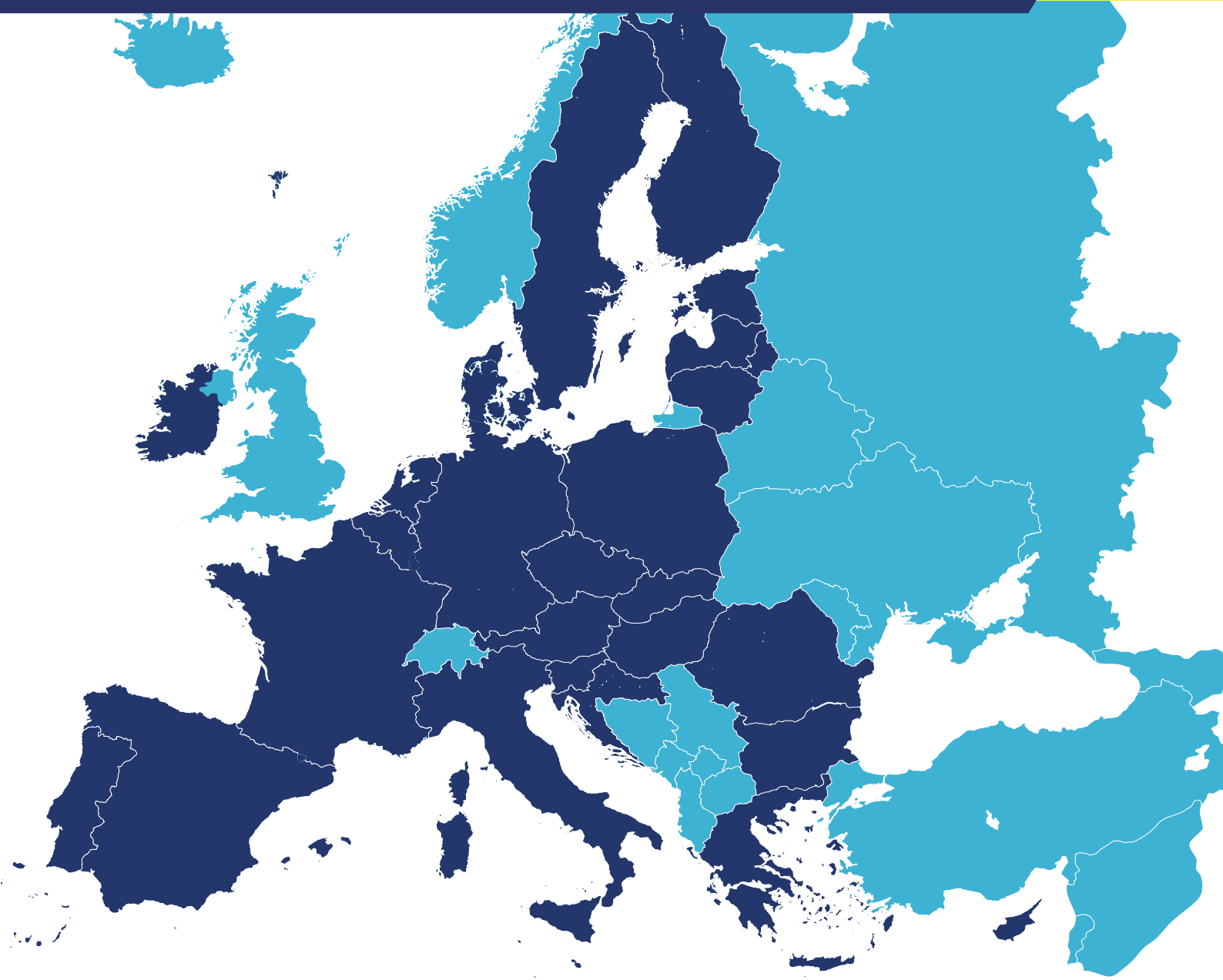# VOTE U4U LIST

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION: WHY & HOW?

From 23 November, Local Staff Committee Elections, BXL

U4U, the one Trade Union for all the Staff of all the European institutions

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Definition

When considering diversity and inclusion in terms of approach and organization, one could translate:

Diversity as "**how to ensure that you have diverse people in your community, just like in our society**"; and

Inclusion as "**how to ensure there is no exclusion, that everyone is integrated, valued and recognized**", regardless of their characteristics.

Preamble: *why a diversity & inclusion policy?*

While reviewing its human resources policies, the European Commission is keen to develop the concepts of "diversity and inclusion" within our Institutions.

U4U supports this approach. However, our union also wants to highlight the many other dimensions that this approach should cover. Indeed, U4U considers that diversity and inclusion are not limited to a single dimension. There are <u>3</u> essential and interrelated <u>dimensions</u> to be taken into account:

- The **societal dimension** (*gender, language, age, disability, ethnic origin, social origin, family situation, physical appearance, political opinions, beliefs, etc.*);

- The **social dimension** (*status, remuneration and income/grade/category disparities, access to information and dialogue, health care guarantees, mobility...*);

- The **cognitive and/or professional dimension** (*knowledge, qualifications, skills, experience, training, types of work, different cultures, values, status, etc.*).

The objective for our institutions would not be to represent all the diversity types of society, but rather to ensure that none in particular is excluded!

Context and challenges: *how to implement a diversity & inclusion policy?*

In order to be able to promote inclusion and diversity among all colleagues while ensuring **dialogue** and **communication**, it is essential to:

1. **Take stock of:**

    1.1. The effectiveness of measures already in place;

    1.2. The current obstacles to equal treatment;

   1.3. The views of colleagues, including their perceptions of their current work environment.

2. **Identify the needs**,

    2.1. By looking for the talent we lack;

    2.2. By not limiting ourselves to the obvious diversities for each of the 3 dimensions (*societal, social and professional*).

3. **Understand and/or convey** that the implementation of this policy promotes work efficiency, the well-being of colleagues and strengthens the Institution.

4. **Establish a framework for inclusion and diversity:**

   4.1. By providing **sufficient human and budgetary resources** to ensure **inclusive management** of the personnel service;

   4.2. By developing a **common institutional culture of inclusion**;

   4.3. By promoting an **institution** that **engages in dialogue** at all levels and allows for **concrete actions to be taken** to achieve the objectives.

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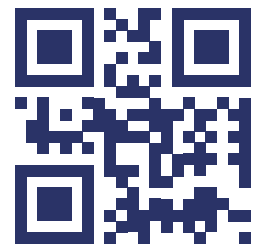
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For U4U, the diversity and inclusion policy should aim at the following major objectives:

1. Promote diversity **at the societal level** by avoiding exclusionary attitudes;

For example,

- By maintaining and developing equal treatment in all regulatory provisions, whether in terms of language, recruitment, appointment, evaluation, promotion rates, reimbursement of medical expenses, etc. (*guaranteeing school allowances regardless of family situation, extending the right to reimbursement by the JSIS of medically assisted procreation, etc.*);

- By setting up training and follow-up actions on multiculturalism and the acceptance of and respect for differences, from the moment of entry into the organisation but also throughout the career, in order to build a common culture specific to the institution (*provide training on intercultural dialogue at the heart of institutional processes - meetings, drafting of documents, etc. -, training on how to adapt to a colleague who becomes disabled or is suffering during his/her career, etc.*);

- By ensuring that colleagues feel comfortable in their environment, whatever their gender, age, language, disability, etc. (*provide logistical, linguistic and scheduling arrangements, etc.*).

2. Promoting **social** inclusion by combating discrimination, disparities & insecurity and differences in careers;

For example,

- By guaranteeing recruitment to a grade and function group corresponding to training, experience and the nature of the tasks entrusted, in order to reduce under-classification on recruitment;

- By increasing the number of reclassification actions that take into account qualifications, work done, performance evaluation in order to reduce existing disparities and inequalities;

- By ensuring equal management of staff, whether on statutory or contractual terms (*replacement of maternity leave, reimbursement of medical expenses, access to crèches/schools/childcare centres, etc.*);

- By organising regular and planned competitions for establishment with a significant number of successful candidates.

3. Promote diversity and inclusion **at the professional level, i.e. in qualifications, experience and skills**, by changing recruitment and training methods to allow for greater diversity and flexibility;

For example,

- By adopting recruitment methods that promote the inclusion of a diversity of talents, skills and experience (*diversify recruitment methods that promote the inclusion of talents, following the example of the "Junior Professional Program"; in addition to general external competitions, develop competitions and calls for applications adapted to needs and profiles, etc.*);

- By considering the length and objectives of the probationary period and, in this context, by improving the induction and training of newcomers (*increasing the probationary period to allow a real assessment of the skills of future officials and thereby giving this period the value of professional experience*);

- By developing a policy of internal competitions that allow for career development;

- By promoting a forward-looking and not only administrative management of Human Resources which is able to anticipate the indispensable needs and talents but also to follow and accompany the personnel throughout their career;

- By promoting an administration that is open to and encourages debate, whether it is related to working life and/or the implementation of Union policies.

The European Union is based on fundamental rights:
dignity, freedom, equality, solidarity, citizenship, justice.

It is also an original institutional formation, which for the first time in human history conceives its development and unification process taking into account the defence and enhancement of its diversity! These values guide EU legislation and policies to promote equality, non-discrimination and integration in the Union.[1]

In the context of the *overhaul of human resources policies*, the European Commission, wishing to develop the concepts of "**diversity and inclusion**" within its institutions, has proposed that we reflect on this theme.

This document aims to:

1. **Analyze the issue**: the why and how of the concepts of "diversity and inclusion"

2. **Suggest some proposals** for the evolution of the concepts of "diversity and inclusion"

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1. Article 19 TFEU states: "Without prejudice to the other provisions of the Treaties and within the limits of the powers conferred by them upon the Union, the Council, acting unanimously in accordance with a special legislative procedure and after obtaining the consent of the European Parliament, may take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

Preamble

What dimension of diversity and inclusion should be referred to?

First of all, it is essential to agree on the meaning of the terms 'diversity' and 'inclusion', which concern us all:

- Diversity could be translated as "**how to ensure that we have diverse people, representative of society**";

- Inclusion could be translated as "**how to ensure that there is no exclusion, that everyone is integrated, valued and recognized**", regardless of their characteristics.

It is therefore not only a question of including, but also of ensuring that we do not exclude!

Like the Commission, U4U believes that it is essential to launch a thorough reflection on the concepts of 'diversity and inclusion'.

While ensuring dialogue and communication, three essential and interrelated dimensions must be taken into account:

- The **societal dimension** of diversity and its inclusion (gender, language, age, disability, ethnic origin, social origin, family situation, physical appearance, political opinions, beliefs, ethics ...);

- The **social dimension** of diversity and its inclusion (status, remuneration and income/grade/ category disparities, access to information and dialogue, health care guarantees, mobility...);

- The **cognitive and/or professional dimension** or diversity and its inclusion (*knowledge, qualifications, skills, experience, training, types of work, different cultures, value judgements, etc.*).

1. ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM

1.1. <u>Why advance these concepts of diversity and inclusion within our institutions?</u>

The EU civil service is in fact a diverse and inclusive organization thanks to:

- The geographical and cultural diversity of its staff, from across the EU (and beyond);

- The diverse skills of its staff;

- Its social and societal composition in line with European society.

Now our institutions aim to further increase their diversity in order to:

- Better <u>reflect the richness of EU society;</u>

- Provide an <u>attractive and motivating</u> working environment for all members of our union;

- Benefit from <u>additional skills and wealth</u> that enable them to understand the world.

Indeed, our Institutions consider that citizens throughout the EU should be able, to some extent, to identify with the EU civil service and feel appropriately represented by it.

Moreover, the variety of professional experiences, skills, ages and genders enriches the debates and reflections. Bringing together more diverse skills and visions allows a better understanding of future challenges. In an ever-changing world, our European civil service must <u>adapt</u> and continue its work to "be an institution representative of our society" & responsive to <u>the</u> world around it.

However, the objective is not for our institutions to welcome "all the diversity of the world" but rather to prevent any obstacle that would exclude it <u>a priori</u> from our services.

It is not only a question of including, but also of ensuring that we do not exclude a priori!

In this area, U4U considers the Commission's intention to be more than commendable.

However, at this stage, U4U is wondering how to strengthen and deepen the work initiated by the Commission to attract and retain the talent our Institutions need to develop.

U4U believes that a diversity and inclusion policy should have the following key objectives:

1. Promoting diversity **at societal level** by avoiding exclusionary attitudes.

2. Promoting **social** inclusion by combating discrimination, disparities and precariousness and career differences.

3. Promoting diversity and inclusion **at the professional level** by changing recruitment and training patterns.

1.2. <u>How can the work initiated by the Commission be valued?</u>

In 2017, the Commission adopted a 'Diversity and Inclusion Strategy' to attract and select a more diverse workforce and promote an inclusive working environment.[2]

The European Commission now wishes to continue[3] to promote equal opportunities and the fight against discrimination and exclusion, to be representative of our society.

A Commission Diversity and Inclusion Office has been set up for this purpose within DG HR.[4]

However, U4U believes that in order to meet the objectives, it is essential to:

1. <u>continue and strengthen</u> the Commission's action to promote the inclusion of diversity;

2. make the Commission's action in favour of diversity inclusion more visible to all colleagues.

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2. See details in Commission Communication C(2017) 5300 final of 19/07/2017.

3. This principle is enshrined in the Statute (see Article 1(5)), which states: "In the application of this Statute, any discrimination, such as discrimination based on sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic characteristics, language, religion or belief, political or other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation, is prohibited.

4. (DIO - Diversity & Inclusion Office).

U4U suggests addressing this issue by applying to it:

A methodology:

1. Draw up a comprehensive review/audit of what has been undertaken.

This would provide a concrete overview of diversity, exclusion and inclusion in our institutions.

2. Conduct an in-depth and critical analysis of this assessment as well as an analysis of unaddressed discrimination and oppression.

This would allow to launch an associative/inclusive debate to clearly identify what diversity and inclusion our Institutions will need and to ensure equal treatment on all levels.

3. Measure and value the perception of colleagues who illustrate this diversity of what is actually happening to them and the degree of their exclusion or inclusion[5].

This could, for example, be measured through the setting up of expression groups.

Resources:

1. Genuine capacity for optimised human resource management.

This type of personnel department should be able to provide the various skills needed but also to support, monitor, accompany and train staff from the moment they are taken on.

2. Provide a framework for a common institutional culture.

This would help to foster a common institutional culture, particularly for new staff, for inclusion that avoids discrimination, whether social, cognitive or otherwise.

3. Promote an institution that engages in dialogue.

Put in place procedures that encourage dialogue at all levels. This reflection should not be limited to a "specialized task force" which will then inform colleagues without including them. Such a reflection must be open to social dialogue and involve staff.

4. Set up warning bodies and tools (foresight cells).

This is to ensure that our institutions are attentive and responsive to the constantly changing world around them.

Thus, from the moment of entry into service and throughout one's career, it is necessary to ensure meaningful inclusion through:

• **Inclusive management of the personnel department** capable of ensuring a supported and monitored career path;

• **Training** to:

   - Raise awareness of the diversity of services and institutions, their purposes and practices;

   - Learn about an inclusive multicultural European culture.

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5. A survey on diversity, inclusion and respect at work was launched on 10 March 2021 among staff of the Commission, the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the executive agencies to get a 'better' picture of staff members' experiences and views on diversity and inclusion. This survey covers the so-called "core" aspects of non-discrimination: age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion or belief, race or ethnic origin and the issue of harassment, but not skills. Finally, this survey was carried out in order to feed into the revision of the Commission's Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan, the revision of the Commission's anti-harassment policy and the new EEAS diversity and inclusion strategy. The results of the survey should also serve as a benchmark to measure trends over time.

2. OUR PROPOSALS FOR PROGRESS

Before any proposal is made, it should be recalled that:

1. A review/study/analysis is required to:

      1.1. Measure the effectiveness of measures already in place in terms of diversity and climate of inclusion;

      1.2. Analyze the current obstacles to equal treatment in its various aspects;

      1.3. Reveal how colleagues perceive their working environment, including their hierarchy.

2. It is essential to identify the needs and links between diversity, inclusion and performance:

      2.1. By looking for the profiles that we lack, especially for the most blatant discrimination;

      2.2. By not limiting ourselves to visible diversities when we take into consideration the societal, social and professional dimensions - even if it means reviewing the concepts of diversity and inclusion within our institutions -.

On the basis of the fore mentioned elements, it can be concluded that it would be worthwhile to consider how we can advance diversity and inclusion within our Institutions: "what to do, why and how?".

U4U therefore wishes to launch a few lines of thought that integrate the societal, social & professional dimensions and aim to achieve its three major objectives, namely:

1. Promoting diversity and inclusion at societal level by avoiding exclusionary attitudes;

2. Promoting diversity and inclusion at the social level by combatting discrimination, disparities and precariousness and career differences;

3. Promoting diversity and inclusion at the professional level by changing recruitment and training patterns.

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6. The **societal dimension** of diversity and inclusion (*gender, age, disability, ethnic origin, social origin, family situation, physical appearance, political opinions, beliefs, ethics, language...*).

    The **social dimension** of diversity and its inclusion (*statut, rémunérations et disparités de revenus/de classement/de catégories, accès à l'information et au dialogue, garantie des soins de santé, mobilité...*).

    The **professional or cognitive dimension** of diversity and its inclusion (*knowledge, qualifications, skills, experience, training, type of job, personalities, different cultures, value judgements, ...*).

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What to do, why and how?

Societal diversity Measures to make everyone feel comfortable		
WHAT	**WHY**	**HOW**
Raising awareness	Institutions have an interest in deepening their societal commitment: • To promote awareness of our prejudices; • To encourage the deployment of the individual potential of each employee for the benefit of the entire organization; • To create a culture of inclusion for everyone in our institutions.	• Set up a training action on multiculturalism and the acceptance and respect of differences.
Developing an inclusive policy	Inclusion must eliminate all discrimination, precariousness and even social injustice by ensuring **equal treatment** at all levels and by ensuring that there is no exclusion regardless of gender, age, disability, way of thinking, origin, language...	• Promote equal treatment in all regulatory provisions, whether in terms of status, language, recruitment, appointment, evaluation, career type, mobility, promotion rates, reimbursement of medical expenses, etc.; • Ensure that employees feel comfortable in their environment **regardless of** language, gender, age, disability, way of thinking, origin...

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Social diversity		
The need for inclusive measures to reduce discrimination and combat precarity and exclusion		
WHAT	**WHY**	**HOW**
Have accessibility and inclusion measures in place	Act so that there are less to no more disparities or inequalities and fight against precariousness: whatever their status, all workers must feel protected and integrated and considered at their fair value.	Actions to reduce disparities should be undertaken, such as • Ensure commitment within the function group corresponding to the tasks assigned; • Apply and increase the number of outplacement actions that take into account qualifications and work performed; • Allow access to more regular internal competitions; • Guarantee equal treatment of staff, whether they are statutory or contractual, and therefore ban precarious situations (*such as replacement of maternity leave, sick leave, reimbursement of health costs, access to childcare facilities [crèches, nurseries, schools], etc.*); • Shortening recruitment processes to avoid discrimination against low-income applicants…
The social dimension as a corollary of the attractiveness of our institutions	Diversity is already present in our institutions. However, they have a strong interest in acting in order to: • Ensure social diversity; • To make this diversity evolve. It is a way of keeping talent in-house: otherwise, our institutions would lose all made investments and efforts.	• Ensure equal treatment: this would ensure staff motivation and would also combat precariousness; • Practice an intense social dialogue to bring out diversities and solutions: the staff must be involved in the inclusion process.

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Cognitive and/or professional diversity To attract and retain all the talent our institutions need to grow		
WHAT	**WHY**	**HOW**
Integrate cognitive diversity into all HR processes	Cognitive diversity will enable our institutions to perform better, to be more responsive and to be more attuned to a changing world.	• Develop a new recruitment method to welcome more diverse candidates while ensuring that selection procedures are not discriminatory; • Ensure that there is no discrimination in any of the processes specific to human resources management: induction, training, career management, skills and performance optimization, etc.; • Set up a foresight unit capable of being reactive to the evolution of the world around it; • Request a diversity audit: this could help to determine the extent to which discrimination actions have been implemented and provide recommendations for further action.
Change the way we recruit *Or even consider new ways of recruiting so as not to force the reception of all possible diversities, but rather to ensure that none is excluded a priori from our services* *("Young Professional", temporary agents, external competitions, specialised competitions...)*	Diversifying the modes of recruitment would help to attract the diversity of profiles/ skills/talents corresponding to the needs of our Institutions.	• Develop selective competitions that are more responsive to real needs; • Use of internal competitions; • Facilitate the integration of temporary agents; • Reviewing the probationary period prior to tenure in the post.

Highlight the key role of the Personnel Department	In order to meet the interests and challenges that our Institutions are and will be facing, a change in personnel management is essential.	• To orientate the administrative management of personnel towards a prospective management of personnel in order to be able to:
		
		   - Anticipate/plan indispensable needs and talents;
		
		   - Follow and accompany personnel throughout their career.

Ensure that we have the right talent to run our institutions	Do not limit yourself to recruiting only the best scores, which does not guarantee diversity of skills. We enrich our knowledge and creativity by sharing different ideas, ways of thinking and doing, and by encouraging, not stifling, critical thinking.	• Recruiting different profiles on the basis of psychological or other selection tests specialising in the desired subject; • Involve managers more at a more decentralised level.

Anticipate training actions	They need to become more responsive to the realities of diversity.	• Diversity and Inclusion Training for Human Resources; • Diversity and inclusion training on entry to service; • Sharing good practice for all colleagues, regardless of status; • Appoint a diversity officer within Human Resources **who would have the means to do so.**
Develop cross-cutting working methods by promoting cognitive diversity	Encouraging interaction between departments will create the conditions for individual and collective motivation on a common project.	• Promote professional collaboration between departments, between Directorates General and even between institutions.
Establish a genuine "culture of inclusion" within our Institutions	The aim is: • To promote inclusion that avoids social, cognitive or other discrimination; • To co-construct a common institutional culture based on respect for diversity, the *raison d'être* of European construction ("United in Diversity").	Establish a framework and benchmarks for a culture of inclusion by redesigning the work organization so that it is fit to: • Review and diversify its recruitment model; • Improve the induction process: training at induction, alternating between different departments and various training courses to enable an awareness of the tasks and obligations of the job; • Encourage all employees to work together to improve the performance of our institutions; • Value atypical career paths; • Provide career counselling and support services; • Raise awareness and increase the involvement of the hierarchy, whose role is fundamental to ensure a common culture (e.g.: implementation of training actions to strengthen managerial practices and skills); • Provide ongoing training in 'inclusive culture' for management and staff.
Create a truly inclusive organization that promotes diverse careers	• All colleagues are entitled to a working environment in which they feel they belong in, and where they can make an optimal contribution; • No one can be left behind in terms of career, integration into teams, communication, collaboration, and training.	The fight for the inclusion of diversity begins with action to stop excluding: • By exploiting the various skills; • Ensuring equal treatment at all levels; • Promoting relevant training; • Involving managers more in the process of including colleagues and monitoring their careers.

Improve the Commission's image as a diverse employer	This would contribute to a positive and attractive image of the Commission as an "Employer of Diversity!" and to increase diversity within the European institutions.	• Actively promote the Commission as an attractive employer, possibly through communication campaigns (DG HR) - with targeted messages for a specific audience;
		
		• Increase the attractiveness of the civil service by:
		
		  - Encouraging effective career development, including better organized intra- and/or inter-institutional mobility;
		
		  - Providing quality educational services (crèches, nurseries, schools).

These objectives can only be achieved through the full participation of staff and the Personnel Department. It is an essential lever to ensure equality in the workplace, but also to attract, develop and retain the best and most diverse talents needed for the general interest of the Union, because to stop excluding, we must include!

In conclusion, diversity is a richness, both in human terms and in terms of performance. Our strength lies in our differences: accepting them and bringing them to the fore, without being representative of all the diversities in society BUT considering them all, is what makes the strength and success of a diverse organisation such as ours.

U4U invites you to reflect on this issue that concerns us all:

It is essential for our institutions:

1. To identify but also to **adapt to**, and even anticipate, **societal changes**.

2. Ensure that **all the professional skills** required for their operation are present.

3. That the diversity of the staff does **not result in situations of exclusion or negation, nor in social discrimination**: it is important that staff feel comfortable and integrated in their working environment, but also that they are assured of equal treatment, regardless of their personal characteristics.

4. **To have an internal professional and cognitive diversity** that allows it to understand what is emerging, in order not only to **be** "up to date" but above all, to be **reactive** in a changing world.

Any comments, questions, suggestions?
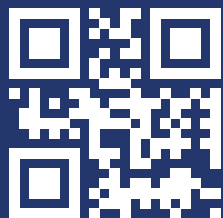
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