

**DIVERSITY, EQUITY,
AND INCLUSIVITY:
FROM THEORY
TO PRACTICE.**
PERSPECTIVES
FROM POLAND
AND CYPRUS.



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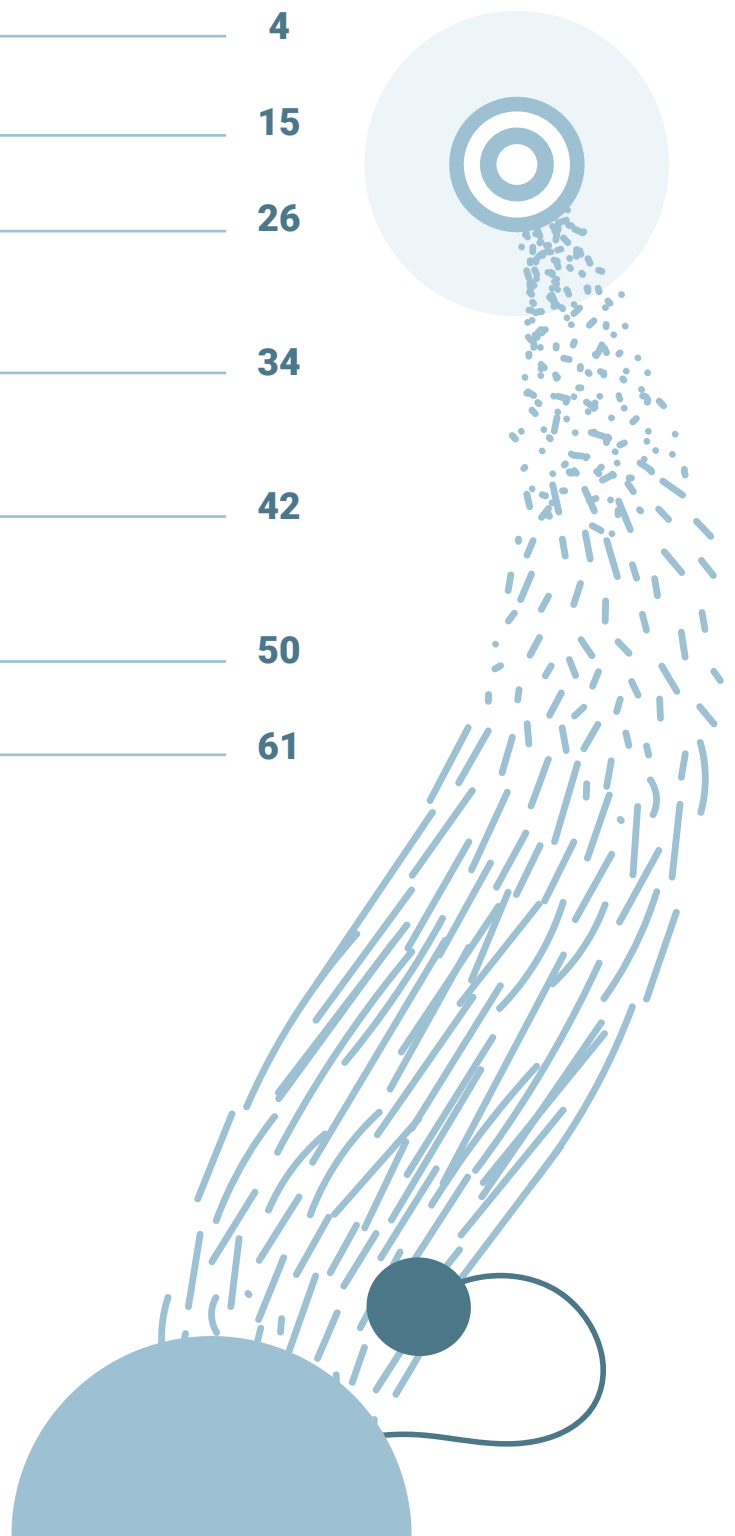
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Introduction

The increasing diversity in the workplace in Europe in recent years stems not only from ongoing demographic processes such as aging populations in developed countries and migratory movements but also from advancing globalization and the growing diversity of consumer needs. These challenges require more creative and innovative strategies, services, and products aimed at fostering teams of employees that reflect increasingly diverse and mosaic-like societies.

The topic of diversity is particularly significant in modern, evolving organizations. It involves creating a work environment where the voice of each employee is heard and acknowledged. Diversity provides equal opportunities for the development of employees, aligned with the organization's mission and objectives. Everyone has the same conditions and possibilities to realize and develop their own potential. Valuing employees pertains not only to the outcomes of their work but also to who they are and the value they bring to the organizational culture. Through culturally diverse teams, we can operate more effectively and achieve better work results.



*DEIB: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) at Organizations

Diversity management is an expanding field of actions that responds to demographic processes, globalization, and diverse consumer needs. The past 40 years serve as evidence of the inevitability and continuous necessity of adapting to these changes and rapidly responding to new trends. The evolving global market demands the creation of innovative solutions to meet the challenges of a competitive environment. An approach drawing from diversity and equity yields tangible results, such as improved customer trust and image, increased profitability and competitiveness, attracting talents, and enhancing employee productivity and job satisfaction.

The Diversity Leaders Coalition project is an international Polish-Cypriot partnership that promotes equity-based leadership and diversity. It is primarily aimed at women who wish to develop their leadership skills as well as those interested in harnessing the potential of diversity. This goal has been achieved through a broad spectrum of educational and communicative activities, including scenarios for workshops on diversity, hybrid workshops covering equity, diversity, and inclusivity topics, a handbook instructing on how to effectively and attractively organize diversity initiatives, study visits for sharing experiences, and a conference to disseminate the project's outcomes.

The project is led by the Inna Foundation, specializing in equity, diversity, inclusivity, and empowerment initiatives. On the Cypriot side, the project's partner is the DOREA Educational Institute, specializing in adult education, gender equity, and women's entrepreneurship.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity

Diversity

Diversity is about differences, non-uniformity. It encompasses all the characteristics that contribute to our uniqueness and define who we are. Our gender, age, origin, orientation, religion, disability status, and beliefs – all of these set us apart and make each of us distinct, each simply being themselves. Diversity signifies the uniqueness that not only allows us to get to know but primarily to understand different worldviews and perspectives. Ensuring equal rights, opportunities, and a sense of social justice for all citizens and countering discrimination are closely linked to the issue of diversity. The concept of equity lies at the core of European Union policy, encompassing equal treatment, equal opportunities, and the elimination of all forms of discrimination. Equal treatment based on fairness and providing equal chances for all is evolving towards recognizing and appreciating differences and diversity.

Understanding diversity has been evolving since the 1970s, when the term "diversity" referred to minority groups and women as groups of employees. For a long time, management assumed that workplace diversity involved increasing the representation of genders, national and ethnic minorities, and concerned the hiring and retention of a greater number of individuals from so-called minority groups (underrepresented identity groups). The impetus for changes in diversity management came from transformations in employment structures observed in the USA and Western Europe in the second half of the 20th century. Many factors influencing the growing interest in diversity in businesses include:

- The growing significance of women's emancipation movements and the fact that an increasing number of women opt for professional goals rather than family life.
- Traditional forms of family life are changing both in terms of household constellations and member composition, as well as the size of households.
- Women are entering traditionally "male" professions, and men are increasingly choosing careers traditionally associated with women.
- The increasing importance of minority groups demanding equal treatment in the workplace and social life.
- Greater diversity in work environments – people of different ages, backgrounds, value systems, and diverse beliefs: religious, political, physical, and psychological predispositions, individual aspirations – collaborate in multicultural teams.
- Aging societies with a higher proportion of older individuals among the working population¹.

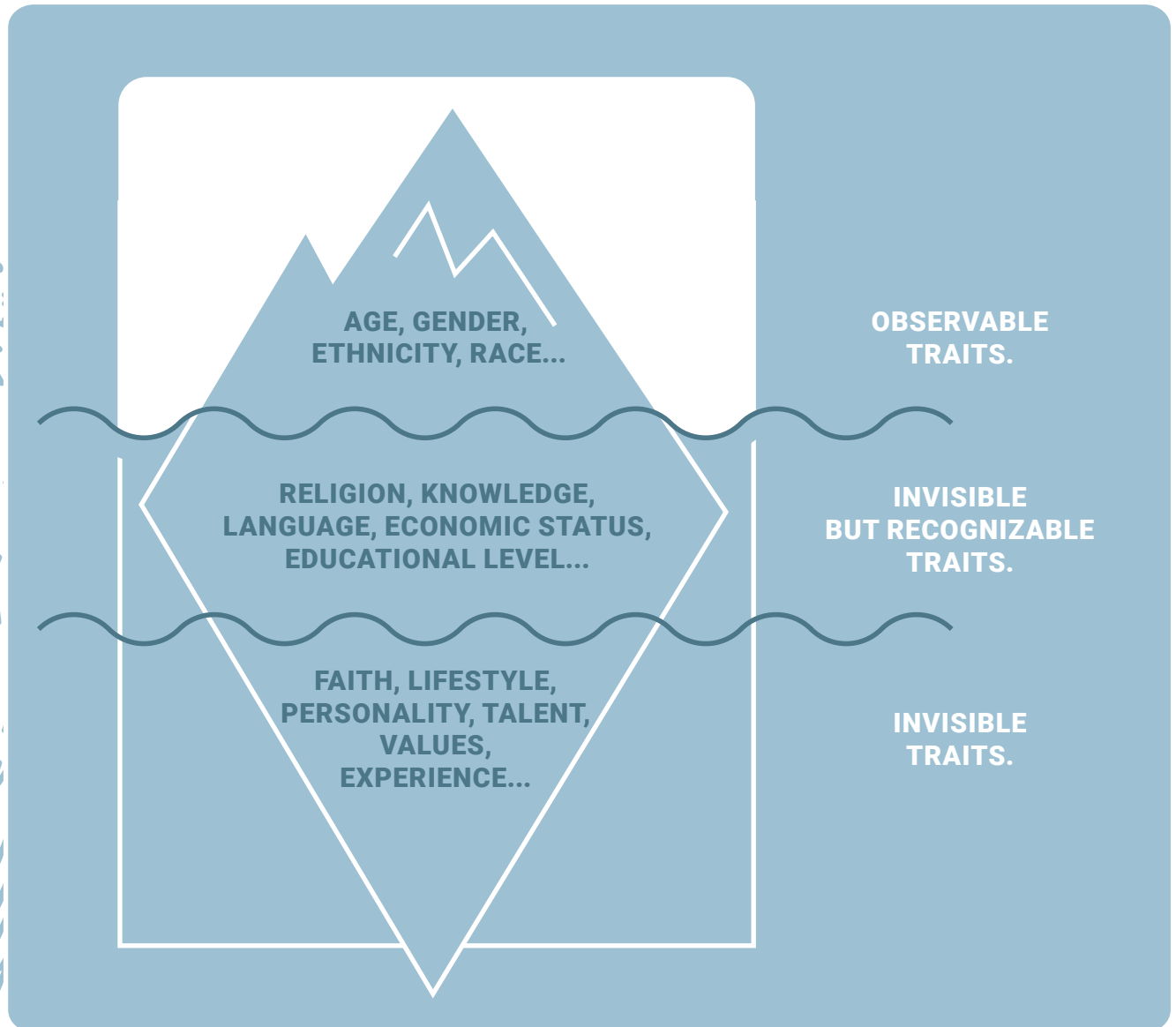
The concept of "diversity" comes from the Latin word "diversus," which means opposite. Diversity is reflected in the characteristics of individuals or communities. The initial definitions of diversity related to characteristics that determine primary identity, such as race, ethnic origin, and gender. However, it turned out that this understanding of diversity does not encompass all the issues related to it². There are many other aspects that significantly contribute to one's identity. Research by M. E. Barak indicated that in some selected countries, diversity is perceived only in terms of racial and ethnic dimensions (USA), religious dimensions (Ireland), or social categories (India). Diversity, in the context of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), refers to the diversity of people employed³. In a broader sense, diversity encompasses all aspects in which people exhibit differences and similarities. Not all characteristics are directly observable. Diversity also includes respect and recognition for mutual differences, whether they relate to gender, race, ethnicity, lifestyle, appearance, language skills, communication, decision-making style, and more. V.R. Hayes defines diversity as encompassing all the elements by which we differ, adding that the concept of diversity is not limited to issues observable by people, such as age, gender, or disability status. Diversity is based on recognizing harmony in differences and

¹ K. Klimkiewicz, "Managing Diversity as a Component of Pro-Social Corporate Policy, 'Contemporary Management' 2/2010, p. 95."

² "Difference - <<distinguishing between things; diversity, disparity, inequality; also: a distinguishing feature that sets something apart. To differ - to be different from something else, to exhibit differences.>>; To differentiate - <<to seek or find differences, to divide, to extract based on differences.>>; Polish Language Dictionary, ed. E. Sobol, Warsaw 2002, p. 880. Diverse - of various kinds, origins, composed of different elements; various."

³ M. E. Mor Barak, *Managing Diversity, Toward a Globally Inclusive Workplace*, Sage Publications Thousand Oaks 2011, s. 234 – 236.

emphasizing similarities within them. This approach offers patience and tolerance for recognizing, becoming aware of, experiencing, supporting, benefiting from, and fulfilling each other (meeting each other's needs, complementing each other), as well as adapting to unique social differences⁴.



According to P. Drucker, diversity encompasses numerous demographic and socio-economic aspects, including population aging, increasing employee competencies, migration, evolving women's roles, cultural differences, etc. Diversity in the workplace generates implications such as a collage of race, ethnicity, religion, family situations, age, physical abilities, and/or it can encompass functions within the organization, interactions with diverse individuals and groups encountered in labor markets, among client and employee groups⁵.

⁴ V.R. Hayes, Diversity training and development handbook, New York, 1996, s. 105.

⁵ Research by G. Kirton and A.M. Green suggests that race and gender can be seen as primary factors shaping the job market, along with factors such as disability status, age, psychosocial identity, and other human resource characteristics. Quoted from E. Gross-Gołącka, "Diversity Management: Toward Diverse Human Resources," Warsaw 2018, p. 46.

Many interpretations of diversity are broader than those focused on demographic characteristics, emphasizing individuality and the unique value of each person. There are various definitions related to diversity, and some of them are presented in the table below.

Definition	Source
Diversity encompasses everyone and is not solely defined by race or gender. It also includes age, personal and corporate backgrounds, educational levels, functional and personality aspects, lifestyle, sexual preferences, origins, tenure in the organization, status as an employee or non-employee, and management roles.	R. R. Thomas Jr, 1991
Diversity should be understood as the recognition, understanding, acceptance, and appreciation of differences among people, encompassing age, ethnic background, gender, physical and mental condition, psychosexual identity, spiritual practices, and social assistance status..	K. C. Esty, R. Griffim, Mschorr Hirsch, 1995
Diversity - in a broad sense - can refer to any perceived differences among people, such as age, professional profile, occupation, sexual preferences, geographic origin, lifestyle, tenure in an organization, or position.	M. Dobbs, 1996
Diversity encompasses differences arising from ethnicity, gender, roles performed, nationality, language, skills, religion, lifestyle, and tenure in the workplace.	E.E. Kossek, S.A. Lobel, 1996
Diversity can be narrowed down to demographic differences, particularly focusing on age, race, tenure, or position.	D. Lau, J. Murnigham, 1998

Diversity among employees is understood as the presence of men and women in an organization with diverse ethnic, racial, and cultural backgrounds, as well as varying physical abilities and ages.	H. J. Muller, P. Parham, 1998.
Diversity is defined as a mixture of people from different group identities within a single social system.	M. T. Fleury, 1999
Diversity is used as a criterion for assigning people to specific roles and levels within an organization. It has both invisible aspects (e.g., cultural background) and visible aspects (e.g., gender, age, skin color).	S. Moore, 1999
Diversity should be understood as the various perspectives and approaches brought into an organization by members of groups with different identities.	F. Gorman, 2000
Diversity among employees has been defined, among other things, as the percentage representation of Asians, African Americans, and Hispanics employed by a company.	L. Hartenian, D. Gudmundson, 2000
Multicultural diversity encompasses differences such as age, economic status, education, family type, gender, personality type, race, religion, origin, and psychosexual identity.	J. Nixon, J. West, 2000
Diversity encompasses all experiences and distinctive characteristics that define us as individuals.	The Diversity Task Force, 2001
Diversity is formed by gender, race, skin color, religion, and national origin.	Y. Lai, B.H. Kleiner, 2001
Diversity is the range of social and cultural personality differences among people coexisting in a defined workplace or market. Cultural diversity signifies the representation of people with distinctly different cultural group affiliations within a single social system..	T. Cox, 2004, T. Cox 1994
The concept of diversity has evolved since its inception. It now focuses not only on ethnicity, race, and religion but also on age, socio-economic class, belief, ability level, marital status, psychosexual identity, etc. Organizations need to adapt and address the needs of individuals with various learning styles, cultures, and life experiences.	S. Jimenez-Cook, B.H. Kleiner, 2001

Employees at the company level that includes individuals from various nationalities, ethnic backgrounds, different cultures, using diverse languages, with varying physical and intellectual abilities, etc.	Międzynarodowa Organizacja Pracy (ILO, International Labour Organisation), 2005
Diversity is dynamic and interactive, encompassing differences and similarities that form a distinct mixture, extending beyond superficiality.	R.R. Thomas Jr, 2005
Diversity is the collective sum of differences among members of a team within a social unit.	D.A. Harrison, H. Sin, 2006
Diversity is both a component at the individual level and a specific attribute. The concept of diversity is used to describe the distribution of differences among members of a unit in relation to a common factor X, which could be factors like tenure, ethnicity, conscientiousness, task approach, or salary.	D.A. Harrison, K.J. Klein, 2007
Diversity is a distinctive characteristic of social groups that reflects the degree to which there exist objective or subjective differences among the members of those groups.	D. Van Knippenberg, M.C. Schippers, 2007
The definition of diversity has shifted from being a group-level phenomenon to appreciating individual differences.	P.A. Parham, H.J. Muller, 2008
Diversity constitutes a comprehensive entity at the team level, representing differences among interdependent work teams due to their individual attributes.	Joshi, H. Roh, 2009
Primary diversity refers to differences (e.g., personality, attitude, skills) among team members that are typically revealed through closer interaction.	S. E. Jackosn, A. Joshi, 2010

Equity

Equity in the context of equity among people refers to the principle or idea that all individuals should be treated equally and have equal rights, opportunities, and chances, regardless of differences such as gender, age, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, religion, or other personal characteristics. Equity is a fundamental ethical principle and a human right recognized at the international, national, and societal levels.

In the context of equity among people, several key aspects can be discussed:

- **Equity in rights:** This means that everyone has the right to equal treatment and access to basic human rights, such as the right to life, freedom of speech, equity before the law, the right to education, and so on.
- **Equity of opportunity:** This means that all individuals should have equal opportunities to develop their potential and achieve success in life, regardless of their background or other personal characteristics. This includes equal access to education, employment, healthcare, and other development opportunities.
- **Social equity:** It refers to the pursuit of reducing social inequalities that may arise from differences in income, social status, access to resources, and other factors. The goal is to create a more just society where everyone has a chance to lead a dignified life.
- **Combating discrimination:** Equity also requires combating all forms of discrimination, which involves unfair treatment or exclusion of individuals based on their personal characteristics.

M. Durska points out that diversity management is often associated solely with combating discrimination, which narrows down the essence of this concept. This is because combating discrimination usually involves various affirmative actions (related to the implementation of the so-called equal opportunities policy in a company) aimed at equalizing opportunities for individuals or specific social groups (e.g., women or people with disabilities). However, diversity management shifts the focus from these individuals or specific social groups to all employees of a given company, i.e., the entire organizational community. At the core of this thinking lies the assumption that diversity is a value in itself, enhancing the quality of the functioning of a given community. This does not exclude the role of equal opportunities policies, which are part of diversity management, as tools for optimizing the entire process. Nevertheless, they should not be treated as identical and equal.

According to M. Rawłuszko, it is important to emphasize that the equal employment opportunity policy includes actions taken by a company within its personnel strategy to prevent discrimination and promote equity in the workplace, such as increasing the representation of women in managerial positions in the company. On the other hand, the goal of diversity management is to create a work environment in which every employed individual feels respected and valued, and has the opportunity to fully utilize their individual capabilities to achieve the company's mission. Diversity management is based on the close relationship between personnel, organizational culture, and the degree of mission fulfilment of the company. It relates to the invisible and often informal dimension of a company's functioning - its organizational culture. It is worth noting that equity does not mean that all people are identical, but that the principles and opportunities are equal for everyone, and individual differences should not lead to discrimination or unfair treatment. Equity among individuals is an important social and ethical goal aimed at ensuring social justice and the dignity of each individual.

Inclusivity

According to the Polish Language Dictionary PWN, "inclusive" means "connecting or encompassing a whole, intended for everyone." Inclusiveness signifies a way of behaving that acknowledges, respects, and accepts diversity, which is who we are. It involves a readiness to learn, understand, and support the differences and uniqueness that define us. Therefore, to build diverse teams, we must learn to collaborate with people from different nationalities and cultures, understand their perspectives, and foster an inclusive culture in the organization that values interpersonal engagement. This includes having an open attitude focused on mindfulness towards biases and stereotypes, built upon courage and questioning observed behaviors within the company.

Inclusion refers to a company's policies and actions that help all employees realize their full professional potential. Employers increasingly recognize that building a sense of belonging and trust, which enable the acquisition and retention of the best employees, requires diversity management and an inclusive organizational culture. However, diversity alone, without an inclusive organizational culture, is worth considerably less than the combination of these two components. Our experiences make it clear that diversity + an inclusive workplace = better business results. Companies consist more and more of diverse, multidisciplinary teams that combine the potential of women and men, people of different origins, and younger and mature workers. Nevertheless, a standard combination of diverse individuals often isn't sufficient for ensuring high performance and requires traits of inclusive leadership – leadership that ensures all team members feel respected, treated fairly, appreciated, and confident.

An inclusive culture brings various benefits, both socially and in terms of business, including:

- Increasing job satisfaction among employees
- Attracting new talent
- Stimulating innovation and creativity in teams
- Reducing employee turnover and employment costs
- Building a socially responsible company image
- Developing competitive advantages in international markets.

INCLUDING ORGANISATIONS:



2x

more frequently achieve or surpass established financial goals



3x

more efficient



6x

more innovative



8x

more often achieve better business results

Source: Juliet Biurke. *Which Two Heads Are Better Than One? How Diverse Teams Create Breakthrough Ideas and Make Smarter Decisions* (Australian Institute of Company Directors, 2016)

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Characteristics of an inclusive organizational culture:

- **Honesty and Respect:** Equal treatment is the starting point for building an inclusive organizational culture and is manifested by the absence of unjustified favoritism when making decisions about promotions or raises.
- **Feeling of Appreciation and Belonging:** Particularly emphasized by millennials, who value individualism and appreciate the recognition of individual achievements while also expecting a sense of belonging to the group.
- **Feeling of Safety and Freedom of Expression:** A key element of an inclusive culture is the absence of fear when expressing opinions.
- **Support for Realizing Individual Potential and Development:** Actions that encourage employees to give their best in their work.

The essence of inclusivity lies in accepting the diversity that affects every employee. Everyone is different, with different backgrounds, origins, education, orientation, or experiences. Inclusiveness respects and accepts this diversity.

Among the 6 most important traits of an inclusive leader are:

- Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion Based on Personal Values and/or Business Benefits.
- Courage: Speaking up, questioning the status quo regarding observed behaviors in the company.
- Mindfulness of Biases and Stereotypes, willingness to learn.
- Interest in Others, openness to different perspectives.
- Cross-Cultural Proficiency: Being adept at interacting among people of different nationalities/cultures.
- Team Collaboration Building.



In summary, inclusivity is not only a way of behaviour but also a set of processes we apply that enable everyone to achieve the best results. Our inclusive organizational culture embraces and respects differences, allowing us to be who we are. Inclusive culture can be a significant tool for creating business value. However, to benefit from this tool, it's necessary to thoroughly analyse and reshape our approach to managing diversity. Inclusivity is about creating a work environment where all employees feel accepted, respected, and treated equally, regardless of cultural, ethnic, gender, age, religious differences, as well as sexual orientation or disabilities. It is largely based on principles of non-discrimination and equal treatment, which are also present in labour law.

Gender dimension



Understanding gender

Our gender identity and sexuality are an integral part of our lives. Even though it is not always noticeable, gender affects us all in complex and subtle ways. Different terms are regularly used in theories of sexuality and gender, for example, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expressions, gender roles, and sexual orientation. However, even though sexuality, gender, gender identity, sex and other terms used all have distinct meanings, they are still frequently misunderstood and used interchangeably, without making a distinction. Thus, let's explore these terms and their meanings to better understand the meaning of gender.

Gender definition

World Health Organisation (WHO) refers to gender as the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviours and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with others. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time⁶.

The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against Women and domestic violence is the first international human rights document that contains a definition of gender. In Article 3, gender is defined as *"socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and men."*⁷

Due to the hierarchical nature of gender, there are many social and economic inequalities that overlap with gender, including those caused by ethnicity, socioeconomic position, disability, age, location, and sexual orientation, among others. The term "intersectionality" describes this. The term intersectionality describes the ways in which systems of inequity based on gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, class and other forms of discrimination "intersect" to create unique dynamics and effects⁸.

For the majority of people, their gender matches up with the cultural expectations of the sex they were assigned at birth. This means they're cisgender. Others may self-identify as being transgender, agender, Two-Spirit, genderqueer, non-binary, gender fluid or any number of terms.

⁶ World Health Organisation (WHO), website: https://www.who.int/europe/health-topics/gender#tab=tab_1

⁷ The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, website: <https://rm.coe.int/168008482e>

⁸ Center for Intersectional Justice, „What is intersectionality“, website: <https://www.intersectionaljustice.org/what-is-intersectionality>

Sex definition

Sex is related to but distinct from gender. According to WHO, sex refers to the different biological and physiological characteristics of females, males and intersex people, such as chromosomes, hormones and reproductive organs.

Sex, for example, in many countries is used in identity documents. This most often includes female, male or X. Depending on the legal systems of each country, X is sometimes used by people who don't identify as female or male or who choose not to share their gender on identity documents.

Gender vs Sex

There are many definitions proposed for both terms. Some interlink the terms, while some have a clear distinction between the two. It is worth noting that many languages do not use separate terms for sex and gender. In Scandinavian languages, e.g. Norwegian, the word *kjønn* may refer to both biological sex and social gender. In other languages, the English term gender was recently introduced as an academic concept.

General differences between gender and sex terms could be summarised as follows⁹:

Sex

- Sex refers to biological differences between males and females (e.g. sexual organs, chromosomes, hormones)
- Sex is usually assigned at birth. Sometimes sex is assigned later, for example in the case of „intersex“ people¹⁰.
- Sex can also be changed later in life. For example, for transsexual people, who are born with the sex characteristics of one sex and gender identity of the other, sex reassignment surgeries are performed. This includes a change of sex organs and the administration of hormones.

Gender

- Gender is a social, psychological, and cultural construct that emerges during the socialization process. As a result, different communities and cultures may have diverse ideas about what constitutes "masculine" or "feminine."
- Gender-related norms and expectations are created by societies, and people learn about them throughout their lives, including in the home, at school, and through the media. All of these factors force particular duties and behavioural patterns on every member of society. The heteronormative

⁹ Council of Europe. 2019. Gender Matters: a manual on addressing gender-based violence affecting young people (Second edition). URL: <https://rm.coe.int/chapter-1-gender-identity-gender-based-violence-and-human-rights-gende/16809e1595>

¹⁰ Intersex is a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male.

order, which holds that there are two sexes (or genders) and that they are attracted to one another, serves as the foundation for gender norms, which evolve through time.

- Gender is both an analytical category – a way of thinking about how identities are constructed and a political idea which addresses the distribution of power in society.
- Traditional gender norms are hierarchical: they presuppose an unequal power structure related to gender that disadvantages mostly women.
- Gender is not necessarily defined by biological sex: a person's gender may or may not correspond to their biological sex. Gender is more about identity and how we feel about ourselves. People may self-identify as male, female, transgender, other or none (indeterminate/unspecified). People that do not identify as male or female are often grouped under the umbrella terms 'non-binary' or 'genderqueer', but the range of gender identifications is in reality unlimited.
- Gender is deeply personal to every individual: some people recognise their gender identity early in childhood, and some only later on.

To better understand gender we have to challenge biological determinism in everyday thinking. While various aspects and characteristics of sex are not likely to vary substantially over time between various societies, gender characteristics are predicted to vary greatly.

Gender identity

However, when it comes to gender identity, it is not the same as gender and should not be confused with each other.

According to the European Institute for Gender Equity¹¹, gender identity is a personal sense of the body (which may involve, if freely chosen, altering bodily appearance or function by medical, surgical, or other means) and other expressions of gender, such as dress, speech, and mannerisms, are all deeply felt internal and individual experiences of gender that may or may not correspond to the sex assigned at birth.

Gender expression is often used to express gender identity through name, pronouns, clothing, hairstyle, behaviour, voice, body features and others.

For example, using restrooms and changing areas that correspond to a person's own sense of gender is one way to express gender. These indicators are frequently associated with masculine and feminine behaviours in society. However, perceptions of what is considered masculine and feminine shift over time and among cultures.

¹¹ European Institute for Gender Equality, website: <https://eige.europa.eu/>

As mentioned earlier, while the majority of the population is cisgender, others identify themselves using a number of different terms - transgender, agender, Two-Spirit, genderqueer, non-binary, gender fluid, etc.

Let's explore some of these terms¹²:

- Cisgender – a person whose gender identity aligns with the gender assigned at birth.
- Transgender – a person whose gender identity or expression differs from societal expectations of the sex they were assigned at birth.
- Agender – a person who identifies as having no gender or being without a gender identity.
- Gender queer – a person whose identity does not fit into a binary classification of sexuality and/or gender (queer).
- Non-binary – a person that does not conform to traditional binary beliefs about gender, which indicate that all individuals are exclusively either male or female. A non-binary person may identify as an intermediate or separate third gender, identify with more than one gender, have no gender, or have a fluctuating gender identity.
- Gender fluid – a person who does not identify as having a single unchanging gender.
- Two-Spirit – refers to a person who identifies as having both a masculine and a feminine spirit, and is used by some Indigenous people to describe their sexual, gender and/or spiritual identity.

Sexuality/Sexual orientation

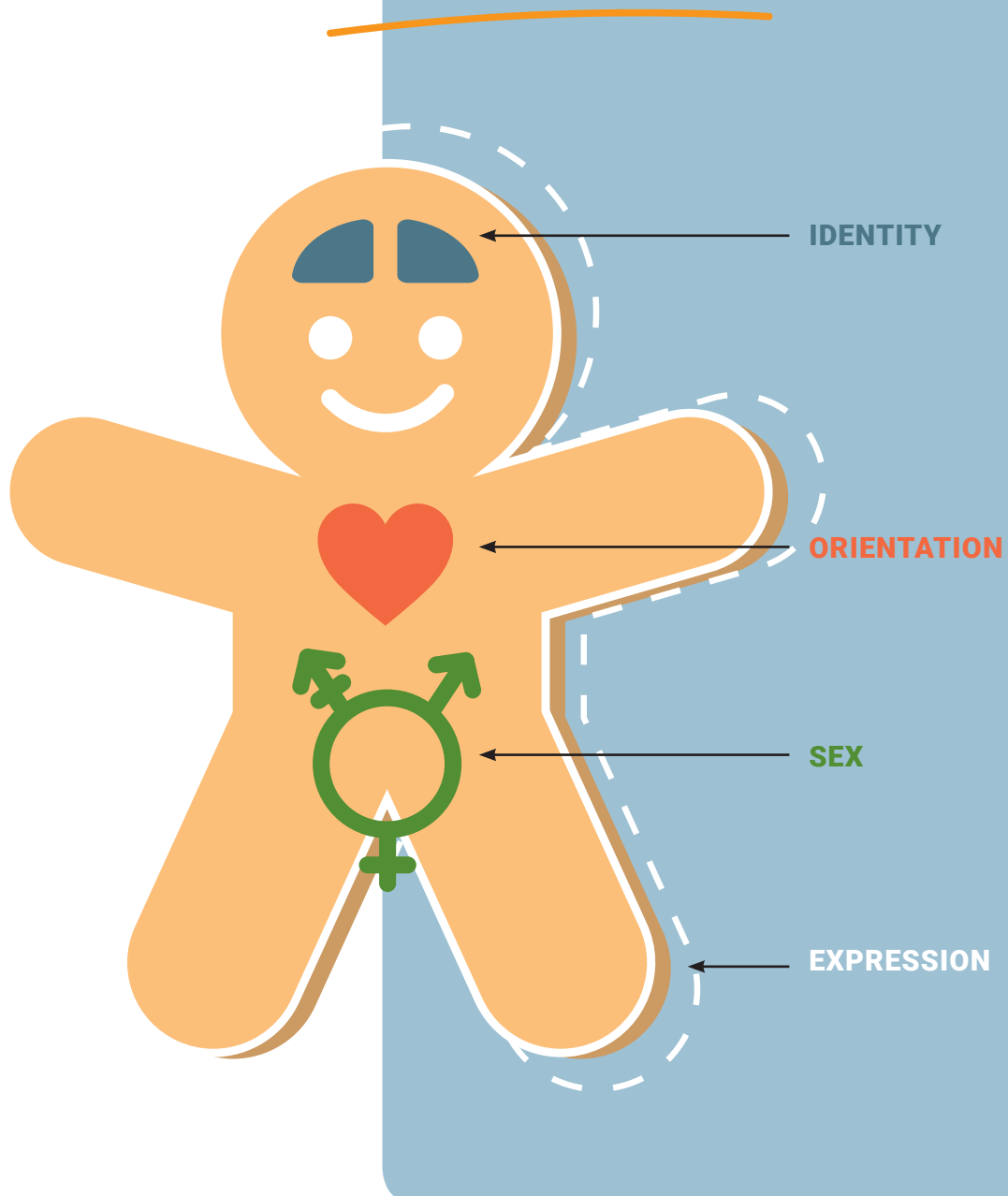
Sexual orientation and gender identity are two separate but connected aspects. While gender is personal (how we feel and see ourselves), sexual orientation is interpersonal (who we are attracted to physically, emotionally, or romantically).

Sexual orientation can be described using terms such as gay, lesbian, heterosexual, bisexual, pan-sexual, and asexual. Sexual orientation can be fluid, and people can use a variety of labels to describe their own.

Sexual orientation is related to gender because it is defined by our gender and the gender(s) of people we are attracted to. Because of this relationship, new gender identity terms have expanded the language of sexual identities as well.

¹² European Parliament. Glossary of Sensitive Language for Internal and External Communications. URL: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/trad/etu/pdf/glossary_sensitive_language_2020_en.pdf

THE GENDERBREAD PERSON



Source: <https://www.diverseandresilient.org/>

GENDER IDENTITY

WOMAN

GENDERQUEER

MAN

Gender identity is how you, in your head, think about yourself. It's the chemistry that composes you (e.g., hormonal levels) and how you interpret what that means.

GENDER EXPRESSION

FEMININE

ANDROGYNOUS

MASCULINE

Gender expression is how you demonstrate your gender (based on traditional gender roles) through the ways you act, dress, behave, and interact.

BIOLOGICAL SEX

FEMALE

INTERSEX

MALE

Biological sex refers to the objectively measurable organs, hormones, and chromosomes. ♀ Female = vagina, (wades. XX chromosomes; male = penis. testes. XY chromosomes; intersex = a combination of the two.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

HETEROSEXUAL

BISEXUAL

HOMOSEXUAL

Sexual orientation is who you are physically, spiritually, and emotionally attracted to, based on their sex/gender in relation to your own.

Dimensions of gender

A person's gender is the complex interrelationship between three dimensions: body, identity and social¹³:

1. **Body.** It refers to our body, the experience of our own body, how society genders bodies, and how others interact with each other based on our bodies. Most societies view sex as a binary concept (woman and man) and equate a person's sex with their gender. Bodies themselves are also gendered by cultural and physical expectations. Physical characteristics that are associated with masculinity and femininity are used to categorize persons as more or less being a man or woman depending on how much they exhibit such characteristics. Our perception of ourselves and how other people view and interact with us are both impacted by the gendering of our bodies.
2. **Identity.** It refers to the name/term we use to convey our gender based on our internal sense of self. Identities usually fall into one of three categories: binary (e.g., man, woman), non-binary (e.g., genderqueer, genderfluid), or ungendered (e.g., agender, genderless). People cannot choose their gender, nor can they be made to change it. However, a person can choose how to communicate their gender identity to others and it may change over time. A person's gender identity can correspond to or differ from the sex they were designated at birth.
3. **Social.** It refers to how we present our gender in the world (gender expression) and how individuals, society, culture, and community perceive, interact with, and try to shape our gender. Social gender includes gender roles and expectations and how society uses those to try to enforce conformity to current gender norms. Everything is given a gender - toys, colours and clothes are some of the examples. Expectations regarding gender are communicated through every aspect of our lives, including family, culture, peers, schools, community, media, and religion. Because expectations around gender are so rigid, we frequently assume that what someone wears, or how they move, talk, or express themselves, tells us something about their gender identity. However, we should not mix expression and identity – they are not the same. We should not assume anyone's gender based on their expressions. For example, a boy may like to wear skirts or dresses, however, he could identify as a man. His choice of clothing doesn't define his gender identity but rather his preferences in clothes.

Definition of gender equity

The term "gender equity" is often used to describe equity between men and women. It defines a situation in which women and men have equal rights and opportunities, and where both women's and men's behaviour, aspirations, wishes, and needs are respected and given priority. It also implies an equitable distribution of and access to resources.

¹³ Reimage gender. Understanding gender. URL: <https://www.reimagegender.org/understanding-gender>

However, we have established before that gender should not be confused with gender identity, thus the term “gender equity” can be much broader in reality. In reality, the term could also be used to describe broader ideas of equity in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity (the social expectations and conventions associated with the masculine and feminine).

The Council of Europe has adopted a number of standards relating to gender equity focusing on different areas and issues, such as violence against women, balanced participation in political and public decision-making, gender equity in media, education, health and sport, etc. However, these standards interpret gender equity as equity between women and men and any issues relating to gender identity and sexual orientation are dealt with individually by the Council of Europe¹⁴.

The official definition of gender equity by the European Council is:

Gender equity is equal visibility, empowerment and participation of both sexes in all spheres of public and private life. Gender equity is the opposite of gender inequity, not of gender difference, and aims to promote the full participation of women and men in society. It means accepting and valuing equally the differences between women and men and the diverse roles they play in society. Gender equity includes the right to be different. This means taking into account the existing differences among women and men, which are related to class, political opinion, religion, ethnicity, race or sexual orientation. Gender equity means discussing how it is possible to go further, to change the structures in society which contribute to maintaining the unequal power relationships between women and men, and to reach a better balance in the various female and male values and priorities.¹⁵

Gender Equity and Sustainable Development Goals

In addition to being a fundamental human right, gender equity is also a precondition for a world that is stable, affluent, and sustainable. This is why, gender equity has been included in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Specifically, goal no.5. “Achieve gender equity and empower all women and girls” aims¹⁶:

1. End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere
2. Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
3. Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation

¹⁴ Council of Europe. Gender Matters: a manual on addressing gender-based violence affecting young people (Second edition). 2019. Link: <https://rm.coe.int/chapter-1-gender-identity-gender-based-violence-and-human-rights-gende/16809e1595>

¹⁵ Council of Europe Gender Equality Glossary, March 2016. For the full definition please refer to Chapter V.

¹⁶ United Nations. Sustainable Development Goals. URL: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/>

4. Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate
5. Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life
6. Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences
7. Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws
8. Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women
9. Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equity and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels

Even though great progress in this area has been made, the world is not on track to achieve gender equity by 2030. This situation was worsened by COVID-19 pandemic. According to United Nations (UN) progress in many areas, such as unpaid care and domestic work, decision-making regarding sexual and reproductive health, and gender-responsive budgeting, violence against women, etc. is falling behind.

To reach the aims of the no.5 goal stronger commitment from the global community and major players across the sectors is needed. If change continues at its current rate, gender equity will remain unrealized for centuries to come.

Gender Equity across the Sustainable Development Goals

1. NO POVERTY

Globally, over 380 million women and girls are in extreme poverty, living on less than \$1.90 a day. If current trends continue, in sub-Saharan Africa, more women and girls will live in extreme poverty by 2030 than do today.

2. ZERO HUNGER

Globally, nearly 1 in 3 women experienced moderate or severe food insecurity in 2021. Rising food prices are likely to exacerbate hunger around the world.

3. GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Unsafe abortion is a leading but preventable cause of maternal mortality and morbidity. Today, over 1.2 billion women and girls of reproductive age live in countries and areas with some restrictions on access to safe abortion. 102 million live in places where abortion is prohibited altogether.

4. QUALITY EDUCATION

Protracted conflicts, wars and renewed efforts to keep girls out of school perpetuate gender gaps in access to school and learning. 54% of girls who are not in formal education worldwide live in crisis-affected countries.

5. GENDER EQUALITY

At the current rate of progress, it may take another 286 years to remove discriminatory laws and close prevailing gaps in legal protections for women and girls.

Globally, more than 1 in every 10 women and girls aged 15-49 were subjected to sexual and/ or physical violence by an intimate partner in the previous year.

In 2021, 4,475 communities made public declarations committing to eliminate female genital mutilation.

Women hold over one third of seats in local decision-making bodies.

School and day-care closures in 2020 led to an estimated 512 billion in additional hours of unpaid childcare globally for women.

The glass ceiling remains intact. Close to 1 in every 3, managers/ supervisors is a woman. At the current pace of change, parity will not be achieved for another 140 years.

Despite progress, only 26% of countries have a comprehensive system to track gender-budget allocations.

6. CLEAR WATER AND SANITATION

The lack of clean water claims the lives of more than 800,000 women and girls every year.

7. AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

Affordable and clean energy, key to lifesaving care and productivity, remains out of reach for millions of women and girls in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Rising energy prices are making matters worse.

8. DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Women's labour force participation in 2022 is projected to remain below pre-pandemic levels in 165 countries and areas.

9. INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Women hold only 2 in every 10 science, engineering and information and communication technology jobs globally. They comprise only 16,5% of inventors associated with a patent.

10. REDUCET INEQUALITIES

By the end of 2021, some women and girls had been forced to flee their homes due to climate change, war, conflict and human rights violations.

11. SUSTAINABLE CITIE AND COMMUNITIES

The majority of the world's women live in cities. 49% of women in urban areas report feeling less safe walking alone at night since COVID-19 began.

12. RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

13. CLIMATE ACTION

14. LIFE BELOW WATER

15. LIFE ON LAND

On average, one disaster resulting in 115 deaths and losses of \$202 million was recorded daily during 1970-2019. Women, especially from poor and marginalized communities, are disproportionately affected.

16. PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

Strong institutions that support just and peaceful societies are not possible without women. But women globally hold just 42% of judicial positions and make up a tiny share of police forces - a mere 16%.

17. PARTNERSHIP FOR THE GOALS

Funding for gender equality is not keeping pace with the increasing severity of global challenges and backlash against women's rights. Just 4.6% of bilateral allocable ODA goes to programmes where gender equality is the main objective.

EU path to gender equity



When it comes to gender equity, the European Union (EU) is often considered one of the most developed political systems in the world, with its initiatives to do so frequently being dubbed "exceptional." The origins of gender equity policy development at the European Union (EU) level can be found in the EEC Treaty, which was signed in Rome in 1957. Article 119 of the Treaty of Rome established the principle of equal pay for equal work.

Art 119 (art. 157 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU) was the sole foundation for European activity in the area of gender equity until 1997. Nevertheless, a substantial policy of combatting inequity and promoting gender equity was built on this 1957 Rome treaty. The article gave the Commission and the European Court of Justice (ECJ) the freedom to take a more active role in the 1970s in promoting gender equity in employment and other labour-market-related issues, such as social security and unemployment benefits¹⁷.

The Maastricht treaty in 1992, furthered the protection of gender equity. The Social Protocol attached to the Treaty of the European Community provided that that community would support and complement national action in several fields, including the promotion of equal opportunities between women and men in the labour market. Between Maastricht and Amsterdam treaty, the EU has produced many directives in the field of gender equity, such as directives on pregnancy and maternity leave, parental leave, part-time work, the burden of proof in cases of discrimination on the grounds of sex, etc.

In 1999, Amsterdam Treaty established equity between men and women as a specific task of the Community and as a horizontal objective affecting all Community tasks. Before the adaptation of the Amsterdam treaty, gender matters had been limited to the area of employment, and were basically considered a question of social policy. The Amsterdam treaty has changed that by adding more articles and changes to social policy as well. In particular, the Amsterdam Treaty introduced several new provisions that are the expression of these principles¹⁸:

- article 2: achieving equity between men and women, as one of the objects of the Community;
- article 3, paragraph 2: eliminating inequalities in all employment strategies and Community actions;

¹⁷ Arribas G.V. & Carrasco L. Gender Equality and the EU – an assesment of current issues. URL: http://aei.pitt.edu/834/1/scop2003_1_3.pdf

¹⁸ The European Commission. Briefing No 26 Women's Rights and the Enlargement of the European Union. URL: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/enlargement/briefings/26a2_en.htm

- article 13 (ex-article 6 A): combatting discrimination based on sex or sexual orientation;
- article 137 (ex-article 118): promoting equity between men and women with regard to labour market opportunities and treatment at work;
- article 141 (ex-article 119): application of the principle of equal pay for male and female workers for equal work or work of equal value; equal pay without discrimination based on sex and introduction of "measures providing for specific advantages in order to make it easier for the under-represented sex to pursue a vocational activity or to prevent or compensate for disadvantages in professional careers".

The European Commission (EC) has also formalised its commitment to advance gender equity in research in its Communication Women and Science: mobilising women to Enrich European Research¹⁹. Since then, over the past few decades, the EU has notably worked for:

- Equal treatment legislation;
- Gender mainstreaming (integration of a gender perspective into all policies);
- Specific measures for the advancement of women

13 directives on gender equity have since been approved by the European Union, including ones on access to products and services, parental leave protection, equal pay and social security, and protection of expectant mothers.

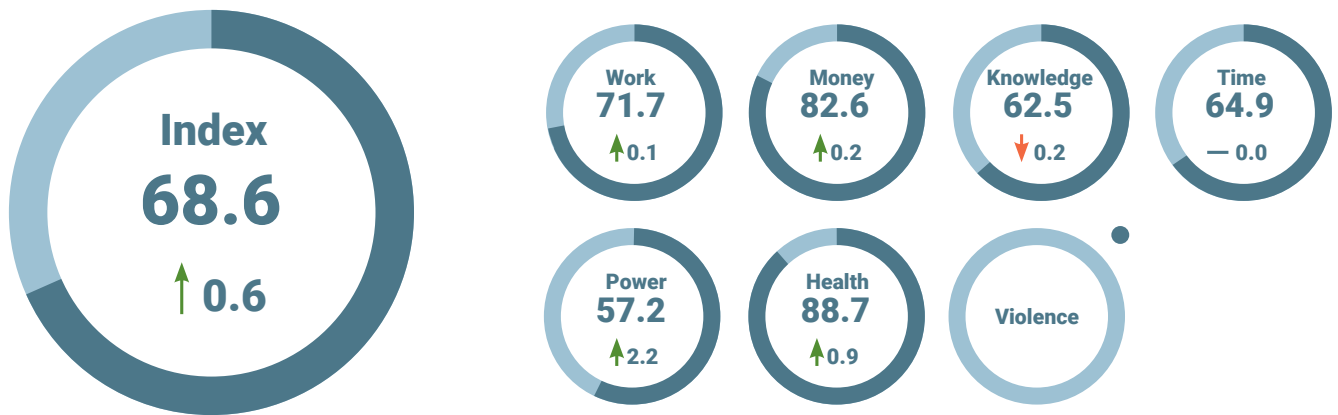
Gender Equity and women empowerment in EU: current status

Although a great deal has been achieved internationally to guarantee gender equity, there is still a long way to go to reach gender equity in the EU and the world. In fact, not a single country in the world has already reached full gender equity, with Iceland being close. Iceland remains in the number one position with a gender gap score of 90.8 per cent, followed by Finland, Norway and New Zealand.

With 68.6 out of 100 points, the European Union has a long way to reach gender equity. Since 2010, the EU's score has increased by 5.5 points. Since 2019, the EU's score has increased by 0.6 points. Progress in gender equity is largely driven by the domain of power, which conversely has the greatest gender inequalities in the EU. Without this domain, the EU Index score would have fallen due to the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on gender equity²⁰.

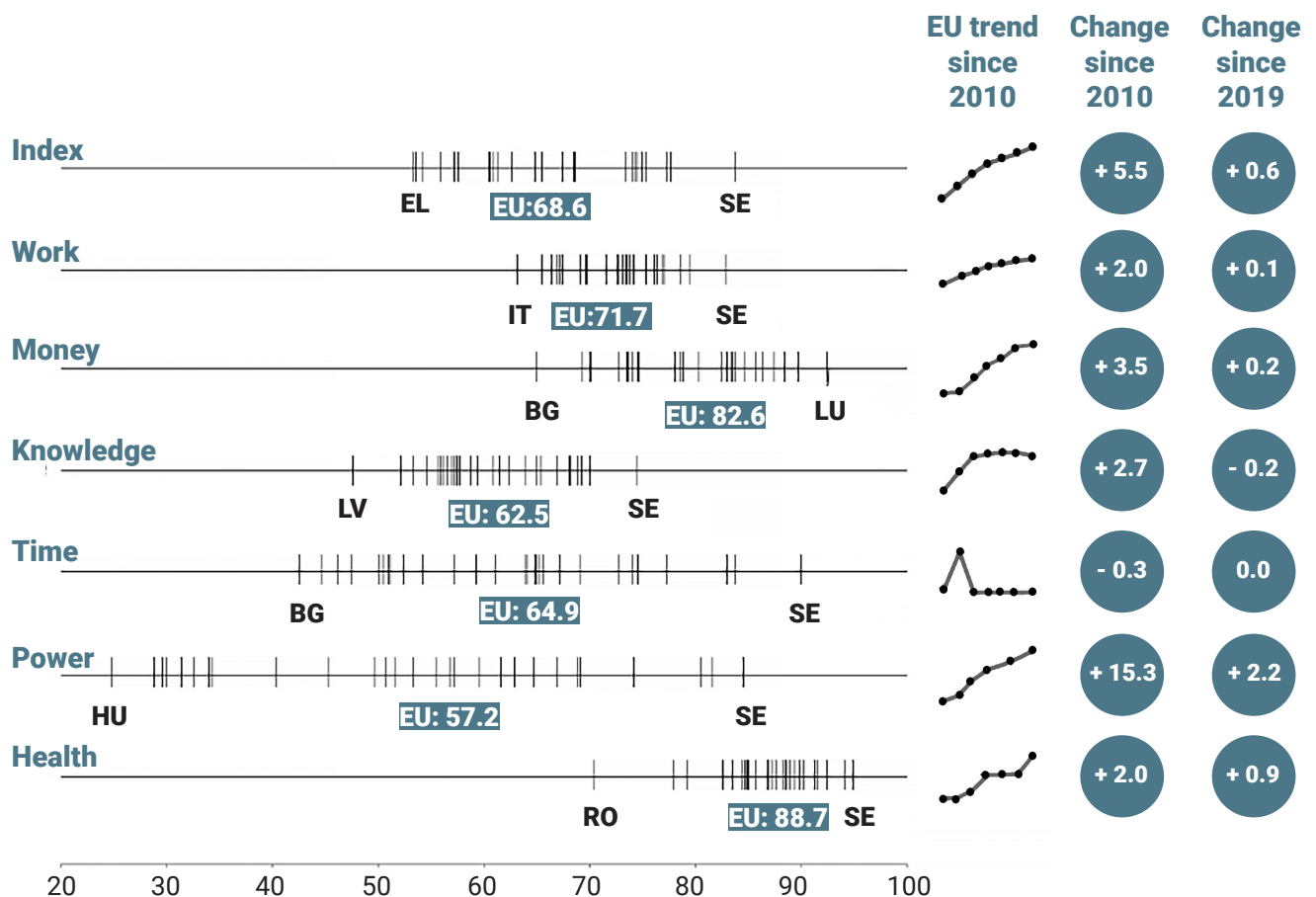
¹⁹ European Commission. 2011. Toolkit Gender in EU-funded research. URL: https://www.ki.si/fileadmin/user_upload/KINA24840ENC_002.pdf

²⁰ European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). Gender Equality index 2022. URL: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2022/country>



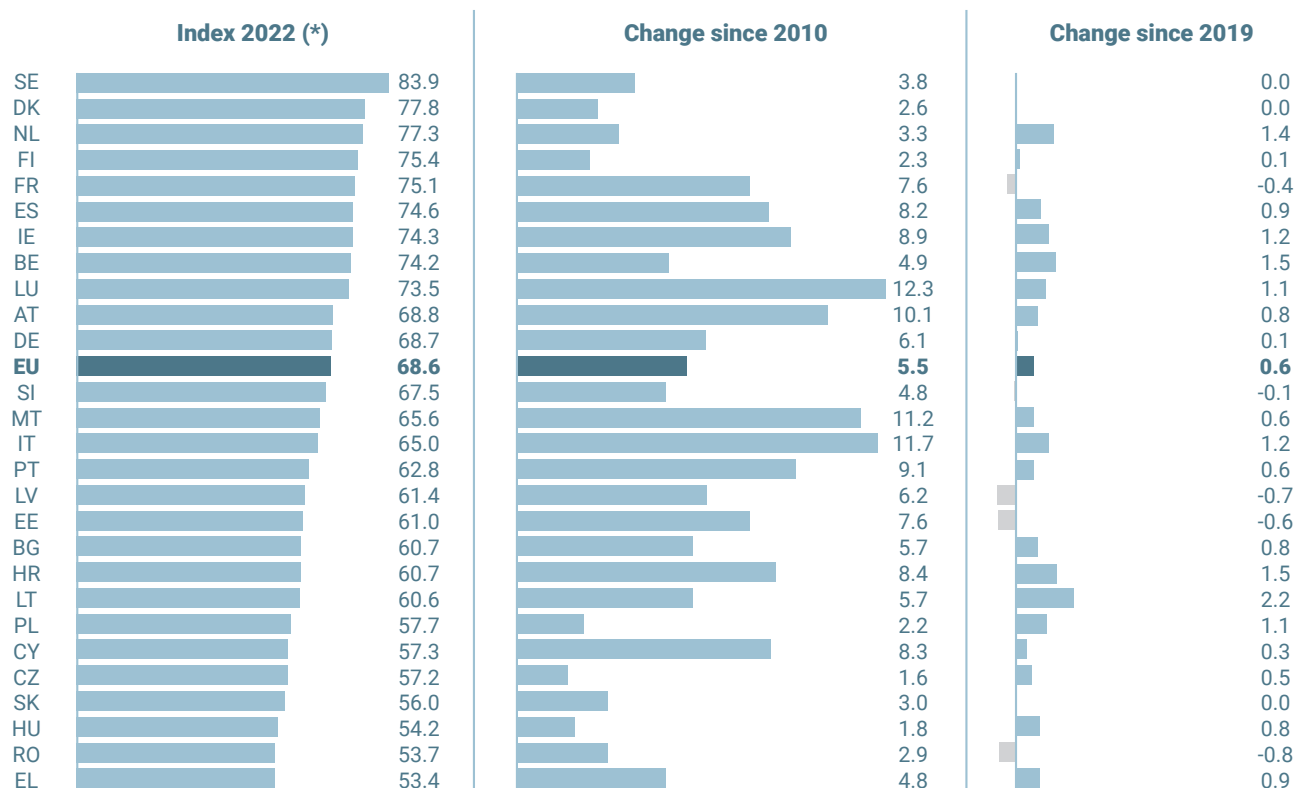
EU Gender Equity Index. Source: European Institute for Gender Equity

The EU is the closest to gender equity in the domain of health (88.7%), especially in the sub-domain of access to health services (97.6%). The lowest scores are in the domain of power (57.2 %), especially in the sub-domains such as economic decision-making (52.1 %) knowledge (62.5 %) and gender segregation (54.1 %).



Ranges of Gender Equity Index 2022 scores for Member States, and changes over time. Source: European Institute for Gender Equity

Gender equity levels vary considerably among Member States –with Sweden being the first one on the list with 83.9% and Greece being on the bottom with 53.4%. Cyprus and Poland are at the bottom of the list, scoring below the EU average, with 57.7% and 57.3% respectively.



Gender Equity Index 2022 in EU by country. Source: European Institute for Gender Equity

Women in Economy

Even though equal pay for work of equal value has been part of the European treaties since 1957, major differences in remuneration between men and women still prevail in the EU. According to an OECD study, on average women in the EU earn 10.3% less than men, with the average being 12%²¹.

Besides wage discrimination, women are also largely under-represented in the business management domain, despite the fact that women account for around 60% of new university graduates in the EU. Fewer women are on company boards, making women often deprived of real decision-making power. According to a study, on average in the European Union, 31.5% of the members of boards and 8% of board chairs are women²².

²¹ OECD. Gender wage gap. URL: <https://data.oecd.org/earnwage/gender-wage-gap.htm>

²² The European Council. Gender balance on corporate boards. URL: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/gender-balance-corporate-boards/#figures>

However, with the new legislation proposed by EC²³, by 2026 listed companies²⁴ should aim to have members of the underrepresented sex holding at least 40% of non-executive director positions and 33% of all director positions. EU member states can choose to apply rules to both executive and non-executive directors. Women continue to experience poverty at far higher rates than males. According to Eurostat data, 11.2% of women versus 10.3% of men are in a situation of persistent poverty. This is because of a variety of things that affect women, such as lower pay and pensions, higher unemployment rates, a greater prevalence of part-time employment, more unpaid housework than men, a higher rate of single parenthood, etc. Lower wages and the fact that women often work shorter hours than men or are more likely to be in lower-skilled or part-time jobs have an impact on women beyond their active period in the labour market: they receive lower pensions than men. Eurostat data shows the gender gap between pensions is considerable. On average, women in the EU receive 29% less in pensions than men²⁵.

Women in Politics

The European institutions have never had so much women representation as they have today. Since 2019, the German Ursula von der Leyen is the first woman appointed to head the European Commission, French woman Christine Lagarde is also the first female to preside over the European Central Bank (ECB) – after having been the first to head the IMF – and since January 2022, Maltese Roberta Metsola is the third woman president of the European Parliament, after Simone Veil (1979-1982) and Nicole Fontaine (1999-2002).

Besides these notable women, the Secretariats-General of the Commission (Ilze Juhansone since 2020) and the Council (Thérèse Blanchet since 2022) are also headed by women²⁶.

The European Commission has almost reached desired equity – 44.44% of Commissioners are women. The lower percentages, however, are in EU member states national governments where currently 33% of heads of government are women on average. It is worth mentioning that there are big disparities within member states when it comes to women in politics. The highest rates of women in current governments are in Spain (60.87%), Finland (57.89%) and Belgium (57.89%). The lowest rates are in Hungary (7.14%), Greece (8.33%), Romania (9.09%) and Malta (10.54%).

The rate of women in the EU parliament, with 37.77% of the members of the European Parliament being women. The number is higher compared with the average in the Member States, which is 31.53%.

It is worth mentioning that over the last 20 years, a number of EU member states have taken steps to improve the gender balance (at least 40 % of each gender) in their parliaments, such as the

²³ European Parliament. Directive of November 2022. URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32022L2381>

²⁴ Listed companies - companies with their registered office in a member state and whose shares are admitted to trading on a regulated market in one or more member states.

²⁵ Eurostat. Gender pension gap in 2019. URL: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/d n-20210203-1?language=fr&e-trans=fr>

²⁶ Buzmaniuk S. 2023. Gender Equality in Europe: a still imperfect model in the World. URL: <https://www.robert-schuman.eu/en/doc/question-s-d-europe/qe-659-en.pdf>

application of legislative quotas that aims to ensure a minimum proportion of each gender among candidates.

When it comes to political parties, even though many political parties have adopted voluntary gender quotas to promote gender equity in candidate selection, their internal power structures often fail to represent women adequately. Across the EU, based on 2021 data, women accounted for only 1 in 4 (26.1 %) leaders of major political parties and 1 in 3 deputy leaders (33.8 %) ²⁷.

Even though the numbers are relatively good, the parliament election in 2024 will decide which direction the EU wants to go. Hopefully, the women's percentage will increase even more, allowing the place for desired gender equity in the EU institutions, and improving women's representation when deciding key questions that affect everyone.

Overall, while Europe remains the place where women live best, Europe has seen a fair share of setbacks, persistent difficulties and slow progress in economic, social and political fields. It is crucial that the EU continue to implement socio-economic policies to address gender equity in a holistic way.

Key strategies

2011-2020 European Pact for gender equity.

The first European pact for gender equity was adopted in 2006. The pact placed a strong focus on the necessity of utilizing women's untapped labour market potential. To achieve this, adopting steps to eliminate gender gaps, battle gender stereotypes, and support greater work-life balance for both men and women was needed. These steps also included the need to support women's empowerment in economic and political life.

The pact was revised and in 2011 the updated European Pact for gender equity for the year 2011-2020 was adopted. It aimed at encouraging the EU and Member States to take measures to ²⁸:

- eliminate gender stereotypes, ensure equal pay for equal work and promote the equal participation of women in decision-making;
- improve the supply of affordable and high-quality childcare services, and promote flexible working arrangements;
- strengthen the prevention of violence against women and the protection of victims, and focus on the role of men and boys in order to eradicate violence.

²⁷ European Institute for Gender Equality. Statistical brief: gender balance in politics 2021.

²⁸ Eur-Lex. Council conclusions of 7 March 2011 on European Pact for Gender Equality (2011-2020). URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52011XG0525%2801%29>

Gender Equity Strategy 2016-2019

The Strategic Engagement for Gender Equity 2016-2019 established the Commission's work programme in terms of gender equity for the 2016-2019 period. It is a thorough framework that outlines the Commission's obligations to advance gender equity across all of its policies and in all EU financial initiatives. The following areas of action were designated as priorities by the Commission²⁹:

- Equal economic independence for women and men;
- Equal pay for work of equal value;
- Equity in decision-making;
- Dignity, integrity and ending gender-based violence;
- Promoting gender equity beyond the EU.

The strategic engagement has also emphasized how gender equity contributes to both sustainable development and economic success.

Gender Equity Strategy 2020-2025

When the EU institutions underwent changes following the 2019 European elections, Ursula von der Leyen, the first female Commission president, strongly supported the issue of gender equity, as well as Helena Dalli, a special commissioner for equity.

The newly updated gender equity strategy was adopted in 2020. The Strategy outlines policy goals and steps that should be taken to significantly advance gender equity in Europe by 2025. The objective is to create a Union in which men and women, young people and adults, in all their diversity, are free to follow the paths in life they choose, have equal opportunity to succeed, and may equally contribute to and influence our European community³⁰.

The strategy is structured around six themes:

1. Being free from violence and stereotypes
2. Thriving in a gender-equal economy
3. Leading equally throughout society
4. Gender mainstreaming³¹ and an intersectional perspective in EU policies
5. Funding actions to make progress in gender equity in the EU
6. Addressing gender equity and women's empowerment across the world

²⁹ European Charter for Equality. The European Union and Gender Equality. URL: <https://charter-equality.eu/the-charter/the-eu-and-gender-equality.html>

³⁰ The European Commission. Gender equality strategy 2020-2025. URL: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en

³¹ *Mainstreaming involves the incorporation of gender considerations into all policies, programmes, practices and decision-making so that, at every stage of development and implementation, an analysis is made of the effect on women and men, and appropriate action is taken (Arribas G.V. & Carrasco L)*

The main goals are to put an end to gender-based violence, confront gender stereotypes, close the gender pay and pension gaps, address the gender care gap, achieve equal participation across all economic sectors, and achieve gender balance in politics and decision-making. The Strategy is consistent with the EU's foreign policy on gender equity and women's empowerment even if it primarily focuses on measures within the EU.

EU Gender Action Plan III (GAP III)

The first action plan was developed and adopted in 2010. It aimed to secure enough personnel and financial resources as well as a stronger leadership role for the EU in advancing gender equity and women's empowerment in development.

The second edition „Gender Equity and Women’s Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020“ (GAP II) was introduced and adopted in 2015. It vowed that the EU would intensify efforts to help women and girls worldwide experience gender equity on a practical level. The plan focused on 4 thematic areas:

1. ensuring girls’ and women's physical and psychological integrity;
2. promoting social and economic rights;
3. empowerment of women and girls;
4. strengthening girls’ and women's voices and participation.

Alongside to EU gender equity strategy 2020-2025, the Gender Action Plan III 2021-2025 outlines the EU’s political and operational roadmap towards a gender-equal world.

The action plan strives to address the intersectionality of gender with other types of discrimination and address the structural causes of gender inequity by adopting a transformative and rights-based approach.

The Gender Action Plan III focuses on 5 pillars³²:

1. Making gender equity and women and girls’ empowerment a cross-cutting priority of EU external action. By 2025, 85% of new EU actions should contribute to achieving this objective, with more actions including it as a main objective
2. Working together with EU Member States as Team Europe at multilateral, regional and country levels, and fostering partnerships with stakeholders, CSO, and women’s organisations
3. Accelerating progress by focusing on key areas of engagement
 - ending gender-based violence
 - sexual and reproductive health and rights

³² European Commission. Gender Equality and empowering women and girls. URL: https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/gender-equality/gender-equality-and-empowering-women-and-girls_en

- economic and social rights and empowerment
 - equal participation and leadership
 - women, peace and security
 - green and digital transformations
4. Leading by example, by striving for a gender-responsive and balanced leadership, more capacity and expertise, and a reinforced network of gender focal points
 5. Putting the focus on results, accountability and transparency through qualitative, quantitative and inclusive monitoring

Overall, GAP III is an ambitious plan to promote gender equity and women's empowerment through all external actions of the European Union. It aims to empower women and girls to participate and lead equally in social, economic, and political life, and have a say in decisions involving them.

In addition, the Plan also encompasses actions that aim to provide a long-term change in mentalities and address the harmful social norms and stereotypes at the root of gender inequity.

Gender Equity and women empowerment in Poland



The issue of diversity policy is widely analysed on the European level as well. Since 2003, the European Commission has been promoting diversity policies among employers through research and publications of best practices. One significant initiative by the European Commission is the Diversity Charter, which is a written commitment signed by organizations that obligates them to introduce a workplace non-discrimination policy. It also involves a commitment to actively work towards creating and promoting diversity, and a declaration of readiness to involve all employees, as well as business and social partners, in these efforts. Employers opting to implement this tool are working towards social cohesion and equity. EU guidelines and directives have prompted changes in the national laws of EU member states and strengthened the protection of minority groups and women. It's important to note that each member state has implemented its own internal anti-discrimination laws. The principle of equity and non-discrimination is a value, goal, individual right, positive obligation, and competence of both the EU and its member states.

Strategic Documents in the Field of International Human Rights Protection and Anti-Discrimination:

Document	The range of introduced solutions/changes:
<p>The Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR No. 005), September 3, 1953:</p>	<p>Article 14 establishes a prohibition of discrimination and condemns unacceptable grounds for discrimination. Ensuring the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Convention should take place without discrimination based on: sex, race, color, language, religion, political or other opinions, national or social origin, property, birth, or any other status.</p>
<p>Protocol No. 12 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, November 4, 2000 (ECHR No. 177)</p>	<p>The exercise of any legally established right should take place without discrimination on any grounds such as sex, race, color, language, religion, political or other opinions, national or social origin, property, birth, and other status, particularly relating to public authorities (Article 1, paragraph 2).</p>
<p>The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ECHR No. 157) came into force on February 1, 1998:</p>	<p>The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities is an international treaty adopted within the Council of Europe that aims to promote the protection of the rights of national minorities. It was established to address the needs and concerns of minority groups in various countries and ensure that their rights are respected and upheld. The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities contributes to the ongoing efforts to promote tolerance, inclusivity, and the protection of minority rights across Europe. The convention prohibits any form of discrimination based on national belonging or nationality.</p>
<p>The European Social Charter. Opened for signature on October 18, 1961.</p>	<p>The European Social Charter is a legally binding international treaty adopted by the Council of Europe. It aims to protect and promote a wide range of social and economic rights for individuals, including labor rights, housing, health, education, and social security. The European Social Charter establishes rights and standards that member states should work towards achieving, ensuring that individuals within their territories have access to essential social and economic rights. These rights contribute to improving the quality of life, promoting equity, and fostering a just and equitable society. Member states that ratify the charter commit to implementing its provisions and periodically submitting reports on their progress. The charter serves as an important instrument for the protection and enhancement of social rights in Europe, contributing to the well-being and dignity of individuals across the region.</p>
<p>The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 16, 1966</p>	<p>The continuation of human rights legislation encompasses gender equity, social and ethnic groups, the rights of nations to self-determination over resources, the right to life, personal freedom and security, privacy protection, freedom of movement, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, assembly and association freedoms, humanitarian treatment, protection against torture, and fair and equal treatment before the court.</p>

<p>The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 21, 1965</p>	<p>The convention obliges states to consider as punishable offenses all forms and ideas based on racial supremacy or hatred, incitement to discrimination, acts of violence, and incitement to such acts on grounds of race, color, or ethnicity. It also requires the penalization of organizations acting in such a manner..</p>
<p>The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 18, 1979.</p>	<p>The aim of the convention is to eliminate any forms of direct and indirect gender-based discrimination, as well as to protect women against discrimination from state authorities, whose role also involves improving their situation.</p>
<p>The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 13, 2006.</p>	<p>The aim of the Convention is to promote, protect, and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by persons with disabilities. This includes individuals who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments that, when interacting with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in social life on an equal basis with others.</p>
<p>The Treaty on European Union, concluded in Maastricht on February 7, 1992.</p>	<p>It is based on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equity, the rule of law, and respect for human rights. These values are common to the member states in a society founded on pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity, and gender equity..</p>
<p>Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (OJ C 326/47 of 26 October 2012)</p>	<p>The Treaty states that the EU, in all its actions, aims to eliminate inequalities and promote gender equity; it strives to eliminate all forms of discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, religion, belief, disability, age, and psychosocial identity.</p>
<p>Directive No. 75/117/EEC of February 10, 1975, on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the application of the principle of equal pay for men and women (OJ L 045 of February 19, 1975).</p>	<p>The directive, as the first of its kind, specifies the scope of eliminating gender-based wage inequalities. It stipulates the removal of any discrimination in relation to all elements and conditions of remuneration for the same work and/or work of equal value. It also obliges member states to establish mechanisms for enforcing rights in cases of experiencing harm due to unequal treatment in the remuneration of women and men.</p>
<p>Council Directive 86/613/EEC of December 11, 1986, on the application of the principle of equal treatment between self-employed men and women, including those working in agriculture, and on the protection of self-employed women during pregnancy and motherhood (OJ L 359 of December 19, 1986).</p>	<p>The directive extends the principle of equal treatment to the realm of self-employment, imposing on member states the obligation to apply non-discrimination principles to all self-employed individuals, including those working in agriculture and practicing liberal professions. This also encompasses spouses who are not employees or partners, but are significantly involved in the self-employed person's activities, carrying out the same activities and/or supportive actions.</p>

<p>Council Directive 92/85/EEC of October 19, 1992, concerning measures for the purpose of improving the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding (OJ L 348 of November 28, 1992).</p>	<p>The directive obliges the employer to take the necessary measures, including temporary adaptation of working conditions and/or working hours, for a specific employee in order to avoid risks associated with her work. If this is not possible, the directive mandates the transfer of the employee to another job. Additionally, the directive introduces regulations regarding the duration of maternity leave, prohibition of night work for pregnant women and for a certain period after childbirth, prohibition of dismissals during pregnancy and maternity leave, and more.</p>
<p>Council Directive 97/80/EC of December 15, 1997, on the burden of proof in cases of discrimination based on sex (OJ L 014 of January 20, 1998).</p>	<p>The directive shifts the burden of proof in cases of discrimination, meaning that the defendant must prove that the principles of equal treatment have not been violated.</p>
<p>Council Directive 2000/78/EC of November 27, 2000, establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation (OJ L 303 of December 2, 2000).</p>	<p>The prohibition of unequal treatment covers: access to employment or self-employment, access to all types and levels of vocational guidance, vocational training, further training and retraining; conditions of employment and work; joining workers' or employers' organizations, whose members pursue a specific occupation.</p>
<p>Directive 2002/73/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of September 23, 2002 (OJ L 269 of October 5, 2002).</p>	<p>The directive amending Council Directive 76/207/EEC on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions. The document summarizes the definitions of direct and indirect discrimination as well as harassment, which are recognized as forms of discrimination.</p>
<p>Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of July 5, 2006, on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (OJ L 204 of July 26, 2006).</p>	<p>The directive repeals the following directives: 75/17/EEC, 76/207/EEC (amended by Directive 2002/73/EC), 86/378/EEC (amended by Directive 96/97/EC), 97/80/EC (amended by Directive 98/52/EC), while simultaneously regulating the principle of equal treatment in the field of employment and addressing the issue of prohibition of discrimination on grounds of sex in certain aspects of public life.</p>
<p>Council Directive 2004/113/EC of December 13, 2004, implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services (OJ L 373 of December 21, 2004).</p>	<p>The directive establishes a legal framework regarding gender-based discrimination in the realm of access to goods and services, as well as the provision of goods and services.</p>

In Poland, the development of diversity management and gender equity concepts was primarily influenced by two factors. Firstly, the entry of international corporations into the market in the 1990s brought foreign trends and practices related to human resource management and corporate culture. With the establishment of these new companies, foreign nationals started occupying managerial positions, representing countries with different cultures and religions, leading to the gradual adoption of Western behavioral patterns. Ethical codes were introduced, defining values such as respect for others and openness to workforce diversity. Initiatives targeting businesses were also introduced, such as the "Equal Opportunities Company" or "Mother-Friendly Company"³³ awards. Secondly, the accession to the European Union (EU) played a significant role in promoting diversity and equity values. One of the conditions for EU membership was the adaptation of national legislation to EU standards, particularly in terms of equal treatment. Poland's EU membership required adherence to community law, and Article 10 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) emphasizes the elimination of all forms of discrimination in defining and implementing EU policies. The result of aligning national law with EU law led to changes in the Labor Code³⁴ and the adoption of the Act of December 3, 2010, on the implementation of certain EU provisions in the field of equal treatment. This Act specifies areas and methods of responding to unequal treatment based on gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, belief, worldview, disability, age, and psychosexual identity, including in economic, professional, and union activities. Poland incorporated the so-called equity directives, Directive 2000/43/EC and Directive 2000/78/EC, into its legal system. The first directive introduces the standard of equal treatment regardless of race and ethnicity, while the second focuses on equity and the prohibition of discrimination in employment.

³³ "Forum of Responsible Business", 2009, p. 5.

³⁴ 1996, 2003, 2004

Table: Legal Aspects of Equal Treatment in Poland³⁵

Normative act	Content
<p>Constitution of the Republic of Poland</p>	<p>In Article 30, there is a reference to dignity as an inherent and inalienable characteristic of every human being, the source of all other subjective rights and freedoms, granting it the status of inviolability and obliging all public authorities to respect and protect it³⁶.</p>
	<p>Article 31 refers to the principle of freedom. The principle of freedom does not mean that civil liberty is unrestricted; it must respect the necessity of respecting the rights of other individuals. However, in accordance with this principle, there is a freedom to do what is not explicitly prohibited by law.</p>
	<p>Article 32 states that all individuals are equal before the law and have the right to equal treatment by public authorities. Discrimination in political, social, or economic life for any reason is prohibited.</p>
	<p>Article 33 also introduces the principle of gender equity, which signifies the equity of rights between women and men in family, political, social, and economic life.</p>
<p>Labor law</p>	<p>Article 11 contains a list of legally protected characteristics (also referred to as discrimination criteria), which include, among others, gender, age, disability, race, religion, nationality, political beliefs, union membership, ethnic origin, creed, psychosexual identity, and employment on a fixed-term or indefinite basis, as well as full-time or part-time employment³⁷.</p>

³⁵ https://www.rownetraktowanie.gov.pl/sites/default/files/podrecznik_all_accept2.pdf

³⁶ Human dignity means not only the necessity of preserving a certain sphere of autonomy or freedom for individuals but also the prohibition of subjecting them to situations that could violate that dignity. Human rights are derived from the principle of dignity, including prohibitions such as discrimination, persecution, and infringement of bodily integrity

³⁷ Article 113a: Any discrimination in employment, direct or indirect, especially based on gender, age, disability, race, religion, nationality, political beliefs, union membership, ethnic origin, creed, sexual orientation, as well as based on employment on a fixed-term or indefinite basis, or in full-time or part-time employment, is prohibited.

Article 183a, § 1: Employees should be treated equally regarding the establishment and termination of employment relationships, employment conditions, promotion, and access to training for professional qualifications, irrespective of gender, age, disability, race, religion, nationality, political beliefs, union membership, ethnic origin, creed, sexual orientation, as well as irrespective of employment on a fixed-term or indefinite basis, or in full-time or part-time employment. § 2: Equal treatment in employment means non-discrimination in any manner, directly or indirectly, based on the reasons specified in § 1. The list is non-exhaustive, as indicated by the use of the word "especially" in the provision. This implies that in addition to the characteristics listed in the law, other attributes such as worldview or appearance may also be subject to protection. Employees should be treated equally concerning the establishment and termination of employment relationships, employment conditions, promotion, and access to training for professional qualifications.

<p>Act of 20 April 2004 on Employment Promotion and Labor Market Institutions</p>	<p>The employer is obligated to provide necessary and reasonable accommodations for a person with disabilities who is in an employment relationship with them, participating in the recruitment process, undergoing training, internship, vocational preparation, or professional or graduate internships. These accommodations are tailored to the specific requirements of the person with disabilities, enabling them to perform their job and arising from their disability, as long as implementing such changes or adjustments would not result in imposing disproportionately high burdens on the employer.³⁸</p>
<p>Criminal law</p>	<p>"Criminal law" encompasses regulations related to the principle of equal treatment and non-discrimination. Polish criminal law does not introduce the concept of bias-motivated crimes. Provisions of the Penal Code.³⁹ They provide criminal liability for perpetrators of crimes committed based on the national, ethnic, racial, political, religious affiliation, or lack of religious affiliation of the victims⁴⁰.</p>
<p>The Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence</p>	<p>The Convention defines "violence against women" as a human rights violation and a form of gender-based discrimination. It encompasses all acts of violence based on gender that result in or are likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological, or economic harm or suffering to women. This includes threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, both in public and private life. The Convention applies to all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence. It imposes specific obligations on states to prevent and combat such violence.⁴¹ Additionally, participation in an organized group or association with the intention of committing a crime (Article 258 of the Criminal Code) and publicly inciting the commission of a crime (Article 255 of the Criminal Code) are also considered punishable under the Convention.</p>

³⁸ Article 36: Employment Mediation for the Unemployed and Job Seekers carried out by county and provincial employment offices is conducted free of charge, in accordance with principles: (...) 3) equality – meaning the obligation to provide all job seekers with assistance in finding employment or other gainful work, regardless of gender, age, disability, race, ethnic origin, nationality, sexual orientation, political beliefs, religious convictions, or union affiliation. (...) 5. Employers are obligated to promptly inform the relevant county employment office based on the employer's location about available job positions or positions for vocational preparation. When informing about available job positions or positions for vocational preparation, employers cannot formulate discriminatory requirements against candidates based on gender, age, disability, race, ethnic origin, nationality, sexual orientation, political beliefs, religious convictions, or union affiliation.

Article 19c: A employment agency cannot discriminate based on gender, age, disability, race, religion, ethnic origin, nationality, sexual orientation, political beliefs, or creed, nor based on union membership of individuals for whom it seeks employment or other gainful work. Article 121: Anyone who operates an employment agency without the required entry in the registry of employment agencies shall be subject to a fine of not less than 3,000 PLN. Anyone operating an employment agency and charging additional fees from individuals for whom they seek employment or other gainful work, other than the amount specified in Article 85(2)(7), shall be subject to a fine of not less than 3,000 PLN. The same fine applies to anyone operating an employment agency who fails to adhere to the principle of prohibition of discrimination based on gender, age, disability, race, ethnic origin, nationality, sexual orientation, political beliefs, religious convictions, or union membership, as specified in the Journal of Laws from 2008, No. 69, item 414, as amended.

³⁹ Article 119 of the Criminal Code provides for criminal liability of a person who uses violence or unlawful threats against a group of people or an individual due to their national, ethnic, racial, political, or religious affiliation, or due to their lack of religious affiliation. The same penalty applies to a person who publicly incites the commission of such a crime. Article 256 of the Criminal Code penalizes, among other things, public incitement (directed at a larger, unspecified number of people) to hatred based on differences in nationality, ethnicity, race, religion, or lack of religious affiliation. Article 257 of the Criminal Code establishes criminal liability for publicly insulting a group of people or an individual due to their national, ethnic, racial, religious affiliation, or due to their lack of religious affiliation. The same penalty applies for violating bodily integrity for the mentioned reasons.

⁴⁰ It's worth noting that the list of individuals who are covered by special legal protection is a closed list – it does not include, for example, individuals with non-heterosexual orientation or disabilities.

⁴¹ Article 119 of the Criminal Code establishes criminal liability for a person who employs violence or unlawful threat against a group of individuals or a single person due to their national, ethnic, racial, political, religious affiliation, or lack of religious affiliation. The same penalty applies to an individual who publicly incites the commission of such a crime. Article 256 of the Criminal Code penalizes, among other things, public incitement (directed at a larger, indeterminate number of individuals) to hatred based on differences in nationality, ethnicity, race, religion, or lack of religious affiliation. Article 257 of the Criminal Code outlines criminal liability for publicly insulting a group of people or an individual due to their national, ethnic, racial, religious affiliation, or lack of religious affiliation. The same penalty applies for violating bodily integrity for the mentioned reasons.

<p>The Act of 3 December 2010 on the Implementation of Certain European Union Regulations in the Field of Equal Treatment (Journal of Laws from 2010, No. 254, item 1700, as later amended).⁴²</p>	<p>The principle of equal treatment has been defined in Article 3 of the Law, which states that equal treatment means "the absence of any behaviors constituting unequal treatment." In contrast, unequal treatment according to the provisions of the law refers to treating another person in a manner that includes one or more of the following behaviors: direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, less favorable treatment of a person resulting from rejecting or submitting to harassment or sexual harassment.</p>
<p>The Civil Code</p>	<p>Article 23 of the Civil Code contains a list of personal rights. These include: health, freedom, honor, freedom of conscience, name or pseudonym, image, secrecy of correspondence, inviolability of domicile, scientific, artistic, inventive, and rationalization creations.</p>
<p>The Act of 6 January 2005 on National and Ethnic Minorities and on Regional Language (Journal of Laws from 2005, No. 17, item 141, as later amended).</p>	<p>The Act prohibits discrimination resulting from belonging to these minorities and stipulates that public authorities are obligated to take appropriate measures to promote full and real equity in the economic, social, political, and cultural spheres between individuals belonging to minorities and those belonging to the majority. It also emphasizes the protection of individuals who are subjected to discrimination, hostility, or violence due to their minority status.</p>
<p>The Act of 20 April 2004 on Employment Promotion and Labor Market Institutions (Journal of Laws from 2008, No. 69, item 414, as later amended).</p>	<p>The Act prohibits discrimination based on gender, age, level of ability, race, religion, ethnic origin, nationality, sexual orientation, political beliefs, and creed, as well as based on union membership of individuals.</p>
<p>The Act of 7 October 1999 on the Polish Language (Journal of Laws from 2011, No. 43, item 224, as later amended).</p>	<p>It stipulates that the provisions contained in it do not infringe upon the rights of national and ethnic minorities.</p>
<p>The Act of 29 December 1992 on Radio and Television Broadcasting (Journal of Laws from 2011, No. 43, item 226, as later amended).</p>	<p>It stipulates that programs of public radio and television should take into account the needs of national minorities and ethnic groups.</p>

Source: Own compilation.

⁴² Starting from January 1, 2011, the Act on the Implementation of Certain European Union Regulations in the Field of Equal Treatment (commonly known as the anti-discrimination law) has been in effect. This law defines areas and methods of countering violations of the principle of equal treatment. The law organizes the legal situation and implements the provisions of EU anti-discrimination directives, while also specifying legal means of protecting the principle of equal treatment and the authorities responsible for its enforcement. For the first time, this law introduced a prohibition of discrimination into national law beyond the realm of employment. Previously, a clear prohibition of discrimination was only included in the Labor Code and was solely applicable in the relationship between employees and employers. However, the protection provided by the anti-discrimination law is limited and dependent on specific areas of social life. For instance, in the fields of education and higher education, discrimination based on certain characteristics such as race, ethnic origin, and nationality is prohibited, while other legally protected characteristics like gender, religion, belief, worldview, disability, age, or sexual orientation are not explicitly covered.

A significant impact on the popularization of the diversity management concept in Poland was the promotion of the Diversity Charter idea by the Responsible Business Forum in 2012. The Charter is a commitment signed by organizations that decide to introduce a non-discrimination policy within their structures and work towards creating and promoting diversity. It expresses the company's readiness to involve all employees, business partners, and social partners in these activities⁴³. As a result, human resources management became an important and increasingly widespread concept in Poland. The initiative to create a Polish version of the Diversity Charter emerged during a meeting of representatives of companies with French capital in May 2011. Subsequently, the Responsible Business Forum, along with strategic partners, launched the process of creating the Polish version of the Diversity Charter in September 2011.

Gender Equity and women empowerment in Cyprus



Nowadays, the word "female empowerment" is omnipresent - everyone talks about it, many feel understood by it and others try to bring about a lasting change in society. But what exactly does it mean and what is the situation for women in Cyprus?

Gender-based violence – violence against women in Cyprus

Violence against women is deeply rooted in the unequal status women hold in society, highlighting the imbalance of power between women and men in social, political, and economic spheres. This pervasive violation of human rights is one of the most prevalent issues of our time, causing physical, sexual, psychological, and economic harm or suffering to women. The consequences of violence against women extend beyond the individual, negatively impacting families, communities, and societies as a whole. Disturbing estimates indicate that in the European Union, approximately 1 in 3 women, or 61 million out of 185 million, have experienced physical or sexual violence, or both, since the age of 15.

Addressing violence against women requires a multifaceted approach. However, accurately assessing its full extent remains challenging due to underreporting and the associated stigma. Consequently, the reported cases represent only a fraction of the actual reality. In Cyprus, specifically, there is a concerning lack of trust in the police among 47% of the population.

⁴³ Responsible Business Forum, 2012

According to the Gender Equity Index 2015 published by the European Institute for Gender Equity (EIGE), countries where people exhibit greater trust in justice institutions tend to have higher levels of reported violence. In Cyprus, it is estimated that 22% of women have experienced violence, which is 11% lower than the overall EU average.

Overall, violence against women persists as a pressing issue, deeply rooted in societal inequalities. Efforts to combat this problem must involve comprehensive strategies aimed at addressing power imbalances and fostering trust in justice institutions.

Measures from the Cyprus government to fight violence against women

The first assessment of Cyprus by the Council of Europe Group of Experts on Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) highlights positive measures taken by the Cypriot authorities since the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (=Istanbul Convention) in 2017. GREVIO particularly appreciates the entry into force of a law against sexual harassment and stalking in 2021 and a law against sexism in 2020. Based on a visit to Cyprus earlier this year, also positively highlights the recent opening of a women's shelter in Nicosia, a crisis centre offering a full range of support services to victims of domestic violence 24 hours a day, seven days a week. However, GREVIO criticises the lack of comprehensive support for rape victims in the report published together with the opinion of the Cypriot government. In particular, GREVIO notes the lack of specialist counselling and comprehensive support for victims of female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage or rape, which is a serious gap that should be addressed.⁴⁴

Efforts to eliminate violence against women in Cyprus are being coordinated by the Ministry of Justice through the implementation of the National Action Plan on Equity between Men and Women. The original plan was set for the year 2014-2017, and the new updated version for the years 2021-2025 has been adopted in 2020. Within this plan, combating violence against women was identified as a key priority. Various actions were taken to address this issue, including awareness-raising campaigns, the training of professionals, and improvements in data collection pertaining to all forms of violence against women.

The first National Action Plan on Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family (2010-2013) played a crucial role in promoting integrated policies and measures to combat domestic violence as well. This encompassed the implementation of prevention programs, enhancing victim support services, and facilitating research and data collection efforts.

To further strengthen the fight against violence in the family, a second National Action Plan on Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family (2016-2019) has been developed. The plan aimed to

⁴⁴ Council of Europe. Violence against women in Cyprus. URL: <https://www.coe.int/de/web/portal/-/violence-against-women-in-cyprus-despite-positive-developments-rape-victims-need-more-support-says-new-report>

build upon the achievements of the previous one and reinforce comprehensive strategies to prevent and combat violence in the family.

Currently, there is no updated national action plan to tackle violence in the family. However, the current National Action Plan for Equity between Men and Women 2019-2023 includes “Combating Gender-Based Violence /compliance with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention” as a key priority.

Cyprus ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, also known as the Istanbul Convention, in 2018. In 2021, the Republic of Cyprus also passed Law 115(1)/2021 on the Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and Related Matters. The law makes various forms of violence against women illegal, calls for the amendment of the definition of rape in order to bring it more in line with the convention, and puts into effect the 2021 Law to Protect Against Harassment and Stalking and the 2020 Law on Combating Sexism and Sexist Behaviour. As a result of the amendment to the VAW Law 2021, femicide is now recognised as a crime distinct from homicide and as a form of violence against women.

Additionally, Cyprus has ratified the United Nations Security Council resolution (S/RES/1325), the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in 2002, and the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings in 2007. Cyprus has also ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights back in 1967.⁴⁵

In summary, Cyprus has taken significant steps to address violence against women, as evidenced by the implementation of national action plans and ongoing efforts to raise awareness, enhance support services, and improve data collection.⁴⁶

Gender Equity in Cyprus

Gender equity has been entrenched as a principle in the Republic of Cyprus since its establishment in 1960. According to Article 28 of the Constitution, every person shall enjoy all rights and liberties without any direct or indirect discrimination against any person on the ground of their sex.

Cyprus holds the 21st position among EU countries on the Gender Equity Index, with a score of 56.9 out of 100. However, it lags behind the EU’s overall score by 11 points. Over the years, there has been some progress in Cyprus’s gender equity efforts. Since 2010, the country’s score has increased by 7.9 points, with a slight improvement of 0.6 points since 2017. Comparatively, Cyprus has shown slightly faster progress in certain aspects of gender equity when compared to other EU member states. As a result, it has managed to enhance its ranking by six places.

⁴⁵ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies. Situation report on discrimination against women in Cyprus.

⁴⁶ Ending Sexual Harassment and Violence in Third-Level Education. URL: https://euomedrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Factsheet-Cyprus_EN.pdf <https://www.itstopsnow.org/sites/default/files/2018-02/EIGE%20Report%20Cyprus-Combating%20>

While this progress is notable, there is still work to be done to bridge the gender equity gap in Cyprus. Ongoing efforts and initiatives are necessary to continue advancing gender equity and to further improve Cyprus's position on the Gender Equity Index.

There are some mentionable improvements in Cyprus referring to gender equity. One example would be improvements in economic decision-making. The proportion of women on the Board of Directors of the Central Bank and on the boards of the largest listed companies has increased. Moreover, tertiary educational attainment is increasing among both women and men and unmet needs for medical care have decreased for women and men. However, there are still weak points alongside the positive developments, for example in political decision-making, where the number of women ministers is still the same after 10 years. Furthermore, the uneven concentration of women and men in education is a persistent problem since more women than men are studying education, health and welfare, or humanities and arts.

Gender inequalities in earnings persist since there is a big gender gap in monthly earnings between women and men born outside the EU. The gender pay gap in Cyprus between men and women was at 15,87% for the year 2022.⁴⁷

Cyprus' best performance is in the domain of health in which it scores 87.9 points and ranks 12th among all member states. Cyprus is closest to gender equity in the sub-domain of access to health services, ranking 11th with a score of 98.4 points.

Key Gender Equity Institutions

In the past decade, several institutions have been established to promote gender equity in Cyprus' public sphere, each focusing on specific areas of expertise. The National Machinery for Women's Rights (NMWR), operating under the Ministry of Justice and Public Order, serves as the primary coordinating body for gender equity promotion. The NMWR advises the Council of Ministers on policies, programs, and laws related to women's rights. It also monitors, coordinates, and evaluates the implementation and effectiveness of these initiatives.

Furthermore, the NMWR conducts information, education, and training programs on relevant gender issues, aiming to raise awareness and mobilize the public sector. Acting as a collaboration platform, it facilitates cooperation between the government and women's organizations and NGOs dedicated to gender equity and women's rights.

⁴⁷ European Institute for Gender Equality. Cyprus Gender Equality Index in 2020.

The NMWR comprises four bodies⁴⁸:

1. The Council, chaired by the Minister of Justice, consists of seventeen women's organizations, including two Turkish Cypriot organizations. The Council's role is to study policy matters and programs, formulating advisory opinions and decisions.
2. The National Committee, the largest body within the NMWR, comprises an additional 60 NGOs. These organizations actively participate in NMWR projects, programs, and activities. They receive funding for their projects and operational costs and are regularly consulted on policy issues, such as the development of national action plans.
3. Interministerial Committee, composed of gender focal points from all eleven ministries in Cyprus. This committee meets on an ad hoc basis to coordinate efforts, share information, and discuss government policies regarding gender equity.
4. The General Secretariat provides administrative and scientific support to the advisory bodies of the National Machinery for Women's Rights (NMWR). It plays a crucial role in promoting and implementing the decisions made by these advisory bodies. The NMWR's secretariat is managed by the Equity Unit of the Ministry of Justice and Public Order.

In addition to the NMWR, several other bodies have been established in Cyprus to address gender-related issues:

1. Ombudsman/Anti-Discrimination Body and Equal Treatment Authority:

The Ombudsman, established in May 2004, handles discrimination cases independently. This led to the creation of two separate authorities: the Cyprus Anti-Discrimination Body and the Equal Treatment Authority. The Anti-Discrimination Body investigates complaints of discrimination across various areas such as access to goods and services, social security, education, and health-care. The Equal Treatment Authority focuses on complaints related to sex-based discrimination in employment and vocational training, including sexual harassment, maternity rights, and discriminatory practices in employment conditions. Its mandate was expanded in 2008 to cover the Equal Treatment of Men and Women (Access to Goods and Services) Law.

2. Gender Equity Committee in Employment and Vocational Training:

Established in June 2003 under the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, the Gender Equity Committee monitors the implementation of the Equal Treatment of Women and Men in Employment and Vocational Training Law. The committee accepts and addresses complaints of discrimination within the realms of employment and vocational training. In 2009, it was empowered to pro-

⁴⁸ European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality. 2012. The Policy on Gender Equality in Cyprus. URL: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/note/join/2012/462447/IPOL-FEMM_NT\(2012\)462447_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/note/join/2012/462447/IPOL-FEMM_NT(2012)462447_EN.pdf)

vide independent assistance to victims of discrimination, including legal advice and representation in judicial or administrative proceedings.

3. Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family:

The Advisory Committee focuses on preventing and combating domestic violence in Cyprus. Its activities include monitoring the implementation of relevant laws, raising awareness among professionals and the public, conducting research, strengthening interdepartmental cooperation, evaluating existing services, providing training to relevant professionals, and developing a National Action Plan on Combating Violence in the Family.

4. Coordinating Multidisciplinary Group for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings:

The Coordinating Multidisciplinary Group was established in 2007 under the Law on Combating Trafficking and Exploitation of Human Beings and Protection of Victims. Chaired by the Minister of Interior, the group is responsible for monitoring the implementation of laws and national action plans on trafficking in persons. It collects and exchanges information among its members, which includes various government agencies involved in combating trafficking, as well as two NGOs.

Equal economic independence for women and men

Employment equity policies and priorities have led to an increase in the number of women in employment while maintaining equal opportunities for promotion, remuneration and career advancement. As a result, the role and position of women in social and economic life has been strengthened. These developments have been favoured by the good performance of the Cypriot economy in recent years, which has been accompanied by a radical economic restructuring that started with a significant development of the service sector. Most of the new jobs are concentrated in the service sector, which offers better working conditions and favours women's participation. In Cyprus today, about 15.000 women seem to prefer temporary employment, while about 16.000 women have part-time jobs in sectors such as education, commerce, and agriculture, as well as in the manufacturing industry, either because of favourable working conditions or flexible working hours that allow them to reconcile family, social and professional obligations.

According to the results of the Cyprus Statistical Service's Labor Force Survey, the labour force in the 2nd quarter of 2022 amounted to 482,385 persons or 65.1% of the population (males 71.2%, females 59.5%) in comparison to 466,525 persons (63.9%) in the corresponding quarter of 2021.

The number of unemployed persons amounted to 32,903 and the unemployment rate to 6.8% of the labour force (males 6.0%, females 7.8%) in comparison to 39,224 persons (8.4%) in the corresponding quarter of 2021⁴⁹. Women are slightly more likely than men to be unemployed, but the gap is relatively small. Women are also more likely to take part in part-time jobs than men. This could be

⁴⁹ Cyprus Labour Force Survey (LFS): 1st quarter 2022. URL: <https://www.pio.gov.cy/en/press-releases-article.html?id=28286#flat>

as a result of the fact that women are expected to take care of the children and the household.

A notable development for women in recent years has been a shift from low-skilled jobs to those with high educational requirements. The improvement in educational attainment has also led to more women entering the labour force. For example, for every 100 women aged 15-64 with a lyceum or equivalent educational qualification, almost 40 are in the labour force, compared to about 81 for university graduates. It has been documented internationally that as women's skill and education levels rise, so does their labour force participation trend.⁵⁰

Nevertheless, there are still significant gender gaps in labour force participation: A very large gender pay gap of over 23% and gender segregation in employment, with women traditionally working mainly in lower-paid sectors such as -like already mentioned- health, education and domestic work. As in other European countries, women are also more likely to interrupt their careers to raise children and have particular difficulties re-entering the workforce after periods of absence.

The promotion of women in the labour market is one of the main priorities of the Cypriot government and receives the strongest political and financial support. This may be related to the fact that issues of labour market integration policies are important for the equity of gender equity in the European Union as a whole. A number of measures co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) have been implemented since 2007 to promote women in the labour market. One of the measures specifically for women is the Programme for the Promotion of Women's Entrepreneurship, which is aimed at women of all ages (18-55 years) who want to work in manufacturing sectors, trade, services and tourism, and who want to use their knowledge, training and new technologies and innovations as well as the potential of information technology in the development, production and sale of "new" products and services. There are also special training programmes for women who are not in the labour force, which are implemented by the Human Resources Development Authority and co-financed by the ESF, which aim to promote the training and employability of unemployed and inactive women labour force.

Other measures targeting inactive women include the Programme for the Promotion of Flexible Forms of Employment (FFE) for the programming periods 2004-2006 and 2007-2013. Based on the project results of the 2004-2006 period, a programme to subsidise enterprises/organisations in operation to create jobs with flexible employment arrangements for the benefit of young people, older people, persons, people with care needs and, in general, people from socially vulnerable groups. The insufficient supply of quality and affordable care facilities for children and other care-dependent relatives was identified as a major obstacle to higher labour force participation of women. Furthermore, flexible forms of employment are not particularly widespread and the number of persons in flexible employment is low in comparison to other European countries.

In order to close the gender pay gap, the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance (MLSI) launched in 2007 a comprehensive Social Insurance (MLSI) commissioned a comprehensive study to assess and analyse the extent of the problem in Cyprus.

To analyse the extent of the problem in Cyprus, identify the causes of the phenomenon, and make recommendations for policy measures to address the problem. Based on the findings of the above

⁵⁰ Cyprus government. Department of labour. Equality between men and women in employment. Website: https://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dl/dl.nsf/page1f_en/page1f_en?OpenDocument

study, the MLSI has launched a project “Actions for Reducing the Gender Pay Gap” with concrete measures to reduce the gender pay gap, to be implemented in the period 2009-2013. The programme was launched in 2011 and has a budget of approximately 4.5 million euros and is co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF). The programme provides, among other things, for the creation of an effective mechanism for enforcing the equal pay legislation, the development of handbooks and guides as tools to investigate cases of inequalities in employment, interventions to promote the reconciliation of work and family life, life, and measures to eliminate gender stereotypes through the education system.

During the period from 2007 to 2013, an initiative called the “Provision of Services for Covering Social Care within the Framework of Family and Employment Reconciliation” was implemented by the SWS (State Welfare Services). His project aimed to subsidize the expenses associated with daycare for children, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities, with the goal of facilitating women’s integration into the labour market.

Equal Representation of Women and Men in Decision-Making

When it comes to equal representation of women and men in decision-making roles, Cyprus has seen some progress in increasing women’s involvement in politics. However, the pace of change has been slow, and women continue to be significantly underrepresented in the government. For instance, only 38% of judges and 20.8% of senior-level civil servants in Cyprus are women. In the parliamentary elections of 2001, out of 85 female candidates, only six were elected. This number slightly increased to eight seats (14.6%) in 2006, despite the total number of candidates rising to 128. The Cyprus National Machinery for Women’s Rights (NMWR) launched a major campaign to encourage voters to support women candidates, but the impact was limited. In the 2011 elections, the percentage of women elected fell even further to only six (10.7%). In the municipal elections of 2011, the number of female mayors decreased from 3% to 0%, and the proportion of female members in municipal councils declined from 20.3% to 17.5%.

There have been some positive developments, such as the appointment of three women as ministers out of eleven posts and the election of two women as members of the European Parliament in June 2009. Additionally, in recent years, women have been appointed to high-ranking political positions for the first time, including the Law Commissioner, the Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman), the Auditor-General, the Deputy Accountant-General of the Republic, and the Commissioner for the Protection of Personal Data.

To address the underrepresentation of women, most political parties in Cyprus have implemented a quota system to promote the participation of women in decision-making bodies. Some parties have also introduced quotas for their candidate lists. However, these measures have been implemented through the parties’ internal rules rather than legislation. The National Action Plan on Gender Equity includes measures to introduce targets and quotas. For instance, the plan sets a target of 40% women’s participation in political life and proposes a quota of 30% for women on ballots in municipal, parliamentary, and European Parliament elections, as well as a quota of 30% for women’s

appointments to public committees and boards. Despite these targets, the introduction of quotas has not garnered significant support in Cyprus and is generally not favoured.

This may be a result of the pervasive patriarchal beliefs and ingrained assumptions about the obligations and roles of men and women in the home, the job, politics, and public life.

However, it is worth noting that the Union of Municipalities established the Committee of Elected Women of the Union of Municipalities in February 2005. This committee aims to promote equal representation of women and men in local councils.⁵¹

Most notable in this area is the new Cyprus Council of Ministers, after the swearing-in of the new President Nikos Christodoulides on 8 June 2023, the new cabinet of ministers was introduced composed of 14 men and 9 women. This represents a gender balance of 40% and thus the new president is keeping his election promise of improving gender equity, which is a great step forward for Cyprus.⁵²

10 good practices of women empowerment

SHORT GOOD PRACTISE DESCRIPTION

⁵¹ European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality. 2012. The Policy on Gender Equality in Cyprus. URL: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/note/join/2012/462447/IPOL-FEMM_NT\(2012\)462447_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/note/join/2012/462447/IPOL-FEMM_NT(2012)462447_EN.pdf)

⁵² In Cyprus news portal. President-elect Christodoulides announces a gender-balanced cabinet. URL: <https://in-cyprus.philenews.com/news/local/president-christodoulides-reveals-a-50-gender-balanced-cabinet-as-he-takes-over-tomorrow/>

Title of the good practise:	Cyprus International Women of Today - CIWOT
Name and type of entity implementing/ sharing the good practice (for example an individual, governmental organisation, private sector actor – SME, NGO, employment agency, etc.)	An organization on a voluntary basis
Location /geographical coverage: What is the geographical range where the good practice has been used? Please specify when possible, the country, region, province, district, town and village.	Limassol, Cyprus
Description of good practise: Kindly provide a short description of the good practice being addressed.	<p>selected to be primary focus and a variety of projects is undertaken according to the interest of the members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “CIWOT exists to help our local community, to help women become better leaders, strengthen individual talents, provide friendship and networking, thereby connecting women in their communities”. • Volunteer to raise money, donate time to local charities, offer courses to learn new skills and organize social events to get to know each other better, try new things and enjoy ourselves.
Main objectives: What were/are the main objectives of the good practise?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage women to excel at communicating, organising and leading • Raising money for charity
Key actors and stakeholders involved. Kindly list key actors and stakeholders involved in the good practise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board of Directors on a voluntary basis,, who are appoint annually, women belonging to the club
Target group: Who are the users of the good practice? Kindly list the beneficiaries or the target group of the good practice.	Women from many countries and of all ages who are English-speaking and live in Cyprus, in or around Limassol

Title of the good practise:	AIPFE Cyprus – Women of Europe
Name and type of entity implementing/ sharing the good practice (for example an individual, governmental organisation, private sector actor – SME, NGO, employment agency, etc.)	Non-Profit-Organisation
Location /geographical coverage: What is the geographical range where the good practice has been used? Please specify when possible, the country, region, province, district, town and village.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AIPFE was first set up in Brussels, Belgium • The Cyprus Chapter was established in 2001, Nicosia
Description of good practise: Kindly provide a short description of the good practice being addressed.	“As an organisation, our mission is to facilitate and open up the conversation about Women’s role in society. We empower, motivate and connect women to sit at the table. We organize events, workshops and lead programs that will allow us to fulfil this mission”
Main objectives: What were/are the main objectives of the good practise?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mission: to facilitate and open up the conversation about Women’s role in society; empower, motivate and connect women to sit at the table. • 2 broad categories: Politics (Society) Economy (Leadership & STEM) • The European-funded projects AIPFE is involved with: Women Fit 4 Business Gender Diversity in Decision-Making Positions
Key actors and stakeholders involved. Kindly list key actors and stakeholders involved in the good practise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President: Despina Papadopoulou • Vice President: Thalia Iacovou • Secretary: Christos Lazanias
Target group: Who are the users of the good practice? Kindly list the beneficiaries or the target group of the good practice.	Women across all strands of society

Title of the good practise:	CYPRUS GIRLS CAN
Name and type of entity implementing/ sharing the good practice (for example an individual, governmental organisation, private sector actor – SME, NGO, employment agency, etc.)	Campaign / group, runs entirely on volunteer basis
Location /geographical coverage: What is the geographical range where the good practice has been used? Please specify when possible, the country, region, province, district, town and village.	Cyprus, Events across the island
Description of good practise: Kindly provide a short description of the good practice being addressed.	“In Cyprus, women are under-represented in most sports and the sportswomen who are achieving receive little media coverage and remain unknown to most. CGC wants to change that and promote women’s empowerment by giving them an opportunity to try new sports, step outside their comfort zone, be inspired by others and socialise with people from across the divide. By showing women that they CAN, we use sport as a socio-educational tool for inclusion
Main objectives: What were/are the main objectives of the good practise?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on trying something new and having fun in a relaxed, non-competitive environment • Promoting health • Connect and empower
Key actors and stakeholders involved. Kindly list key actors and stakeholders involved in the good practise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers
Target group: Who are the users of the good practice? Kindly list the beneficiaries or the target group of the good practice.	Girls and women of all ages and abilities, all across the divided island of Cyprus

Title of the good practise:	OWAAT – One Woman At A Time
Name and type of entity implementing/ sharing the good practice (for example an individual, governmental organisation, private sector actor – SME, NGO, employment agency, etc.)	Sustainable, community-court collaboration
Location /geographical coverage: What is the geographical range where the good practice has been used? Please specify when possible, the country, region, province, district, town and village.	Cyprus
Description of good practise: Kindly provide a short description of the good practice being addressed.	<p>“OWAAT guides abused women to be empowered and place the law in their hands and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know their human rights; • Become self-represented litigants; • Self-help; • File for more emergency no contact orders grounded on protections of their fundamental human rights of access to court, human dignity and privacy.”
Main objectives: What were/are the main objectives of the good practise?	To prevent all forms of non-physical, non-violent abuse against women, as unwanted contact interference In violation of their international human right to privacy
Key actors and stakeholders involved. Kindly list key actors and stakeholders involved in the good practise.	<p>Sponsors & Supporters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fulbright • University of Nicosia • Alexandra M. Hadjidaki & Team
Target group: Who are the users of the good practice? Kindly list the beneficiaries or the target group of the good practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women of every age • Cyprus courts to support OWAAT goals and objectives

Title of the good practise:	Cyprus Women’s Lobby
Name and type of entity implementing/ sharing the good practice (for example an individual, governmental organisation, private sector actor – SME, NGO, employment agency, etc.)	Umbrella network, non-governmental organisation
Location /geographical coverage: What is the geographical range where the good practice has been used? Please specify when possible, the country, region, province, district, town and village.	Nicosia, Cyprus
Description of good practise: Kindly provide a short description of the good practice being addressed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “brings together a wide range of women’s organisations and NGOs throughout Cyprus” • Mission: to promote gender equity and women’s empowerment, to combat all forms of discrimination and violence against women and to ensure the full participation and active involvement of women in decision making processes
Main objectives: What were/are the main objectives of the good practise?	Promotion of gender quality and women’s empowerment
Key actors and stakeholders involved. Kindly list key actors and stakeholders involved in the good practise.	Women of all ages, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and local-level power.
Target group: Who are the users of the good practice? Kindly list the beneficiaries or the target group of the good practice.	Women of every age

Title of the good practise:	Young Female Entrepreneurial Program
Name and type of entity implementing/ sharing the good practice (for example an individual, governmental organisation, private sector actor – SME, NGO, employment agency, etc.)	Strategic Partnership project
Location /geographical coverage: What is the geographical range where the good practice has been used? Please specify when possible, the country, region, province, district, town and village.	Nicosia, Cyprus
Description of good practise: Kindly provide a short description of the good practice being addressed.	“The inspiration for the YFEP project is the ongoing EU challenge of enhancing the entrepreneurial spirit of young women, increasing business creation rates and providing alternative pathways of employability and, most of all, young women’s personal fulfilment.”
Main objectives: What were/are the main objectives of the good practise?	Aims at offering young women with the motivation to start a business an all-in-one program in enlarging their knowledge on entrepreneurship, sustainable management, improve attitudes and foster skills
Key actors and stakeholders involved. Kindly list key actors and stakeholders involved in the good practise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinator: Fundacja Autokreacja/ Autokreacja Foundation, Poland • The Nest Social Cooperative Enterprise, Greece • Seal Cyprus, Cyprus • Mv International, Italy • Aregai Terre di Benessere Associazione Culturale, Italy • West Lothian Chamber Of Commerce Limited, United Kingdom
Target group: Who are the users of the good practice? Kindly list the beneficiaries or the target group of the good practice.	Young women

Title of the good practise:	HERstory FOR PEACE
Name and type of entity implementing/ sharing the good practice (for example an individual, governmental organisation, private sector actor – SME, NGO, employment agency, etc.)	Project is implemented by the Center for Gender Equity and History (Cyprus) in collaboration with the HERstory Educational Trust (Ireland) and is funded by the European Program Erasmus+.
Location /geographical coverage: What is the geographical range where the good practice has been used? Please specify when possible, the country, region, province, district, town and village.	Cyprus & Ireland
Description of good practise: Kindly provide a short description of the good practice being addressed.	“The aim of the project is to use the lens of women’s history to tackle the continuous marginalisation of women from the peace-building efforts and to empower Cypriot and Irish women to be active agents of both peace and gender equity
Main objectives: What were/are the main objectives of the good practise?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Womens empowerment • Peace education • Women’s invisibility in history-telling • Deconstructing historical myths about genders and about the national/religious “Other”
Key actors and stakeholders involved. Kindly list key actors and stakeholders involved in the good practise.	Center for Gender Equity and History (Cyprus) -> Non-profit, non-governmental organization
Target group: Who are the users of the good practice? Kindly list the beneficiaries or the target group of the good practice.	Women of every age, especially working in the field of Education

<p>Title of the good practise:</p>	<p>Building Healthy Relationships and Enhancing Gender Equity</p>
<p>Name and type of entity implementing/ sharing the good practice (for example an individual, governmental organisation, private sector actor – SME, NGO, employment agency, etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online interactive workshop for women • Implemented with the contribution of the Cyprus Family Planning Association and the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies
<p>Location /geographical coverage: What is the geographical range where the good practice has been used? Please specify when possible, the country, region, province, district, town and village.</p>	<p>Online</p>
<p>Description of good practise: Kindly provide a short description of the good practice being addressed.</p>	<p>“The workshop uses non-formal education methodologies with aim at encouraging participants to reflect on women’s experiences, critically discuss how gender norms and stereotypes affect the expression and enjoyment of gender and reproductive rights, enhance the sense of community, challenge gender norms and explore ways for bringing more freedom, etc.”</p>
<p>Main objectives: What were/are the main objectives of the good practise?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on Women’s experiences • Challenge gender norms and explore ways for bringing more freedom, happiness, fulfilment and equity in women’s lives and relationships
<p>Key actors and stakeholders involved. Kindly list key actors and stakeholders involved in the good practise.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cyprus Family Planning association • Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies
<p>Target group: Who are the users of the good practice? Kindly list the beneficiaries or the target group of the good practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women aged 18-25 • Nationals residents from Cyprus, Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan

Title of the good practise:	Smart Women Project
Name and type of entity implementing/ sharing the good practice (for example an individual, governmental organisation, private sector actor – SME, NGO, employment agency, etc.)	Project meeting, hosted by project partner Cyprus Computer Society (CCS)
Location /geographical coverage: What is the geographical range where the good practice has been used? Please specify when possible, the country, region, province, district, town and village.	Larnaca, Cyprus
Description of good practise: Kindly provide a short description of the good practice being addressed.	"SMART Women is a project that aims to design and deliver a training programme specialising in Entrepreneurship and eCommerce. The programme aims at increasing the knowledge and competences of female individuals in the area of electronic commerce and business to enable them to improve the employment prospects or business opportunities of the participants."
Main objectives: What were/are the main objectives of the good practise?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance knowledge on the use of ICT - Inspiring digital entrepreneurs to fully exploit the potential of ICT, both in terms of supply of new digital products and services
Key actors and stakeholders involved. Kindly list key actors and stakeholders involved in the good practise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Langas I ateiti / Lithuania • LIKTA / Latvia • EOS / Romania • Dedalo Foundation for the Development of the Information Society / Spain • Malta Communications Authority / Malta
Target group: Who are the users of the good practice? Kindly list the beneficiaries or the target group of the good practice.	People who are interested in building start-ups and deepen their knowledge in entrepreneur skills

<p>Title of the good practise:</p>	<p>Cyprus International University Women Empowerment Center (CIU-WEC)</p>
<p>Name and type of entity implementing/ sharing the good practice (for example an individual, governmental organisation, private sector actor – SME, NGO, employment agency, etc.)</p>	<p>Center is run by Cyprus International University</p>
<p>Location /geographical coverage: What is the geographical range where the good practice has been used? Please specify when possible, the country, region, province, district, town and village.</p>	<p>North Cyprus</p>
<p>Description of good practise: Kindly provide a short description of the good practice being addressed.</p>	<p>The goal of Cyprus International University Women Empowerment Center (CIU-WEC) is to give talented but underprivileged young women a chance to pursue their ambitions in a supportive and challenging academic environment. The center was established as a meeting place to foster originality and encourage women to think beyond the box.</p>
<p>Main objectives: What were/are the main objectives of the good practise?</p>	<p>Contribute to the development of a more equitable society by fostering a more progressive pedagogical climate and expanding career prospects for women in STEM fields.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving girls the tools they need to build a brighter future for themselves and their communities. • Offering a forum to boost girls' self-esteem and autonomy.
<p>Key actors and stakeholders involved. Kindly list key actors and stakeholders involved in the good practise.</p>	<p>Cyprus International University</p>
<p>Target group: Who are the users of the good practice? Kindly list the beneficiaries or the target group of the good practice.</p>	<p>Cyprus International University Local and off-campus young women</p>

Organizing Diversity Day



Organizing Diversity Day Organizing Diversity Day in the workplace can be an exciting challenge. Here is a step-by-step guide to help you successfully organize this event:

Step 1: Define Objectives and Purpose

- Explain why you want to organize Diversity Day and what goals you would like to achieve. Is it to raise awareness about diversity, build bonds among employees, or promote a specific issue related to equity and inclusion?
- Promote Open Dialogue: Focus on creating an atmosphere where employees feel comfortable discussing diversity, sharing their experiences, and viewpoints. Encourage questions, storytelling, and seeking common solutions.

Step 2: Establish an Organizing Team

- Form a team responsible for organizing Diversity Day. Ensure that it includes individuals from various fields, representing the internal diversity of the organization.

Step 3: Plan the Event

- Create an event plan that includes diverse activities such as workshops, panel discussions, presentations, contests, artistic performances, information booths, and more.
- Include Diverse Topics: Propose diverse diversity-related topics such as gender equity, multiculturalism, LGBTQ+ acceptance, cultural differences, and many others. This will allow you to cover different aspects of diversity.

Step 4: Consult with Employees

- Conduct a survey or consultations among employees to understand which diversity-related topics are most important to them and which activities would be most engaging. Involve different departments in organizing Diversity Day to create a more comprehensive and diverse program.

Step 5: Choose Date and Location

- Select a convenient date and location for Diversity Day. Ensure that the venue is suitable for the number of participants and provides a comfortable and safe atmosphere.
- Utilize Technology: If your organization has employees in different locations or remote workers, use technology to enable their participation in online events.

Step 6: Engage Organizational Leaders

- Engage the executive team and organizational leaders to secure their support and participation in Diversity Day.

Step 7: Promote the Event

- Effectively promote Diversity Day using various internal communication channels such as emails, intranet, posters, employee meetings, etc.

Step 8: Ensure Diversity in Presentations and Panels

- Ensure that the event program includes individuals representing diverse groups and perspectives. This will contribute to diversity within the event itself.

Step 9: Organize Workshops and Training

- Focus on creating practical and interactive workshops that encourage employees to actively participate and engage with diversity-related topics.

Step 10: Monitor Effects and Learn for the Future

- After Diversity Day, conduct an evaluation to understand the reactions and whether the event met its goals. Based on the assessment results, you can adjust future diversity-related activities in your organization.

Step 11: Continue the Efforts:

- Diversity Day should not be a one-time event. Implement changes that arise from the discussions and activities on that day. Continue to promote and maintain diversity in daily work.

Remember that Diversity Day is one of many opportunities to emphasize the importance of diversity in the workplace. It is essential to maintain an inclusive approach and actions promoting diversity throughout the year.

Organizing Diversity Day is an important initiative that can help build awareness and acceptance of cultural, ethnic, religious, gender, and other forms of social diversity. Here are a few good examples of how you can organize Diversity Day:

Types of Activities for Diversity Day

Workshops and Presentations	Organize workshops or presentations led by experts in diversity and social inclusion. These sessions can cover topics such as gender equity, diverse leadership, combating discrimination, and more.
Panel Discussion:	Invite panelists representing various social groups to participate in a panel discussion. The panel's topic can revolve around experiences related to diversity and inclusion, as well as ways to build more inclusive communities and workplaces.
Cultural Exhibition and Tasting:	Set up an exhibition showcasing cultural diversity through art, cuisine, music, and dance. You can also offer tastings of dishes from different world cuisines to allow participants to experience various flavors and traditions.
Contests and Quizzes	Host contests or games that promote diversity and understanding of cultural differences. This could include a quiz about different cultures or an interactive activity where participants learn about each other.
Networking Event:	Organize a networking event that enables participants to connect and exchange experiences with individuals from diverse cultural and professional backgrounds. This is an excellent way to build relationships and support diversity in the workplace.
Film Screenings and Discussions	Choose a film or documentary related to diversity and social inclusion, and organize a discussion afterward where participants can share their reflections and insights.
Volunteer Activities:	Partner with social or charitable organizations that promote diversity and inclusion. Collaborate on projects or charitable actions together. Encourage participants to engage in charitable activities, such as food, clothing, or fundraising drives, that support various needy groups.

Information Campaign:	Create an information campaign related to diversity and inclusion that promotes understanding and respect for different groups. The campaign may include posters, brochures, or newsletters
Training and Workshops:	Conduct workshops or training sessions related to diversity and inclusion. Topics may include cultural awareness, combating biases and stereotypes, or intercultural communication skills.
Presentations and Speeches:	Invite employees to prepare short presentations or speeches about their culture, traditions, or experiences. This can help foster an understanding of diversity in the workplace.
Mentoring	Organize a mentoring program where experienced employees can assist new employees from different backgrounds. This can help integrate new team members.
Guest Speaker Sessions	Invite diversity and inclusion experts to speak about best practices and strategies for building a more diverse work environment.
Research	Conduct regular surveys and evaluations on the organizational climate regarding diversity and inclusion. This can help identify areas for improvement and monitor progress.

Remember that the key to a successful Diversity Day organization is to provide participants with opportunities for learning, sharing experiences, and reflecting on the importance of diversity in society and the workplace. It is also important to promote social inclusion and equity as values that guide such initiatives.

Here are some inspiring examples of organizations celebrating Diversity Day, demonstrating their commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion in the workplace:

- **Google** - Google is known for organizing diverse events at its offices worldwide. Their initiatives include panel discussions, workshops, speeches by prominent equity activists, as well as various artistic events. Diversity Day at Google is an opportunity for reflection, learning, and celebrating cultural, ethnic, and social diversity within the organization.
- **Salesforce** - Salesforce annually organizes Equity Day, which focuses on promoting gender equity, LGBTQ+ acceptance, and inclusive leadership. The events include presentations, workshops, and discussions on various aspects of equity in the workplace.
- **IBM** - IBM organizes various events for International Equity Day, covering diverse topics related to inclusion, gender equity, cultural differences, and skills diversity. These initiatives aim to emphasize the importance of diversity and support employee engagement in building an inclusive organizational culture.

- **Microsoft** - promotes diversity and inclusion on multiple levels. Their Diversity Day includes various events such as panel discussions, guest speaker presentations, workshops, and film screenings. These initiatives aim to raise awareness among employees about diversity and involve them in developing a more tolerant and understanding work environment.
- **Johnson & Johnson** - is actively involved in organizing Diversity and Inclusion Day. Their events include panel discussions, workshops, expert presentations, and opportunities to participate in charitable activities and support communities.
- **Cisco** - actively works to promote diversity. Their Diversity Day covers various events related to cultural differences, gender diversity, and also addresses topics related to disabilities and integration.
- **Deloitte** - organizes Diversity Day as part of their broader strategy to promote equity and diversity. On this day, employees participate in various workshops, panel discussions, and networking meetings.
- **Procter & Gamble** - organizes Diversity Day, emphasizing the importance of cultural, ethnic, and social diversity. Employees have the opportunity to participate in workshops, presentations, and cultural food tastings.
- **Unilever** - organizes Global Diversity Day, which is aimed at all employees worldwide. During this day, the company hosts numerous events that encourage understanding and appreciation of diversity.
- **Accenture** - Accenture organizes Diversity Day, which focuses on gender diversity and promoting gender equity. On this day, panel discussions, workshops, and presentations are organized, emphasizing the importance of equity in the workplace.
- **Facebook (Meta Platforms, Inc.):** is committed to creating an inclusive workplace culture. Organizing Diversity Day is part of their efforts, including meetings, lectures, and educational campaigns.

These examples demonstrate that organizations worldwide undertake various initiatives to emphasize the importance of diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Diversity Day provides an excellent opportunity to take actions that promote understanding, respect, and acceptance for all employees, regardless of their background, gender, orientation, or abilities.

In Poland, companies that promote diversity and may organize Diversity Day include:

- **PGE (Polska Grupa Energetyczna):** PGE is an example of a company in Poland that actively promotes diversity and inclusion in the workplace. The company conducts various initiatives and training related to this topic.
- **ING Bank Śląski:** ING Bank Śląski is a financial institution that works for diversity in the workplace and engages in various educational and cultural activities related to this topic.
- **PwC (PricewaterhouseCoopers):** PwC is a consulting and auditing firm that emphasizes the importance of diversity in its organizational culture. The organization conducts various initiatives related to equity and inclusion.

- **Shell Polska:** Shell is a company in the energy sector that supports diversity and inclusion. This company may organize events for Diversity Day.
- **Auchan Polska:** Auchan is a supermarket chain that engages in diversity in the workplace and promotes inclusion. It can organize various educational initiatives and actions.
- **IBM Polska:** IBM is an international company with a presence in Poland that is committed to diversity and inclusion in its organizational culture. It can organize events related to Diversity Day.
- **L'Oréal Polska:** L'Oréal is a company in the cosmetics industry that actively promotes diversity and inclusion in the workplace. This organization can participate in Diversity Day celebrations.
- **Orange** is a telecommunications company that works for equity and diversity. It can organize educational and cultural events related to Diversity Day.

It is worth noting that many companies in Poland, both large international corporations and smaller enterprises, are committed to diversity and inclusion in the workplace. If you are interested in whether a specific company in Poland is organizing Diversity Day, I recommend contacting the company's HR department or checking their official website or social media, where they may announce such events.

Organizing Diversity Day in a company brings many benefits to both employees and the organization itself. Here are some of the main benefits associated with organizing such an event:

- **Increased awareness:** Organizing Diversity Day helps raise employees' awareness of diversity and inclusion in the workplace. This helps build greater understanding and sensitivity to differences among people.
- **Increased employee engagement:** Employees who see that the company is committed to promoting diversity often feel more engaged in their work. This can contribute to higher job satisfaction.
- **Collaboration and innovation:** Diverse teams often have a greater ability to solve problems and generate innovative ideas. Organizing Diversity Day can encourage better collaboration among employees with different perspectives and experiences.
- **Improvement of organizational culture:** Promoting diversity can lead to an improvement in organizational culture, creating a more open, friendly, and tolerant work environment.
- **Increased diversity in leadership:** Diversity Day can help raise awareness of the need to increase diversity in leadership and at higher levels of the organization. This can lead to more representative decision-making teams.
- **Better customer service:** Workplace diversity can help better understand and serve different customer groups, which is important in today's global market.
- **Support for company values:** Organizing Diversity Day can be consistent with company values such as equity, fairness, and inclusion. This helps the company build a positive image and reputation.
- **Talent retention and attraction:** Companies that actively promote diversity often attract and retain talented employees who value a diverse and inclusive work environment.

- **Avoidance of discrimination-related issues:** Promoting equity and diversity can help avoid issues related to discrimination and illegal practices in the workplace.
- **Support for local communities:** Organizations that engage in diversity often engage in activities for local communities and non-governmental organizations, contributing to positive relations with the surrounding environment.

Organizing Diversity Day is an important step in building a more inclusive and diverse organizational culture, which benefits both employees and the organization itself. It also underscores the values of equity and respect for differences in the workplace.



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