



Technology to Change Position of Women in the Labour Market

Brno, 14 June 2019

On Friday 14 June 2019, the international conference **Women in the Age 4.0** took place at the Faculty of Social Studies of Masaryk University in Brno. The conference looked at the changing role(s) of women in the labour market in Central and Eastern Europe in view of the fast-moving technological development.

How can technology improve position of women at work, as regards career planning, work flexibility, work-life balance, support to career development and also women's advancement to top management positions? These were the main topics on the conference agenda.

The conference tackled issues related to the necessity of proper preparation to the future of work 4.0 in order to ensure that women get as equal opportunities as possible and that "technological tools" are no longer designed so as to keep current stereotypes and traditional barriers.

"Recruiting women into technical roles will make machines learn more efficiently," noted **Allen Blue**, LinkedIn Co-Founder, at the **World Economic Forum in Davos in January 2019 in the scope of the Future of Work agenda**. According to him *"AI and machine learning are becoming fundamental to how all technology is built."* *"It is important, as we go forward, that we are designing and building that tech in the right way,"* said Blue, reflecting on the inherent biases that many algorithms have because they were designed and built by white males.

*"We believe that thanks to technology, it is possible to improve position of women at work. That is why we decided, together with Diversity Charter of Slovakia, to organize the **Women in the Age 4.0** conference. The conference discussed current and future position of women in the technology-driven labour market and women's level of participation in this market,"* said Pavel Štern, Program Director at Business for Society.

"The best employer for women is the best employer for everyone. Therefore, searching for ways to improve women's career development and to ensure equal remuneration and equal opportunities makes perfect sense for everyone. Even more so today, in the age of technological progress and changes, to which each employer should aspire to react," said Ms Ivana Vagaská, Senior Programme Director of Diversity Charter of Slovakia.

Hlavní partneři:



Spolupracující partneři:



Journey to genuine equality is still ahead of us

Labour market is losing on high potential, since it fails to use the potential and talent of women and it tolerates gender inequalities. Yet, a survey conducted by **Pew Research Centre** lists several areas where women are stronger in key areas of both in politics and business. Survey respondents noted that women are:

- 34 % better at working out compromises,
- 34 % more likely to be honest and ethical,
- 25 % more likely to stand up for their benefits,
- 30 % more likely to provide fair pay and benefits,
- 25 % better at mentoring.

Forward-thinking companies should be looking for ways to employ and empower more women at work – not just as a moral obligation, but also as a sound business strategy.

What is the situation in the Czech Republic? Though **46 % university graduates** in the Czech Republic are women, boards of directors of TOP 250 Czech companies – according to the **Index of Women in Management Positions developed by Business for Society** – **have only slightly above 7 % female members**. The gender pay gap in the Czech Republic is still **around 22 % in favour of men**. The total of **80 % women-mothers** – according to the regular survey conducted by Business for Society among over 500 parents – seek particularly flexibility of work environment, which they consider a key factor to create better balance between professional and private life. Long-term statistics note that only **45 % women-mothers with children younger than 5 are at work**. On the other hand, women's employment among mothers with older children or childless women **amounts to approximately 90 %**. Despite some positive changes, only a very low percentage of fathers in the Czech Republic participate in childcare.

Gender equality in the Czech labour market does not develop in a sufficiently comprehensive and dynamic manner, even though there are already some examples of best practice among employers. Business for Society, national coordinator of Diversity Charter of the Czech Republic, jointly and Vodafone Czech Republic aim to change this. Therefore, they launched the **Women in Leadership Platform** at the beginning of March 2019 at a conference of the same title organized in cooperation with **NYU Prague**. The platform aims to provide comprehensive support to employers as regards their attitude to women and men at work, from supporting parents, to sandwich generation, higher participation of women in management positions and equal remuneration. The aim is also to seek support and alliances when promoting comprehensive approach to diversity and support women in management positions.

Hlavní partneři:



Spolupracující partneři:



Diversity and inclusion 4.0: Swedish and UK experience

Special conference guests, **H.E. Anna Viktoria Li, Ambassador of the Swedish Kingdom to the Czech Republic**, and **Ms. Lucy Hughes, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** responded to 'how is the situation seen by the world around us'.

H.E. Anna Viktoria Li presented the **Swedish perspective of industry 4.0** and underlined the concepts of inclusion and sustainability:

"Women and men need to be able to develop to their full potential and take equal part in economic, political and family life. Education is the key and our society cannot afford to use only a part of our human capital if we are going to stay competitive and successful. An effective and sustainable industrial policy 4.0 needs to incorporate a gender perspective." She said in the debate.

Lucy Hughes presented the UK perspective of gender diversity and employment 4.0. She said in the debate:

"Everyone needs the skills to allow them to take advantage of new technology, and the changing nature of work. OECD projections show that by 2030, if the share of women working reached the same level as men, annual growth rates in GDP per capita would rise by 0.5 percentage points in the UK. There would be an even bigger boost if women's working hours increased. So this is potential that we need to tap into."

Diversity brings real value to companies

Diversity in the labour market is not only a matter of 'moral' stand, but it is actually an integral part of a successful revenue-generating business. A **Boston Consulting Group Study** found that companies with more diverse management teams have **19 % higher revenues due to innovation**. This finding is significant for tech companies, start-ups and industries where innovation is the key to growth.

This is also shown by McKinsey's **Delivering Through Diversity** Report, which brought to light that corporations embracing gender diversity on their executive teams were more competitive and **21 % more likely to experience above-average profitability**. They also have a 27% likelihood of outperforming their peers on longer-term value creation. Different perspectives on customer needs, product improvements and company wellbeing fuel a better business.

"In the Czech Republic, part-time jobs and home office represent the key features of flexibility offered to female employees with small children. In the context of the expansion of Industry 4.0, IT companies lead the way and may handle flexibility in favour of women or to their disadvantage. They are thus truly powerful. IBM Brno tries to create company culture that is in line with the company's global strategy, while further accentuating this issue. To my mind, flexibility at work is a great concept but it needs to be supported by public childcare policies and – especially – by women themselves asking for better conditions. As an employer, we should be boosting their self-confidence

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and providing them with maximum support. The Industry 4.0 renders us a great starting position we need to know capitalize on properly,” **Klára Chládková, HR Manager IBM**

Companies in the Czech Republic are well aware of the issue as well. *“Diversity is important for us because it brings new ideas, innovation and diversity of opinion. That is why we try to make positions in our company more attractive for female candidates. We have an extensive Internship Programme Beln to support female students. We also have Women’s Employee Group that deals with the issue in a systematic way – creating programmes to support women on maternal or parental leave, while raising awareness of the issue that concerns not only women. We cooperate with Czechitas, an organisation that supports education of women in the IT field. At present, the big issue for us is how to create better work-life balance and part-time work,”* said **Renata Millerová, HR Manager CZ and SK, Thermo Fisher Scientific.**

International Conference: Women in the Age 4.0

14 June 2019, Auditorium, Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University Brno

Organizers:

Business for Society – Diversity Charter of the Czech Republic
Business Leaders Forum – Diversity Charter of Slovakia
Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University Brno

Main Partners:

Thermo Fisher Scientific
FSS Masaryk University Brno
IBM

Cooperating Partners:

Nordic Chamber of Commerce in the Czech Republic
Randstad

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BpS – Byznys pro společnost (Business for Society) is the largest alliance of companies promoting responsible and sustainable approach to business in our country. Thanks to our involvement in international structures, we follow the latest trends in sustainability, we localize international standards and we open new issues that should be tackled by companies in the Czech Republic. We are the national partner organization to CSR Europe, the European platform for responsible business, which involves more than 10 000 companies in member countries, getting them involved in responsible and sustainable development.

Hlavní partneři:



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BpS unites important companies with over 250 000 employees and thousands of suppliers with significant impact on society. Companies associated in BpS are leaders in sustainability and responsibility. We help companies to make responsibility and sustainability an integral part of their business activities. We hold debates with stakeholders, supporting the exchange of good practice and experience.

Thanks to its role as the national coordinator for the European Diversity Charter, BpS is a member of the European platform under DG Justice and it cooperates with EU member states and the European Commission in the area of diversity development and inclusion in the labour market and in society. We regularly attend workshops and conferences and we are also involved in the preparation of technical materials at the European level.

Hlavní partneři:



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