

High Level Event

10 ans de la Charte
de la Diversité française
*10 years of the French
Diversity Charter*

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**CHARTÉ
DE LA
diversité
EN ENTREPRISE**



L'ORÉAL



HIGH LEVEL EVENT ON DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT 23 October 2014, Paris

10 years of Diversity Charters in Europe: Achievements, current challenges and future perspectives



The European Commission, the French Diversity Charter and the EU platform of Diversity charters organized the “High Level Event” on 23 October 2014 in Paris.

CSR Europe, IMS-Entreprendre pour la Cité and FACE have coordinated the EU platform launched by the European Commission since July 2014. The Diversity Charters are gathered in this platform to share experience and develop common tools. The High Level Event is the annual meeting of Diversity Charters, their signatories, their partners and their stakeholders to bring diversity forward in Europe.

This year, the event was an occasion to take stock of 10 years of Diversity in Europe, to discuss the future trends and perspectives for diversity policies and to celebrate the 10 year anniversary of the French Diversity Charter, the first of its kind.

Opening

Myriam El Khomri, Secretary of State in charge of Urban Affairs

« The progress asks that we walk as one in a spirit of dialogue and of pooling both means and objectives. »

The Secretary of State in charge of Urban Affairs, Myriam El Khomri thanked the European Commission and the EU platform of Diversity Charters for their action to promote gender equality and fight discriminations for the last ten years.

The launch of the French Diversity Charter marked the beginning of the new era in the history of diversity in France and Europe. Despite the movement, discriminations still persists, particularly in the context of economic crisis. Mrs El Khomri stated that *« inequalities must be corrected as quickly as possible »*. This is why a number of positions related to equality will be created in National Education within two years.

The French Government, and especially the Ministry of Urban Affairs, has made the struggle against discriminations its top priority.

Paraskevi Michou, European Commission, Acting General Director, General Direction Justice:

« The Charters proved their efficiency but there is still work to do. »

The Director-General announced that the struggle against discrimination and the promotion of diversity in Europe remain core commitments for the European Commission. Companies and public authorities



in the European Union are more and more committed to diversity. More than 7,100 organizations representing 13.6 millions of employees have already signed a Charter in the European Union. Companies acknowledging the benefits of adopting a diversity policy (better performance, innovation, attractivity to clients...). [See 2014 report on diversity management in Europe](#)

The European Council adopted on 29 September the Directive on disclosure of non-financial and diversity information by large companies and groups. Companies with more than 500 employees will have to communicate on diversity to their administration board

However, legislation alone is not enough. This is why the European Commission is firmly in favor of the increasing the number of Diversity Charters in the European Union.

Claude Bébéar, Honorary President of AXA, funder of the French Diversity Charter :

« Fighting discrimination is about respect and love of others. »

Claude Bébéar recalled that originally, the initiative of the Diversity Charter rested upon the topic of ethnic diversity. The objective was to convince French companies to be « on the colors on France » and to recruit talents from difficult neighborhoods.

Today, the topic of diversity is integrated into companies' policies. Substantial efforts have been deployed by the government to make firms interested in the topic. The notion of Diversity expanded to several points of discrimination and 20 in France today.

A lot of practices have been put in place in the last 10 years and the movement has spread across Europe, even if there is still much work to do. This movement shall continue to be at the forefront of promoting diversity in the workplace and beyond.

Session 1: From the French Diversity Charter to the EU Platform: the innovative model of Charters in Europe.

Sylvie Savignac, General Secretary of the French Diversity Charter and **Luc Vidal**, Director of the polling company Energie – group Obea opened the session with a presentation of the last edition of "Bilan diversité". Conducted every year in France since 2010, the study takes stock of trends and evolutions of practices of signatory companies.

Discover the last study on diversity in companies [click here](#)

Representatives of European Charters present their activity

Aletta Gräfin von Hardenberg, Manager of the German Charter

Kari Kasper, Manager of the Estonian Charter

Louise Ring, President of the Swedish Charter, HRD, Axfood

Vibeke Jensen, Head of the "Employment" unit at Aarhus Municipal Council (Denmark)

Alessandra Servidori, National Equality Councillor of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, Italy

Every Charter representative highlighted the need for a Diversity Charter. This tool provides answers to current challenges such as an ageing population, increased extremism, youth and older people unemployment, gender inequalities...

Charters in partnership with their network of companies, associations and organizations create tools, practical guides, organize events and places to share ideas.

In this framework, the EU platform is of fundamental importance to share practices between Diversity Charter representatives.

Each Charter bears its specificities due to cultural context. The French Charter, as a forerunner, has been a source of inspiration to every other European Charter.

Session 2: The companies' vision: innovative diversity practices of European Charter's signatories.

Davor Sertic, Managing Director, Unit Cargo, Austria

Philippe De Gibon, Managing Director, Convers, France: an SME's view

Eric Dreborg, Managing Director, A-Search AB, Sweden

Stéphanie Oueda, International Diversity Manager, L'Oréal

Companies sign a Diversity Charter because they need a way to show their commitment to diversity.

Diversity is considered as guarantee of economic and social performance for companies.

« Diversity opened the door to new markets for our company. » - Davor Sertic

« It is important to have a diverse work force but it is even more important to create a inclusive environment so every employee can better his performance. » - Stéphanie Oueda

« This cause helps the renewal of our customer base and brings thriving businesses. » - Eric Dreborg

« 100% of balance sheets of Convers are positives while conducting an innovative and exemplary social policy » - Philippe De Gibon

Examples of good practices:

Davor Sertic, Unit Cargo : The dominant culture of Unit Cargo is based on multi-culturality. The company aims to recruiting people on their talents and competencies, whatever the colour of their skin or their religion.

Eric Dreborg, A-Search : At A-Search, a recruitment firm, the diversity question is addressed in a global way. Their mission is to change the way of thinking of their clients and select the most promising talents.

Philippe de Gibon, Convers : An atypical work organization has been set up in Convers. Employees can choose their working time every week and twice a year, they can change their number of hours to reconcile their working and family lives.

Stéphanie Oueda, L'Oréal : L'Oréal suggests joining specialized networks and work with them. It permits the exchange, sharing and obtaining of information. For instance, L'Oréal works with AFIP to recruit young talents and with the European Network Against Racism.

Guillaume Cravero, Adviser, Business Europe

«The European Commission initiative to promote the dialogue between signatories and increase the number of Charters must be supported. »

The Charter is not a legal instrument, as equality legislation is already in place. The Charters are situated between the law and the practice.

Diversity Charters reflect the companies' concerns. It is a tool to put diversity in practice.

Diversity shall serve as a tool to answer European challenges, in particular in the field of employment, (economic crisis, demographic issue, ageing population...). The existing talents and competencies on the market should be used.

The European economy is a single market within a wider globalized economy. There is a need for common tools to work on diversity management in companies.

Session 3 : Le rôle des différents acteurs sociaux et économiques dans la promotion de la Diversité en entreprise

Jean-Paul Bailly, Chairman of IMS, Honorary Chairman of La Poste (French Post Office)

Ommar Benfaïd, Confederate secretary, Economy and Society service, Confédération française démocratique du travail (CFDT). Charge of immigration questions

Laurent Wehr, HR Coordinator, Skills-Recruitment-Training-Corporate Affairs & HR Project Manager, Luxemburg Hospital Centre

Marco Buemi, Expert, National Centre to Combat Racial Discrimination, Italy

The round table showed the importance of the societal role of companies on diversity questions. Companies have already done a lot last ten years through their diversity management actions

But companies cannot act alone. They must include all the stakeholders.

- Legal actors are important because every act of discrimination should be addressed by the law.
- Trade unions should be associated with work on diversity management.
- It is also important to work with external partners: CSR associations, schools and universities...

Jean-Paul Bailly declares that «Companies must act and stakeholders must interact between them. It is true for educators, employment operators, rights defender, national organizations, trade unions and governments ».

Session 4: Future and perspective for Diversity in Europe.

« Diversity management is not an option, it is obvious! Diversity must be managed to prevent conflicts and create a sustainable development both social and economic. », Myrta Casanova

Michael Gardiner, Associate Partner of the Centre for Strategy and Evaluation of Services

Myrtha Casanova, President of the European Institute of Diversity Management

Jan Noterdaeme, External Relations, CSR Europe

Jean-Claude Legrand, HR Director, Corporate Diversity Director, L'Oréal

1) Economic arguments for Diversity policies

Companies recognized the benefits of diversity and its importance in retaining high potential.

Today, we ask what effect diversity has on companies, on their economic performance in the long term?

Economic performance having multifactorial causes, it is difficult to clearly demonstrate the economic arguments for diversity. However, studies tend to show that good diversity policies have positive impact on performance.

2) Future perspectives for Diversity in Europe.

One must expect a more and more diversified world:

- Women, representing 52% of population, will become more and more important economic agents.
- More than 50% of the European population will soon be older than 50
- LGBT population will have a growing impact on the economy.
- Immigration outside the EU will increase.
- The disabled will be more integrated into organizations

It is important to anticipate the impact of future trends such as new and evolving information technologies, physical and virtual mobility and globalization which is making the world smaller and smaller.

3) Achievements of the last ten years, current challenges, perspectives.

Achievements made during the last ten years were highlighted and exposed particularly through the EU platform strengthening.

Companies shall anticipate now the demographic changes by creating specific and new tools.

The obligation of companies to publish information on the representation of diversity in their administration board can be effective to make the firm evolve at all levels of the organization.

An answer might consist in involving investors so they can bring their own intelligence in the process.

4) The Diversity Charter goes beyond the simple signature: L'Oréal presents concrete actions.

- Training: 15,000 employees trained in 28 countries.
- The topic concerns not only Human Resources but also the purchasing department and the communication field through advertising campaign.

Closing session

Stéphane Roussel, Member of the Management Board of Vivendi, and Spokesman for the Diversity Charter

According to Stéphane Roussel, fighting discriminations is a necessity but the debate must be inclined towards promoting differences. « *Diversity is an asset that should be enhanced.* » Taking the example of most discriminated young people, Stéphane Roussel thinks one should help and guide people who are experiencing difficulties rather than erasing differences. « *Every action of big companies or SMEs are headed in the right direction of enhancement.* »

Conclusion or works

Massimo Serpieri, Deputy Head of Unit, Non discrimination policies and Rome coordination unit, Direction General Justice, European Commission

«*Keeping a holistic approach of diversity*»

Massimo Serpieri announced the focus of the European Commission to:

- Pursue the work of quantitative and qualitative evaluation. Measurement is needed to further progress.
- Continue to act with the Charter signatories. Big companies can handle the costs of setting up a diversity policy but SMEs are many. One needs to help the SMEs to commit in this area and favour partnerships with them.
- Keep a holistic approach of diversity. Some criteria are not taken into account enough compared to “gender” or “disability”.
- Move on from the debate « hard law or soft measures? » As expressed by Myriam EL Khomri, « law is not enough but necessary ».
- Closer cooperation between companies, public authorities and trade unions is required.

Massimo Serpieri thanked all relevant stakeholders who contributed to the promotion of diversity.

« *At political, legal and financial level, we can only pursue in the same direction. We will, I hope, increase the commitment. But we know there is much work left to do.* ».

Conclusion

François Rebsamen, Minister for Labour, Employment, Vocational Training and Industrial Relations

The Minister of Work expressed his support in the fight against discrimination and the promotion of diversity. According to Minister, « employment is the common denominator to every aspect of the Charter ».

He offered to find synergies between the initiatives of the charter and of the Employment Ministry. “Companies need public power, not to impose standards but to map out the path to a booming approach.”

His full speech, in French: <http://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/actualite-presse,42/discours,2142/discours-de-francois-rebsamen-high,18118.html>