9 May 2024 InterContinental Athénée Palace Hotel, Bucharest

ED&I Conference Report 2024

Diversity, Equality and Inclusion in Eastern Europe Conference 2024

Organized by RDCC

sponsored by BRD Societe Generale, DB Cargo, Dentons, Kaufland Romania, MyEcoBox and Philip Morris Romania.

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Mission and Vision

Since its creation in 2020, the **Romanian Diversity Chamber of Commerce** (**RDCC**) has emerged as a leader in the Eastern European region, advocating for diversity, equity, and inclusion (**DE&I**).

While RDCC prepared for its **3rd annual ED&I in Eastern Europe Conference**, we continued our mission to advance **ED&I** principles across the dynamic landscape within Eastern Europe.

The conference serves as a platform bringing together professionals specializing in Diversity & Inclusion, HR and Talent Management, NGO Leaders, Government Representatives, Business Leaders, CEOs, Diversity Champions, Employee Resource Group (ERG) Leaders, and Legal Experts to further refine their workplace strategies and foster meaningful professional connections.

The 2024 Conference showcased an impressive lineup of **20 speakers** from Romania, Poland, Hungary and UK, renowned for their expertise in ED&I.

Objectives

- Encourage dialogue and cooperation, fostering substantial conversations among a wide array of stakeholders, including government representatives, business executives, civil society groups, scholars, and individuals from diverse backgrounds;
- Enhance awareness and comprehension of the significance of equality, diversity, and inclusion within the Eastern European context;
- Inform participants about the advantages of nurturing inclusive environments and the consequences of exclusion and discrimination;
- Create a forum for the exchange of best practices and innovative strategies for promoting ED&I in the workplace;
- Motivate participants to initiate and sustain meaningful changes within their areas of influence.

Key discussion areas

The conference aimed to build an understanding of the following topics:

- Learning to foster workplace inclusivity by embracing diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and ideas to create a collaborative and supportive work environment;
- Fair representation for marginalized groups: understanding and addressing the unique challenges faced by individuals with multiple marginalized identities and advocating for inclusive policies that consider multiple dimensions of diversity;
- Addressing social disparities: implementing initiatives that address stereotypes, provide equal opportunities and support advancement regardless of gender in various spheres;
- Identifying and eliminating systemic barriers that hinder marginalized groups from full participation;
- Fostering understanding and implementing inclusive education practices;
- Future trends and global perspectives discussion: forward-thinking strategies based on international best practices;
- Cultural exchange initiatives: engagement with local communities to understand their specific needs and concerns.

Welcome by RDCC President

Opening remarks H.E., Ambassador of Belgium in Romania
H.E., Ambassador of Spain in Romania

Panel 1 Cultural Diversity and Identity

Panel 2 Equity and Social Inclusion

Panel 3 Policy Development & Advocacy

Perspectives

Panel 4

Education, Awareness and Future

Speakers

WELCOME



PERRY ZIZZI

Managing Partner

DENTONS

President and Board Member

OPENING REMARKS



H.E. JOHN CORNET D'ELZIUS Ambassador Embassy of Belgium in Romania



H.E. JOSÉ ANTONIO HERNÁNDEZ Ambassador Embassy of Spain in Romania

Panel 1. Cultural Diversity and Identity



DIANA ȚARFULEA
Director of Engineering and
Diversity & Inclusion/Women
ADOBE Romania



ANA ROBINSON
HR Director Commercial & HR
Country Lead Romania
BERGENBIER



ESZTER BANHIDI
Head of HR Hungary & HRBP
CEE Topline, CEE DEI Lead



EDUARD IANCU
CEO | Head of DB Cargo
Business Eastern Corridors
DB CARGO



MĂDĂLINA MIHAI Inclusion & Diversity Coordinator, Europe DENTONS

Panel 2. Equity and Social Inclusion



ESTERA ANGHELESCU Recruiting & Employer Branding Director KAUFLAND Romania



GEORGE BALTA
Diversity & Inclusion
Specialist
KAUFLAND Romania



LUMINIȚA FLOREA
People & Culture Director
PHILIP MORRIS Romania



TIMEEA MARIN Head of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion NTT DATA Romania



BOGDAN FLORIȘTEANU People & Culture Director HEINEKEN



PABLO ZAPATA
UNHCR Representative in
Romania

Panel 3. Policy Development & Advocacy



ABI MIHAELA COMÂNESC Employment Services Coordinator MOTIVATION Romania Foundation



BILJANA RADONJIC KER-LINDSAY Associate Director, Head of Access: Skills & Employment Gender & Economic Inclusion EBRD UK



SIOBHAN RANDELL Senior DEI Business Partner KNIGHT FRANK



NORA VARADY CEO WeAreOpen Hungary



Co-President ACCEPT

Panel 4. Education, Awareness and Future Perspectives



Executive Director
Polish Diversity Chamber of
Commerce



President
DARE TO LEARN
Foundation



AYLA MENGAZI
HR Transformation and
Development Director
BRD Societe Generale



FLAVIA TIOC Senior Project Manager | DE&I Coordinator OMV PETROM

from speakers & sponsors

"One often says that the degree of civilization of a society depends on the place occupied by women. I think the same can be said for the treatment reserved for all minorities. In a world too often characterized by individualism and intolerance, where extremism is on the rise, in a society where marginalization is driving large parts of the population towards loneliness and despair. Inclusion is not only a question of public health, it is also a question of economic survival."

H.E. JOHN CORNET D'ELZIUS Ambassador Embassy of Belgium in Romania

"We are all well aware that discriminatory practices continue to exist on multiple grounds, gender, sexual orientation or identity, age, ethnicity and disability, among others. But trying to find solutions and taking action often seems too complicated. Therefore, I believe that when someone decides to take the step of pulling resources and efforts from the business sector and civil society to try to find inclusive solutions, they deserve our full support. The ED&I in Eastern Europe Conference is another example of how meaningful it can be to promote the exchange of good practices with the participation of professionals from different sectors and experts in human resources and talent management, NGOs leadership, government representatives, business leaderships or legal aspects. Together, you will discuss how to improve inclusion and diversity and to advocate for inclusive policies that take into account multiple dimensions of diversity."

H.E. JOSÉ ANTONIO HERNÁNDEZ Ambassador Embassy of Spain in Romania

from speakers & sponsors

"You cannot create sustainable structures, for example, if you are not, I'll say, willing to accept that we are different and together we are stronger. Why? Because I think very clearly, we are living in a very complex world. And the best answer to today's complexity, is exactly this kind of diversity.

(...)

There's no monopoly on good ideas. There's no one ethnic group or there's no one gender or there's no one sexual group that has a monopoly on good ideas and I think part of the beauty of diversity in our organizations is that we are richer because of a diversity of opinions."

EDUARD IANCU
CEO | Head of DB Cargo
Business Eastern Corridors
DB CARGO

"It doesn't matter who you are, it doesn't matter how you look, it doesn't matter where you're coming from, it's important what you do. So quality, it's what we're looking at. Inclusion and what is the best that we get out of such a collaboration, it's what we're looking for."

ANA ROBINSON
HR Director Commercial & HR
Country Lead Romania
BERGENBIER

"It's not always easy to sit in that uncomfortableness and have those brave conversations, especially with leadership and management. But I think it's incredibly important to do so because it creates safe spaces for all of the employees to share their background, share their diversity, be who they are, and just creates a beautiful organizational culture that incorporates all of these beautiful aspects of diversity."

MĂDĂLINA MIHAI Inclusion & Diversity Coordinator, Europe Dentons

from speakers & sponsors

"It's very important to have people with disabilities, with different disabilities in your teams and organisations. They can help you also to identify things that can be changed and things that not necessarily cost a lot of money. (...)

We are the biggest private employer that has inside our team around 500 colleagues with disabilities. We are doing small steps also this year to ensure digital accessibility and physical accessibility for all our colleagues, and also try to have a push in s ociety to change some conditions that are not really accessible for our colleagues, and also maybe people that are not in Team Kaufland yet."

ESTERA ANGHELESCU Recruiting & Employer Branding Director KAUFLAND Romania "We all know actually that if you bring together in a team people with different backgrounds and with different experiences, that's the point where magic starts to happen. That's the point where the levels of empathy actually rise. It's the point where people start finding innovative solutions, so on and so forth."

Timeea Marin Head of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion NTT DATA Romania

"People empowerment for us, it's beyond the training, beyond the awareness, it's their involvement. They feel that they are part of the change, they feel that they can do something about this, and they feel empowered. This is something which motivates, this is something that reverberates in each of us art and it's important for us."

Ayla Mengazi
HR Transformation and
Development Director BRD
Societe Generale

from speakers & sponsors

"Diversity and inclusion is not a priority and a project or initiative. It's a business imperative, and I think this is part of the success in delivering the numbers and also putting Diversity and Inclusion very high on the agenda internally and externally.

(...)

We will not be able to solve a societal problem just from the first moment. But if each of the big companies will do one, two, three steps, another 10 steps next year, another 20 steps the year after, things will move. And we have the benefit, at least us in the multinational companies, of living in bubbles. They are beautiful bubbles in which we have resources, people, all of that, that we can do those steps. It will not solve the humanity from the first step, but it will create a synergy."

LUMINIȚA FLOREA
People & Culture Director
PHILIP MORRIS Romania

"I think Romania is a very typical country in many aspects. One of them is that contrary to most European countries, there is less discrimination towards people from or less negative perceptions or perception of threats towards refugees from the Middle East, Asia and other parts of the world, Africa, than in other European Union member states. And at the same time, by being also a country bordering Ukraine, there are a number of historical grievances, imaginary, I mean, or there is a long history.

(...)

It's always a question about inclusion. It is absolutely worth it.
It is a statement to say that everybody is welcome. Everybody should have access to a better life."
Pablo Zapata
UNHCR Representative in
Romania

from speakers & sponsors

"Diversity, equity, and inclusion are matters that belong to sustainability. Those are at the core heart of the business, and those cannot be overlooked.

Therefore, it is important to gradually educate the employees and the stakeholders on every single aspect of it. And that's why we have tackled a gradual approach. And as we realize that we first need to educate ourselves. And this is what it took a long time for us, but happily for us, we are just learning together."

Flavia Tioc Senior Project Manager | DE&I Coordinator OMV PETROM "What some persons with disabilities don't understand is that sometimes to go out and be in the middle of people, in society, is more important than money. Because when you stay between four walls, at home, that's the path to depression.

Companies like Kaufland that have this program Access and get in the front to show people with disability what they can do more, than sit at home and watch TV.

In a company you can advance, but at home no."

George Baltă
Diversity & Inclusion Specialist
KAUFLAND Romania

"Equality suggests treating everybody the same is a positive thing and intuitively that feels right but actually, if you treat everybody the same often what you don't land on is an equal outcome because not everybody is the same and we all have completely different circumstances, we've all had very different levels of opportunity to get us to where we are today."

Siobhan Randell
Senior DEI Business Partner
KNIGHT FRANK

from speakers & sponsors

"Disability inclusion and addressing the gender pay gap are areas I can see that we are improving. But it's definitely a difficult environment. So we always have to balance different interests, not only to discuss Diversity and Inclusion in our little bubble where everyone agrees with everyone.

I can also see many companies that decide not to commit to certain aspects of diversity and inclusion because they don't have the time, they don't have the resources, they don't have the know-how. And I think to elevate this conversation to another level, we have to engage those players as well."

Nora Varady CEO WeAreOpen Hungary "We strongly believe that there is no sustainable market economy without strong human capital, strong and resilient human capital. (...)
And again, there is no strong human capital without inclusive human capital, without equality of opportunity and including all the members of the society in the workforce."

Biljana Radonjic Ker-Lindsay Associate Director, Head of Access: Skills & Employment Gender & Economic Inclusion EBRD UK

Stats

No. of registrations	192 people
In-person attendance	110 people
No. of speakers	23 speakers
*of which international	9 speakers
No. of countries present from CE	6 countries

Mass-media engagement

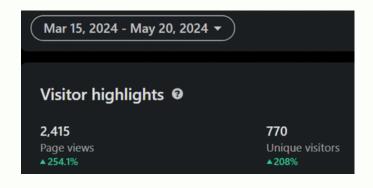
articles in mass-media with a reach of **200.000 people**: clubantreprenor.ro, businessreview.ro, romaniainsider.com, romaniajournal.ro, hit.ro, libertatea.ro, nineoclock.ro.

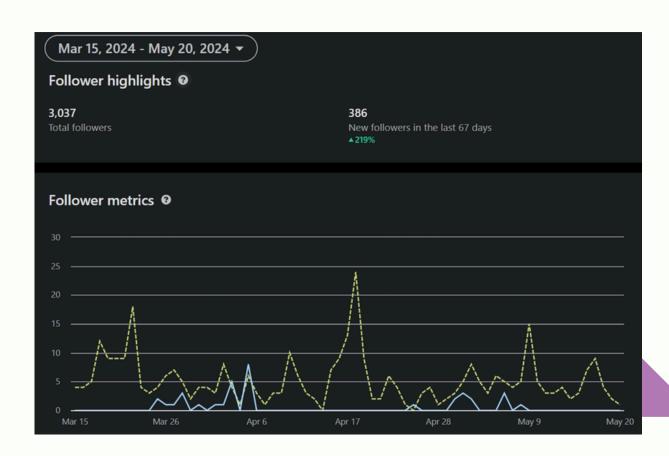
Social media performance

LinkedIn

Here is shown the performance during the active phase of the eventpromotion campaign (15 March - 20 May 2024) for RDCC.

The results were achieved by systematic and targeted postings of tailored content at a specific time to drive the highest level of engagement.

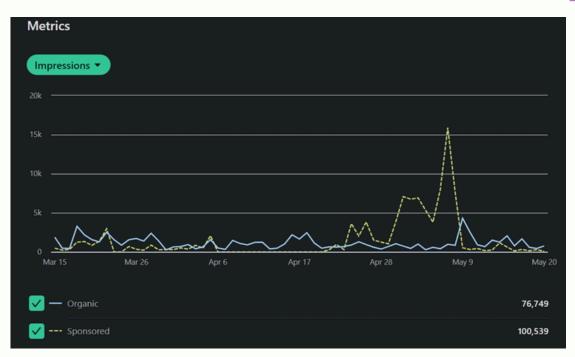


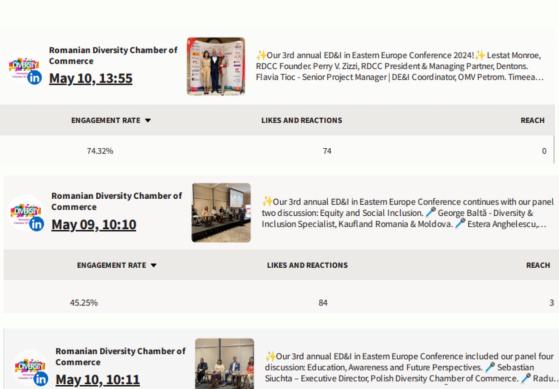


LinkedIn - TOP Performing Posts

ENGAGEMENT RATE ▼

35.58%





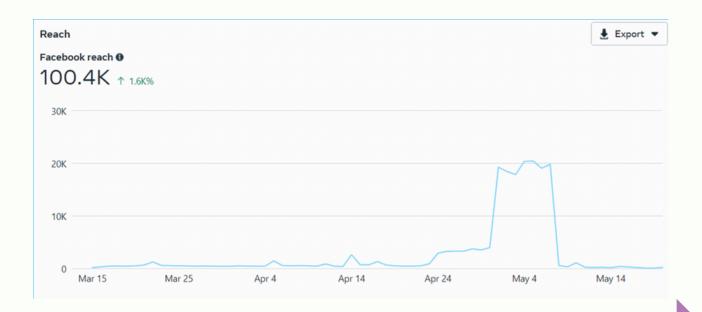
LIKES AND REACTIONS

30

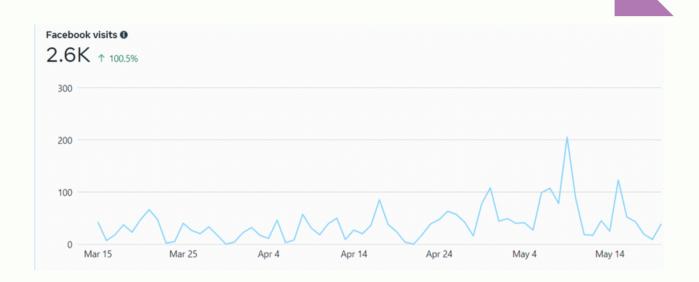
Facebook

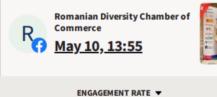
Here is shown the performance during the active phase of the event promotion campaign (15 March - 20 May 2024) for RDCC.





Facebook - TOP Performing Posts







→Our 3rd annual ED&I in Eastern Europe Conference 2024! → Lestat Monroe, RDCC Founder. Perry Zizzi, RDCC President & Managing Partner, Dentons. Flavia Tioc - Senior Project Manager | DE&I Coord inator, OMV Petrom. Timeea Marin -...

ENGAGEMENT RATE ▼	LIKES AND REACTIONS	REACH
18.61%	27	720





Our 3rd annual ED&I in Eastern Europe Conference included our panel four discussion: Education, Awareness and Future Perspectives Sebastian Siuchta – Executive Director, Polish Diversity Chamber of Commerce. Radu Szekel...

ENGAGEMENT RATE ▼	LIKES AND REACTIONS	REACH
16.56%	7	151





"The Romanian Diversity Chamber of Commerce will host its third edition of the leading Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in Eastern Europe Conference on May 9, 2024, at the InterContinental Athénée Palace Bucharest. The event will brin...

ENGAGEMENT RATE ▼	LIKES AND REACTIONS	REACH
16.13%	3	31

Conclusions

based on the speakers' interventions

"It's very important to remember that ED&I matters are sustainability. While ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) focuses heavily on the environmental aspect, it's vital to also address the social and governance components to achieve true sustainability. Personalizing ED&I helps communicate its importance to colleagues and third parties by relating it to personal experiences and the diverse people in our lives. Additionally, grassroots support is essential alongside management-driven initiatives to foster lasting ED&I changes within organizations. Involving people from marginalized groups in policymaking ensures that decisions reflect diverse perspectives and needs."

Perry V. Zizzi, President of RDCC

- It doesn't have to be management that drives the process. If you have a sufficient grassroots support in your organization to drive management to change, that's a harder route, I think, harder to organize, harder to make happen, but it's a great way.
- To personalize ED&I, it is very important to communicate it to colleagues and to third parties. And whether it's persons with disabilities, or Roma, ethnicity, or LGBT, this personalization can take away the kind of lack of interest or stigma.
- Let's make sure we involve people from marginalized groups in the policy making. We don't want to promote uniformity. We want people who are affected by these decisions to help make the decisions. And I think it's one of the key takeaways.

Pictures

from the Conference

























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