

“Verifying (Equal) Opportunities Right Away – Diversity Mainstreaming for Public Authorities” Project

– Outline –

The Laender and the municipalities play a central role in implementing protection against discrimination – both in their capacity as employers and as service providers for a heterogeneous population. They have an important function in society as role models and are – in their capacity as employers – legally bound to avert discrimination based on the characteristics stipulated in the General Equal Treatment Act.

The project under discussion aimed to support the administrations of the Laender and the municipalities in optimally implementing provisions related to protection against discrimination and in creating equality. To this end, *experience* with existing equal opportunity measures, as well as perspectives for further development in the spirit of Diversity Mainstreaming, were collected and analysed by conducting **field research in the partner administrations participating in the project**. In addition, an intensive *discussion* of needs, advantages, and possible solutions for equality across target-group was conducted in the course of **two project workshops**. Selected administrative employees working in the areas of personnel or interest groups, as well as those doing specialised work on the individual dimensions of diversity (for example equal opportunities commissioners and commissioners for the disabled, heads of directorates-general and divisions in the areas of integration, equality of LGBTI individuals or demographic change) all had the opportunity to take part in an *exchange of experience* as well as in *networking* (‘characteristics’ networking or networking across target groups).

The key result of the project is a **Handout for Administrative Employees** on how diversity processes can be initiated in and by administrations. It was based on the findings and insights gained through the project. The Handout for Administrative Employees provides background knowledge on diversity in the context of administrations and identifies challenges and possible solutions for implementation in practice as well as concrete recommendations. Additional results include a **project report** that documents the project itself and its results, as well as **two thematic publications** on the topics: “Diversity Mainstreaming in and through Institutions of the Public Administration. Selected examples of good practice from European Member States” and “‘Equal Opportunity’ as a ‘Quality Aspect’ in the Work of Public Administrations: A Guide to Equality Rights – Different Interests – Satisfactory Benchmarks – Tailor-made Solutions”.

The project arrived at the following **conclusions**:

- Administrations have **many measures with which they can achieve equality but (so far) no comprehensive Diversity Mainstreaming**: various measures target individual or a few dimensions of diversity but are not directed towards all characteristics simultaneously. → *Awareness-building is necessary in order to enable measures to reach across target groups in the future.*
- **There is a need for networking and closer co-operation**: both across areas and characteristics as well as between the strategic and the operative levels of administration. → *The advantages of networking among administrative employees as well as networking with interest groups (as with the dovetailing of measures) must be highlighted and possibilities for networking and co-operation created.*
- **Knowledge of the possibilities for action** open to administrations **in respect of equality and diversity varies considerably; similarly, there is a paucity of information on**: life situations, discrimination and the needs of target groups. → *There is a need for knowledge transfer and awareness-building with respect to diversity in the context of administrations at all levels. Particularly training in the creation of diversity skills is essential.*
- **Substantial and diverse forms of resistance and challenges** often **emerge in the implementation** of equality and diversity. → *This experience can be used productively in planning future diversity processes; however, to this end, possibilities for analysis and the exchange of experience will be necessary.*
- **Administrations already have numerous possibilities for promoting diversity at their disposal**. → *These possibilities for action must be made (more) public and put to greater use.*

Conclusion and outlook: Thanks to the project, it was possible to inform administrative employees about diversity and, to some degree, increase their awareness of the opportunities and advantages of an approach that works across target groups. Moreover, discussion processes were triggered inside of and among authorities whereby those involved in the project judged the exchange of experience to be useful and highly fruitful. *It is now possible to build on these reflection and discussion processes as well as on the identified needs and possibilities for action.* Not least, especially in the collaborating partner authorities, participation in the project has led to *increased publicity for topics such as protection against discrimination and diversity* – an outcome that was considered beneficial for current and future work on the topic.

The subject of Diversity Mainstreaming is a relatively new one for administrative authorities. Since, in the course of this one-year project, a number of questions have been developed further or have resurfaced, *the network-building and exchange of experience that has been initiated is to be continued.*

The envisaged **follow-up activities** include: a survey on the Handout for Administrative Employees – aimed at evaluating its impact and identifying additional needs – as well as a follow-up workshop as a means of continuing the exchange of experience and jointly developing additional answers to practice issues.

More information on the project, as well as the project-related publications - available [here](#), only in German language.

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