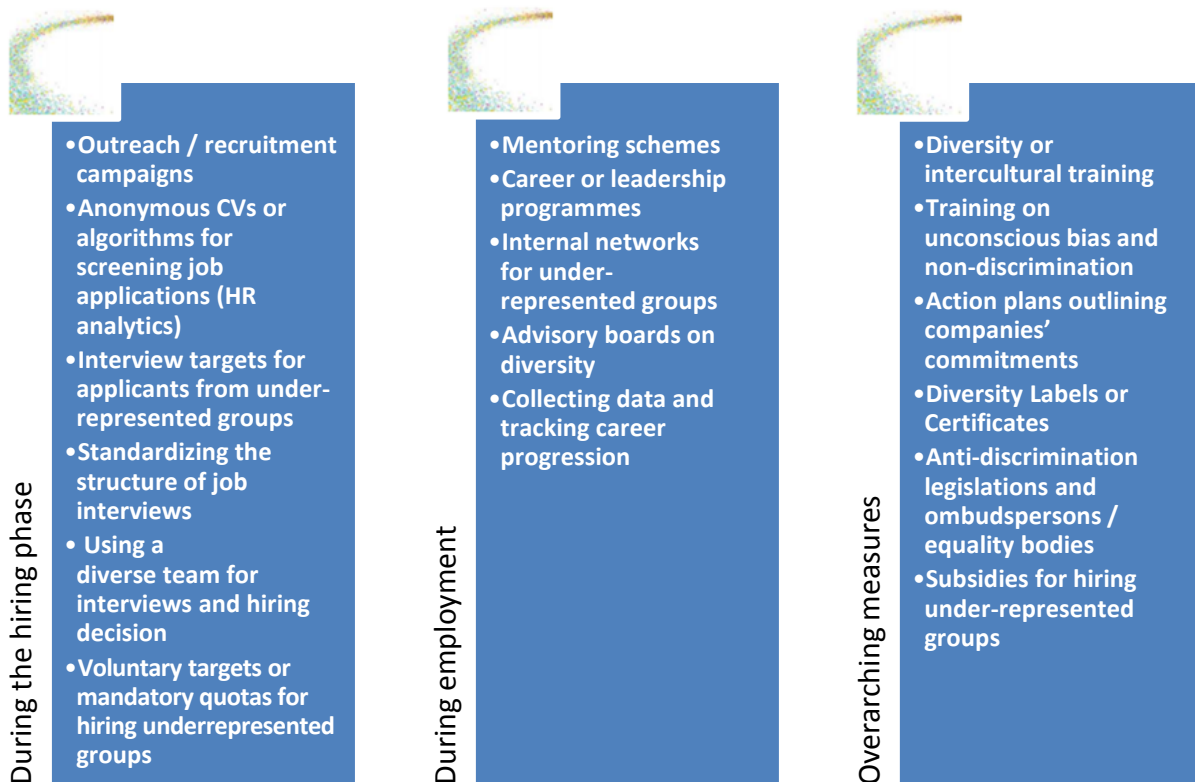# Issues note - Plenary III:
What strategies and policies work to promote diversity?

Businesses and governments across OECD countries have adopted a range of strategies and policies to provide equal opportunities and get the most out of diversity, yet often it is not clear how effective these approaches are.

A large set of tools has been developed to strengthen diversity in the workforce, ranging from voluntary commitments, such as Diversity Charters, to mandatory quotas for certain positions or sectors. Diversity Charters have been signed in 20 EU countries, representing around 10,000 businesses across the EU and approximately 15 million employees. And nine OECD countries have introduced gender quotas for the boards of publicly listed and/or state-owned enterprises. On average in the OECD, only 20% of board members in publicly listed companies are female. Measures may apply to one group specifically, for example reaching out to ethnic minority candidates during recruitment, or target employees more generally, such as providing courses on intercultural competencies or unconscious bias for all staff. Diversity management is important throughout the staff management process, including initial outreach measures, diversity-sensitive approaches in the recruitment phase or initiatives at the workplace regarding promotions. However, there is still relatively little evidence on what works. This is a key issue for effective policy-making, but also makes it difficult to get companies on board who may not be convinced that having more diverse staff adds value. Partly, the lack of evidence reflects a lack of data, as the impact of diversity measures is often not evaluated. It also reflects the challenge of defining what constitutes a 'successful' diversity policy and how this should be measured.

But strategies and policies to promote diversity should not be confined to the workplace. They must involve a multifaceted, whole-of-government approach to ensure that disadvantaged groups have full access to social and economic prosperity. This includes: (i) ensuring equality of opportunity through high-quality early childhood education; (ii) gathering good data on the size of minority populations and developing social, educational and economic indicators; (iii) providing adequate support throughout the life cycle to promote everyone's integration into the economy and society at large; (iv) enacting and enforcing anti-discrimination or minority-inclusive legislation; (v) combating prejudice and stereotypes at home, at school, at work, and in society at large to guarantee that all individuals can succeed regardless of their background. Despite knowledge gaps, evidence on the impact of these approaches confirms their effectiveness. This is for instance the case of the Perry Preschool intervention, an early childhood education program that targeted low-income 3-year old black children in the US. Impact evaluation of this programme reveals substantially better educational attainment and improved labour market outcomes at adult age for children who benefited from this intervention. Evidence on the impact of prejudice-reducing interventions is scarcer but similarly promising. A recent study published in *Science* shows that a mere 10-minute conversations between canvassers and voters about transgender rights substantially and durably reduce transphobia, with effects still visible three months after the intervention.

Different types of diversity policies and strategies in the workplace

During the hiring phase

- Outreach / recruitment campaigns
- Anonymous CVs or algorithms for screening job applications (HR analytics)
- Interview targets for applicants from under-represented groups
- Standardizing the structure of job interviews
- Using a diverse team for interviews and hiring decision
- Voluntary targets or mandatory quotas for hiring underrepresented groups

During employment

- Mentoring schemes
- Career or leadership programmes
- Internal networks for under-represented groups
- Advisory boards on diversity
- Collecting data and tracking career progression

Overarching measures

- Diversity or intercultural training
- Training on unconscious bias and non-discrimination
- Action plans outlining companies' commitments
- Diversity Labels or Certificates
- Anti-discrimination legislations and ombudspersons / equality bodies
- Subsidies for hiring under-represented groups

Questions for discussion

Which policy tools help promote diversity in society at large?

When is it best to mainstream diversity policies? In what areas may targeted approaches be preferable?

How to define and measure the success of diversity strategies and policies?

How can unconscious bias and discrimination be avoided in the hiring stage and beyond?

Speakers

Alexandra Kalev	Associate Professor of Sociology and Anthropology, Tel Aviv University
Edwin Lau	Head of the Reform of the Public Sector Division, OECD
Isabelle Michel-Magyar	Program Leader for the HeForShe movement
Michael Wardlow	Chief Commissioner of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
Mansour Zoberi	President of the French Association of Diversity Managers