

Agreement and Joint Commission to Fight Against Discrimination

April 20th, 2007- Adecco's temporary staffing, represented by the Human Resources Director and social partners, which are representing five unions- CFDT, CFTC, CFE-CGC, CGT et CGT-FO, have signed an agreement against discrimination. This agreement is the result of 18-months of team work, training and negotiations carried out on the framework of the European Program "Averroes" and with the support of the ISM-Corum cabinet of experts as well as the lawyer Michel Miné.

-“This is the first time”, highlights Alain Jaron (FO), “that the “Representative Instances of the Staff” have been integrated to develop a major initiative of the enterprise”.

-“To date, it is the only agreement that unions have jointly drafted with the management of Adecco France”, added Michel Bulawa (CGT)

The huge scope of the project has justified the long lasting dialogue. Today, fighting against all forms of discrimination embodies a legal, an economical and an important social stake.

The international, European and national law forbids and reprimands discrimination. Adecco France has to “*protect itself, its moral persona and its collaborators, from costly judicial litigations on the financial side*” Discrimination also affects the image of the company and of its performance. Adecco France will only be involved on a sustainable development approach by becoming a determinant actor of equal professional opportunities and by promoting diversity.

-“We all had to learn about these subjects and to share information in order to know exactly what we were speaking about”, declares the Human Resources Director, “thereafter, we succeeded in showing that these ideas are part of the culture of the company and that they do not represent a simple marketing tool.

The signed agreement has now developed in concrete commitments, in five chapters and to a joint follow-up commission.

The 5 chapters are entitled:

- “Refusal of Discrimination and Professional Demands“
- “Making the Managerial line Responsible“
- “The Follow-up and Development of Tools and Procedures“
- “The Tracing of Situations“ and
- “Repairing Individual Situations of Discrimination”

A Call for Vigilance

-“Our role consists in being prepared to listen to permanent and temporary colleagues and candidates, to gather their experiences and to know what their thoughts are about the approach initiated by this agreement”, estimates Francis Thomas (CFTC).

Actually, discrimination at work, either direct or indirect, subsists in the field despite the legal framework. Often “insidious”, it remains a reality and in some cases it is still difficult to identify its existence.

-“It's hard to realize that we are a victim or guilty of discrimination” explain the social partners.

Therefore, we need to define indicators and execute a systematic vigilance on the formulation of the clients' orders, amongst other things. Age, sex, origin, physical appearance, social status, political belonging or union affiliation, as well as any other criteria stipulated by the French law, should never be mentioned or implied.

-“By opening Adecco branches' doors, candidates and associates should be confident that they will only be selected based on their professional skills”, insists Véronique Boulain (CFE-CGC). – “We are aware that we will never achieve a zero level of discrimination”, nuances Michel Bulawa (CGT), but it should be reduced to the minimum. In that way, the written commitments on our agreement reveal themselves to be ambitious”

Everyone Has to Take his Own Responsibility

Two points are particularly highlighted by the Commission:

- To review all cases and atone for any setting of discrimination
- To call to account the whole management

The agreement plans a process to re-establish the equality of treatment for all the victims. The signing parties agree that, instead of transferring responsibilities, everyone, is responsible. As soon as the agreement is signed, branches' chiefs were in charge of conveying the message to their whole teams and to all temporary associates with the clear message that any breach of these commitments could lead to sanction "This agreement is very challenging!", adds Jean-Michel Leblanc (CFDT), before explaining the origins of it.

-“At the beginning, we had to analyze the existing agreements of other companies – as we based our work on them in order to learn, to be trained, to analyze the different notions, to understand the context, etc. We have learned to take a step backwards from personal problems and consider a global thought about discrimination”.

After the ratification, the agreement had to be implemented. Over the year, the Joint Commission met every trimester. Operational process and tools of actions were designed to be stable and efficient in the long run. But what is the objective? It's not only to counter but also to prevent all forms of discrimination, until the eradication of discrimination in the behaviour and in the heads.

Moreover, the management of Adecco and the social partners began to negotiate once again about discrimination, this time on specific topics of discrimination like gender, family situation, age, handicap, background, union engagement, etc. These operational agreements will be added to the global agreement.

To learn more about Adecco France and CSR

For more than 15 years, Adecco France has engaged on socially responsible actions in favour of non discrimination, prevention against work-related accidents or diseases, integration of disabled people, fighting against exclusion. Since 2004 and with its commitment to the UN Global Compact, Adecco France has carried out a structural policy on Sustainable Development.

- ⇒ In order find the text of the Agreement and additional information about Adecco's policies on the fight against discrimination, go to www.adecco.fr
- ⇒ Or discover Adecco's dedicated website on Social Responsibility : www.adecco-rse.fr