

Workshop n°4
**« How can an agreement on diversity be negotiated
with social partners? »**



Thursday 25 October 2007

Speakers :

- **Mr François FATOUX**, General Secretary of the Observatoire sur la Responsabilité Sociétale des entreprises (ORSE)
- **Mr Benoit BRUNE**, Human resources manager in Peugeot PSA
- **Mme Martine BALLA**, C.G.T Rhône-Alpes Regional delegate (French Trade Union)
- **Mr Maurice ROCK**, Human resources manager in Adecco
- **Mr Homer BENFAID**, CFDT Federal Secretary (French Trade Union)
- **Mme Emma STRINGFELLOW**, Research assistant at Warwick University (United-Kingdom), on diversity management in different European countries

A social responsibility approach may only continue in the long run if it is **shared by all stakeholders**. Some major businesses have actively become involved into this process by experimenting new forms of dialogue with union representatives, in particular via international framework agreements.

The World Forum Lille is the framework to unavoidable discussions among trade union representatives when apprehending the diversity issue. In France, there is a legal framework for man-woman equality in the workplace since laws were adopted in 2001 and 2006 based on the report of existing discriminating situations.

One can wonder what lead trade union representatives to bend over the Social Responsibility of organizations. Actually, **the first negotiations apprehended the diversity issue**. The negotiations' context can be global -like for Danone's agreement-, European or national. Today, these negotiations can be implemented at any scale, without any geographic limitation. For instance, the head office of PSA leads human resources teams and trade union representatives to work on the diversity issue in order to develop and promote it.

Based on these researches, Ms STRINGFELLOW compares three European countries, where the approach of the "diversity" concept is totally different :

- In France: diversity means social non-discrimination,
- In Germany: the diversity management policy based on the acceptance of differences was imported by settled American companies,
- In United-Kingdom: diversity is an economic asset.

Following up these negotiations, companies make concrete commitments. Adecco, for example, has been implementing in the last few months a proactive behavior in its fight against racial discrimination. An internal policy based on the resistance duty allows the company to meet clients' discriminatory expectations that could represent a penal risk and a threat to its corporate image. Several tools were implemented to fight against all forms of discriminations: a strong commitment in training sessions, an audit system and a hotline available to all employees.

We can notice that trade unions implement effective actions to lead a diversity management policy within businesses. **Most of the time, social agreements and laws apprehend the man-woman equality issue**. Nevertheless, progresses need to be made: go further in man-woman equality and broaden this policy to the fight against all other forms of discrimination.