



The EUROPEAN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE NEWSLETTER

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TIME Associates, Northern Ireland, are the lead partner in the European Employer of Choice (EEoC), Leonardo da Vinci Project that runs from October 2010–October 2012

Managing Diversity and supporting Work-life balance - a topic of interest for organisations in Europe

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Over the last six months each EEoC partner has engaged in a piloting phase during which they have contextualised, translated and tested the European Employer of Choice audit tools measuring (1) an organisation's commitment to Diversity Management and (2) employees' opinions on their Health and Wellbeing and its impact on the workplace.

The partners collectively surveyed 400 employees - management and their staff - from 47 organisations of different sizes, sectors and classifications (public, private and non government).

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This edition of the EEoC Newsletter shares each partner's experiences of the pilot programme – a package of work that has presented challenges to some but has proven to be fruitful for all.

For more information on research carried out by partners please visit

www.euro-eoc.eu



Education and Culture DG



One of the key lessons we have learn from the pilot-test is that it is important to illustrate both diversity and wellbeing as a market requirement (compliance to CSR area, good working climate and so better business, stronger motivation and so loyalty to the organisation, inclusive environment and so new ideas, etc.) to widen the manager/owner interest.



Germany



A seminar for the strategic enterprise planning – Getting and Retaining the Right Staff

Why Employer of Choice? (by Sabine Hentschel)

In the present time small and middle-sized enterprises are confronted with constant change. Globalisation, new markets, changing and more demanding consumer's behaviour and the demographic change. It will increasingly become part of a company's duties to manage the diversity of the staff, to adapt itself to the constantly strolling demands of the working surroundings and to create a positive and healthy working sphere for all partners.

Today in the competition to attract and retain certified employees the importance of having a strong organisation brand is essential. .

The aim must be to become recognised in the labour market and among potential recruits as an "Employer of Choice" – for companies to position themselves in such a way as they are viewed as a good place to work, a place of employment where employee health and well-being is of extreme importance.

What HBZ have done

In November 2011 we piloted an Employer of Choice

Partner County Research Some Observations



Italy

ANTARES, Italy , A positive experience of inclusive workplace practices (by Pietro Ragni)

The pilot-test of EEoC tools in the Italian experience was successful and interesting. ANTARES performed the test phase in the period July-October 2011, involving 10 enterprises/organisations. They were selected with different dimensions (4 micro -less than 10 employees-; 5 little - less than 30 - and 1 medium – more than 50-); with different typologies (public, private, professionals, cooperatives) and in different sectors (training, consultancy, foodstuff, research, ITC). We submitted the "Diversity questionnaire" to all the owners/directors of the involved enterprises and we posted via e-mail the "Employee Audit Questionnaire" to all their employees (total number was 151; total answer collected was 71 -47%-).

With regard to the self completed Diversity Audit for senior managers, whilst they ranked themselves as having good Diversity management systems in we noticed that, if Diversity is a strategic theme for the enterprise there are few formal documents to evidence this. The Employer of Choice programme would provide a valuable mechanism to allow enterprises to formalise this practice. For very small organisations the Diversity questionnaire as it stands is too complex and for this reason we are now considering a simpler version for this type of enterprise.

With the employee questionnaire common issues regarding stress at work was reported often regardless of the size of company, type of company or the sector they operated in. A common need is to address better work-life balance for employees.

programme with 18 small business owners who were interested in becoming recognised in the labour market as being a good place to work. In small group workshops and through one-on-one coaching the entrepreneurs became together with the HBZs professional advisers to consider, as part of their strategic enterprise planning, how they could work towards becoming an European Employer of Choice. Analysis of employees motivations to achieve a better work-life balance were recorded and HBZ have supported the business owner to develop strategies and actions to address this need. Furthermore HBZ are working with the owner to support him / her to develop their abilities in personnel management to better address with employee issues arising through poor work-life balance. HBZ are currently working with the lead partner TIME Associates in developing training modules in this field.



Hungary

SVLS, - Ithe challenges of introducing best practice to small business in Hungary

SVLS,'s aim when getting involved in EEOC was primarily to adapt, transfer and disseminate the EEOC programme to benefit Hungarian organisations, something that our research has shown a clear need for, but also as a secondary objective to understand how the programme can specifically benefit micro businesses like such as SVLS themselves who could potentially benefit from this type of support.

Initially we found introducing this programme to organizations challenging – it is very new to them and many did not initially see the mutual benefit of improving their employees' work-life balance. On the other hand it was very well received from the start by our stakeholder groups who could clearly see the benefit of a programme of this type for the public, private and NGO sectors.

In order to recruit companies for the pilot programme we spent a lot of time presenting the programme through focus groups and overtime the programme became of great interest to them, As a consequence the pilot worked very well, common issues arising around work-life balance, stress in the workplace, poor motivation levels etc. We, and our pilot companies, are now looking forward to the EEOC workshops which will

support the companies to address the issues identified through employee research.

CTANM Romania

CTANM – The Romanian approach to contextualising Employer of choice to local conditions (by Tom Savu)

The Romanian partner, CTANM, in the *European Employer of Choice* project has worked with the stakeholders for achieving a threefold goal:

- Adaptation of the working documents to the specificity of Romanian labour market;
- Development of a practical methodology for the implementation of the *European Employer of Choice* mark in Romania;
- Identification of the proper means to increase the public awareness for the *European Employer of Choice* mark.

The research carried out by the Romanian partner revealed that working documents offered by the coordinator and conceived for the specific conditions of Northern Ireland cannot be used exactly as such in Romania. So, a certain adaptation of the working materials was carried out. The results were successfully checked with the stakeholders.

Being confident in the high quality and efficiency of the *European Employer of Choice* mark, the Romanian partner elaborated a practical methodology based on the coordinator's recommendations and general rules of audit that will cover a large segment of the Romanian labour market. In order to achieve such an aim, the public awareness should be raised. The research indicated that are specific channels that can be used to grasp the attention of employers, ranging from local branches of multinationals to SMEs.

For more information on pilot activity carried out by partners please visit www.euro-eoc.eu

Partners to meet for the 4th time in Munster, Germany



The EEoC partners are travelling to the home of the German partner HBZ for a two day meeting at the end of March. As the project enters its final six months the partners will now focus on developing ideas around sustaining EEoC through European certification after funding has ceased. The partnership have initial thoughts around the establishment of an European association or network which will endorse EEoC and in whose name the certification will also be provided.

We hope to tell you more of our progress with this soon.

What's Next?

EEoC partners are currently developing, translating and pilot testing the EEoC modules for trainers and employees in their respective partner country. The results of this activity will be published later this year.

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