



European Commission
DG Employment, Social Affairs & Equal Opportunities

**THE BUSINESS CASE FOR DIVERSITY IN AN
ENLARGED EUROPEAN UNION
GOOD PRACTICE IN WORKPLACE DIVERSITY**

Project Information Update

Tackling discrimination and ensuring equality of opportunity across European societies is a key goal of the EU. Recent anti-discrimination legislation and a Community Action Programme are designed to help all organisations improve their performance through prohibiting discrimination and promoting diversity. The European Commission recently launched a project aimed at encouraging the exchange of good practice and the development of effective diversity policies by businesses and employers. The project is intended to provide a rational framework with compelling case studies to illustrate the business case for diversity across an enlarged European Union.

Over the course of several weeks, between March and April 2005, we collected many initiatives submitted by enterprises with exemplary management practices of diversity policy.

Initiatives considered for the report exhibited a conscious effort to promote diversity and combat discrimination with respect to racial or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age or disability. We sought examples that had a measurable impact in terms of business performance or impact on the overall society. For instance, diversity initiatives may have increased sales or profitability, recruitment and participation of targeted groups in the workforce, improved workforce morale or enhanced reputation in a local community. Particular credit was given to initiatives clearly linked to the overall business strategy, which demonstrated originality or innovation, and are sustainable in the long term. Initiatives to encourage gender equality and combat sex discrimination as part of a broader strategy to promote diversity were also taken into consideration. Additionally, case studies were reviewed from enterprises operating within existing European Union member states. We particularly welcomed expression of interest from SME's. *While the application phase of this project has passed, it may still be possible to have an exemplary initiative considered.*

The project research, now in progress, will result in a compendium of good corporate practices including an analytical framework and a series of selected case studies. Full results will be presented at a major European conference on workplace diversity to take place at the end of 2005.

Further information about the European Union's commitment to this area of work can be found on the following web-sites:

www.europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/fundamental_rights/index_en.htm
www.stop-discrimination.info

This project is conducted on behalf of the European Commission by a consortium comprising the following organisations with associated contact points for further information:



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