

Diversity is Good Business, says EU Conference

The European Commission joined forces with the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber and the Vienna Economic Chamber to host a High Level conference in Vienna which showed how diversity strategies can produce measurable business benefits for companies of all sizes.

On 31 October 2012, the High Level event “Managing Diversity in Practice: How to value differences and inclusion for growth in Europe” brought together more than 130 delegates from governments, NGOs, multinational companies and SMEs from across the EU to share best practices in diversity management. The conference was opened by the Austrian State Secretary for Integration, **Sebastian Kurz**, **Joanna Serdynska**, from the European Commission, Directorate-General for Justice and **Renate Römer**, Vice President of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber.

”Diversity is reflected across all sectors of society, but perhaps nowhere more so than in the workplace. In response to a more diversified customer base, market structure and workforce, it is essential that employers are aware of the benefits that diversity strategies can bring to their businesses,” says Joanna Serdynska from the European Commission.

Following the opening ceremony, a roundtable discussion featuring diversity experts from business, public administrations and NGOs highlighted the benefits and challenges of implementing diversity policies in organisations. A series of workshops tackled a variety of issues, including the demographic change in the European workforce, diversity management in the public sector and diversity benefits for SMEs. Workshops also provided participants with practical diversity management tools, including reporting and measuring tools to help deliver the message that diversity is good for sustainability and growth.

The High Level event forms part of the European Commission’s project *‘Support for voluntary initiatives promoting diversity management at the workplace across the EU’* which brings together Diversity Charters from across Europe in an EU-level platform for exchange. The platform was created in 2010 and now consists of 11 Diversity Charters from the following countries: Austria, Brussels, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden, Poland, Luxembourg, Finland, and Ireland. The Estonian Charter will launch in November 2012.

To learn more about the Platform, visit

<http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/diversity/diversity-charters/>