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Why Diversity Matters

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

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Matteo Winkler is a law professor at HEC Paris, focusing an important part of his research on international human rights and on teaching Diversity and Inclusion. Professor Winkler also chairs the HEC Paris [Diversity Committee](#). Eloïc Peyrache is a professor of economics. He began his research career with a [study of gender diversity](#) in admissions to French *Grandes Ecoles*. He was nominated Dean of HEC Paris in January 2021. Both professors share their insights on the stakes in Diversity and Inclusion, ways to address discrimination and proposals to include diversity through research. These, they say, are just some of a panoply of initiatives being explored at HEC Paris.



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By [Matteo M. Winkler](#), [Eloïc Peyrache](#)
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WHAT IS DIVERSITY & INCLUSION AND WHY IT MATTERS?

Matteo Winkler: In the last decade, we have witnessed increased attention for D&I at all levels – in the workplace, in family law and reproductive regulations, in public institutions and society at large. This is the result of two forces. First, the #MeToo and Black Lives Matter movements (I addressed the former on Forbes [here](#) and [here](#)) have made us more sensitive to discriminatory practices everywhere. Second, scholars have produced [research](#) on a massive scale regarding the set of microaggressions we are subjected to in our everyday lives. Our main challenge for the current decade is to reflect on the flaws that characterize the existing anti-discrimination legal arsenal. This will generate new ideas and tools that aim to prevent these microaggressions from taking place, which will be tested in real-life scenarios.

We have come to realize that diversity is meaningless without inclusiveness.

At HEC Paris, we believe this task cannot be accomplished without hearing the voice of all the stakeholders involved: not only corporate leaders and D&I experts, but also people offering first-hand experiences of vulnerability. To stimulate meaningful reflections in this regard, HEC Paris has put in place three programs:

- **Teaching D&I across programs:** we offer courses on D&I that helps students identify and de-activate biases, stereotypes, and prejudices in their thinking. They re-design decision-making processes accordingly.
- **Assisting school leaders in developing D&I-oriented policies:** we have a [diversity committee](#) whose goal is to contribute to setting HEC's values by anchoring our collective conversation about inclusiveness to the needs of the school stakeholders (students, employees and faculty, alumni and alumnae, corporate partners, etc.).
- **Modelling campus life:** we help students to speak out about their needs, wishes and ambitions, including sport and associations' activities. We propose pedagogical debates with corporate partners, student associations and D&I experts such as the [HEC DiversiTALKS*](#).

With these actions in mind (more information [here](#)), we have come to realize that diversity is meaningless without inclusiveness. Indeed, the multiculturalism reflected in our campus requires continuous and systematic efforts to encourage inclusiveness. In this way, we ensure that our students and employees enjoy a safe space where they can be themselves; where they can release the hidden potential they harbor; and where they can thrive. In a few words, where they feel that they belong. This is not just a matter of educating our students for them to make their future workplaces more inclusive, but for them to live their diversity right now, right here, on campus.

WHY THIS IN-DEPTH NUMBER ON DIVERSITY & INCLUSION NOW?

Eloïc Peyrache: At HEC Paris, diversity is a key driver of the excellence of the institution. It is by nature multidimensional, from diversity of opinions to diversity of origins through gender and social diversities. Selecting talents from more than 100 different nationalities and being close to gender parity on campus is a great achievement but it's still not enough.

We first need to ensure a strongly inclusive environment based on tolerance, human respect and well-being. These are a necessary condition to unleash human magic on campus. At HEC, professors, staff, students are all involved in shaping the D&I strategy that has been defined. HEC is a leading school fostering social mobility in society through an ambitious equal opportunity policy in France. It has started to implement this beyond its borders. [DiversiTALKS conferences](#) are profound opportunities to learn and share on the matter. The HEC Diversity Committee contributes to driving many changes in the organization, from Charter to HR measures. (Learn more on "Diversity & Inclusion" initiatives at HEC Paris [here](#)).

Research on diversity at work has become even more important lately as the topic evolved into a major societal issue.

We also need to make sure that [research](#) produced by HEC faculty pushes back the frontiers of knowledge on the topic. Research on corporate D&I is not new. For decades, researchers have empirically analyzed correlations and causalities between various types of corporate diversity and indications of performance. But research on diversity at work has become even more important lately as the topic evolved into a major societal issue! As a core dimension of its mission, the [faculty](#) of HEC Paris is contributing to the understanding of the challenges brought by diversity, offering conceptual tools and providing solutions to be implemented.

*Find live posts on the HEC DiversiTALKS sessions on Twitter [here](#).

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Matteo M. Winkler
Associate Professor
Tax and Law

Matteo Winkler's research interests span from public international law to conflict of laws, including dispute resolution, trade law, Internet law and...



Eloïc Peyrache
Professor, Dean

Eloïc Peyrache is Professor of Economics and the Dean of HEC Paris. His research interests include the challenges of information transmission on



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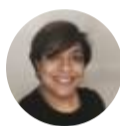
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