treatment is defined. Their non-compliance is then seen as the opposite to equality.

Ethnicity, membership to an ethnic group or national minority cannot be for anybody a disadvantage - as it says in the Constitution of the Slovak Republic and in the wording of the Anti-discrimination law, this cannot, even indirectly, become an obstacle, for which the treatment is different. But as it will be mentioned below – colour of skin, respectively ethnicity perceived as Roma ethnicity together with the background of a child which is disadvantaged as “social disadvantaged” can in many cases become reason for a range of steps and procedures that cause a different treatment from the side of representatives of state institutions, directors and staff of elementary schools, together with other organisations that are involved in the educational process and placement of children to special schools (specialised pedagogical counselling centres, pedagogical and psychological counselling centres) – it is a public area which is by the law laid down in the anti-discrimination legislation.

In describing the situation of over-representation of Roma children in special education I will base it upon selected knowledge of a representative survey which mapped the situation in the area of education in elementary special schools, in special classes in elementary schools and secondary practical schools, whose title is School as a Ghetto.

---

20 The question of inequality as absence if equality was at the origin of sociology (Dahrendorf), in the most general sense it is an aspect of social stratification, result of social structure. Its basis must be not only ethnicity, but also property, power, prestige, access to material, symbolic resources, etc. Various inequality appears always when the community is comprised by a majority number of people which persists (Berger). Conservative tradition tells about its necessity for functioning of society (functionalism), conflictualists highlight the need for its mitigation (Dahrendorf). In education, it is reproduced by the help of social, cultural, economic capital (Bourdieu).

21 A similar study with similar conclusion was published in the Czech Republic with the title “Stigmata - segregovaná výuka Romů ve školách střední a východní Evropy”. [(Stigmata - segregated education of Roma in schools of Central and Eastern Europe). Evropské centrum pro práva Romů and Liga lidských práv, 2007.]

69
Why is the anti-discrimination legislation in the area of education of Roma children necessary?

Anti-discrimination legislation defines in which situations, to whom and how will be protection against discrimination provided – thus this act regulates only selected relations considered for essential (public) in observing equality and it does not further interfere into most areas of the everyday life. The grounds of ethnicity is explicitly expressed in it and therefore it cannot play any role in standard assessment of others (whether under the influence of stereotypes and prejudices or even bad experience) – and exactly in listed areas. Violation of this act means unlawful act.

Although there exist voices which see in the anti-discrimination legislation threat (a threat to individual freedom, restriction of ownership rights, opposition to the legal regulation that is a wrong measure to solve social problems), its objective is not to impose uniformity, eliminate diversity or differences and distinction among people (e.g. men, women, younger, older), but to point out situations where the differences at decision-making are really relevant and in which are not relevant, being the areas and relationships with a certain public overlap.

It is the constitution of a public domain consisting of legislation, economy and policy, where citizens are equal before law and no groups or individuals are disadvantaged, privileged or insufficiently protected. It ensures that in the exactly defined public area, belonging to group identities cannot become a social handicap and at the same time this group identity should not disturb individual equal opportunities. (Rex 1997. Source: Šubrt et al., 2008).

The area of education and training of children is undoubtedly such public domain and belongs into the area of publicly defined interest, also under the protection of the anti-discrimination law. A modern democratic society would agree that it is desirable to distinguish and judge people on the basis of certain attributes which we cannot influence – and ethnicity belongs among them.

The discrimination is understood as disadvantage and limitation of rights that are based upon irrational grounds (Liga lidských práv, 2007). The Anti-Discrimination Act can be an effective tool used against ethnic segregation, elimination of which is also a part of integration policies of multiculturalism which as a political vision and requirement is characterised by an effort for fair sharing of social resources among different groups or members of those groups which refer to the common ethnic origin while forming their requirements. (Hirt. Source: Šubrt et al., 2008). In the education of Roma Children, the future interest of the state is that the children are not discriminated and that ethnicity, together with
other grounds (ethnicity is not the single factor which decides about placement of a child to special school, but it incorporated other factors) should not play any latent role in placing children into special schools.

Elimination of those Roma children from the standard educational system, segregation of whole Roma classes and their exclusion from economic processes in the society, and subsequent fall into the social network causes later problems. Attending a special school is preclusive to participation in the labour market, what practically means an automatic fall into a social network and additional costs for the state in form of social assistance benefits. These people do not bring benefit to the state in the form of taxes, levies, on the contrary – they must be financed from the resources of the state.

A brief overview of the area of special schools with emphasis upon education of Roma children

Annually, special schools attend approximately 2,5 % of the population of the given year. These schools are focused upon special educational needs defined as mental disability (its various variants, from the mild level A to more serious levels B and C), audio, visual, physical disability, autism, etc.). As shown in Table 1 – in Slovakia, the special educational system is formed by special primary schools, special classes in ordinary primary schools and special secondary schools (vocational schools and practical schools) – and only in these two types of schools may continue a student after attending a special class in an ordinary primary school or special school.

Table 1: Schools and classes for children with mental disability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of special education</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special primary schools</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>38 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special classes at ordinary primary schools</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>46 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special secondary schools</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>15 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>466</strong></td>
<td><strong>100 %</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Selected conclusions from the survey School as a Ghetto. Roma Education Fund, 2009 (abridged, revised).
The special secondary schools provide either vocational certificate whereby it is possible to execute activities only under supervision, or prepare these children for practical simple household activities (practical school) – also under supervision. Practical schools are available to all graduates of special schools – also for those who did not manage to study at secondary vocational apprentice schools and they are focused (unlike the secondary vocational apprentice schools) only upon children with diagnosis of mental disability (level B and C). The only chance to succeed at the labour market after graduation from the practical school is protected workshops for people with mental disability.

The only possibility to get secondary school-leaving examination by a pupil with mental disability is individual integration into ordinary primary school. The survey showed that only a minimum of pupils continued in education in those two types of schools – there is a 10-year compulsory school attendance in Slovakia (till 16 years of age) and if that period expires, the Roma parents often prefer a short-term economic interest (activation work) and they do not want to send their children far away from their homes. Possibilities of individual integration are required particular by “white” parents rather than Roma parents – ironically, this is the only solution to secure any chances at the labour market.

Special schools can be attended only by children with diagnosis mental disability. Such diagnosis can be done only by pedagogical and psychological counselling centres or special pedagogical counselling centres. If a pedagogical and psychological counselling centre diagnoses mental disability to a child, that child is sent to a special pedagogical counselling centre for investigation by a special pedagogue – he/she issues a recommendation for a commission about the type of education. This commission consists of the director of the special school who is its chairman, and other specialists (special pedagogue, psychologist, representatives of pedagogical counselling centres). The director on the basis of the proposal from the special committee decides about redeployment of the pupil. This decision has only a recommendatory character and it is not valid without a consent of the legal representative who must be informed sufficiently about consequences as well as alternatives of education.

Generally, in Slovakia, the situation in special education is alarming – from 23 countries in Central and Eastern Europe which participated in the UNICEF study in 2005, Slovakia had in 2001 the highest rate of placement of pupils into special education on the level of primary education, and the proportion of pupils involved in special education in the period of 1989 to 2001 increased. In this country, as the only one country from the 23
monitored countries, the proportion of pupils in special education increased in that period (from 3 % to 3.75 %). As shown in the table below, in Slovakia more than 60 % of children in special education are Roma children. The opinion, expressed by many Roma parents as well as some directors and teachers, that the special classes in standard primary schools are classes for Roma children, is not far from reality as their proportion is 85.8 %. (Friedman E. – Kriglerová, E. – Kubánová, M. – Slosiarik, M., 2009, also Table 2).

Table 2: Bottom limit of estimates about the number of Roma pupils in specialised education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of school</th>
<th>Number of all enrolled pupils</th>
<th>Share of Roma pupils</th>
<th>Share of Roma pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special primary schools</td>
<td>13 807</td>
<td>8 200</td>
<td>59.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special classes at primary schools</td>
<td>5 590</td>
<td>4 795</td>
<td>85.8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special secondary schools</td>
<td>5 114</td>
<td>1 794</td>
<td>35.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>24 511</strong></td>
<td><strong>14 789</strong></td>
<td><strong>60.3 %</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table two also shows that the proportion of Roma pupils is the highest in special classes of standard primary schools, and the total proportion of Roma children in special education is 60.3 %. Estimates of the Roma children in these schools are different – the research implemented in 2008 showed that those estimates also differed whether we asked the heads of schools or teachers.

Calculations made upon the basis of official data from the Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education about ethnicity of pupils indicate that the proportion of Roma children in special schools is nearly 14-times higher than the proportion of Roma children in standard schools. Roma children get into special classes or special primary schools in the first three years of ordinary primary schools – only 21 per cent of parents of children from some forms of special education said that they were placed there from the beginning.

Another possibility for those who are no capable to manage content of the education in the first grade or preparatory grade, being designed for the socially disadvantaged environment (a consent of a legal representative is required – the new Education Act prohibits placement into this grade only based upon the definition of socially disadvantaged environment) is to pass the zero grade. Teachers in special schools use mostly Slovak language (in all types of special
education it was in ¾ of cases). The survey has also shown that many special classes in primary schools as well as in special schools were spatially segregated – placed in another building, in the basement, divided by physical barriers (lattices).

We also noticed statements about Roma parts of buildings – some were located directly in segregated settlements as satellite of standard school buildings, while the equipment differed from the equipment of the standard schools – the situation was most problematic directly in the segregated settlements. It is much easier to start the process of special education than to get back from it – this type of education has in some cases a tendency of reproduction – it is more likely that if the parents already agreed with placement of their child into special education, they will do so also next time.

**The causes of excessive presence of Roma children in special education and their implications**

Official documents of the SR Government for the Children Committee say that there does not exist an ethnically oriented school that would be segregated from the main educational system. The survey School as a Ghetto, however, showed that the difference between what should be prescriptive and the reality is big and identified the reasons of a systematic excessive representation of Roma children in the special school system. These are particularly the mechanisms and motivations that are used for placement of children into these types of education as well as interest of institutions in this area to maintain the status quo.

**Problems of diagnostics and tests for Roma children**

- Tests are not suitable for assessment of Roma children; they are ethnocentric, in Slovak language and therefore disadvantage Roma children. There was also a case of group diagnostics or cases when Roma children were not tested when placed in other types of education.
- The law does not include obligation of re-diagnostics what implies that the schools themselves can decide when they will do it (after 1 year, 2 years, if necessary?..). Only 40 % of children in special schools went through another testing.
- Moment of testing is often the first experience of Roma children with the school environment and with non-Roma adult person.
• The tests are unable to distinguish between the mental disability and the social neglect also due to the language barrier (most often a mild mental disability is diagnosed with the Roma children).

• It is recommended to use the test of school readiness developed in the framework of the PHARE project – which is more or less not used. Its pilot testing showed that 10% of Roma children should not be placed in special schools (the mental disability was not diagnosed with them) and 40% were likely to be placed inappropriately.

**Interest of institutions in the field of special education**

• Establishment of preparatory classes for children with mild mental disabilities in special primary schools - in practice, such schools are often established for Roma children without any mental or physical disability.

• In efforts for integration, schools give priority to non-Roma, special schools discourage placement to ordinary schools or intently create special classes.

• Conflict of interest of special pedagogical counselling centres performing diagnosing of Roma children – the directors are often also directors of special schools, often located in the same building, their funding depends upon number of clients – therefore their interest is to have the maximum number of pupils.

• Setting norms in special education – funding via norms is much higher in special education compared with standard education (1.6 times higher per pupil than in traditional primary school), therefore opening of classes might be attractive – the number of pupils is increased and it helps to keep the staff of special school.

• In cases of ordinary primary schools might be creation of special classes an effort to segregate Roma from the majority population.

• Provision of material benefits – they often receive government subsidies if there is more than 50% of children whose parents are in material distress. Parents then receive subsidies for food and school tools for attendance (this material advantage is, paradoxically, very little used by special schools).

• Stating the apparent advantages – individual approach, lower number of pupils in a class, more simple curricula, establishment of special classes next to the settlements.
Problem of giving information to Roma parents

- Parents are not properly informed about consequences of transferring their children – principle of informed consent is often breached, signature of a legal representative which is required for transfer of a child to a special school is being done without informing parents (legal representatives) about other alternatives. Roma parents are in a weaker position, they trust the school employees, and if they disagree, they are afraid to object. They often do not know the difference between a special and primary school.
- Special schools are sometimes presented as “Roma” schools.
- Sometimes, employees recommend the parents special schools.
- Roma parents themselves make such decision (in special school the achievements are better and the child becomes a good pupil).
- Discrimination from the side of ordinary primary schools (harassment, bad experience with Roma and non-Roma relationships, fear of Roma parents to place their children there).

Public policies

Policies are inconsistent – The Concept of Integrated Education of Roma Children and Youth e.g. speaks about prohibition to place children without mental disability into special schools. However, The Report of The State School Inspection states, that placement of children from socially disadvantaged environment belongs among those target groups for which are the services of special schools dedicated.

How to get out of it? (Recommendations and good practice examples)

- To develop a national action plan to balance the proportion of Roma and non-Roma population in special education with a clear time limit.
- To make difference between mental disability, social disadvantage and ethnicity – according to the new Education Act no child should be placed into special education on the grounds of his/her social disadvantage or ethnicity (it is mainly the reason for discrimination in education on the grounds of ethnicity).

---

23 Recommendations elaborated according to School as a Ghetto. Roma Education fund, 2009 (abridged, revised).
• To collect and store ethnic data in line with the EU standards on data protection – results from testing of children according to their ethnicity should make easier the overall evaluation of policies in the area of discrimination.

• Re-training of pedagogical staff so that they are able to assist and help children in their transposition from special primary schools into standard classes in ordinary primary schools, focus of university programmes upon integration.

• Separation or cancellation of special pedagogical counselling centres that could be in conflict of interest, as they are established by special schools themselves and therefore they are motivated to enrol children into special primary schools.

• Stop to use psychological tests as a mechanism for placement of children into pre-school special education in pre-school age and in the first years of primary schools in cases without an evident mental disability.

• Promoting informed parental consent, presentation of individual integration of children with special educational needs. Launching of programmes to ensure accurate and available information (should be launched in compliance with the new Education Act).

• Increase the proportion of Roma children enrolled in kindergarten, because low number complicates their integration into primary schools – make it compulsory.

• Change the funding of norms so, that they change the motivation of directors to enrol children in special schools.
References


7. EGGSI. 2010. Men and Gender Equality tackling gender segregated family roles and social care jobs.


Other sources


Annexes

Example of a charter

In December 2006, four German companies (Deutsche Telekom AG, Deutsche BP, Deutsche Bank AG, DaimlerChrysler AG) initiated a voluntary campaign under the title “Diversity as an opportunity – Diversity Charter for companies in Germany”. By signing the Charter the company declares its willingness to promote, facilitate and develop diversity in their own company. Till May 2007, 70 companies signed the Charter. A similar initiative started in France in 2004 and so far 300 companies joined this initiative. More similar initiatives can help to promote the idea of diversity in the EU business sector. (Keil, M. et al., 2007:34).
Diversity Charter for Companies in Germany

Diversity as a challenge

The diversity of today's society – influenced by globalization and demographic change – characterizes business life in Germany. We can only succeed in business if we embrace and harness diversity - in our workforce and in the varying needs of our customers and business associates. A diverse workforce with various talents and skills opens up opportunities for innovative, creative solutions.

Our organization is implementing the Charter of Diversity in order to provide a work environment free of prejudice. All employees should be respected – regardless of their gender, race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion, philosophy, physical ability, age, sexual orientation and identity. Our organization derives economic benefits from acknowledging and promoting diversity.

We provide an environment of acceptance and mutual trust. This enhances our image among business partners and consumers in Germany and the other countries of the world.

Under this Charter, we shall:

1. Cultivate a corporate culture characterized by mutual respect and appreciation for each individual. We shall create the conditions so that supervisors and employees understand, share and model these values. Managers and supervisors are under a special obligation in this regard.
2. Review our human resource processes to ensure they take into account the diverse talents and abilities of all employees as well as our performance standards.
3. Acknowledge the diversity of society in and outside the organization, appreciate its inherent potential and put it to profitable use for the organization.
4. Make the Charter's implementation a topic of discussion in and outside the organization.
5. Publicly report on our activities and the progress we have made in promoting diversity and respect for difference on an annual basis.
6. Inform our employees about diversity and involve them in implementing the Charter.

We are convinced that embracing and appreciating diversity has a positive impact on society in Germany.

Company Prof. Dr. Maria Böhmer

..................................................German minister for migration, refugees and integration

Examples of good practices

The Disability & Skills initiative was initially launched within Adecco in France in 1986 to facilitate the access of persons with disabilities to the labour market. Following the success of the programme in France, it has been extended to Spain, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, the UK and Switzerland, and will be further extended to other European countries in 2005. The programme promotes equality of opportunities only on the basis of personal skills, qualities and experience. The objective is to identify and provide work opportunities matching candidates with disabilities, whilst also helping develop additional skills to ensure sustainable employment.

A dedicated Business & Disability coordination team was set up in 2004 at international level to manage the implementation and results of the programme across the group. It is headed by a Corporate Social Responsibility/Disability & Skills project director at group level working in collaboration with a team of project leaders responsible for programme implementation at national and local levels. The coordination team ensures the transfer of know-how and main-streaming of disability inclusion throughout Adecco’s major business units.

Internally, compulsory induction training on non-discrimination and disability inclusion is provided to managers and staff to ensure understanding of corporate diversity values and personal engagement in the policy’s implementation, and to help them deal with potential cases of discrimination. Evaluation of the diversity programme includes monthly, quarterly and yearly monitoring and reporting on the achievements and number of people with disabilities at work.

**Results**

Adecco sets targets and objectives relating to the work placement and employment of people with disabilities. In 2004, it facilitated access to work for 9,578 persons with disabilities across Europe, an increase of 9% compared to 2003, exceeding its own targets. The Disability & Skills initiative has brought organisational cultural change in a previously hostile environment through demystification of disability in the workplace. The programme benefits from the support of staff and temporary staff, disabled and non-disabled, and creates enhanced satisfaction amongst staff and clients. The commitment to disability inclusion has been a key factor in Adecco winning calls for tenders with some clients.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company Name</th>
<th>No. Employees:</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| AIR PRODUCTS     | 5,500+ (Europe)  
                    | 20,000 (global)               | www.airproducts.com          |
| Country          | Turnover: €1.8 billion (Europe)            |                              |
| UK / Europe and worldwide |                              |                              |
| Primary Business | Industrial gases, chemicals, equipment and services provider |                              |

Title of Initiative: Valuing Diversity

Founded more than 60 years ago, Air Products serves customers in technology, energy, healthcare and industrial markets worldwide. However, its success was complicated by some prejudicial attitudes leading to a feeling of exclusion and low contribution from some valuable staff, before a training and awareness diversity programme called Valuing Diversity began in 2001.

The programme has seen improvement in staff progression and a trained and more effective workforce. It includes awareness training, supported by posters to reinforce the learning from diversity workshops and ‘Coffee talks’ to explain the overall initiative and its local implementation. Regular diversity reports appear in employee magazines and corporate Intranet sites. Diversity leadership teams in each major business or region drive change towards an environment in which every employee can contribute fully and feels valued and included. Employee networks, have been set up, for example Gay and Lesbian Empowered Employees (GLEE), Ethnically Diverse Employees (EDEN) and All Asian Americans at Air Products.

The increased awareness has transformed the organisation and created an environment encouraging a significant number of local initiatives, typically related to improving communication, inclusion, building trust, improving teamwork and cultural awareness. This has been achieved through the development of unique training methods tailor for each individual country and allowing for its social and cultural context. Over 5,300 employees have now been trained across Europe.

**Results**

In France for instance, a newly formed logistics team used the concepts of team integration, acceptance and mutual learning to achieve a forecasted €600,000 productivity increase (exceeding a €450,000 target). Also specific efforts to recruit and accommodate Muslim employees in the Maurepas Depot have improved the standing of the company in the local community. In Spain, employees created a successful diversity internet site and information posters, introduced a mentoring programme and training for managers, engaged in self assessment and in recruiting from the local community. The overall initiative has led to a positive impact on the working environment, shifts in management style and enhanced worker innovation Europe wide.

**Specific Grounds:**
- Diversity training across all grounds

**Country(ies) scope:**
- Europe

**Launch date:**
- 2001 ongoing

**Highlights**
- Over 5,300 staff trained in diversity across a large number of EU country operations
- Active employee-driven mentoring programme and networks

*So I will continue to foster tolerance, understanding, respect, integrity and an open working environment. These are essential components of a modern, high-performing corporation and fundamental to retaining and nurturing talented people.*

Bernard Guerini, President, Air Products Europe
Dublin Bus employs staff from over 50 different countries and has a high public profile as a state-funded company that is proactively promoting diversity and equality and an intercultural workplace. Its commitment to diversity and inclusion started in 2001 when the company conducted an Equality Review to understand and analyse its position. This prompted strategic action with the launch of an Equality and Diversity Action Plan in 2003.

The plan’s priorities, objectives and actions are set in relation to dignity and respect at work, recruitment and positive action, ethnic diversity, disability, training and participation, work life balance as well as marketing and advertising. In particular, the plan has led to the introduction of specific internal policies (e.g. Equality & Diversity policy, Dignity & Respect, Intercultural Workplace Policy).

Working groups involving management, staff and trade unions are active on many diversity issues. One such group is the Intercultural Working Group that involves staff and bus drivers from different origins and ethnic backgrounds. It has initiated various projects to raise awareness and promote an intercultural workplace both internally (e.g. policy on intercultural workplace, training for trainers for selected staff to deliver intercultural training in induction courses) and externally (e.g. an annual all nations gaelic football match).

An Equality and Diversity panel of 40 trained employees from various grades and locations has also been set up to act as a resource to the working groups and as diversity champions in the workplace, communicating diversity objectives to other staff and bus drivers at different work locations.

**Results**

The diversity initiative has significantly enhanced the external corporate reputation of Dublin Bus, as well as its internal people management skills and good practice in human resource processes. Since 2001, the success of its Equality & Diversity Programme has been highlighted in the Irish media. The Equality Authority in Ireland has also listed Dublin Bus as a Company of Best Practice in relation to its intercultural workplace. Dublin Bus has a high level of worker satisfaction, and employees report the company as an employer of choice which has led to increasing numbers of job applications from ethnic minorities, older people and people with disabilities.

Joe Meagher, Managing Director, Dublin Bus
Deutsche Bank aims to foster an inclusive work environment in which all employees can contribute their full potential. To achieve this, it set up a global diversity team in 1999 to support various initiatives, such as talent and development initiatives, employee networks and diversity training. However, it initially received a reserved response among business managers. Only when the team started to connect diversity with the business did managers become more open to discussion.

Today at Deutsche Bank, senior managers of each business division act as diversity champions. Diversity management workshops are held for all managers who are also required to set personal diversity objectives. Members of the diversity team now work as business consultants to the business divisions, helping them to analyse data, develop projects and monitor their impact. One project that is being undertaken with Deutsche Bank’s retail banking business in Germany is targeting potential gay and lesbian clients with the aim of gaining market share by positioning the bank as an open-minded and empathetic financial services provider.

The project started in Berlin in late 2003 when Deutsche Bank began placing advertisements in a gay and lesbian magazine. The advertisements gave the names of people to contact, providing the bank with an opportunity not only to sell its services but also to gauge individuals’ responses to the campaign. Internally, Deutsche Bank has gay and lesbian employee networks in Germany, the UK and the US, and it is arguable that the gay and lesbian marketing activities would not have been considered without their influence.

Externally, Deutsche Bank supports gay and lesbian advocacy groups and the Christopher Street Day gay pride parades held annually in German cities. In 2002, its commitment to diversity was rewarded when it won the Völklinger Kreis (Federation of Gay Managers) Max-Spohr prize.

**Results**

Deutsche Bank is succeeding in its target marketing activities in Berlin, attracting new clients and sales revenues. Encouraged by this response, the retail banking business decided to launch a similar gay and lesbian marketing campaign in Hamburg in 2004. Together the Berlin and Hamburg projects have generated a ten-fold return on the initial investment. More recently, projects have been started in Cologne and Munich.
Programme PROGRESS

This publication is a part of the project Equal Opportunities are Worthwhile (VS/2009/0418), supported by the European Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity (2007-2013) managed by the Directorate General for Employment, social affairs and equal opportunities of the European Commission. This programme was established to financially support the implementation of the objectives of the European Union in the employment and social affairs area, as set out in the Social Agenda, and thereby contribute to the achievement of the Lisbon Strategy goals in these fields.

The seven-year Programme targets all stakeholders who can help shape the development of appropriate and effective employment and social legislation and policies, across the EU-27, EFTA-EEA and EU candidate and pre-candidate countries.

PROGRESS mission is to strengthen the EU contribution in support of Member States' commitments and efforts to create more and better jobs and to build a more cohesive society. To that effect, PROGRESS will be instrumental in:

- providing analysis and policy advice on PROGRESS policy areas;
- monitoring and reporting on the implementation of EU legislation and policies in PROGRESS policy areas;
- promoting policy transfer, learning and support among Member States on EU objectives and priorities; and
- relaying the views of the stakeholders and society at large

For more information see: http://ec.europa.eu/progress
© Slovak National Centre for Human Rights, 2010

Good Practices in Non-Discrimination and in Enforcement of Diversity in Employment Relations

Issued by the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights
Executive Director: JUDr. Anna Zachová
Number of pages: 89
Cover design: Marián Podlesný
Technical layout: Daniela Bielíková
Print: Jozef Pavlak – OPTIMA
Edition: 200 copies
Binding: V/2
Not for sale!