



PRESS RELEASE

Greece in the front line for LGBTQI+ rights in the workspace

In December 10th 2021, Mexoxo in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice and the General Secretariat for Human Rights, organized the 1st BE AN ALLY Global Forum to educate professionals regarding LGBTQI+ diversity and inclusion in the workspace.

The goal was to educate, and inspire all professionals of the Greek private sector on how to drive change within the workspaces so they become more diverse and inclusive towards the LGBTQI+ talent. The Ministry of Justice supported the initiative and engaged impact leaders from the public sector continuing that way that the Greek government launched a year ago regarding the LGBTQI+ rights in Greece.

The content of the "BE AN ALLY" training program was designed by Mexoxo Founder, Elpida Kokkota, who invited distinguished executives and academic leaders from the global LGBTQI+ community such as Joanne Troutman, Director of Social Impact Programs, eCornell, Michelle M. Duguid, Associate Dean of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging, Cornell SC Johnson College of Business, Anya A. Marino the 1st transgender professor of Harvard Law School for the LGBTQI+ community rights and Ginger Chien, D&I Speaker and AT&T Device Architect.

The forum also attend and gave speech: Nicholas Yatromanolakis, Deputy Minister of Culture & Sports, responsible for contemporary culture, Maria Syrengela, Deputy Minister, responsible for the Demography and Family Policy, Domna Maria Michailidou, Deputy Minister of Labour & Social Affairs, George Stamatis, Secretary General for Social Solidarity and Fight Against Poverty, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The forum was also attended by: Yanna Hormova, General Secretariat for Demography and Family Policy and Gender Equality & Prodromos Pyrros, Consultant of the Financial Office of the General Secretariat of Prime Minister.

Mr. Panos Aleandris, Secretary General of Justice & Human Rights noted: "The fight for safeguarding diversity and inclusion is a fight for social progress. Meanwhile, the promotion of the aforementioned notions in the workplace also pushes forward economic development. The essence of the 'Be an Ally Forum' can be encapsulated in the phrase below: 'We are all equal in the fact that we are all different'"

Elpida Kokkota said: "We did the obvious. By organizing BE AN ALLY Forum we affirm our intention to be allies of the LGBTQI+ community in the public sphere. Through our accredited partnerships we contribute to building a society that includes all people and respects their right to dream, to grow and to find happiness. I am proud to be an ALLY of the LGBTQI+ community and together with the Ministry of Justice and the General Secretariat for Human Rights we are embarking on a journey full of challenges and victories. "

Mrs. Dimitra Lygoura, Chief of Staff at the Office of General Secretary for Digital Governance and Simplification of Procedures, Ministry of Digital Governance said: "The use of new technologies raises new ethical and social concerns. Support or decision-making systems, as part of a major debate taking place internationally, have been blamed for reproducing prejudice and exclusion. It is the duty of all of us to formulate the appropriate framework that will ensure inclusion and diversity so that the used data are correct."

The BE AN ALLY Forum companies supporters, had presence with exquisite speakers. Mrs. Ioanna Mysirioti, Communications Manager Greece, Cyprus & Malta, The Coca-Cola Company, Mrs. Angelika Tzemou, BoD Member & Head of HR, Bayer Hellas, Mrs. Dimitrina Vasileva, CESA Diversity and Inclusion Leader (CESA stands for Central and Southeast Europe and Central Asia), EY and Mrs. Georgia Karountzou, Corporate affairs & Communications director, JTI contributed significantly to the transfer of knowledge as they shared best practices that their companies apply in the global workplace.

Mrs. Ioanna Mysirioti, Communications Manager Greece, Cyprus & Malta, The Coca-Cola Company, said: "The acceptance of each employee and the integration of diversity are fundamental values of our corporate culture. We will continue to work for equality for all, through business policies that ensure human rights and equal opportunities in the workplace."

Mrs. Angelika Tzemou, BoD Member & Head of HR, Bayer Hellas, said: "In Bayer diversity and inclusion is a huge asset to our sustainability efforts and to creating influence, engaging employees, and driving meaningful change. Bayer is committed to fostering, cultivating and preserving a culture of inclusion and diversity. The collective sum of our individual differences, life experiences, knowledge, innovation, self-expression, unique capabilities, and talent that our employees invest in their work represents a significant part of not only our culture and reputation, but Bayer's achievement as well."

Mrs. Dimitrina Vasileva, CESA Diversity and Inclusion Leader (CESA stands for Central and Southeast Europe and Central Asia), EY, said: "Being serious about attracting diversity and nurturing inclusive culture in an organization means making this part of your core business strategy. It means consistency between intention and action."

Mrs. Georgia Karountzou, Corporate affairs & Communications director, JTI, said: "JTI proves every day in practice that it is a pioneer in securing equal opportunities. With our principles, Code of Conduct and best practices we become strong allies to promote Diversity and Inclusion in the workplace. In JTI, gender equality is a priority. Our goal by 2030 is to place Women in leadership positions reaching a rate of 40%".

The BE AN ALLY companies that also supported the forum were: Clio Muse, Deloitte, Enel, Grant Thornton, Vodafone, AB Vasilopoulos, Athenian Brewery & the Central Bank of Greece.

Academic partner: eCornell.

Strategic partners: AQ Strategy, Hill & Knowlton Strategies & Assessment.gr.

Communications partners: Marie Claire & elculture.gr.

The Electra Palace hotel kindly offered the hall.

Coffee sponsor: Cafe Femenino

Lunch break @home/office sponsor: eFood.

Production company: LibertyMkt.

The Be An Ally Forum was under the auspices of the Municipality of Athens.