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Diversity Management as a Responsible Way of Searching for Job Candidates – Case Study of Big Companies that Signed Diversity Chart in Poland

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Abstract: The aim of the paper is to analyse the usage of diversity management in the recruitment process in companies operating in Poland, which signed Diversity Charter (DC) document. The main emphasis is put on three most important aspects of diversity: gender, age and disability, as they are the leading barriers for hiring employees in Poland. In order to achieve this goal, the following objectives has been set: (1) to identify elements of job offers that are opened for diversity, (2) to analyse job offers of big companies which signed DC in terms of using the elements opened for diversity (3) to discuss diversity management issues in the recruitment process of Polish companies. The case study analysis is a research method applied in the paper. The investigation is based on the content of job offers to be found in different platforms designed for recruitment as well as on the companies' websites and the opinions of experts expressed in non-standardized interviews. The results of the research indicate that the majority of companies follow with the principles of diversity management, as they have declared. However, many of them should improve their communication related to diversity issues. It is worth emphasizing that companies should more carefully create descriptions of job offers. What is more, there is much to be done in the context of caring for people with disabilities during recruitment.

Keywords: diversity management, recruitment, job offer, recruitment opened for diversity, responsible way for recruitment.

1. Introduction

Recruitment is a basic process of finding and attracting candidates for vacancies in the organisation (Oleksyn, 2014, p. 256), and also – a way of communicating the organisational culture (Oleksyn, 2014, p. 487). The process should be planned in order to enhance suitable candidates for the position as well as to eliminate those who do not comply with requirements set by the employer (Król and Ludwicyński, 2006, p. 198). The Economist Intelligence Unit's survey in 2013 showed that 79.0% of respondents claim that diverse teams can produce better and more creative ideas because of synergy among contrasting approaches (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2014, p. 6). Also measurements carried by PwC in 2014 show that diverse teams within the organisation generate 3.7% more income to the company than non-diverse teams. Too homogeneous groups of employees have a greater tendency to the schematic way of thinking and acting. So one can ask: why companies do not follow the idea of recruitment opened for diversity in order to enhance their productivity? Employees coming from different environments and cultures have different experiences, as well as diverse knowledge which the company can benefit from (Forum Odpowiedzialnego Biznesu, 2013, p. 4).

The aim of the paper is to analyse the usage of diversity management in the recruitment process in companies operating in Poland, which signed Diversity Charter document. Only big companies were analysed due to the fact that in a given period of time when the research was conducted, none of SMEs, NGOs and public administration entities which signed Diversity Charter document searched for candidates. This situation made it impossible to take those entities into account in the study.

In order to achieve this goal, the following objectives has been set: (1) to identify elements of job offers that are opened for diversity, (2) to analyse job offers of companies which signed DC in terms of using the elements opened for diversity (3) to discuss diversity management issues in the recruitment process of Polish companies. The investigation is based on the content of job offers to be found in different platforms designed for recruitment as well as on companies' websites and the opinions of experts expressed in non-standardized interviews.

The structure of a paper contains discussion about Diversity Management in Poland, as well as information about Diversity Chart initiative.

Subsequently the elements of job offers opened for diversity are presented with the main research and conclusions and suggestions concerning further research at the end of the paper.

2. Diversity Management in Poland

Diversity is the set of features visible and invisible, which differentiate society, including workers (Bodzhansky, 1979, pp. 24–28). Undoubtedly features that are immediately recognisable are gender, age and skin colour. However, they do not cover all the possible differences existing between employees. In Diversity Wheel Model created by Loden, an expert in the area of diversity management, there are 2 types of diversity dimensions highlighted: basic dimensions (primary dimensions) and supplementary dimensions (secondary dimensions), represented in Figure 1.

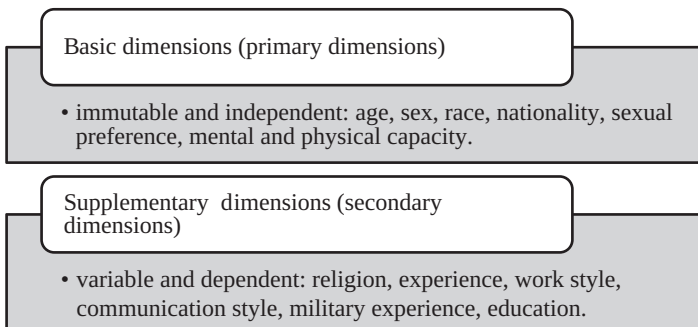


Figure 1. Diversity Wheel Model

Source: elaboration based on Loden (1996), *Implementing Diversity*, McGraw-Hill Companies, Burr Ridge, IL.

Polish Responsible Forum, the coordinator of DC in Poland claims that diversity management means to identify the different dimensions of diversity that are relevant to the organisation and create a work environment in which employees would be able to fully utilize their diverse skills to implement the company’s mission (Forum Odpowiedzialnego Biznesu, 2009, pp. 6–8). Diversity management can also refer to the “voluntary organisational actions that are designed to create greater inclusion of employees from various backgrounds into the formal and informal organisational structures through deliberate policies and programs” (Barak, 2012, p. 235). In homogenous groups it is more difficult

to create ideas and solutions that go beyond current practices and shape a new quality of products or services. Innovation is the result of clashes of different, often extremely unusual views and approaches.

According to Sznajder (2013, p. 6), diversity management is a strategy of personnel management which claims that diversity is a key asset of the organisation contributing to its growth and business goals achievement. As people differ in many aspects, it reflects in their motivation, the way they work, the way they communicate and also – the way they build relations with others (Ephraim and Melvin, 2012, p. 58). Diversity management relies on perceiving and accepting those differences and building on it their competitive advantage. It is also important that diversity management means much more than non-discrimination. This is about going a step further – set the assumption that diversity in the organisation can be a value in itself (Wojsławowicz, 2014, p. 1). Diversity is a natural phenomenon (Dobzhansky, 1979, p. 25) and it often means a good climate for doing business, more attractive workplace and also more innovation (Hunt, Layton and Prince, 2014, p. 12) and effectiveness in a company (Saxena, 2014, p. 83). Likewise the recruitment is a process characterized by flexibility, where the elements of diversity policy can be provided easily and almost at no cost (Rydzewska, 2014, p. 92).

One of the main areas of diversity management in Poland is still an issue of gender. Although women in Poland are more educated population, the employment rate of women remains low: in 2014–56.6% (Eurostat, 2015), with the employment rate of men the same time – 69.3% (Eurostat, 2015). It is estimated that women earn approximately 19% less than men (Hajec, 2016) and have limited access to training and promotion. The situation of women on the Polish labour market is largely determined by the division of parental roles and stereotypes. Employers believe women generate higher costs for the organisation, often take exemptions and because of household responsibilities, they are not fulfilling their professional duties.

Another challenge for Polish organisations connected to diversity is the age and the issue of employment people over fifty or fifty or five years old. Poland has one of the lowest labour participation rate of people 55–64 among the EU members: in 2014–42.5% (Eurostat, 2014). Taking into account the lengthening lifetime of Polish society, as well as growth in emigration among young people, actions leading to activation of people 55+ are needed. In the process of professional activation people 55+ a major role is played by the employer – the company can involve

mature workers to a training program in order to create flexible forms of employment as well as enable them to work part-time. These actions will enable companies to benefit from the potential of employees in their fifties, whose biggest assets are experience and knowledge, often gained over many years of professional work. Mature workers can support the organisation as mentors or teachers and assist younger colleagues with their know-how (Wojnicki, 2014, p. 43). Workers over 55 years old are also more stable and loyal to the employer, which means by hiring them, the company can save money on constant induction of new employees (Walczak, 2011).

In Poland, a third very important area of diversity is the issue of people with disabilities. In 2014, there were 3.27 million of disabled people of the age of working in Poland 10,6% of the population in this age, of which employment had only 17.4% (CSO, 2015, p. 109). For employers people with disabilities are an enormous potential. The employment of people with disabilities is associated with financial benefits – employers may receive grants for disabled worker's salary or reimbursement of costs of equipping the workplace. Inclusion of people with disabilities in the recruitment process of candidates increases the chances of the company to attract talented employees. In recent years the activity of people with disabilities who are increasingly engaged in social life, has increased significantly. They are present at universities and the labour market, and also they are often highly qualified. Moreover, hiring people with disabilities and using their experience create the opportunity to expand the company's offer of innovative services or products for this group of people. The presence of disabled workers in the company sometimes requires adequate preparation, such as breaking down barriers (physically and mentally) and stereotypes among employees. Hiring people with disabilities is strongly connected to adjusting company's infrastructure to the needs of disabled people. Depending on the degree of disability, adaptation of the work incurs greater or lesser cost, but every company hiring a person with a disability for at least 36 months can obtain a refund of the costs incurred by PFRON (Olszowska, 2014).

Three issues mentioned above are considered to be the biggest issues of diversity management in Poland recently. To reduce barriers of employment of people from groups with a high risk of social exclusion, an initiative of Diversity Charter has been taken.

3. Diversity Charter initiative

The Diversity Charter is a document that can be signed by any organisation (e.g. company, non-governmental organisation, public sector entity) with a written commitment of wishing to ban discrimination in the workplace and making a decision to work towards creating diversity. It expresses an organisation willingness to improve the level of workforce diversity in the society (European Commission Justice, 2012, p. 6). It is an international initiative, implemented in European Union countries, such as France, Spain, Italy, Austria, Germany, Poland, Sweden, Belgium, Ireland, Finland, Estonia and Luxembourg, promoted by the European Commission. The idea for the Diversity Charter appeared in January 2004 in a report issued by the Montaigne Institute (French think tank). An initiative to create a Polish version of the Diversity Charter was established during a meeting of representatives of companies with French capital in May 2011. Inauguration of the Polish version of the Diversity Charter took place on 14 February 2012. The content of the Polish version of the Diversity Charter has been developed through consultation with representatives and female representatives of organisations representing the interests of different social groups exposed to discrimination, public administration and business. The content of the Diversity Charter in Poland is included in Appendix 1 to this paper.

Signing of the Diversity Charter in Poland is voluntary and free of charge. Currently (as of 29 August 2015) there are 117 companies as DC signatories in Poland, which structure is presented in Table 1.

The number of companies that initially (in February, 2012) signed the Charter in Poland was 15 and it was the biggest number of companies that joined DC at the same time. From that moment, year after year the number of companies has been growing rapidly. The cumulative number of companies in Poland that have signed the Diversity Charter from the beginning of the program to 29 August 2015 is presented in Figure 2.

The interest in the DC document is very high among large companies, as well as small, medium-sized and NGOs. Also worth mentioning is the fact that several times companies were removed from the Diversity Charter signatories list because of not meeting the standards of the program. Unfortunately, reports about the exclusion of companies are not made public.

Table 1. Structure of Diversity Charter signatories in Poland (as of 29 August 2015)

Category:	Number of signatories:
Big companies (more than 250 employees)	55
SMEs (10 to 249 employees)	27
Non-governmental organisations	20
Micro-enterprises (less than 10 employees)	12
Public entities	2
Other (organisations not listed above, e.g. private universities)	1
TOTAL:	117

Source: own elaboration based on Diversity Charter in Poland (<http://kartaroznorodnosc.pl>, access date 29 August 2015).

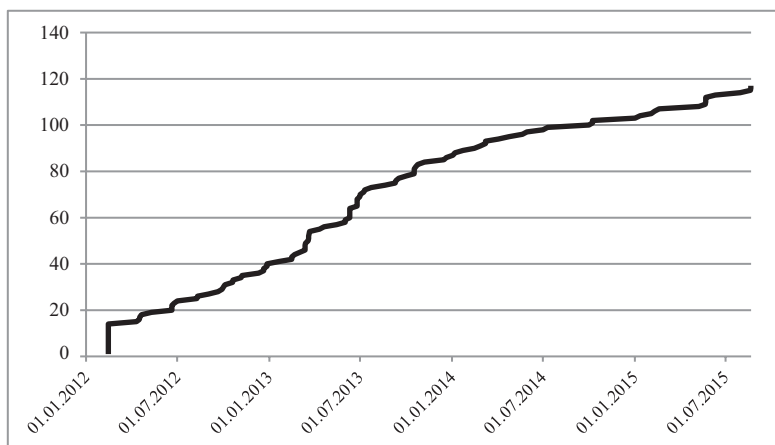


Figure 2. The cumulative number of companies in Poland that have signed the Diversity Charter from the beginning of the program to 29 August 2015

Source: own elaboration based on Diversity Charter in Poland (<http://kartaroznorodnosc.pl>, access date 29 August 2015).

It is worth emphasising that the recruitment process is a very important field from the point of view of the implementation of diversity policies. Of all six areas of diversity management analysed in the research of Diversity Index, the area of recruitment performed the worst (Lisowska and Sznajder, 2014, p. 43). As the Diversity Chart includes the commitment of “developing and implementing equal rights and diversity management policies in the workplace, with special emphasis placed on recruitment”, at any stage of recruitment process can be no question of discrimination.

The most common example of good case practice in this area is to formalise the process and to develop standards related to the content of job advertisements. The elements of job description that can be opened for diversity are mainly those, in which usually appear discriminatory issues. These are: name position (very often suggesting sex), a description of the required skills and competencies and responsibilities, in which, especially in Polish language, there are endings that suggest sex. Those elements were analysed as well as any other content of job announcement that could suggest discrimination.

4. Method of study

The data for the study were collected between 6 July 2015 and 4 September 2015 by analysing job offers of big companies which signed the Diversity Charter in Poland that were published on company websites or on specialised recruitment portals in Poland, such as: Pracuj.pl, Infopraca.pl and Praca.money.pl. The analysis covered also the content of the companies' websites in the section of career or recruitment, including graphics – if were used and contained requirements regarding the qualifications of the candidate and the scope of activities in a given position – mid-level employees and professionals. The number of analysed companies is 47 out of 55 because of elimination of the work agencies job offers' description that were prepared by other companies (the agencies were rejected if they did not recruit employees to their headquarters) and also there were companies not having recruitment processes at the time of research. The number of analysed job offers is 93.

Results of the analysis were compared and contrasted with the opinions of business experts in the field of recruitment, persons cooperating

with the disabled and people involved in corporate social responsibility initiatives. The experts contributing to the study were:

- Karolina Kłosowska, Lead Recruiter CEE, SEE & NEE at Discovery Networks International, Poland;
- Joanna Walczak, Recruitment and Personnel Development Specialist at NEUCA S.A., Poland;
- Joanna Turkiewicz, Member of the Board of WE Patients Foundation, Poland;
- Maria Luiza Ziólkowska, Marketing Coordinator at Electrolux, Sweden, Former Responsible Business Forum Ambassador;
- Ewa Leśnowolska, Diversity Charter Coordinator at Responsible Business Forum, Poland.

The experts were asked about their opinions related to the following aspects of diversity management: identifying gender or age in job announcements, assessing discrimination of employees on the basis of the content of job offers and encouraging to apply those groups that are vulnerable to discrimination, for example the disabled or at mature age.

5. Research

The research was based on analysis of job offers of big companies which signed the Diversity Charter in Poland that were published on company websites or on specialised recruitment portals in Poland. Moreover, the content of companies' websites in the section of career or recruitment was analysed. The following elements of job offers were researched: a job title, main responsibilities of a candidate, facilities offered by the company and other records that were included into job offers. The content of websites was analysed in the section of career or recruitment, work/jobs or other section connected with recruitment as well as with personal and professional development or HR policy of the company. Research also included graphics and pictures if were used together with a concrete job offer (graphics and pictures generally on companies' website were not analysed).

It is interesting that more than 10% of job offers published by companies after signing the Diversity Charter document still use discriminatory descriptions in job announcements. All of those were discriminating women. The structure of descriptions used is presented in Figure 3.

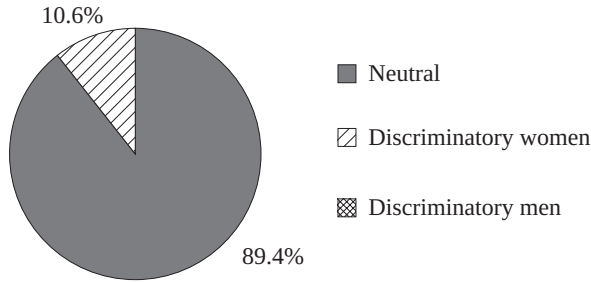


Figure 3. The structure of neutral and discriminative descriptions in job offers
Source: own study.

What is important to emphasize, companies using descriptions in job offers are not consistent in their actions. It happened many times that having a few job advertisements, some of them were neutral or even underlining the desire of employment of a woman or a man – part of the job advertisements by the same company still had the male end. In this study considered was the occurrence of a single-discriminatory description even if the company also published neutral job advertisements. It is hard to decide whether this is an oversight or intentional action of companies. K. Kłosowska, an expert in recruitment processes argues that companies sometimes do not pay much attention to the content of announcements or maybe not all of their employees are familiar with the policy of diversity management within the company and for this reason they publish careless job announcements. Big companies, especially those which have signed the Diversity Charter document, should not have any discriminative descriptions. Also, if it would be an attempt to employ person with a specific gender because of the gender minority in the company, this information should be included in the job offer description.

Only around 49% of job announcements had a graphic or a photo with a person or people so it was possible to analyse if the company pays attention to sensitivity to gender in this aspect. Results are presented in Figure 4.

Statement “graphic/photo sensitive for gender” means a company placed both sexes at the picture, not necessarily equally in numbers but still company has shown the ability to employ both women and men on this particular position.

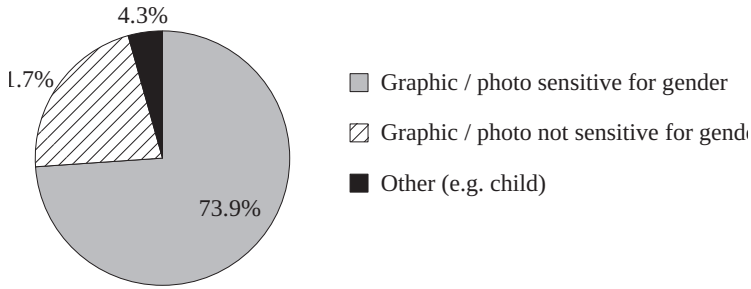


Figure 4. The usage of graphics or photos sensitive for gender in job announcements
Source: own study.

Another issue raised in the paper concerns a study about information published on companies' websites that refers to career or job opportunities, or recruitment process, as well as containing data about diversity management policy, information that company signed the Diversity Chart document (in the section of career, recruitment or job opportunities), or any information that company is opened for diversity. The example of description is following:

“All candidates can guarantee compliance with the law, using every principle of equal opportunities recruitment, professionalism and reliability interviews, respect the right to privacy about their professional and personal lives.”

The overwhelming majority of companies had sections dedicated to the recruitment process or career and development in the structure of company. Also more than 21% of companies published information concerning diversity management policy or company willingness to treat people equally and preserve equal rights during recruitment and later – work in the company. Only 1 company did not publish any information connected to career or recruitment. Collected data in this field are presented in Figure 5.

What can surprise is a fact that none of companies published information about positions that are available also for people with disabilities. J. Turkiewicz, a Member of the Board of WE Patients Foundation claims, that for this group of people statements encouraging to apply should be published in a job offer. People with disabilities are more discouraged to look for work because of their limitations, especially since many companies do not want to employ them. These people should know

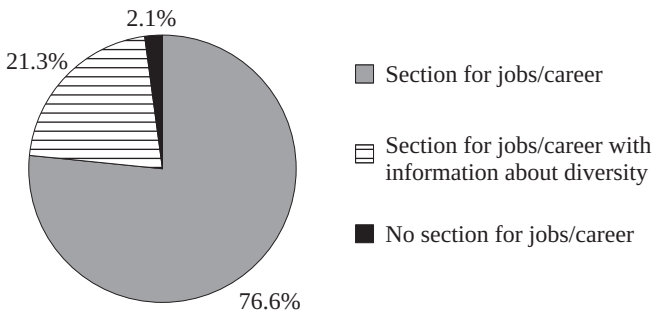


Figure 5. Publishing information about career, jobs or recruitment on company’s website

Source: own study.

that for a given position they are welcome to apply. As E. Leśnowolska, the coordinator of the Diversity Charter in Poland says, “companies do not have to publish this kind of clause. Job announcements without this information are neutral, however companies can attach this kind of clause and it is treated as a positive message that a company is open to diversity, also – to people with disabilities”. On the other hand, K. Kłosowska sensitizes that “companies sometimes communicate that they require a decision on the degree of disability to obtain a financial advantage from the employment of disabled people and it is unprofessional and immoral action”. She also says that it is a very nice idea to encourage people with disabilities to apply for a particular position, but it is a very rare practice.

Experts’ opinions provided also interesting conclusions, which concerned, among others, the language issue in distinguishing gender and areas for further research in terms of discrimination in the whole process of recruitment, not only on the basis of the content of job announcements. Analysing information about gender placed in job announcements is rather adequate to the Polish language, as for example in English language there is no such a situation. For example sentence “we are looking for a person or candidate” can be for both: a man and a woman candidate. In Polish language it is associated with the conjugation of verbs and nouns, which have a male or female endings. Often companies may be unconscious of discrimination against certain groups of people. It is hard to keep an eye on male and female forms position every time in Polish

job offers. Companies often assume both sexes with the term “candidate”, which in Polish is only a male form. But of course it is hard to clearly state whether they are opened for both sexes or they discriminate e.g. women. E. Leśnowolska claims, that if there is a possibility in the Polish language to conjugate man and woman form of words, it should be done, if it does not ridicule.

“Maybe not from the website or job announcement, but one certainly can be able to determine whether the company discriminates on a job interview – even one step ahead”, says M.L. Ziółkowska. The very selection process may already be discriminatory. For example, research conducted in Sweden says that people with the Swedish surname have a much higher chance of receiving an invitation to an interview and thus – the work, than people of strange name. There was also the situation, that some people changed names to Swedish to have a better chance of finding a job.

Experts also agreed that diversity in the workplace (e.g. people with different experiences or nationalities) can be a source of competitive advantage. Some experts see the positive impact of diversity on the results of work in their current teams. Both people with many years of experience as well as people with disabilities should have the same chance of finding a job as the person immediately after graduation – everything should depend on their competences. This is the state at a recruitment process that companies should strive for.

6. Conclusions and implications for further research

Summing up the foregoing, the objectives of the paper have been achieved. The elements of job offers that are opened for diversity were identified. Secondly, job offers of big companies which signed the Diversity Charter were analysed in terms of using the elements opened for diversity. Thirdly, the findings on diversity management in the recruitment processes of Polish companies were confronted with the opinions of experts.

The results of the research indicate that the vast majority of companies follow with the principles of diversity management, as they have declared. However, there are companies that have decided to consciously implement diversity policies, but not always fully follow their rules. Furthermore, as highlighted in the opinions of experts, it should be

noted that very often it is not known whether the job advertisement of the company discriminates against one sex, or is it an oversight and the company expects both women and men applications. Despite this, it is worth emphasizing that companies should more carefully create descriptions of job offers and more carefully select photos placed for this reason. Sometimes even though the company has no bad intentions, the candidate may feel that the offer is not for him when he sees a team of young people and he is 50 years old or when he sees only women, and he is a man.

What is more, there is much to be done in the context of caring for people with disabilities during recruitment. Although there are no requirements concerning the special clause about the availability of job offers for this group of people, it is worth to the company to be aware of employment opportunities for disabled persons and to consciously inform these people that they can apply for the position. Currently, if it happens, it is a very positive message from the company. In the future, however, it should be a standard.

Finally, companies that signed the Diversity Charter document should pay a special attention to the issue of communication that the company is opened to diversity. As the research reveals, there are many companies that do not communicate this, even though it is their duty. The conducted study is also the starting point for further analysis of openness to diversity in the recruitment process, not only on the basis of the description of job offer, but also to its later stages, including an interview.

The issue of diversity management in companies has a great potential for scientific research because of its relevance and complexity. Keeping with the scope of the study contained in this article, it should be emphasized that a big research challenge is the question about construction of job descriptions in the context of the company strategy (or personal strategy of the company). When it comes to large companies there should be also considered whether job descriptions and illustrations (images) used in the process of searching for job candidates are imposed by the international strategy of the company or branch offices in different countries affect the local communication in a particular country. Another aspect worth examining is the issue of managing diversity at a later stage of the recruitment process that is, among others, selection of candidates, and – which would be very interesting – conducting interviews. Perhaps it is even the most important stage of the recruitment process to investigate the issue of recruiting in the responsible way.

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Appendix No 1.

The content of the Diversity Charter document

“Diversity constitutes a fundamental value of the modern society. Equal rights policies and diversity management translate into measurable benefits and drive forward the development and innovativeness of organisations. Taking into consideration the respect for a diverse multicultural society and placing special emphasis on policies promoting equal rights, irrespective of **gender, age, disability, health, race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion, creed, irreligiousness, political views, union membership, psychosexual orientation, sexual identity, family status, lifestyle, employment form, scope and basis, other types of cooperation, or other traits which may give rise to discrimination**, our organisation undertakes to implement diversity management and equal rights policies and to promote and disseminate them among all of its stakeholders. In light of the above, we hereby make the following commitments:

- To create a corporate culture and atmosphere which ensures respect for diversity, by means of mainstreaming diversity management, age management and equal opportunities in policies and procedures applied in our organisations;
- To introduce internal institutional solutions in order to promote the development of equal rights, including the appointment of a person or team to coordinate all efforts meant to combat discrimination and mobbing in the workplace;
- To develop and implement equal rights and diversity management policies in the workplace, with special emphasis placed on recruitment, access to training programs and promotion opportunities, remuneration, reconciliation of professional and family obligations, protection from mobbing and unjustified dismissal;
- To introduce anti-discrimination and anti-mobbing monitoring, as well as cyclical educational schemes focusing on combating discrimination and mobbing, in order to build awareness and enhance relevant knowledge through training sessions, workshops and activities for all employees, especially including the management team;
- To engage in dialogue with employees as regards the adopted diversity management policy and to notify the organisation’s stakeholders – especially its employees, but also its clients, business partners, associates, shareholders, vendors and subcontractors – of the introduction of a diversity management model and the result of such an approach;
- To draft annual reports on relevant activities and their practical results;
- To promote and disseminate diversity management in Poland.”

