

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Round table

Tackling racism in the workplace: Combatting the barriers to diversity



Programme

Tuesday, 22 March 2022, 14.00 – 15.30

Interpretation in EN/FR/PL and Sign Language

Welcome

Dimitrios PAPADIMOULIS

Vice-President of the European Parliament and Chair of the High-Level Group on Gender Equality and Diversity

Ewa KOPACZ

Vice-President of the European Parliament and Vice-Chair of the High-Level Group on Gender Equality and Diversity

Understanding the nature of unconscious biases

Lennard LOUISY

Work performance facilitator and Speaker

Looking outside: The barriers to diversity in the workplace in the European society

Romeo FRANZ

MEP, Co-President of the European Parliament Anti-Racism and Diversity Intergroup

Looking inside: What are the challenges in the EP?

Ziyad LUNAT

Representative of the People of Colour support group

Open discussion with panellists and Q&A

Closing remarks

Kristian KNUDSEN, Director-General, Directorate-General for Personnel

Moderated by

Erika LANDI

Director for Human Resources Support and Social Services, Directorate-General for Personnel

Speech

PHS 7C50 or online at <https://broadcaster.interactio.eu/join/pisn-sfw6-3xml>

The barriers to diversity in the workplace in the European society

Good afternoon and many thanks for the opportunity to address you!

Today it should be about equality and inclusion for all.

Today we raise awareness of the benefits of an inclusive and diverse work place and of the motivation and competencies of any citizen.

We highlight the need to work in diversity and inclusion of employers and encourage others to follow their example.

I am a Romani man, and with regret I say that in today's world, in many cases, for ethnic minorities trying to find decent employment can be difficult, and even if they do manage to secure employment, often continue to face unequal treatment such as lower wages, zero hour contracts, a lack of career options and even direct discrimination and harassment.

It should be everyone's goal to eliminate this inequality. **Remember:** equality doesn't always mean treating everyone the same. It can mean taking into account the differences and acting appropriately.

Considering the multilevel governance approach in the European Union, on the one hand we have EU employment initiatives, some with and some with no

binding character on the Member States; however, they expressed their explicit commitment to enhancing access to employment for every citizen.

At the national level on the other hand, either through these EU initiatives or because of other national priorities, Member States put in place their own national strategies and measures for access to decent employment. In theory, all citizens should be eligible to benefit from these employment measures in their countries of residence, explicitly or not.

However take the case of youth unemployment. This is one of Europe's big challenges. And, in addition, take the case of young Romani people. For them, it is often a persistent struggle, enhanced through common aspects of Romani social exclusion, including substandard education and direct or indirect discrimination on the labour market.

Equality of opportunities for young Romani people would be fair and just, but also a smart economic choice: it would be an effective way to improve growth prospects and respond to the demographic challenge of rapidly ageing populations in EU Member States. Investing in young Romani people, for example, can break the cycle of poverty, discrimination and exclusion. It can yield high returns and can deliver the kind of lasting change that many policies and programs have so far failed to achieve.

In conclusion, there is a need for different actors to come together and ensure that the right to decent work becomes a reality for all citizens and that theory must become reality. Europe can only win if it will ensure equality for all.