

Workshop 1: Promoting intercultural understanding, diversity and inclusion: learning from the corporate sector experience and mainstreaming in policy

Panelists:

Holger Heims, Managing Partner Falcon Group

Christopher McCormick, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Head of the EF-Cambridge University Research Collaboration

Milena Pighi, Corporate and Governmental Affairs, Head of Corporate Citizenship BMW Group

Pascale Thumerelle, Vice President Sustainable Development Vivendi

Moderator:

Jean-Christophe Bas, UNAOC

Workshop Summary

The cooperation between policy makers and the corporate world is essential. Holger Heims illustrated how the corporate sector is confronted with helping shape the framework for cultural diversity and how diversity can be used as a positive factor in the growth of the companies. Developments in the corporate world should increase the awareness of the need of cultural diversity also within the public sector.

Learning languages is essential in order to promote intercultural understanding and diversity. Christopher McCormick argued that language is not the only relevant factor, but that the lack of cultural understanding and competence can hinder intercultural work in cross-border teams. Therefore cultural and educational exchange programmes should be focused on in order to break down language barriers and geographic borders.

Pascale Thumerelle characterized the promotion of cultural diversity as a challenge in the corporate context, giving the example of Universal Music Group, where 60 % of the profits are generated with the sales of local artists' work.

The panelists agreed on three layers of intercultural understanding: 1. if we want to work together effectively, we need to understand each other, share cultural understanding and facilitate language education. 2. if we want to work effectively and achieve results and profits in the corporate sector, we have to understand the desires of our consumers and the specific needs in different parts of the world. Finally, 3. if we want to work in a stable market, which is indispensable, the corporate sector needs to promote social cohesion.

Quotations

Jean-Christophe Bas:

“We have to be in the same boat and develop a common general knowledge on intercultural understanding.”