



Diversity within the Firm: Our Commitment to a More Colourful Future

18th January 2024

By: [Lucina Berger](#), [Vera Jungkind](#) and [Dirk Uwer](#)

One of our goals as a law firm is to attract exciting personalities to work with. Valuing diversity in all its dimensions, we treat one another based on mutual respect and using constructive communication. Combined with a high degree of diversity, this creates new perspectives and benefits all of us – both in the quality of our work and in how we interact with each other.

For that reason, fostering greater diversity among our staff is an important objective for everyone at Hengeler Mueller. To achieve this, we have built strong internal and external networks in addition to starting various initiatives and organising events to promote an inclusive environment.

We pursue our goals in a strong, dedicated and collegiate team: equal opportunities for women and men are a matter of course, continuously supported and fostered through various programmes that further equalise career opportunities. This includes monthly lunch meetings for female lawyers, as well as our annual Hengeler Mueller Women's Day, during which we encourage dialogue between female lawyers through training,

workshops and panel discussions. We have also welcomed partners from our Best Friends network at these events. In addition, we organise special hiring events for female lawyers, a leadership programme for women in management positions in cooperation with our Best Friends affiliates, and professional coaching for selected female associates with the aim of strengthening and advancing their careers.

HM Pride is an internal LGBTQIA+ and friends network at Hengeler Mueller. This network's mission is to support and foster an inclusive working environment in which everyone feels at ease and can develop their potential as well as contribute their individual talents – regardless of their sexual identity or orientation. International networking is also important to us, which is why we work closely with our international Best Friends affiliates. For example, we organise regular LGBTQIA+ inclusion events together with our Best Friends.

Our Cultural Diversity network regularly initiates a range of different formats and events to promote intercultural dialogue. For example, this network has set up a Cultural Calendar – using a blog to draw attention to various holidays and festivals of all cultures on the firm-wide intranet in order to strengthen cultural awareness in our day-to-day work even further.

We have arranged 'Diversity Talks' internally for years, typically attracting around 100 participants. At these events, we invite interesting personalities from outside the firm who are strongly committed to diversity and inclusion to describe their own careers and share with us their experiences, perspectives and ideas for promoting a diverse and inclusive workplace.

For many years, we have been active in the German employer initiative '*Charta der Vielfalt*' and since the start of 2023, we have also been a partner of the General Counsel for Diversity & Inclusion (GCD&I). We are committed to the initiative's guiding principle: "We promote Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the Legal Sector". Through GCD&I, we are expanding our commitment to greater diversity beyond our firm and in particular to our relationship with our clients' legal departments. We embrace diversity in all of its dimensions – be it gender, cultural and social background, ethnicity, religion/worldview, sexual orientation, disability, or age. Together with our Best Friends affiliates, we are also part of the Stonewall Global Diversity Champions programme.

Our participation in various work shadowing programmes and our support for short-term internship programmes also contribute to strengthening our firm's intercultural diversity. For example, we took on interns from Ukraine at short notice in 2022 via the 'Safe Harbour' programme. The same programme also helped female VIS MOOT students leave war zones in Ukraine.

Since 2023, we have also been supporting the internship programme of the German Foundation for International Legal Cooperation (IRZ), which works on behalf of the German government. Under this framework, we host interns for several weeks, who

familiarise themselves with life in the German legal profession. During short lunch talks, our lawyers also gain an insight into the legal system in their countries of origin.

Following our first ever diversity survey in 2022, we adopted a number of suggestions and implemented them over the course of the past year.

For example, the establishment of a distinct scholarship programme for students with obstacles in their educational background was one suggestion that emerged from the survey. The first round of 'Chancen@Hengeler' scholarships started in the 2023 winter semester. Eight students who, for various reasons, such as coming from a family without university experience, having a refugee background or for financial reasons, do not have the same start in life as their fellow students, will receive financial and non-material support. In addition to financial assistance, they will receive personal guidance from a mentor and access to exclusive law firm events.

These are just a few of the initiatives we are pursuing to promote diversity within our firm. We are very much aware of our social and corporate responsibility and will therefore continue to develop initiatives in this area in the coming years.

AUTHORS



Lucina Berger
Partner
+49 69 17095 623
lucina.berger@hengeler.com



Vera Jungkind
Partner
+49 211 8304 405
vera.jungkind@hengeler.com



Dirk Uwer
Partner
+49 211 8304 141
dirk.uwer@hengeler.com