

## EMEA DIVERSITY NEWS 17

January 2008  
Editorial

Dear Readers:

The editorial team of EMEA DiversityNews wishes you a healthy and successful year 2008. This year is supposed to become important for intercultural exchange and understanding as the EU just has launched the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue and two major sport events will take place this summer. Peking will host the Olympic Summer Games and the European Championship in Soccer will take place in Switzerland and Austria. All events can improve the relations between different ethnic groups and cultures and foster intercultural understanding. So maybe we should start the year with the slogan of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue in mind which emphasizes the EU's positive view on cultural Diversity within Europe: *Together in Diversity*'

In this month's issue of EMEA DiversityNews, we explore various facets of diversity and developments. Norwegian women start to break the glass ceiling in the boardrooms and Czech Republic police employees are getting anti-discrimination trainings. Europe's first LGBT nursing home opened its doors and the winners of the 'For Diversity Against Discrimination' press award have been announced.

In this edition Michael Stuber kicks-off the new category "Personal Perspectives" that presents experiences and opinions on current issues. We invite you, our readers, to contribute and send us short articles. Moreover, we will from now on present short reviews of Diversity related books. We start with "Creative Destruction" by Tyler Cowen.

The editorial team of EMEA DiversityNews is curious about your thoughts and perspectives on Diversity and on our work. What could we improve, which topics have not yet been covered? We look forward to receiving your comments and suggestions by email: [newsdesk@european-diversity.com](mailto:newsdesk@european-diversity.com).

Enjoy reading EMEA DiversityNews 17!

The editorial team: Asli Weheliye, Felix Wittig and Michael Stuber

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## DIVERSITY DIMENSIONS

### New charter on the rights and responsibilities of Muslims within European society

On January 10, 2008 around 400 Muslim groups met in Brussels to sign a charter for the Muslims of Europe. This charter describes the rights and responsibilities of Muslims within the European society and is supposed to ameliorate the negative images of Islam and improve relations between Muslims and non-Muslims within Europe. "It describes how we should act as positive citizens in the societies in which we live and not be a threat," said Ibrahim Elzayat, a representative for the Federation of Islamic Organisations in Europe (FIOE).

European officials and politicians support the charter. "The charter amounts to a code of good conduct for Muslims in Europe which commits them to taking part in building a united society," said European Parliament vice-president Mario Mauro, responsible for relations between the parliament and religious groups. The charter is divided into 26 separate points which are aimed to disperse common myths and stereotypes about Islam. Furthermore certain terms such as 'jihad' are clarified in the document. "The term Jihad that occurs in Islamic texts means to exert all efforts towards good, starting from reforming oneself to spreading truth and justice between people," reads the document. It continues "Based on such an understanding of Jihad, Islam rejects violence and terrorism, supports just causes and affirms the right of all people to defend themselves by legitimate means."

### Europe's first LGBT nursing home opens in Berlin

In January this year Europe's first gay nursing home opened in Berlin. The groundbreaking project culminates years of planning, fund-raising and public campaigning. Berlin's mayor, Klaus Wowereit, has backed the project from its beginnings. The four-floor facility is built to accommodate 28 residents in its high-tech rooms with private bathrooms. The fourth floor is exclusively reserved for LGBT clients. Giving elderly gay people room to live in a safe and open-minded environment free from hate and discrimination is one important reason for the realisation of the project. "When you're old, the last thing that you want to do is to hide. And you certainly don't want to give up your identity and live in some hostile environment, possibly sharing a room with someone who despises you," said Christian Hamm, an architect and board member of the new nursing home. Many potential residents are already signing up or have expressed interest at the prospect of living out their twilight years in a gay-friendly environment. "I wouldn't like to be in a heterosexual environment all the time," one applicant said. "Elderly people like to talk about their children and their grandchildren, for instance. A large number of homosexuals do not have children and find it hard to join in. For us, talking about the grandkids is awkward."

## ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGIES

### RWE npower: Employer of choice for women

RWE npower is one of the UK's Top 50 employers for women, according to the latest list published by Aurora - a business women's diversity network. To make it into the Top 50 organisations have to prove themselves in five key areas, including the opportunities that they provide women; having progressive, transparent cultures and the ability to celebrate diversity.

RWE npower runs a diversity and inclusion programme to help retain and attract talented people. In 2006, diversity training was rolled out to 1,800 line managers and all 12,000 staff was given access to the subject. In addition, RWE npower promotes flexible working and runs a wellbeing programme to encourage employees to think about health management as part of their daily routine. Over 1,000 of their managers have also attended stress workshops, so that they can perform team-based risk assessments and assist any colleagues who may be suffering. Nick Smith, RWE npower's head of diversity and inclusion, commented: "We're delighted to make it into The Top 50 and its fantastic recognition of our work at all levels of the organisation to ensure equal opportunities for all." RWE npower is the only energy generation and supply company to appear in the UK's Top 50 employers list. Among other top employers for women were also companies like Cisco for best opportunities, Google for best progressiveness, CITI for its employees Diversity, Deloitte for best connectivity or McDonald's for best responsibility.

### Police trained against Discrimination in Czech Republic

Over 1,000 Czech police officers have been trained against discrimination by various NGO activists. The seminars were to narrow the gap between the world of the police and residents of socially excluded localities such as Romas. The anti-discrimination seminars have been held at all regional police offices in the Czech Republic since February 2007. Members of various parts of the police such as teachers, instructors and police men have been trained. The police corps wants to have not only its members able to understand and deal with people from various minorities without any problems, but also hire new members hailing directly from the minorities, said Interior Minister Ivan Langer. This is to be achieved by the project of the police academy in Holesov, called Police for Everyone. The first students of Romany, Vietnamese and Ukrainian ethnic origin will start the studies this September. Minister for Human Rights and Minorities, Dзамila Stehlikova, said the anti-discrimination schooling of the police and the support to policy academy students from ethnic minorities will have good influence on both groups. "A trained police officer can surmount the cultural barriers and establish respect for the system and men of the law and order among the people from excluded localities," Stehlikova said. Anti-discrimination issues will soon be part of basic training courses for all police employees.

## POLICY DEVELOPMENT

### Opening of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue

Europe is becoming more culturally diverse. The enlargement of the European Union, deregulation of employment laws and globalisation have increased the multicultural character of many countries. To celebrate this diversity and to foster intercultural dialogue the EU has launched the “European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (EYID) 2008”. It is supposed to encourage all those living in Europe to explore the benefits of Europe’s cultural heritage and opportunities to learn from different cultural traditions.

The year will feature a small number of flagship projects on a European level, as well as EU support for national projects in each Member State. Fifteen outstanding personalities from Europe's cultural scene, known as the 'Ambassadors' of the year, have been appointed to raise awareness of the importance and benefits of intercultural dialogue. Although there is an emphasis on activities within the Member States, Brussels will also be hosting some key events. Six big debates on such topics as migration, minorities, education, cultures and religions will be organised with Commissioners and well-known personalities. Concerts of orchestras subsidised by the EU are in preparation, as well as a youth event around the theme of inter-religious relations. To find out more visit: <http://www.interculturaldialogue2008.eu/>

### Diversity Toolkit for TV programmes

How can TV professionals better reflect cultural diversity on screen? This is the key question behind a “Diversity Toolkit for factual programmes in public service television”, published by FRA, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. The Toolkit seeks to equip TV professionals to promote the principles of cultural diversity across their services. It contains a wealth of information on how to promote the principles of cultural diversity in broadcast organisations and TV programmes. It brings together practical elements (checklists, references) and good practice advice that can be used, applied and learned from. The core of the Toolkit is a DVD with examples from news and current affairs programmes from a dozen European countries illustrating some of the difficulties facing journalists when they report on minorities. The Toolkit may be used for non-commercial purposes either by journalists and programme-makers in their daily work, or as a tool for training sessions and workshops.

It was developed by media professionals under the auspices of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU). They have exchanged experiences and produced joint programmes. The Diversity Toolkit brings together the collective knowledge of these TV professionals. The Toolkit is available free-of-charge from FRA [www.fra.europa.eu](http://www.fra.europa.eu).

## BUSINESS CASE

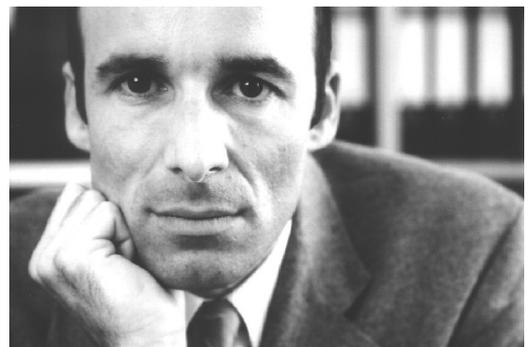
### Norwegian women break into the boardroom

From this year on Norwegian law requires publicly listed corporations to have at least 40 percent women on their boards of directors. The legislation was actually introduced in 2003, but gave companies five years to bring more women onto their boards with a January 1, 2008 deadline. According to the law, companies that failed to comply by the deadline would be forced to shut down their business. However not one of the companies actually had to close for non-compliance because the situation improved a lot since 2003. Currently almost 38% of board members are female, compared to 15.5% when the legislation was initially introduced. “This reform is a success. The most alarmist people told us the economy would suffer, that investors would flee Oslo, that the level of competence on the boards would plunge,” stated Marit Hoel, the chief of Norway's Centre for Corporate Diversity (CCD) in the AFP. “What we've seen is that the economy is doing very well, that the investors are still there, and that the women who have been appointed to the boards are more highly educated, more international and younger than their male counterparts, which creates a new dynamic.” Norway has also passed positive quotas to increase the number of women serving in the Parliament. As a result a Norway today rank 6th among the world's Parliaments with 37.9% women members. The United States Congress is far behind, on 65 with 16% female members.

## PERSONAL PERSPECTIVES

*Diversity experts spend a lot of time and energy educating their stakeholders about respect, and how important it is to accept and explore other opinions and approaches. Yet, how does the practice of the preachers look like? Are we actually able and willing to appreciate colleagues who clearly have different ideas about Diversity? As soon as different priorities and preferences become apparent, or different approaches or project partners are favoured, we tend to be affected by some of those dynamics that we officially criticise. Firstly, ‘even’ Diversity experts are human beings, which means that we also carry our package(s) of life, we also have emotions, and we also have likes and dislikes, which – we should admit – can get in the way of meritocracy. In addition, the Diversity journey for some people is a very personal involvement, which provides ample scope for sensitivities.*

*Another important component of our Diversity work is to find effective ways to change organisational cultures and systems. In order for us to be successful in this, we must play by some of the rules that strictly speaking should not be ours. Tactical power plays, behind the scenes networking, considering one's own personal advancement or benefit are some of the mechanisms only few of us can afford to ignore. For me, the essence of these considerations is the question about ethics and personal credibility. Diversity experts have to find*



*ways to be successful in environments that are not in best shape (yet), and they have to do this in ways that are effective and that do not blatantly violate their proclaimed standards. I think, especially in times when the Diversity job (and the business) is getting tougher, these issues need some of our attention. The least we can do is to remind ourselves of our own particularities every now and then, and to role model some of the values and behaviours we demand from others; such as respect, fairness, or exploring other perspectives.*

*We want to utilise this platform to encourage more exchange of personal perspectives. In fact, EMEA DiversityNews reaches out to a unparalleled group of international Diversity practitioners, and it covers a multitude of topics in an innovative way. Therefore, we invite those of you who want to share a particular experience or voice a personal opinion on a current issue, to contribute a short text such as this one. Given the nature of this newsletter, stories related to practical, organisational situations will be preferred. We will consider each article sent. However, we might suggest transforming some text into editorial content, and we reserve the right not to publish a text. Critical contributions will always be welcome.*

*Michael Stuber,*

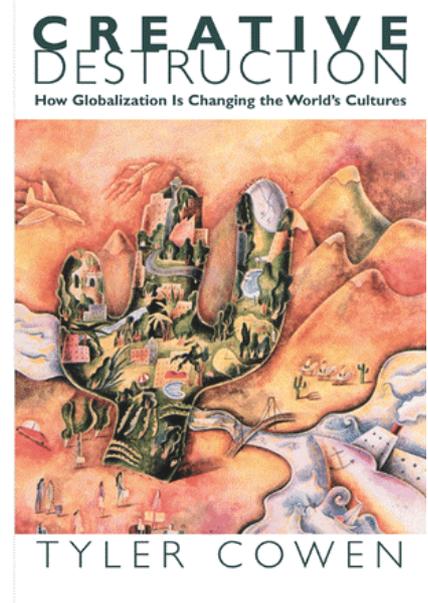
*Founder and Managing Director of European Diversity Research & Consulting*

## READING DIVERSITY

### Creative Destruction, by Tyler Cowen

*Although it is not a new book, we feel the readers of EMEA DiversityNews should know about it. Globalisation is probably one of the most important drivers of Diversity from a corporate (business) perspective. At the same time, it is a concept that is understood differently by different people, and provokes a variety of feelings accordingly. While managers see no alternative to reshaping organisations for global scope, critics are worried about the elimination of cultural specifics. Cowen's book deals with many aspects in between those extreme poles. He manages to acknowledge some of the criticism, but he adds a number of positive aspects from cultural, societal, and personal areas that have been all too often neglected in heated debates. The book is spot on relevant for Diversity practitioners, although not for practical purposes but as quintessential background information.*

*Cowen describes how 'cross-cultural exchange' has always changed local cultures (and economies), and that these changes usually took away something and added something else. He shows that this process often leads to more similarity on a macro level (e.g. countries becoming more alike if certain fast-food chains are available everywhere), but that the variety of choice, and often the welfare, increases locally. Several chapters provide detailed information on valuable, relevant examples of historic*



*transformation processes in societies and cultures around the world.*

*It is noteworthy that the author is an economist himself and that the book is a prime example for out-of-the-box thinking (or writing). Therefore, do not expect neither scientific discussions or references (although there is a couple of great sources mentioned!) nor expert tracts about culture. Cowen presents both an inside and outside perspective, (still) fresh ideas and numerous examples from around the globe that Diversity experts can't afford not to know. (ms)*

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## MISCELLANEOUS

### Portuguese journalist wins “For Diversity Against Discrimination” press award 2007

The first prize in this year's 'For Diversity. Against Discrimination' Journalist Award has been awarded to a Portuguese journalist writing about the discrimination faced by migrant workers in the Netherlands. The European Commission honoured those journalists who helped foster, through their writing, a better understanding of the benefits of diversity and who encouraged readers to consider more closely issues of discrimination and inequality. “These journalists have helped to bring to light stories which offer people across Europe an insight into some of the major issues facing our society today,” says Vladimír Špidla, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. The winning article, “Portugueses alimentam nova escravatura da Europa” [Portuguese contribute to a new kind of slavery], was written by the Portuguese journalist Maria do Céu Neves, who works for the newspaper *Diario de Noticias*. The article looks at the issue of discrimination in the labour market, particularly from the point of view of Portuguese and Polish migrant workers in the Netherlands. The second prize went to a French article “Discrimination: les solutions qui marchent” [Discrimination: Solutions that work] by Marie-Madeleine Péretie and Adeline Trégouët, published in *Courrier Cadres*. The article highlights the challenges job candidates throughout Europe have to face and criticises discriminatory recruitment practices.

### Pastries foster dialogue among cultures

This project is addressed to artists, confectioners, bakers, chefs and creatives, who are interested in the realisation of an artistic project which aims to promote the meeting and dialogue among cultures, through the distribution of new sweet recipes around the Mediterranean countries, made by the Love Difference confectioneries. The Love Difference Pastries represent a cultural passport that joins different cultures in the Mediterranean area and brings them closer, through the experience of taste. It will cross all the Mediterranean areas, activating through creativity, intercultural meetings increasing the value of difference. Love Difference launched an open-call to collect recipes and

creative activities, with the aim of constructing a Love Difference confectioneries network, i.e. places where differences will meet each other and will be tasted. The recipes should translate the idea of cohabitation among cultures, using different channels: ingredients, production and distribution techniques, food design, etc.. The products will be selected by a jury composed of personalities of the cultural and gastronomic world. The entries selected will be presented at the event 'Gelato e Dolci Love Difference come Passaporto culturale' (Love Difference Ice-cream and sweets as cultural passports) from February 22 until February 24, 2008 in La Spezia, Italy.

## IMPRINT

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