

## **‘Better Leadership’ Round-Table organised at IFW Dresden, 9. June 2009**

On June 9, 2009 a round-table on the topic ‘Gender Diversity & Human Resources Management: Identification of best practice examples from industry and economics’ was organized by IFW Dresden, in the framework of the ‘DIVERSITY’ European project ([www.diversity-fp7.eu](http://www.diversity-fp7.eu)).

### **The round table agenda included the following items:**

1. Opening of the meeting (Welcome words were given by the DIVERSITY Project Coordinator Dr. h. c. Rolf Pfrengle).
2. General information on the DIVERSITY project (Short presentation was given by Ms. Friederike Wasserscheidt, member of IFW DIVERSITY team).
3. Discussion structured on specific questions (The questions were formulated by Prof. Mayrhofer)
4. Closing remarks.

Prof. Wolfgang Mayrhofer, professor of Human Resources Management at WU Wien, and Dr. h. c. Rolf Pfrengle, the Administrative Director of IFW Dresden, were the chairs of the group. They encouraged the speakers and structured the discussions. In his welcome speech, Dr. h.c. Pfrengle introduced the coordinating institution IFW Dresden as well as the IFW team involved in the project. At the next point of the agenda, Ms. Wasserscheidt has presented an overview of the DIVERSITY project. The round-table concept and structure have been prepared and presented by Prof. Mayrhofer. He explained the goals of the round table, in correlation with the objectives of the work-package 4 of the DIVERSITY project.

The round-tables aimed to collect information about the gender diversity management, with particular focus on:

- increasing the proportion of women in leadership positions
- life- and career-cycle perspective – looking at ‘work and life’ across all of one’s personal and professional life

The round-table allowed an interesting exchange of views about:

- Good practice in one’s own organization
- Core levers for improving the situation in one’s own organization
- Requests for changes in the contextual framework, e.g. legal regulations, political action
- Advice for women affected by the current situation in one’s own organisation

Prof. Mayrhofer was the moderator of the round-table. The discussions have been structured on the following specific questions:

### **Questions round #1 – ‘good practice’**

- Is an increase in the ratio of women in leadership positions an issue in your organisation and if yes, how do you want to achieve this?
- Is the label ‘(Gender) Diversity Management’ or the like helpful or harmful to such activities?
- How do you win over core multipliers, in particular persons from middle

management, for such activities and how do you deal with such multipliers whom you cannot convince?

- Which effects do you expect/observe if women join leadership positions?
  - At the overall level of the organization, e.g. organizational culture, performance
  - At the group level, e.g. working teams
  - With the women themselves

### **Question round #2 – Ways of improvement in one's own organisation**

- From your observation: What are issues that prevent women from reaching a leadership position in your organisation? Think of wide spectrum from upbringing /socialisation to hidden discrimination in the early professional years and the compatibility between work and private life to conscious decisions by women not to pay the price for reaching a leadership position
- Which 3 core starting-points do you see in your organisation to get more women into leadership positions?

### **Question round #3 – Wishes for improved external conditions and framework**

- Which changes in the external conditions/framework are essential in order to improve the opportunities for women to reach leadership positions?
- Broad focus: e.g. legal regulations, influencing public opinion leaders, role models

### **Question round #4 – Advice for women in their concrete situations**

- Which advice do you give women in your organisation who are interested in reaching leadership positions and who, from your point of view, are qualified for this?
- What is the role of mentors? Are there any specifics if the mentor is male?

### **Closing round – Methapher**

- How would you express the current situation regarding 'women and leadership positions' with an image, a metaphor, a slogan or the like, ideally in a drastic/colourful way?
- And how would that look like if you do the same for an ideal future, i.e. one that looks like you want it to be?