

PRESS RELEASE

Ljubljana, 12.5.2022

Celebrating the European Diversity Month 2022:

*Working lunch*

"Inclusion of People with Disabilities into the Labour Market"



Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands together with Slovenian Diversity Charter celebrated European Diversity Month.

His Excellency, Johan O.Verboom, hosted a working lunch on the topic »Work Inclusion of People with Disabilities«.



The event was attended by:

1. **Barbara Zupančič**, director, Slovenian Diversity Charter
2. **Ms Florence Ferrari**, HoM France
3. **Mr Anton Niculescu**, HoM Romania
4. **Mr Andor Ferenc Dávid**, HoM Hungary
5. **Ms Helen Teasdale**, DHM and Charge d'Affaires UK
6. **Ms Mojca Pršina**, Director-General of Labour Market and Employment Directorate at the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
7. **Ms. Jana Ponikvar**, Director of Šentprima, Institute for Rehabilitation and Education
8. **Ms. Barbara Hočevár**, journalist, DELO
9. **Mr. Cveto Tovornik**, a member of the Supervisory Board of Sent - Slovenian Association for Mental Health
10. **Mr Miha Menard**, Managing Director of OC IMP Klima.
11. **Ms. Paulina Pazio**, People & Organization Country Head at Novartis
12. **Ms. Sandra Peršak**, CEO of TSinpo d.o.o., a branch of Telekom Slovenije for people with disabilities
13. **Derk Jan Nauta**, Deputy Head of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherland

The month of May marks the European diversity month across Europe. The initiators of the celebration are the European Diversity Charters together with the General Directorate for Justice and Consumers of the EC. The topic of this year's celebration is building bridges. That is why, during this month, various organisations are helping to build bridges between businesses and organisations, between cities and local communities, with a view to bring together European Union, in practice, in all its diversity. All organisations, businesses and cities are invited to celebrate the European Diversity Month to join the movement for diverse and inclusive jobs and societies.

The Diversity Charter Slovenia was established on 17.11.2017 and today represents a community of 182 signatory organizations (from economic, public and NGO sector) which are committed to promoting and implementing the values of diversity, equality, and inclusion in the workplace and more broadly in society.

Among the signatories there is also the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, which made public commitment to the principles of the Charter in 2019. The signing of the Charter represents a voluntary commitment to the principles that promote the development of an organizational culture based on equal opportunities, mutual respect, acceptance and inclusion of diverse employees, the creation of a diverse and inclusive environment, the adheres to and dissemination of the principles of diversity at all levels of the organization,



the identification of diverse stakeholders, the creation of diversity policies and promoting their commitment to principles and diversity policies to all stakeholders.

Managing diversity in the workplace is one of the main priorities for every modern employer in Europe. If employees are valued as they are, they are more committed to their work and take full advantage of their talents and creativity. Diversity in the workplace means employment of people of different ages, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, cultural background, educational level, and employment of persons with special needs or persons with different disabilities.

Therefore, the invited guests exchanged views on the topic of employing persons with disabilities as one of the biggest and most vulnerable groups in the labour market.

At the working lunch, director of the Slovenian Diversity Charter, pointed out that Slovenia has a modern disability protection policy and is comparable to other developed European countries. But Slovenia also has challenges, like systemic arrangements for the transition of young people to the labour market, ensuring regional coverage of protected workplaces at employment centers and companies for disabled people, we lack diversity of jobs, including different jobs for more educated people with disabilities.

At the same time, she pointed out that the labour market has changed significantly in the last 20 years, and that more and more employers today show good practices of work inclusion of people with disabilities. This is precisely why it is necessary to provide more intensive support to employers and employed persons with disabilities and focus also on the career progression of employed people with disabilities.

The employment of diverse persons is not only a topic of social justice but is key to innovation with the Slovenian business environment. Research shows that diversity in the workplace contributes to the company's good results. Companies with diversified employees are 35% more likely to achieve a higher financial return compared to other companies. There is also a 70% higher likelihood of them capturing more markets.

Diversity, inclusion and equality have always been a source of progress and development of a fairer society. They open up a way of thinking that really contributes to lasting solutions. This communication was supported by 3 new signatories that committed to principles of DC by signing the charter at the event:

- Embassy of France, her Excellency, Florence FERRARI
- Embassy of Romania, his Excellency, Anton NICULESCU
- Mr. Miha Menard, managing director, OC IMP Klima



\*The Charter links and strengthens the exchange of experience and knowledge in the field of diversity management, combines existing good practices and promotes the development of new practices and the expansion of diversity management principles in economic, governmental and non-governmental organisations. It is a modern approach to the implementation of the principles of diversity, as it is about integration from above and below, which is the most effective way of achieving the objectives of working organisations.

More about Slovenian Diversity Charter: [www.raznolikost.eu](http://www.raznolikost.eu)

