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A better workplace for all: from equal opportunities towards diversity and inclusion

Contents

- 1. A new Diversity and Inclusion strategy for Commission staff..... 3**
 - 1.1. Equality and non-discrimination in EU legislation and beyond..... 3**
 - 1.2. The Commission as state-of-the-art employer 3**
 - 1.2.1. State of play: non-discrimination and equality 3
 - 1.2.2. The new concept of diversity and inclusion 4
- 2. Diversity and Inclusion in action 5**
- 3. The Commission's commitment: A Diversity and Inclusion Charter 6**
- 4. Diversity and Inclusion through concrete actions..... 8**
- 5. Cross-cutting measures 9**
 - 5.1 Attracting a more diverse workforce..... 9**
 - 5.2 Fostering diversity in selection and recruitment procedures..... 9**
 - 5.3 An inclusive working environment and a good work-life balance for all.....10**
 - 5.3.1 Discrimination prevention10
 - 5.3.2 Harassment prevention10
 - 5.3.3 Promoting inclusion 11
 - 5.3.4 Opportunities to report discriminatory or hostile practices..... 11
 - 5.3.5 Encouraging telework and flexible work arrangements and a good work-life balance 11
 - 5.4 Preparing talented staff for management 12**
- 6. Targeted measures for specific groups..... 13**
 - 6.1. Achieving the target of at least 40% women in management..... 13**
 - 6.2 An inclusive environment for persons with disabilities 15**
 - 6.2.1 Improving accessibility to buildings, websites, communication tools15
 - 6.2.2 Information and assistance to staff 16
 - 6.2.3 Staff with caring responsibilities16
 - 6.2.4. Medical-costs scheme and other support17
 - 6.3 A working environment where LGBTI staff are comfortable and confident about their identity 17**
 - 6.4 Valuing the talents of older staff..... 19**
- 7. Enhancing leadership and delivering transparent monitoring..... 20**
 - 7.1 Responsibilities and commitment at the highest level..... 20**
 - 7.1.1 College 20
 - 7.1.2. Directors-General..... 20
 - 7.1.3. Directorate-General for Human Resources..... 21
 - 7.2. Indicators and reports..... 21**
- 8. The way forward 23**
- Annex: Timetable 24**

1. A new Diversity and Inclusion strategy for Commission staff

1.1. Equality and non-discrimination in EU legislation and beyond

The European Union's founding values of freedom, democracy, equality, human dignity and the rule of law are as relevant today as ever before. They continue to guide EU legislation, policies and activities to advance equality, non-discrimination and diversity across Europe. This currently includes:

- A Strategic Engagement for Equality between Women and Men (2016-2019) for the EU;¹
- Implementation by the EU (and its institutions) of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD);²
- The List of Actions to advance LGBTI Equality;³
- The proposed Equal Treatment Directive aimed at expanding protection from discrimination in EU legislation⁴;
- Awareness raising activities to promote business-oriented diversity management in companies⁵.

But upholding values starts at home. Whatever we promote to Member States must first apply here in the European Commission. This Communication helps us achieve that by setting out the first comprehensive strategy promoting diversity and inclusion for all Commission staff.

1.2. The Commission as state-of-the-art employer

As an employer, the Commission has already gone a long way in fostering **non-discrimination and equality**. This has not been done as part of a comprehensive diversity strategy but rather through specific programmes aimed at ensuring compliance with non-discrimination rules.

1.2.1. State of play: non-discrimination and equality

Since 1988, the Commission has issued action programmes based on two guiding principles: non-discrimination and equal opportunities, focusing originally on achieving **gender diversity**. This is in line with the concept of fair treatment for all employees.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/document/files/strategic_engagement_en.pdf

² <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0636:FIN:en:PDF>; <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32010D0048&rid=1>

³ http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/lgbti_actionlist_en.pdf

⁴ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52008PC0426>

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/index_en.htm

A reinforced Strategy on equal opportunities for women and men was adopted by the Commission for the years 2010-2014. Following President Juncker's public commitment, in July 2015 the European Commission set a target to have at least 40% women in its senior and middle management teams by 2019.⁶

In relation to **staff with disabilities**, or with disabled dependents, the Commission has put certain decisions and guidance in place. These include the Decision on providing reasonable accommodation⁷, the Guidance on reasonable accommodation⁸ and the Code of good practice for the employment of people with disabilities.⁹

More broadly, the 2016 Talent Management Strategy was designed to ensure the best possible match between staff competencies and service needs. The strategy supports:

- Managerial excellence, with a focus on middle managers;
- Recruitment and performance, for long term workforce planning, career opportunities and performance monitoring;
- Development of staff competencies, through learning at work and professionalisation programmes;
- Collaborative skills and corporate culture, in order to develop professional communities and training;
- Career development, notably for non-management AD functions, advisers, AST, contract agents 3a.

These five pillars will be supported by a horizontal effort to increase mobility and diversity across the Commission and to promote diversity and inclusion in all Human Resource processes.

With this Communication, the Commission complies with its pledge on Diversity and Inclusion.

1.2.2. The new concept of diversity and inclusion

In this Communication, the Commission goes well beyond ensuring compliance with non-discrimination and equality rules. It commits to welcoming and managing diversity and inclusion. This **pro-active approach** seeks to create a diverse working environment and an inclusive culture in which everyone feels valued and can live up to their full potential in the workplace.

⁶ The presence of women in senior management posts has increased from 4% in 1995 to 33% in 2017, and has risen at middle management level from 10.7% to 35% in 2017. 45% of non-management AD posts are now occupied by women, and women constitute 55% of the Commission's total workforce, compared to 44 % in 1995. As many as 52% of staff in the AD5-AD8 categories are women, offering a large pool of skills for the future.

⁷ http://www.cc.cec/guide/publications/infoadm/2004/ia04069_en.html

⁸ http://www.cc.cec/guide/publications/infoadm/2004/ia04069_en.html

⁹ https://myintracomm.ec.europa.eu/hr_admin/en/equal_opportunities/Documents/pwd_c_2003_4362_1_en.pdf

Diversity is a given in an international organisation that is home to so many nations, languages and cultures. Yet, the concept of inclusiveness is not as straightforward. Inclusion is about an environment that allows our differences to thrive and be accepted and valued. It is a **corporate culture**.

The Commission believes that this concept fits better to today's challenges than a non-discrimination and equal opportunities strategy alone. And the **business case** for diversity and inclusion is just as strong. Organisations that embrace a diverse workforce and are inclusive to all tend to **deliver better results, innovate more and are able to take tough decisions**. The same should be expected from the Commission.

This new approach formally acknowledges that inclusion has different meaning for different groups. The need to take into account the particular situation and specific concerns of each group has been confirmed by the various stakeholders consulted when preparing this Strategy:

- **Women:** inclusion can mean having better access to management posts or not being confronted with stereotyping at work.
- **Staff with disabilities:** inclusion can mean taking into account different needs when providing for adapted reasonable accommodation. This can imply removing barriers to physically entering a building or providing appropriate IT equipment.
- **LGBTI¹⁰ staff:** inclusion can mean putting measures in place to help all employees feel comfortable and confident to be open about their LGBTI identity and to fully participate in the social dimension of the workplace.
- **Older staff:** inclusion can mean having the same opportunity to work on interesting projects as younger staff, and being valued for their experience.

That is why this Strategy also contains a series of measures targeted to a number of specific groups.

The Commission embraces the concept of diversity and inclusion. It is a pro-active approach aimed at fostering a culture in which everybody is valued and respected. This goes beyond mere compliance with rules. For the first time, the meaning of inclusion for certain specific groups is addressed through a series of targeted measures.

2. Diversity and Inclusion in action

The Strategy is based on measures taken at three levels:

- A new commitment: the Diversity and Inclusion Charter
- Cross-cutting measures relevant for all groups and individuals
- Targeted measures

¹⁰ Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, intersex people

A set of new measures laid out in this Strategy will already be implemented as of autumn 2017. With the support of stakeholders, they will be further developed and refined in an additional action plan.

The requirement to recruit staff from the broadest possible geographical basis is already enshrined in the Staff Regulations (Article 27). It is therefore not specifically addressed in this Strategy.

3. The Commission's commitment: A Diversity and Inclusion Charter

For the very first time, the Commission will have a Diversity and Inclusion Charter. The Charter sets out the guiding principles for the Commission's Human Resource policies.

Diversity charters are a voluntary initiative aimed at encouraging companies or public institutions to implement and develop diversity and inclusion policies. They outline what the organisation does - and will do - to promote those policies in the workplace. Most importantly, diversity charters are a valuable asset in fighting discrimination and promoting equality at work.

The Commission underlines the value it attaches to a culture of diversity and inclusion for its staff. To reinforce and formalise this commitment it approves, as a central part of this Communication, a "Diversity and Inclusion Charter of the European Commission" which is an integral part of this Communication. The Charter will be widely publicised in order to ensure it is as visible as possible.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION CHARTER OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

This Charter is a commitment in favour of diversity and inclusion among the Commission staff, which must benefit from equal treatment and opportunities, irrespective of any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation.

The Commission commits to:

- 1. Implement a human resources policy where diversity is regarded as a source of enrichment, innovation and creativity and where inclusion is promoted by managers and all staff, through policies improving work-life balance and flexible working arrangements for both women and men, through appropriate support, particularly for the underrepresented sex, and through the implementation of the obligations enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.*
- 2. Secure equal opportunities at every step of the career, through selection and recruitment procedures and mobility. Selection and recruitment must always be made on the basis of merit, irrespective of any other factors. The process must be devoid of bias while respecting the specific measures and rules so as to redress the gender imbalance at AST/SC level and to achieve the goal of at least 40% female representation in senior and middle management within the present mandate of the Commission.*
- 3. Exclude any kind of discrimination, and promote the enforcement of this principle at every level of the Commission, in line with the Staff Regulations. There can be no place for divisive or opaque behaviours; nor any form of bullying or harassment.*
- 4. Heighten managers' and Human Resource services' awareness of any barriers that can prevent individuals from succeeding. Organise special events and training to fight against stereotypes and to foster inclusion as a corporate culture built on greater diversity and inclusion.*
- 5. Communicate widely and to each colleague the commitment to implement a diversity and inclusion policy, and deliver regular and detailed follow-ups of the results.*

4 Diversity and Inclusion through concrete actions

The Strategy is based on a **mix of (i) cross-cutting measures relevant** for all groups and individuals, and **(ii) targeted measures**.

- (i) **Cross-cutting measures** cover recruitment, work-life balance measures such as telework and flexible work arrangements, training for managers and staff, counselling, awareness raising (for example on International Women's Day, International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOT), International Day of Persons with Disabilities, awards per Directorate-General/Unit, support to internal networks, information material, etc.). These cross-cutting measures clearly recall that no discrimination - direct or indirect - is tolerated within the Commission services. Equal opportunities must be for all, and respect and dignity in the workplace must be upheld.¹¹
- (ii) This Strategy will also include measures that target the **specific groups** identified. While the overarching focus is on diversity and inclusion for everyone, every targeted group faces its own challenges and thus requires different actions. They concern:
- Reaching the target of at least **40% of women in management**;
 - Implementation by the Commission of the United Nations Convention on the **Rights of Persons with a Disability (UNCPRD)**¹², which is the first human rights convention to which the EU has become a party.
 - Specific actions as regards **LGBTI staff** are warranted. The Staff Regulations contain some provisions which address the situation of LGBTI staff, in particular same sex-couples, and inclusive interpretation of some provisions of the Staff Regulations has been made to address situations which may be specific to LGBTI staff in view of ensuring equal treatment of staff. The actions outlined in this Communication aim to ensure that the Commission is a workplace where everybody can share moments of their personal life, and feels comfortable and confident at work.
 - As the average age of Commission staff is rising, the Commission must maintain an engaging work environment for **older staff** in which they continue to use and develop their skills and share experience with younger colleagues.

¹¹ Art. Id (77) (96) of the Staff Regulations says: "any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age, or sexual orientation shall be prohibited."

¹² <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0636:FIN:en:PDF>

5. Cross-cutting measures

5.1 Attracting a more diverse workforce

The Commission is already a diverse and inclusive organisation. It has staff from all Member States, 24 official languages, an improving gender balance¹³ in its workforce and a self-declared share of around 6% of staff with disabilities¹⁴. However, in a changing world, the Commission has to adapt and do more to be representative of our society. It must remain an attractive and motivating place to work in for all members of our society.

The European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO) is the gateway for recruitment to the European civil service. While EPSO consistently applies an equal opportunities policy and takes all reasonable measures to ensure equal treatment of all candidates, it will also work to further enhance the diversity of applicants. It will do so notably by broadening its outreach and further developing diversity communication channels. These will be made up of expert organisations and associations representing people from diverse target groups. It will therefore be easier to engage closely with these groups and understand their needs and the barriers they face. It will help present the EU institutions as potential employers and publicise current vacancies through these channels.

5.2 Fostering diversity in selection and recruitment procedures

Members of (pre-) selection panels within the Commission should be particularly encouraged to attend specific training to raise awareness of unconscious bias. This will help equip them with tools to eradicate bias in decision-making, notably on the grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation. The structure of the interview conversation should take into account the principles of diversity and avoid risks of unconscious bias.

In general terms, diversity in all (pre-) selection panels should be encouraged, without prejudice to the specific requirements that have been established to achieve the target of at least 40% women in management.¹⁵

¹³ 55% women vs. 45% men of the Commission's total workforce, compared to 44 % in 1995.

¹⁴ 6.1% of respondents in the 2016 Commission's staff opinion survey indicated that their daily activities (e.g. walking, seeing, concentrating, communicating, etc.) are affected by longstanding health issues (longer than 6 months) or disability (physical, mental or sensory). This is on a self-declared basis. Surveys conducted at European level show that, depending on the definition employed by the studies, usually between 10% and 15% of the EU population aged 15-64 report a disability. Therefore the real prevalence of disability among Commission staff may be higher.

¹⁵ Commission Decision of 27 July 2016, PV(2016)2179, point 11; Commission Decision of 15 July 2015, PV(2015), point 5.1.

5.3 An inclusive working environment and a good work-life balance for all

A culture of equal opportunities for all, respect, and safeguarding dignity is essential for a thriving and inclusive workplace. The Commission has the duty to maintain such a culture, offer support and where needed take action, if the dignity of an individual is threatened or infringed.

5.3.1 Discrimination prevention

All managers will be provided with specific training to ensure a respectful working environment and act against the biases mentioned in the Staff Regulations. This will heighten their awareness and increase their ability to detect any discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation or gender identity. As a result, all managers would, for instance, intuitively keep a watchful eye on the scheduling of meetings to ensure they work for all participants. In addition, they would be open to women and men with caring or family-related responsibilities. They would reassure – and not penalise – those who use workplace flexibilities. Managers would also combat prejudice against older colleagues and put their experience to good use.

5.3.2 Harassment prevention

Discrimination can be manifested through harassment. To enforce its anti-discrimination policy, the Commission will continue to develop the existing conflict and harassment prevention framework.¹⁶ The Directorate-General for Human Resources will also, by **means of awareness raising actions**, encourage good practices to help pre-empt any negative behaviours. This would focus on:

- Supporting teams with team-building actions, consultancy and coaching, systematically strengthening what works well;
- Equipping Commission managers, by means of training and coaching, with appropriate people leadership skills. This will help them encourage their staff to adhere to good practices and pre-empt unsuitable behaviours; and
- Offering conflict management courses to managers and staff for immediate application in the teams they are responsible for or work in. This will help provide the tools needed to de-escalate budding conflicts at the outset.

¹⁶ See

https://myintracomm.ec.europa.eu/hr_admin/en/equal_opportunities/respectful_working/harassement/Pages/index.aspx

5.3.3 Promoting inclusion

In addition to the efforts expected of managers and staff, the Commission will increase awareness-raising actions on the mechanisms designed to prevent non-inclusive practices at corporate level. The Commission will offer further training for staff and managers on respect and dignity in the workplace. In addition, on the basis of information and experience gained from anonymised individual cases, the Commission's Mediation Service will present a yearly general activity report to the Commission. This report may contain general recommendations to promote good practice. As an independent actor, the Commission's Mediation Service can help develop comprehensive measures for the management of human resources, for example in relation to psychosocial risks. It seeks to improve relations between staff and the administration, thereby pre-empting recurrence of similar problems.

5.3.4 Opportunities to report discriminatory or hostile practices

Transforming the workplace environment into a diversity-friendly one implies offering applicants and staff safe means of reporting unfair, discriminatory or hostile practices, particularly on the grounds of the personal identity elements mentioned in the Staff Regulations, namely sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation. Cases of discrimination, inequality or intolerance during the recruitment process or in the workplace will be rigorously followed up. A zero tolerance approach will be taken. Apart from the formal procedures included in the Staff Regulations, such as formal complaints or requests for assistance, staff may also, within the harassment prevention scheme, confidentially seek advice and help from counsellors and/or the Commission's Mediation Service.

5.3.5 Encouraging telework and flexible work arrangements and a good work-life balance

The Commission has set up an integrated health and wellbeing "fit@work" strategy for its staff. The strategy's primary aim is to care for Commission staff and protect their health and wellbeing. The "fit@work" strategy and action plan also include work-life balance related elements to better address the needs of the Commission staff. Indeed, achieving a good work-life balance and managing a higher workload are the second most common cause of concern among colleagues, according to the 2016 staff satisfaction survey. In order to address this situation, the "fit@work" strategy aims to highlight various actions through communication campaigns and ensure the highest degree of uniform application, for instance, for time management, part-time and telework formulas.

Flexible working arrangements are also key to attracting and retaining a diverse workforce, as evidenced for example by the Commission's initiative to address the work-life balance challenges faced in particular by working parents and carers.¹⁷

¹⁷ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1311&langId=en>

In particular, in terms of result-oriented environment and work-life balance, the Commission has in place:

- Flexible working recognised in the Staff Regulations since 2014 as an essential tool for reconciling private and professional life, thereby ultimately increasing productivity. Flexitime is currently the default working regime.
- The Telework Decision of 17 December 2015 further increased the possibilities for telework. Managers and staff are encouraged to make maximum use of it within specified limits. A specialised course on managing teleworkers is offered to managers under the "fit@work" programme. "Tips & tricks" brochures for staff and managers on how to make teleworking a success are readily available. In addition, the Directorate-General for Human Resources, together with the Directorate-General for Informatics, is looking at the development of online and internet based video conference and telecommunication facilities in order to help managers communicate more easily with their teleworking staff and reduce the overall telework-related expenses.
- On 8 January 2016, the Commission adopted further flexibility measures for part-time work formulas.¹⁸ In this respect, the criteria for obtaining 95% part-time for staff suffering serious hardship will be revised in order to make it more accessible and to align the Commission with other European Institutions.
- The Staff Regulations and Commission rules foresee special leave entitlements for family-related events, such as adoption leave, maternity leave, paternity leave, parental leave, and family leave.¹⁹

Persons benefitting from these arrangements must not suffer in their career development. Directorate-General Human Resource will analyse and scrutinise correlations between working patterns and career advancement to avoid situations of discrimination.

5.4 Preparing talented staff for management

Following the recently agreed guidelines on job shadowing²⁰, the Directorate-General for Human Resources will provide all necessary support to shadowing actions targeting administrators that are interested in following managers in their daily tasks. Directorates-General will be encouraged to follow best practices for example in setting up local initiatives or programmes, addressed to administrators that may be interested in management functions. This could include setting up a training plan. Local management (direct superior, other managers having worked with the administrator) should encourage administrators whom they consider to have management potential to take part in further training, or to apply to "pre-management" positions such as team leader, head of sector or deputy head of unit. Directorate-General Human Resource will ensure that all relevant information on training options is passed on to the Directorates-General.

¹⁸ Commission Decision C(2015)0157 concerning telework; Commission Decision C(2015)9720 concerning part-time work

¹⁹ https://myintracomm.ec.europa.eu/hr_admin/en/employment_conditions/leave/Pages/index.aspx

²⁰ https://myintracomm.ec.europa.eu/hr_admin/Documents/TalentManagement/Job_Shadowing.pdf

The Commission will, in addition to existing measures, offer further training on diversity and inclusion for all staff, with the aim of awareness-raising.

6. Targeted measures for specific groups

The cross-cutting measures described above are the very essence of the culture of diversity and inclusion in the Commission. However, the Commission will also pay particular attention to targeted measures for specific groups.

6.1. Achieving the target of at least 40% women in management

The Commission is committed to achieving the target of at least 40% women in management within its mandate. To this end, a number of tools have been approved by the College to ensure that the selection processes leading to the nomination of senior and middle managers provide equal opportunities to all talented women.²¹ Developments are being closely monitored at the highest level.

- **Targets for first time appointments:** While recognising the progress achieved during the first half of its term of office²², the Commission needs to adopt additional measures with a view to fully reaching the target of at least 40% female managers. Namely, as a follow-up to the present Communication, the Commission envisages to set quantitative targets in terms of first female appointments to middle management functions to be achieved by each Directorate-General and service by the end of 2019²³. The Commission departments could be prevented from filling middle management functions if they do not make sufficient progress towards the targets assigned.
- **Management Programmes for Women:** In parallel to the above-mentioned measures and in order to increase the number of first applications for middle management functions from women, the Commission will strengthen accompanying measures in the form of specific programmes for women. Details and outline of the programme will be presented in the action plan following this Communication.
- **Identifying talented women:** the Directorate-General for Human Resources will also promote relevant training, including participation in leadership courses. It will launch

²¹ Commission Decision of 27 July 2016, PV(2016)2179, point 11.

²² On 1 July 2017, female representation was at 33% at senior management level while at 36% at middle management, all in all at almost 36% at both management levels.

²³ The targets for first appointments will replace the indicative sub-targets per Directorate-General for female representation in middle management as set out in the document SEC(2015)336.

awareness raising activities to help reach out to potentially eligible female staff. In this context, the career guidance service in the Directorate-General for Human Resources is also available.

- **Fostering Mobility of AD women:** the Directorate-General for Human Resources will support the mobility of non-management female AD staff between Directorates-General so as to enable them to expand their experience, and work on further development opportunities.
- **Fostering Confidence:** the Directorate-General for Human Resources is developing further corporate initiatives with a view to identifying female ADs with the potential to grow into a middle management function.
- **Specific programmes for DGs:** In addition to the corporate measures, local initiatives are encouraged to allow female ADs to expand their capacities and boost self-confidence by enabling a more active exchange within and between women's networks. The Directorate-General for Human Resources will offer specific programmes for female ADs who are eligible to apply to middle management functions, to empower them to fulfil their real potential, develop their management capability, and to allow them to make informed career choices. These programmes can be adapted to the specific situation in the Directorate-General, considering their policies, organisation, size, staffing, gender composition and preponderance of grades. Implementing the corporate programmes in the Directorates-General will enlarge the pool of potential female managers. While not every talented woman can expect to take on a middle management position, experience has shown that these programmes bring numerous benefits to participants helping them find fulfilment in their careers. They also increase participants' engagement, motivation and a feeling of "belonging".
- **Understanding barriers for women:** The middle managers constitute the talent pool from which, ultimately, senior managers will be selected. Officials eligible for senior management positions should have at least two years of management experience in grade AD 14 or in grade AD 13 (in the latter case at least 2 years seniority in the grade is required). The Directorate-General for Human Resources will set out questions to this group, to be filled out on a voluntary basis. It will enquire on the motivation, possible barriers and perceived suitability for senior management positions.
- **Working with women networks:** Previous experience in Directorates-General has shown that formal or informal networks improve work processes and interconnections amongst different Directorates-General. They are also a key element to **provide information, mutual support, coaching as well as delivering role models**. In this respect, the Directorate-General for Human Resources will support women's local or cross-cutting networks throughout the Commission, by providing:
 - A space for support and exchange with other women's networks across the Commission;
 - A Central Desk for information on learning opportunities for leadership development;
 - Regular speaker events, open to members of the networks;

- Support to provide mentoring opportunities;
- A dedicated Connected or Yammer space to facilitate exchanges;
- A platform for women's representative organisations and networks on the intranet webpages of the Commission;
- Help to existing women networks which are largely organised by nations, to network amongst them and set up a "network of the networks" and establishing more networks.

The Directorate-General for Human Resources will focus on fostering potential female managers by developing central initiatives as well as by requesting Directorate-Generals to set up local management programmes. The Directorate-General for Human Resources will support women's networks across the Commission and will provide a common platform for these networks to meet and exchange views and best practices.

6.2 An inclusive environment for persons with disabilities

While the Commission has already implemented specific decisions for staff with disabilities, the objective is now broader - it is to ensure, as far as reasonably possible, that people with disabilities have the **same possibility to work and progress in their career as persons without disabilities**.

6.2.1 Improving accessibility to buildings, websites, communication tools

The Commission will:

- Continue to ensure full accessibility across the board. It will review, in light of the UNCRPD obligations on information and communication including ICT, and the UN Committee conclusions,²⁴ the accessibility of all its websites and of other means of communication (e.g. in sign language) and information provided, including easy-to-read formats.
- Continue to refit and refurbish its buildings in line with the highest possible standards, including going beyond certain minimum national legal obligations, for instance through the installation of vocal signalisation in lifts.
- Strive for high accessibility to all its standard buildings throughout the European Union. As local legal requirements vary in the Member States, the Commission will strive to meet the highest standards for accessibility. Representative associations of staff with disabilities will be involved in devising corresponding plans. The Commission will also integrate in its internal provisions the relevant EU legal obligations on accessibility and public procurement.

²⁴ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1138&langId=en>.

- Monitor compliance of its building environment and its communication tools with the UNCRPD obligations of accessibility following the "universal design approach".²⁵
- Ensure that staff with disabilities are duly represented in the decision-making processes of issues of their concern – as is for example the case under the social integration section of the "fit@work" action plan.

6.2.2 Information and assistance to staff

The Commission will:

- Set up a new online information portal which will feature relevant information for colleagues with disabilities, who will be invited to participate in the project;
- Establish a single help and contact point for all staff with disabilities to address their specific requests. The contact point will help ensure that their rights and requests concerning specific needs are given appropriate follow-up. It should also be available for consulting, encouraging and supporting line managers in recruitment, accommodation and retention of colleagues with a disability;
- From 2018 onwards, provide all newcomers at the entry into service with an optional questionnaire about special needs, if any, to have a better understanding about the different facets of disability;
- Support staff with disabilities networks by providing a space for exchange;
- Create a dedicated Connected or Yammer space to facilitate exchanges;
- Encourage all staff and managers to benefit from training on unconscious bias and discrimination relating to disabilities.

6.2.3 Staff with caring responsibilities

The Commission will ensure that staff and managers are sensitive to the situation of staff with caring responsibilities for dependents with disabilities, by means of appropriate training and awareness-raising. Staff must be enabled to use the possibilities for flexible working and special leave where warranted, without disadvantages to their careers.

The Commission is aware of the UNCRPD Committee's recommendation about the European Schools regarding an inclusive quality education for all students with disabilities. The Directorate-General for Human Resources is in a renewed dialogue with the Secretary-General of the European Schools in order to address this issue. However it should be noted that the European Schools are subject to an inter-governmental agreement between the Member States and the European Union, according to which the Commission has a single vote, as any other Contracting Party.

In addition, the Directorate-General for Human Resources will:

²⁵ See Article 2 of the UNCRPD.

- Support representative organisations of staff with disabilities and with caring responsibilities for disabled relatives by offering logistic support where necessary; and
- Provide a platform for staff's corresponding representative organisations on the intranet webpages of the Commission.

6.2.4. Medical-costs scheme and other support

All beneficiaries of the Joint Sickness Insurance Scheme (JSIS), whether with or without disabilities, receive under certain conditions reimbursement of sickness costs of 80% or 85%, depending on the pathology and type of expenses, and of 100% in case of serious illness.

Payments by the JSIS should not be seen in isolation because staff members with a disability or staff members' disabled family members – in the meaning of the Staff Regulations - can benefit from other payments made outside the JSIS. This concerns financial support in case of non-medical expenses linked to a disability, such as adapting the home environment to the needs of a staff member with disabilities, or financial support for special schooling that may be necessary for children with disabilities.

Reimbursement of non-medical costs related to disabilities is however sometimes confused with the principles and guidelines from the medical insurance scheme, with sometimes important financial complexities and unsuitable analogies to "very ill" persons.

The Commission will set up a suitable body to study the current situation and to propose ideas and means to lighten as far as possible the burden of staff with disabilities. The Commission will closely consult with and actively involve persons with disabilities, through their representative organisations, in the decision-making processes concerning issues relating to them. These recommendations are expected to be implemented before the end of the current mandate of the Commission.

The Commission will set up a central help and contact point for information for staff with disabilities. It will organise trainings for all staff on unconscious bias and discrimination of staff with disabilities. It will also provide a platform for the relevant staff associations on its internet website. The Commission will set up a suitable body to study the current situation of costs and their coverage related to disabilities, with a view to lighten as far as possible the burden of staff with disabilities. From 2018 onwards, the Directorate-General for Human Resources will provide all newcomers at entry into service with an optional questionnaire about special needs to have a better understanding about the different facets of disability.

6.3 A working environment where LGBTI staff are comfortable and confident about their identity

In line with a resolution from the European Parliament and a joint call from Member States to increase efforts to combat discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity,

the Commission set out the 'List of actions to advance LGBTI Equality'. The objectives are to support progress across the EU and beyond in a number of policy areas, improve and enforce EU legislation and improve the social acceptance of LGBTI people. It includes activities envisaged by the Commission in different policy areas in 2016-2019. The first Annual Report on the Implementation of the List of Actions was published in February 2017.²⁶

As part of the List of Actions and its efforts to promote diversity and inclusion at the workplace, the Commission published on 17 October 2016 the report "The Business Case for Diversity in the Workplace: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity."²⁷ The report finds it makes good business sense to have LGBTI-supportive actions in the workplace. This is associated with reduced incidence of discrimination. Less discrimination is associated with better psychological health and increased job satisfaction among LGBTI employees. In addition, the presence of LGBTI-supportive activities and workplace environments are associated with improved relationships between LGBTI employees and their co-workers and supervisors; LGBTI employees are more engaged in the workplace, are more likely to go above-and-beyond their job description to contribute to the work environment, and report greater commitment to their jobs.

The Commission as an employer is committed to an inclusive culture in which everyone, including LGBTI staff, feels valued, can be themselves, and can realise their full potential. A two-way process is essential in this respect: managers' inclusion of LGBTI staff creates favourable conditions for staff to feel comfortable and confident and to be open about their LGBTI identity; and when LGBTI people who so wish are open about their identity, they contribute to further LGBTI inclusiveness.²⁸ This is in line with the needs expressed by both representatives of the Commission's/internal LGBTI staff association, and of external organisations' representatives and by external ones in their meeting with Commissioner Oettinger.

The actions outlined below aim to foster such a culture where no one feels the need to conceal their sexual orientation and where everyone, including LGBTI staff, feels valued, can be their authentic selves and realise their full potential. These concrete actions come on top of the rules already enshrined in the Staff Regulations and the inclusive interpretation which, when necessary, has been made of them. Those actions are mostly awareness-raising actions, such as staff events on the International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOT), or training for managers. It is evident that in creating such a culture, managers play a leading role. Managers' inclusion of LGBTI staff creates favourable conditions for staff to feel comfortable and confident, and to be open about their LGBTI identity.

To increase inclusiveness, the Directorate-General for Human Resources will engage particularly in actions such as:

- Exchanging information and good practices with international companies and public administrations;
- Promoting training on unconscious bias at all levels;

²⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/item-detail.cfm?item_id=54346

²⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/item-detail.cfm?item_id=35768

²⁸ Workplace Pride, Talent to change for LGBT Employee Research Leading The Way In Diversity <http://workplacepride.org/site/docs/Talent%20to%20Change%20For%20FINAL%20FULL%20REPORT.pdf>

- Ensuring that managers are trained specifically to prevent discrimination and bias in relation to LGBTI people;
- Organising central staff awareness-raising events on the occasion of the International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOT);
- Launching further awareness-raising initiatives;
- Pursuing a zero tolerance policy against discrimination and harassment;
- Supporting representative organisations of LGBTI staff by offering logistic support where necessary;
- Providing a platform for representative organisations of LGBTI staff on the intranet webpages of the Commission;
- Supporting LGBTI staff networks by providing a space for exchange;
- Creating a dedicated Connected or Yammer space to facilitate exchanges.

In line with the new approach of formally acknowledging that inclusion has different meanings for different groups, the Commission addresses explicitly the social inclusion of its LGBTI staff. In this field the Commission will carry out in particular awareness-raising actions and exchange best practices with international companies and public administrations. The relevant staff associations will have a platform on the Commission's intranet webpages.

6.4 Valuing the talents of older staff

The Commission is committed to ensure that there is no discrimination in the careers of older staff. Any incidence of discrimination is strictly pursued. As first steps to foster inclusion, and in order to maximise the benefits from the expertise and experience of its older staff, the Directorate-General for Human Resources will notably monitor the mobility and development patterns and their success rates in applying for new positions in the institution, so as to identify any possible bias. In addition, the Commission implements a range of measures which also benefit older staff. Training is offered for staff of all ages, aiming to continuously help them maintain and broaden their knowledge and competencies, throughout their careers, and to remain at work until the legal retirement age. Suitable working arrangements, and reasonable accommodation when pertinent, including with regard to working time, are an option which is likewise open to older staff.

As first steps to foster inclusion, the Directorate-General for Human Resources will monitor the mobility and development patterns of older staff and their success rates in applying for new positions in the institution.

7. Enhancing leadership and delivering transparent monitoring

7.1 Responsibilities and commitment at the highest level

7.1.1 College

Commissioners and senior managers of the Commission are the key drivers for promoting diversity, gender equality and inclusion for all Commission staff. They will work alongside their portfolio Directors-General to foster and promote a culture of diversity and inclusion for all. They will encourage and support Directors-General in a collective effort to adequately involve and give space to representative diversity or gender equality staff organisations, require them to take preventive measures and to act immediately when there is any evidence of discrimination, harassment or other inappropriate behaviour within their Directorate-General.

The Commissioner in charge of Human Resources will regularly present to the College the progress made in the institution on gender equality, diversity and inclusion, starting in 2018.

7.1.2. Directors-General

Members of the Commission, Cabinets and Directors-General are responsible for achieving the women middle management targets at Directorate-General level.²⁹ Directors-General and Heads of Service are themselves "Diversity Champions" and are as such responsible for diversity and inclusion progress in their Directorates-General.

All Directors-General will fully implement the Commission's diversity charter (cf. Point 5 below) and should commit to the following (non-exhaustive) practices if not yet in place:

- Set up meeting rules which strive to ensure a good work-life balance for both women and men;
- Promote time flexibility, e.g. part-time working and telework for managers as well as for other levels;
- Implementation of the corporate management programmes open for female ADs, that fulfil the technical conditions to apply for middle management positions, to develop their potential;
- Be responsible, with the support of the other relevant services, to remove and prevent barriers for colleagues with disabilities, by supporting the provision of appropriate ICT equipment, enabling them to fully participate in meetings, or setting up groups to assess reasonable accommodation rights in cooperation with the Directorate-General for Human Resources and other relevant services;

²⁹ Commission Decision of 15 July 2015, PV(2015)2135, point 5.1; SEC(2015)336.

- Promote a full range of actions to enhance rights of LGBTI staff by supportive measures
- Encourage staff to report hostile or discriminatory attitudes;
- Set out best practices to be adhered to in a specific, measurable, assignable, realistic and time-related way; ensure monitoring and evaluation for instance by a competition of "Inclusive Department of the Year", to be elected via staff vote, with the help of the Directorate-General for Human Resources; and
- Include in the reporting to the Directorate-General for Human Resources their annual action plans and achievements regarding diversity and gender equality, and on providing reasonable accommodation to staff with disabilities.

Diversity and inclusion measures should be promoted at the level of the Directorates-General. All Directors-General will fully implement the Commission's diversity charter and should commit to a series of (non-exhaustive) practices if not yet in place.

7.1.3. Directorate-General for Human Resources

The Directorate-General for Human Resources is in charge of the relevant trainings, the improvement and monitoring of selection processes and the reporting:

- Yearly, to the College, on progress in reaching during its present mandate the at least 40% target of women in management positions³⁰;
- Yearly, on the achievement of the above target with a chapter in its annual report;
- Yearly, a diversity and gender equality report.

7.2. Indicators and reports

With regards to the at least 40% target for women in management, the Directorate-General for Human Resources will set out a number of questions to women exercising middle management functions as part of the annual staff satisfaction survey. This will take place during this mandate and be aimed at women in the grades AD 13, with at least 2 years seniority in the grade, and AD 14. It will be on a voluntary and anonymous basis. It will ask about motivation, possible barriers and perceived (un-) suitability for senior management positions.

As regards disability issues, the Commission will more systematically collect information on the types of reasonable accommodation measures and accessibility measures to be taken in order to address effectively and efficiently the needs of its staff. In line with the requirements of the UNCRPD, the Directorate-General for Human Resources will make available as from 2018 to all newcomers at the entry of service a questionnaire about their special needs, to which they can reply anonymously and

³⁰ See the first report of 27 July 2016, SEC(2016)362

on a voluntary basis.³¹ In addition, newcomers will get at their entry into service the relevant forms as well as a list of relevant contact persons to obtain the reasonable accommodation that may be needed. The Directorate-General for Human Resources will, in addition, continue to make use of the annual staff satisfaction survey for existing staff to obtain information on staff with disabilities and their satisfaction about the reasonable accommodation currently provided.

In more general terms, the Commission will also need to collect data on staff satisfaction with the work environment in terms of diversity and inclusion. To this end it will include in the annual staff satisfaction survey questions relating to respectful and inclusive behaviour, and practices, of staff and management, notably in relation to sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation.

Progress of this Strategy will be measured quantitatively and qualitatively by the Directorate-General for Human Resources:

- Work Environment: yearly measurement Commission-wide and per Directorate-General of telework and use of flexible working formulas (by women and men); monitoring of career progression of teleworkers and part-time workers (women and men); qualitative measurement of the correlation between flexible working arrangements/job satisfaction/engagement (women and men); qualitative measurement of the work environment and working relationship in the yearly staff satisfaction survey.
- Gender gap in management positions: regular progress measurement Commission-wide and per Directorate-General towards the at least 40% target to be achieved during the present mandate of the Commission; obtaining information from female middle managers on motivation, possible barriers and perceived (un-) suitability for senior management positions; qualitative measurement in yearly staff satisfaction/engagement survey of female and male managers, with particular attention on work-life balance issues; analysis of career progression, effects of career breaks and working patterns between men and women; recruitment of female ADs.
- Gender balance in assistants' positions: yearly measurement Commission-wide and per Directorate-General, with specific attention to strong imbalances; recruitment of male secretaries (AST/SC).
- Disability: staff engagement of people with disabilities measurement in the context of the annual staff satisfaction survey; quantitative measurement and publication of results of recruitment of persons with a disability.
- LGBTI inclusion: staff engagement of LGBTI employees; progress towards fostering an inclusive working environment based on the number of awareness-raising/training actions.
- Discrimination and harassment-free working environment: yearly measurement of the number of discrimination complaints and anti-harassment procedures.
- Age inclusion: staff engagement of older staff; analysis of mobility patterns.

³¹ In accordance with the provisions of Regulation 45/2001 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data, OJ L 8/1, 12.1.2001.

In order to measure progress in inclusion in qualitative terms, new questions regarding diversity and inclusion will be included in the next staff satisfaction survey.

8. The way forward

The Commission, working closely with the relevant stakeholders, will now immediately prioritise and get to work on the operational implementation of the principles and measures set out in this Strategy.

While all actions contained in this Strategy deserve the same level of attention, the operational implementation will concern first the following areas:

- Trainings for all staff to promote diversity and inclusion at the workplace, with particular encouragement for managers and panel members to attend;
- Awareness raising actions, in particular through regular speaker events;
- Preparation of talented staff for management, with a particular focus on supporting programmes for women in light of the at least 40% target of female managers;
- Reinforced continuity between EPSO's and the Commission's actions to foster diversity in selection and recruitment procedures;
- Support (including logistic support) to associations and networks to which greater visibility will be ensured;
- Review of the processes and procedures, in particular at the entry into service, for staff with disabilities;
- Review of the questions contained in the Staff Survey as regards Diversity and Inclusion.

The operational steps to be taken in order to achieve the objectives of this Strategy will be based on the above global orientations and incorporated in an operational Action Plan.

The first Diversity and Gender Equality Report will be elaborated by the Directorate-General for Human Resources in 2018 and will be widely publicised.

Implementation will be started immediately. In 2018, the Directorate-General for Human Resources will establish its very first Diversity and Gender Equality Report which will be widely publicised.

Annex: Timetable

SEPTEMBER 2017

ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS

Directorate-General for Human Resources elaborates first draft operational action plan with stakeholders' input.

SUPPORT PARTNERS

Support to associations and networks to which greater visibility will be ensured.

AUTUMN 2017

INFORM STAFF

New training sessions for all staff to promote diversity and inclusion at the workplace, with particular incentives for managers and panel members to attend.

SUPPORT WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT

Preparation of talented staff for management, based on a strengthened focus on supporting programmes for women in light of the at least 40% target of female managers.

ENHANCE ACCESSIBILITY FOR STAFF WITH DISABILITIES

Start building the central help and contact point for staff with disabilities, with involvement of their representative association in the Commission.

DECEMBER 2017

AWARENESS RAISING CAMPAIGN

Cycle of Awareness raising actions, launched in conjunction with the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

SPRING 2018

STAFF SURVEY FEEDBACK ON DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Revamped questions to be inserted in the Staff Survey as regards Diversity and Inclusion.

First Diversity and Gender Equality Report elaborated and widely publicised.