

## EMEA DIVERSITY NEWS 18

February 2008  
Editorial

Dear Readers:

On 8 March 2008 women around the globe will celebrate the International Women's Day (IWD). Women of all continents, often divided by national boundaries and by ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic and political differences, come together to commemorate their achievements, as they can look back to a tradition that represents at least nine decades of struggle for equality, justice, peace and development. The IWD was established in 1909 in the USA. Since then women and other supporters take the time on this special day to reflect on progress made, to call for change and to celebrate acts of courage and determination by ordinary women who have played an extraordinary role in the history of women's rights. Many women groups and associations as well as big companies support this special day with events and award ceremonies across the world. On the website [www.internationalwomensday.com](http://www.internationalwomensday.com) hosted by the global women's organization Aurora interested persons can check for local events in their area.

In this month's issue of EMEA DiversityNews, we explore various facets of diversity and developments: two recent studies prove the benefits of Managing Diversity and Dell Ireland was awarded for its Diversity program. In Brussels the European Commission published the results of the latest Eurobarometer survey on cultural and ethnic diversity and European Commissioner Ján Figel announced the launch of a study on the role of culture on creativity. In UK an Indian wins a discrimination case against Honda and the European Court of Human Rights decided that LGBT individuals are eligible to adopt children in the EU.

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 18!

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

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## DIVERSITY DIMENSIONS

### Black Berry Women Technology Awards 2008

With its women technology awards Black Berry celebrates for the third time the achievements of women using technology, both within and beyond the IT sector, to bring their outstanding contributions to business and beyond via the use of technology into the public eye. The awards look to honour the individual (or company) that has achieved success and competitive advantage through innovation, management and return on investment via technology. Black Berry wants to profile and celebrate outstanding women who are playing a central part and who are an inspiration to many other women. Charmaine Eggberry, VP and Managing Director EMEA at RIM (the makers of Black Berry), states: "I believe there are many modern muses in the technology sector today that can inspire a new generation of women who may be considering a career in technology."

On May 8, 2008 successful women will be awarded in 8 categories, such as "Best Use of Technology by a Woman within the Corporate Sector", "Best Use of Technology by Under 30 Year Old Woman", "Best Female Mentor", or "Best Woman in Technology (Public Sector and Academia)". The award evening will honour the achievements of women and showcase their inspirational stories.

### Indian wins racism case against Honda

Car giant 'Honda' has been ordered to pay 64,000 British pounds to an Indian worker who was forced to quit after suffering racial abuse at work. Kalmesh Shah, who worked at a Honda factory for nearly two years, was allegedly moved randomly between production line jobs without training, bullied and refused toilet breaks by his supervisor, reports 'The Financial Express'. His poor treatment led to severe physical and mental health problems which forced him to quit. Shah sued Honda for racial discrimination. Despite an attempt by managers to falsify documents and training records in a bid to dispute his claims the tribunal finally ruled in his favour. "This was never about the money; it was about standing up to a company that treated me like a third-class citizen because of my race. I was persecuted for speaking out and blowing the whistle," Shah told reporters. He was awarded around 64,000 pounds, including 15,000 pounds for injury to his feelings, 10,000 pounds for psychiatric damage, 18,496.21 pounds for loss of earnings since he resigned, two-and-half years future loss of earnings of 28,356 plus interest. A Honda spokeswoman said: "We have accepted the findings of the Employment Tribunal, some nine months ago, and consider this case to be a very unfortunate 'one-off' and deeply regret the offence to Shah caused by an individual associate." The tribunal hearing, held in Bristol in June last year, gave its final ruling in October, but has only recently awarded the financial settlement. The tribunal ruled: "We consider that there is evidence of a 'cover-up' on the shop floor, of the fact that untrained employees were being used to avoid having to stop the line."

## ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGIES

### Dell Ireland awarded for its Diversity Strategy

Dell has been recognised for its commitment to promoting and celebrating diversity in the workplace by Chambers Ireland in the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All. The IT Company received the award with a special mention for the work the company has achieved in flexible working and gender. Organisations competing for the awards programme were required to display how they played their part in the community by helping overcome some of the social challenges faced in today's modern Irish workplace.

“Diversity at Dell is not just a distant, corporate goal; rather it is an ingrained part of the culture of the organisation,” said Ciara Lynch, Dell Ireland Corporate Communications Manager. “When people think of diversity, they usually think of race, gender, different or cultures. At Dell, diversity is defined in its broadest sense, including differences such as communication style, leadership style, thought style, skill set and cultural influences. Diversity is an essential element of Dell's corporate values and ethos.” Some of the companies' diversity measures include its approach to a barrier-free workplace, actively hiring and retaining both women and non-nationals and an effective work-life balance program.

### Diversity management stops at senior management

A new survey by the Association of Executive Search Consultants (AESC) shows that in spite of corporate promises to promote diversity in senior management, very little progress has been made so far. According to the AESC's BlueSteps 2007 Diversity Report, 76% of 357 global senior executives report their companies have one or no minorities among their top executives, and 56% say their employers have one or no women among their top executives. This lack of diversity at the top exists despite the fact that 54% of the respondents indicated their companies have an official “diversity in the workplace” policy already in place.

A similar survey was conducted for the June 2005 BlueSteps Diversity Report. A comparison of 2005 and 2007 survey results finds a slight decline - from 59% to 54% - in the percentage of respondents reporting that their companies currently have an official diversity policy in place. On a regional level, the majority of executives from North America and Asia Pacific, 61% and 50% respectively, say their companies have official diversity policies, while the majority of European executives (54%) said they do not. This lack of progress suggests the entrenchment of the “good ole boys club” and business as usual, writes the Business Week Europe. The key question for the future of diversity will be for companies to come up with alternative recruiting and promoting strategies - especially for senior corporate management positions.

## POLICY DEVELOPMENT

### Developing anti-discrimination law in Europe: The 25 member states compared

A review of the transposition of the EC Racial Equality and the Employment Equality directives in the national law of 25 EU Member States was published by the Migration Policy group in late 2007. In many European countries anti-discrimination legislation was reviewed and changed during the last couple of years. This major and unprecedented operation was set in motion with the adoption of two pieces of European legislation in 2000, namely the Racial Equality Directive and the Employment Equality Directive. How these Directives were transposed into national law of the 25 Member States is described in a series of country reports prepared by the European Network of Legal Experts in the non-discrimination field. The reports were written by independent national experts in each Member State. Member States were also given an opportunity to comment on the final drafts of which they made minimal use. The 25 reports cover the many changes to national law, the putting in place of enforcement mechanisms and the adoption of other measures. This comparative analysis compares the information set out in these country reports in a format mirroring that of the country reports themselves and draws some conclusions from the information contained in them. You can download the report [here](#).

### Judgment: LGBT individuals are eligible to adopt children in the EU

The European Court of Human Rights delivered its judgement in a case of a lesbian woman v. France and said that exclusion of individuals from the application process for adoption of children simply because of their sexual orientation is discriminatory and is in breach of the European Convention of Human Rights. Ms. E.B., a lesbian nursery teacher, applied for approval as a possible adoptive parent already in February 1998, but her application was rejected, essentially because of her sexual orientation. In June 2002, the highest administrative court in France still upheld the rejection of her application. In 2002 in the very similar case, the European Court of Human Rights ruled by 4 votes to 3 that the exclusion of a gay man from the application process for adoption of children, because of his sexual orientation, did not violate Convention. Patricia Prendiville, Executive Director of ILGA-Europe, commented the verdict: "We welcome the judgement of the European Court of Human Rights. This is a significant change in the Court's approach towards and interpretation of the rights of LGBT people under the European Convention on Human Rights. The Court firmly established a principle that administrative officials cannot discriminate against an individual on the basis of her/his sexual orientation in the process of applying to adopt a child."

## BUSINESS CASE

### HR in Europe – Managing demographics is critical challenge

The Boston Consulting Group (BCG) and the European Association for Personnel Management have conducted a survey on the future key challenges for Human Resource Management in Europe. 1,350 executives in 27 EU countries were interviewed on the most critical HR challenges in the future. According to the outcomes of the survey companies will face the following 5 critical HR challenges in the near future: Managing talent, managing demographics, becoming a learning organization, managing work-life balance, and managing change and cultural transformation.

Managing demographics, for example, was the top future HR issue in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, where 250 executives participated. “Corporate executives in Europe generally agreed that they have a demographic problem and that they have not yet devised strategies to fully combat it,” says Rainer Strack, a BCG partner and managing director based in Dusseldorf. With the workforce in Western Europe becoming older, European companies must mitigate two different risks: the loss of capacity and knowledge as workers retire and the loss of productivity as the workforce ages. Other Diversity aspects, such as Managing Work-Life Balance and Managing Change and Cultural Transformation were also crucial since the boundaries between private and work life blur and companies will hire workers from around the globe and enter new markets with increasing speed. Overall the general assertion on Managing Diversity in Europe is quite positive as most interviewees consider it an important asset to stay competitive in a globalised world. You can download the executive summary [here](#).

### Cultural Diversity as competitive advantage in Germany

Cultural Diversity in companies is an economic advantage according to the latest outcomes of the practice survey “Synergy by Diversity. Real Life Examples of Cultural Diversity in Corporations” which was presented by the Bertelsmann Foundation in February, 2008. If cultural Diversity is applied strategically, companies can raise their total revenue or boost their market share by addressing diverse customer needs. In collaboration with well-known companies from a wide variety of industries, the Bertelsmann Foundation has compiled a list of examples in which cultural diversity has resulted in an economic advantage. Thirteen companies report on their experiences, successes and challenges in the field of cultural diversity management. The examples show that sustainable profitability is possible while recognizing Diversity as a vital source, challenge and competitive advantage. This publication describes areas in which cultural diversity plays a role in large German companies, from the perspective of both individuals and organizations. It describes how companies approach cultural diversity and the benefits they derive from it. You can download the survey [here](#).

## MEDIA & BITS

### European-wide Action Week against Racism in March

During the annual European-wide Action Week, which centres around 21 March, thousands of people actively engage themselves for respect and equal rights and celebrate the diversity of Europe. This year once again hundreds of activities will take place all around Europe, organised by a wide variety of organisations. Activities range from intercultural youth festivals to cleaning the walls of racist slogans, or multicultural football matches.

All organisations, large and small, can contribute in their own way to the Action Week. It is not important for an effective action to have lots of financial resources since it is more the creativity and originality of the ideas that count. The European campaign aims to raise awareness in all relevant sectors of society. Its three main targets are the media, youth and the general public. The week aims to initiate national and international projects and campaigns while highlighting the issues of racism from a non-governmental perspective on all levels. The European-wide action week and its campaigns are organised by UNITED for Intercultural Action, the European network against nationalism, racism, fascism and in support of migrants and refugees.

### Results of the Eurobarometer survey on cultural and ethnic Diversity

Three in four EU citizens welcome the dialogue with other cultures according to the latest Eurobarometer on cultural and ethnic Diversity commissioned by the European Commission in 2007. Almost three quarters of EU citizens (72%) believe that people with a different background (ethnic, religious or national) enrich the cultural life of their country, while a quarter (23%) of citizens disagrees with that idea. Respondents were asked about the patterns of their interaction with people of different cultures, about their general attitude towards cultural diversity and, specifically, about the upcoming European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008.

The most important results of the survey can be grouped together into categories such as Day-to-day interaction among people belonging to different cultures as a reality in Europe, positive benefits of intercultural dialogue, meanings to the expression “Intercultural dialogue in Europe” and general interest for the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. Overall the results were positive, stating that a large majority of EU citizens believe that intercultural dialogue and people with a different background (ethnic, religious or national) enrich the cultural life of their country.

More information can be found here: [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm)

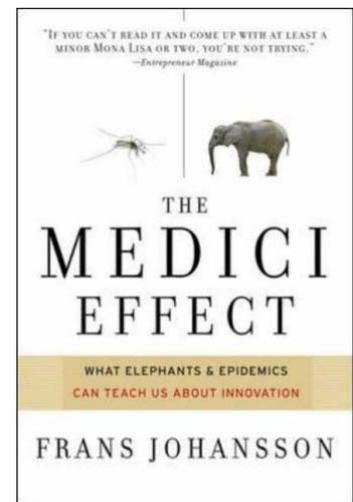
## READING DIVERSITY

### The Medici Effect, by Frans Johansson

*The connection of innovation and diversity appears to be obvious to some extent: You need significantly different perspectives and skills in order to create something groundbreaking. If only experts from a field work together, invention (or enhancement) will be the result, but no sought-after leap forward. Consequently, Frans Johansson's book, The Medici Effect, has been hyped in corporate and Diversity contexts for a while. Especially when you have followed one of the author's inspirational talks, you can't wait to read the book and find out more about how innovation happens or can be generated. But then, in order to set your expectations right, consider the following: Johansson is portrayed as an entrepreneur and journalist, and the book is described to focus less on a corporate setting than on self-starting and individual achievements.*

*No doubt, the book itself is an innovation as it offers new perspectives to explore creativity, and it combines a number of established facts or more-or-less-known examples in an inspiring way. However, Johansson does all this in a journalistic manner: He profiles fascinating people, and points to connections few people might have thought about before. And he does it in an entrepreneurial way: The (profitable) extend to which he combines publishing (it's available in several languages), presenting (his talks are legendary) and consulting is rare outside strategy and marketing. Just like a good journalist, the author had spoken to many people, and collected a multitude of views and a wealth of personal stories. Those stories, combined with the creative way of linking and commenting them, are the big plus of the book. Johansson illustrates in a powerful way, that the key to innovation is combining concepts from previously unrelated areas (in what he calls intersections), create large numbers of possible solutions (and being ready to see some fail), and to take risks (even against established ideas in one's networks) actually executing new concepts. While the book offers great ideas about how to look at the creative process (other books do that in different ways), it offers very little help as to how the innovation process can actually be managed. Notions like "explosion of ideas" or the "Medici effect" itself sound way to romantic in order to actually work in organisational contexts, where power issues and politics and many other influences determine if, where and how change happens.*

*If you take Managing Diversity & Inclusion as an innovation that is happening at the intersection of corporate management, personal values, political systems and societal change, you can easily see many of the dynamics described in 'The Medici Effect'. Implementing Diversity programmes requires to use a number of methodologies from change management (overcoming resistance) and from innovation management (using promoters of power and others). If you combine the inspirational strength of this book with some robust models and some solid tools, you can make a big difference! (ms)*



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## MISCELLANEOUS

### European Commission about to investigate the impact of culture on creativity

In January European Commissioner Ján Figel' announced the launch of a study on the role of culture, and the EU's cultural industries, in promoting and stimulating creativity, innovation and growth in the EU. "Innovation and creativity are fundamental to the process of economic growth," Mr. Figel' told the representatives, "and they also boost social development. In our increasingly competitive, globalizing world, policy makers in the Member States and the EU need to develop better, 'tailor-made' policies for the creative industries so that they can contribute their full potential to boosting Europe's long-term economic growth." The study will get underway in February to investigate the circumstances that effectively contribute to stimulating creativity in the EU. It will also focus on ways to further explore and promote the specific role of culture in fostering creativity. This study is also supposed to help identify the type of actions that should be implemented during the forthcoming "European Year of Creativity and Innovation through Education and Culture" in 2009. Additionally the Commissioner announced the creation of a group of experts from Member States and a group with civil society organisations, whose tasks will be to focus on unleashing the full potential of the cultural and creative industries, especially in small and medium sized enterprises, to help achieve the aims of the EU's Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs.

### Discrimination case in Sweden: Lesbian was refused the purchase of a dog

A Stockholm court ruling decided that homosexual citizens cannot be prevented from purchasing dogs in Sweden. The court confirmed an earlier district verdict in favour of a lesbian who had sought damages from a dog breeder who refused to sell her a puppy because of her sexual preference. The dog owner has to pay the woman 20,000 kronor (\$3,000) in damages for subjecting her to discrimination and harassment and around 45,000 kronor in legal fees. The incident began when the woman called the breeder to inquire about an advertisement for a puppy. The woman told the dog breeder, who is also a woman that she liked animals and that she and her partner would have plenty of time to care for the dog since they were both students. But when the breeder got to know that the woman's partner was also a woman, she put a stop to the sale. In her explanation for denying the woman her dog, the dog owner made reference to earlier contacts she had had with transvestite couples, saying she had read that transvestites are connected to animal pornography. She made it clear to the woman that she would not be allowed to buy the puppy because she didn't trust homosexuals. The woman reported the incident to the Ombudsman against Discrimination on grounds of Sexual Orientation (HomO), which recommended the case to the courts.

## IMPRINT

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