9th Equal@work Seminar: 
Women of colour @ work: 
Intersectional approaches to diversity management 
Brussels, Friday 1st December 2017, 09:00-16:30

During the last 20 years, the ‘diversity management’ landscape has progressed with employers (public and private) trade unions, political institutions and civil society organisations developing strategies to improve equality and diversity in their workplaces. Most notably, there have been great advances in institutional and corporate diversity policies relating the recruitment and advancement of women in the workplace. **Gender equality** has become the priority of diversity management, with progressive leaps forward being made in countering discrimination against women, improving representation in leadership, and moving toward equal pay and conditions for women in workplaces across Europe.

But how far do these numerous gender equality and diversity initiatives benefit all women? An emerging critique of diversity policies is that they fail to adequately understand, incorporate and address the specific barriers faced by women of colour (women from racial, ethnic and religious minorities, including but not limited to migrant women) in the workplace. In other words, diversity policies are not **intersectional**; they fail to address how discrimination and inequality on the basis of gender is experienced with other forms of discrimination, such as racism.

Resources are allocated to the study of inequality between men and women in terms of participation, remuneration and benefits, quality of work, conditions and discrimination. However, the discrimination and inequality faced by women of colour in the labour market is both unrecognised and under-explored. In terms of access to the labour market, there is a clear gap showing that migrant women from outside of the EU substantially less likely be active in the labour market than those born in the EU. However, these experiences are not limited to women who are recent migrants.

What are the experiences of women of colour in the workplace? The EU expert group on gender equality, social inclusion, health and long-term care (EGGSI) found that women from certain ethnic minorities are more likely to face barriers accessing employment when compared to the men of their communities and that of ethnic majority women. When women of colour do access employment, many experience a range of discrimination relating to their gender, or race, or both. They are likely to be underrepresented in leadership positions and overrepresented in low-pay and precarious work.

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The result is that ethnic minority women tend to be discriminated in more ways than men from the same communities and white women, facing not a glass but a ‘concrete ceiling’.

The aim of the 9th Equal@work seminar is to explore discrimination in the workplace at the intersection of race and gender. We will consider the position of women of colour in our workplaces and in the wider European labour-market. Looking at the particular experiences of discrimination, exclusion and inequality experienced by women of colour, we will ask how existing initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality can benefit women of colour. Where they cannot, we will consider how participants can develop ways to empower women of colour in their workplaces. ENAR considers that the best way to achieve this ultimate goal of equality is through the discussion between different actors – private companies, public administrations, trade unions, NGOs, employees - to find proper solutions or share good practices.

Topics to cover:

- Does the gender diversity focus benefit women of colour at all?
- What are the specific experiences of discrimination women of colour face in the workplace?
- Are women of colour disadvantaged in terms of progression, pay and representation in leadership/management?
- How can the over-representation of women of colour and migrant women of colour in precarious, low pay professions be addressed?

Find more about ENAR’s Equal@work Platform longstanding work on diversity management here.

ENAR is the only pan-European anti-racism network that combines advocacy for racial equality and is facilitating cooperation among civil society anti-racism actors in Europe. The organisation was set up in 1998 by grassroots activists on a mission to achieve legal changes at European level and make decisive progress towards racial equality in all EU Member States.