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Against all odds: How the institutional context shapes diversity management in the Central and Eastern European Oil and Gas Industry

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3 **Against all odds: Institutional context shaping Diversity Management**
4 **in the Central and Eastern European Oil and Gas Industry**
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9 *Purpose*

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11 Due to their multifarious backgrounds, multinational enterprises from emerging economies
12 offer unique research opportunities to push the boundaries of our understanding of diversity
13 management in transitional contexts. In that regard, Central and Eastern European
14 multinationals present a blind spot in diversity management research.
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21 *Design/methodology/approach*

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23 We examine the extent to which context shapes the discourse on diversity management in the
24 Oil and Gas industry across Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) through a qualitative approach
25 based on content analyses of corporate communication data matched with data on national
26 institutional contexts.
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32 *Findings*

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34 We find a lack of effective pro-diversity pressures across CEE except for cultural pressure in
35 European Union member countries. However, CEE Oil and Gas companies report a broader
36 scope of diversity management than studies of Western counterparts suggest. Companies with
37 subsidiaries in Western countries show convergence towards etic diversity approaches, while
38 local and regional companies are more divergent.
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46 *Originality*

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49 We define the boundary conditions of diversity management in the Oil and Gas industry across
50 nine CEE countries and how they impact the diversity discourse in the industry.
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Keywords

Diversity, Diversity Management, Europe, Convergence, New Institutionalism, Oil and Gas

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Introduction

In recent years, global movements have increased the pressure on companies to care about the diversity of their workforce (OECD, 2020; Özbilgin and Erbil, 2021). Thus, reporting on workforce diversity has become an important aspect of a positive corporate image (Johns *et al.*, 2012). However, findings, e.g. by Erdur (2020) or Bader *et al.* (2022), revealed that due to cross-national differences and local sensitivities, diversity management (DM) is often context specific. The pressures to comply with institutionalised diversity expectations may also differ immensely between advanced and emerging or developing economies (Küskü *et al.*, 2021).

During socialist times, women in Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries fared better in positions of power than in the West, while racial and religious discrimination was rampant (Weitz, 2002; Metcalfe and Afanieseveva, 2020). Since then, the CEE countries have taken various directions regarding diversity legislation, activism and acceptance, resulting in distinct national pressures on local companies (Buyantueva and Shevtsova, 2020). This is particularly evident in local diversity issues such as traditional gender roles, same-sex marriage, or reproductive and self-determination rights of women (Morley *et al.*, 2016) accompanied by prevailing xenophobia (Kalmar, 2018). Due to a global convergence of management practices (Pudelko and Harzing, 2007), multinational enterprises (MNEs) from the former Eastern Bloc are putting efforts into westernising their business practices, partially emulating American and Western-European companies (Latukha and Malko, 2019), where diversity management (DM) is an integral part of human resource management (HRM) (Syed and Özbilgin, 2009). Nevertheless, DiTomaso *et al.* (2007) as well as Küskü *et al.* (2021) among others highlight gaps in the literature regarding the context-dependency of DM. We also follow calls to contextualize DM beyond the Western context (e.g. Adams *et al.*, 2021; Erdur, 2020), especially in the challenging diversity contexts in CEE (Babonea and Ciora, 2018; Sliwa and Tobiasz-Adamczyk, 2018; Buyantueva and Shevtsova, 2020) and calls to advance the convergence versus divergence debate in non-Western MNEs (e.g. Paik *et al.*, 2011).

The global Oil and Gas industry is going through immense changes induced by the finiteness of its core resources, changing consumer behaviours, consolidation processes and changes in its workforce diversity (Williams *et al.*, 2014; IEA, 2020). Professional studies which focus on the topic paint a bleak picture of diversity (Rick *et al.*, 2017). Talent is mostly underutilised due to discrimination based on disability, race, or nationality, among other attributes (Rafferty, 2020). Across CEE, Oil and Gas is among the top three industries in revenue (Coface, 2020).

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3 Releasing the untapped potential of disadvantaged communities may help organisations (Tatli
4 et al. 2013; Holck et al., 2016), to combat challenges within the Oil and Gas industry and social
5 inequalities in CEE (Amis *et al.*, 2020). Despite its global and regional importance as well as
6 sensitivities surrounding the energy crisis, sustainability, ethics, and diversity (IEA, 2020),
7 diversity efforts in the Oil and Gas industry have received scant scientific attention (for
8 exceptions, see Miller, 2004 and Williams *et al.*, 2014). There remains a major public and
9 scientific interest in the diversity performance of this industry.

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16 Consequently, our research goals are to identify the status quo on DM reporting in the industry
17 as well as the influence of contextual pressures to report on diversity. Our study draws on a
18 multidimensional diversity concept and examines the DM discourse based on a content analysis
19 of corporate communication data from the fifteen largest independent Oil and Gas companies
20 by turnover across CEE. Following Yang and Konrad's (2011) suggestions, we use new
21 institutionalism as the theoretical backdrop to contextualise the respective contextual pressures
22 to report on diversity. We make a distinction between global (etic) categories of diversity,
23 which emanate from dominant Western pro-diversity concepts and local (emic) categories,
24 which emerge from idiosyncratic local concerns such as traditionalised gender roles,
25 controversy over same-sex marriage and abortion (Tatli and Özbilgin, 2012).

34 35 **Literature Review**

36 37 *Diversity Management*

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40 Academic support for multiculturalism in organizations has resulted in an ideological shift from
41 corporate homogeneity to diversity (Jackson, 1992). The learning and integration paradigm by
42 Ely and Thomas (2001) urges organizations to encourage employees to utilize demographic
43 and cultural knowledge in the solution of organizational problems. Kossek and Pichler (2006)
44 extend the paradigm, stating that managing diversity may support organizational justice and
45 inclusion, reduce discrimination, and improve competitiveness. A way to combat such
46 underutilization is diversity management, which refers to "policies and practices that seek to
47 include people who are considered to be, in some way, different from the traditional member"
48 (Herring and Henderson, 2011, p. 630). To address diversity through managerial action,
49 organisations resort to a plethora of actions including, among others, inclusive recruitment,
50 mentoring, affinity groups, diversity training programs, formal evaluation to reduce bias,
51 organisational development, and institutionalization of support for underrepresented groups
52 (Williams *et al.*, 2012). The differences among organisational members manifest themselves in
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3 various forms. Milliken and Martins (1996) categorize diversity based on observable and
4 underlying attributes. Observable attributes are age, gender, race, and nationality while
5 underlying attributes are personality, education, tenure, etc.. Similarly, Loden and Rosener's
6 (1991) internal dimensions of diversity, which include age, gender and identity, ethnicity, social
7 background or class, religion or worldviews, sexual orientation, as well as physical and mental
8 abilities, have been numerously applied in Western management (e.g., the German Diversity
9 Charter) and research (e.g., Barnard and Mamabolo, 2021; Fitzsimmons *et al.*, 2020).

16 17 *Institutional Context and Diversity Management*

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19 Discourse on diversity must be understood in the social context and institutional framework
20 within which it is defined. One of the most prominent foci in DM research hence is the
21 identification of external antecedents of DM to explain differences. The resistance paradigm
22 propounds that organizations maintain the status quo in the absence of pressure to increase
23 diversity (Dass and Parker, 1999). According to institutional theory, common contexts create
24 pressures on organisations which result in the isomorphism of organisational practises and
25 routines to correspond to institutionalized expectations to ensure their survival (DiMaggio and
26 Powell, 1983; Scott, 2001). In addition to home country pressures, each host country of MNEs
27 presents unique institutional conditions that may differ drastically from the home country
28 (Kostova and Roth, 2002). DM as well as research on DM consequently needs to be context-
29 sensitive (DiTomaso *et al.*, 2007).

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31 Scott (2001) defined institutions as supra-individual social entities that cause social as well as
32 organisational phenomena through a combination of cultural-cognitive, normative, and
33 regulative context factors. According to Scott (2001), regulative institutions create coercive
34 pressure to conform in the form of rules and corresponding sanctions. Normative institutions
35 create pressure in the form of social obligations, binding expectations, and the need for
36 appropriateness of action. Lastly, cultural-cognitive institutions drive mimetic processes
37 through shared understandings and actions as well as common beliefs.

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39 DM research has primarily focused on the influence of government regulation and legislation,
40 whereas knowledge about the interplay of cultural and normative antecedents as well as a
41 combination of all of them is missing (Yang and Konrad, 2011; Kuskü *et al.*, 2021). The
42 majority of DM research has been executed in North American or Western European contexts.
43 Woodhams and Corby (2007) show regulative pressure and its significance on the
44 implementation of employer practices regarding employees with disabilities in the UK. Konrad
45 *et al.* (2016) found that Canadian managers tailor DM practices to balance competitive and

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3 institutional pressures. Very little is known about companies from emerging markets, though
4 (see Shore *et al.*, 2018). Abdullah *et al.* (2016) suggest based on findings from Malaysia that
5 context plays a role in shaping the impact of female directors on performance. According to
6
7 Tang *et al.* (2015), the Chinese understanding of inclusion is different and broader than that of
8
9 Western literature; while Western theories and measurements can be applied, they may not be
10
11 able to capture the Chinese context entirely. Kuskü *et al.* (2021) find that the lack of supportive
12
13 legal frameworks in Turkey allows diversity to be neglected. These studies highlight the
14
15 significance of the local institutional context in shaping central DM concerns of EMNEs.
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18 Studies examining DM across Central and Eastern European companies shed a light on the
19
20 importance of legal frameworks, economic pressure, and cultural attitudes towards diversity in
21
22 the region (Heisz and Milovecz, 2014; Milovecz and Prikrylova, 2016; Babonea and Ciora,
23
24 2018). Considering the findings of previous literature on contextual impacts on DM, we create
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26 the following research proposition:

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28 *Proposition 1: Local normative, regulative, and cultural-cognitive pressures impact the*
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30 *discourse on DM in CEE MNEs.*

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32 However, in the wake of globalization, companies are increasingly urged to develop global
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34 strategies, resulting in the coordinated internationalization of HRM (Paik *et al.*, 2011) as well
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36 as a global convergence of HRM practices (Pudelko and Harzing, 2007). Smith and Meiksins
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38 (1995) suggest a socioeconomic gap between countries to form dominance perceptions in firms
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40 from less advanced countries as they see a benefit in adopting practices from advanced and
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42 consequently dominant countries. With supposedly progressive Western approaches to
43
44 management, MNEs hope to attract investors, global customers, and employees (Velinov *et al.*,
45
46 2018; Carrillo Arciniega, 2021) and to gain a competitive advantage by better utilising the talent
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48 and increasing creativity (Kossek and Pichler, 2006; Peretz *et al.*, 2015). In CEE Latukha and
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50 Malko (2019) found former Soviet countries to westernize their HRM in order to attract
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52 investors. This leads to the following Proposition for DM:

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54 *Proposition 2: CEE MNEs address Western dimensions of diversity.*

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56 Only looking at the domestic environment is ill-faced when looking at MNEs. Research has
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58 shown that due to the activity across several country contexts, also etic context may influence
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60 HRM. MNEs have been found to adapt their HRM considering institutional factors in their host
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62 markets (Hennekam *et al.*, 2017; Tsui-Auch and Chow, 2019) succumbing to isomorphic
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64 pressures (Kostova and Roth, 2002) which may provide the necessary impetus to apply DM
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66 (Dass and Parker, 1999; Bader *et al.*, 2022).

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3 *Proposition 3: The market presence in Western markets increases the implementation*
4 *of DM.*
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7 In that regard, Bader *et al.* (2022) found that host countries with gender inequality and less
8 institutional pressure on DM than the home countries make the implementation of DM practices
9 difficult. This may apply to CEE and other emerging markets as for example Poland, Hungary,
10 and Romania, demonstrate conservative tendencies and resistance toward LGBTQ+ rights and
11 activism, while Russia promotes conservative and anti-Western discourse and shows growing
12 discrimination toward queer people and activists (Buyantueva and Shevtsova, 2020).
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18 *Proposition 4: The market presence in other CEE or emerging markets does not*
19 *increase the implementation of DM.*
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23 24 *Industrial context: Oil and Gas*

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26 Studying the CEE Oil and Gas industry provides insights beyond the regional and
27 organisational levels. Spender (1989) explains that the industrial context has a strong
28 explanatory power in terms of work practices even compared to the national and organisational
29 context. Despite its global activity, diversity management in the Oil and Gas industry is studied
30 mainly in North America and Western Europe (e.g., Williams *et al.*, 2014). Being an old boys
31 club, companies still market themselves as promoters of diversity through tokenism in their
32 corporate communication (Williams *et al.*, 2014). Williams *et al.* (2014) also state that DM in
33 the industry focuses on gender and age, due to reluctance to tackle existing racial and ethnic
34 diversity and extreme gender inequality, which overshadows the other dimensions. On the one
35 hand, companies must ensure compliance with their respective institutional context and, on the
36 other hand, must demonstrate to global shareholders and stakeholders that they are managing
37 internal diversity ethically and efficiently (Johns *et al.*, 2012). By combining the gaps outlined
38 in the introduction and the previous findings listed above with the lack of research and public
39 and scientific interest concerning the industry, we deduct the following research questions (RQ)
40 guiding our article:
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52 *RQ 1: How does the Oil and Gas industry in Central and Eastern Europe address*
53 *diversity?*
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57 *RQ 2: How does institutional context shape Diversity Management approaches in the*
58 *Central and Eastern European Oil and Gas industry?*
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Sample and Methods

Our methodology uses content analysis to examine the CEE Oil and Gas discourse on diversity. Organisational and institutional documents have been a staple in qualitative research for many years, and the analysis of their content is a fruitful method to research diversity management practices (c.f. Austin, 2010). We analyse the discourse between CEE Oil and Gas companies and their global audience by examining whether they report on DM in their external communications to conform to domestic or international pressure.

The examined companies result from a theoretical sampling process following two selection criteria: industry affiliation and headquarters location. Industry affiliation determines that Oil and Gas must account for the majority of the sample companies' revenue. Thereby we ensure that all sample companies are exposed to the same isomorphic pressure of their organisational field (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). The company headquarters have to be located in Central and Eastern Europe, defined as all independent countries located in Europe which have been part of the Eastern Bloc, i.e. former member states of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, former Socialist Republics, and geographically European former member states of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. They also need to be free from a foreign controlling stake to exclude external influences.

(Insert Table 1)

CEE Oil and Gas companies without an international presence are used as deviants to care for the effect of foreign market presence on DM. The MNEs included in the sample need to have at least one foreign operation. We identified fourteen Oil and Gas MNEs from seven CEE countries as well as three large companies without international presence. The international market presence is divided into four categories:

(Insert Table 2)

In our data collection from November 2020 to April 2021, we focused on electronically available public communication documents to analyse which dimensions of diversity are publicly addressed in the CEE Oil and Gas industry (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). The resulting 66 documents, which depict the discourse on DM are indicated in Table 3. We first skimmed the documents to locate pertinent paragraphs, followed by an in-depth reading of the identified

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3 paragraphs and then the interpretation of relevant phrases through content analysis (Bowen,
4 2009) to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin and
5 Strauss, 2008). Data on the sample companies have been collected and studied in English if
6 available and native languages and then translated by members of the research team aided by
7 native speakers.
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12 A directed content analysis of the data to offer supporting and non-supporting evidence was
13 applied to structure the content into categories following Mayring (2014). We filtered the
14 documents via previously defined classification criteria in a structuring deductive
15 categorisation of content based on seven deductive categories stemming from Loden and
16 Rosener's (1991) internal dimensions of organisational diversity to analyse the reporting of etic
17 dimensions of diversity (Mayring, 2014) with the help of relevant sample quotes clustered in
18 Microsoft Excel. These are Sex, gender, and identity (*Gender*), age (*Age*), race, ethnic
19 background, colour, and nationality (*Ethnicity*), physical and mental (dis)ability (*Ability*),
20 sexual orientation (*Sexuality*), religion and worldview (*Spirituality*), as well as social status and
21 background (*Status*). The usage of an established diversity concept as the backbone of the
22 deductive coding supports the credibility and confirmability of our study (Hsieh and Shannon,
23 2005; Sinkovics *et al.*, 2008) and increases the transferability of our method to other cases and
24 contexts (Tracy, 2010). As suggested by Mayring (2014) and Flick (2018), we transform the
25 qualitative content analysis data and quantify the addressed etic dimensions of diversity to
26 analyse the effect of four different types of market presence for illustration.
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39 To address the neglected consideration of different contexts for the implementation of DM as
40 criticised by Özbilgin and Tatli (2008), Erdur (2020), and Adams *et al.* (2021), we draw on
41 institutional theory and aim to detect macro-level impacts on meso-level DM reported by the
42 sample companies (cf. Pringle and Ryan, 2015). We focus on the relations between text and
43 graphics, constituting the diversity discourse in the CEE Oil and Gas industry, and its context.
44 To determine this context, we collected data on Scott's (2001) institutional pillars in nine CEE
45 countries.
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51 To examine domestic normative pressures, we analyse national diversity charters, if present,
52 i.e., voluntary initiatives aiming at encouraging organisations to implement and develop DM,
53 in a preceding content analysis. The more companies, and especially members of the
54 organizational field, are part of the initiatives, the higher becomes the normative pressure to
55 join. By joining, the companies pledge to pro-diversity values and are obliged to report their
56 actions aimed at reaching the charter targets. We applied a deductive categorization to the
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3 charter contents, based on the codes *Initial Funding*, detecting whether the initiative is funded
4 by foreign or supranational institutions, the addressed etic *Diversity Dimensions* based on
5 Loden and Rosener (1991), *Launch date*, the number of *Signatories*, and the number of *Oil and*
6 *Gas Signatories*, a higher number in each of those implies higher pressure (Mayring, 2014).
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8 The information is compiled into a pro-diversity *pressure* category ranging from none, over
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10 low and medium to high, which is used for the other pillars as well.
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14 Each home country's regulative institutional context is examined by means of a directed
15 deductive content analysis of the national constitution and the labour legislation in place
16 regarding the etic dimensions of diversity (Mayring, 2014). We gathered the legal documents
17 in English via the legislationline-database and coded the content on a phrase level according to
18 seven deductive categories based on Loden and Rosener's (1991) diversity dimensions and
19 deducted the pro-diversity pressure from none, over low (*Non-discriminatory*), *medium*
20 (*Equality before the law/ Equality of rights and freedoms*), to high (*Special protection/*
21 *Affirmative Action*).
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25 Furthermore, Scott's third pillar, cultural-cognitive institutions, is analysed through data on
26 eight questions from the newest dataset of the European Values Study, a large-scale, cross-
27 national survey on basic human values (EVS, 2020). Results are available for each country
28 except for Latvia and have been used in diversity research e.g. by Nemeth *et al.* (2020). We
29 coded the questions according to the etic diversity dimensions and selected one question (two
30 for *Gender* to be able to showcase Gender roles) per dimension which bears the highest
31 congruence with one etic dimension by Loden and Rosener (1991) (Mayring, 2014). We
32 identified data on gender roles (*Gender*), xenophobia with regard to *Ethnicity* and *Spirituality*,
33 homophobia (*Sexuality*), support for people with disabilities and health issues (*Ability*), concern
34 for the elderly (*Age*), and concern for the unemployed (*Status*).
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48 (Insert Table 4)

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51 The quantitative results are transformed into a qualitative six-level pro-diversity pressure scale
52 which divides the value percentages from zero (*None*), over low, medium, and high in 20 %
53 steps to match the other contextual influences (Mayring, 2014).
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59 (Insert Figure 1)

Results

In the results, we first show our findings on the nine institutional contexts, structured according to the three institutional pressures to implement DM, before we present our findings regarding DM in our sample companies.

Normative pressures

The normative context presents disparities between EU member states on the one side and Serbia and Russia on the other, where no institutionalised etc initiatives exist. In Bulgaria, Romania, and Slovenia those initiatives were initiated and funded by EU programmes, while in Hungary, Poland, and Latvia the initiatives were driven nationally. While the Polish initiative was launched in 2012, the other countries followed significantly later (see Table 2). The Polish diversity charter has by far the most signatories (305), followed by the Romanian (80), Slovenian (60), Hungarian (50), Croatian (42), Latvian (41), and Bulgarian (10) charters. Foreign companies are the backbone of those initiatives in Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Poland, where only up to 33 % of the signatories are domestic. In Croatia (55 %), Latvia (60 %), and Slovenia (75 %) national organisations are the main advocates of the initiatives. Only in Croatia, a domestic Oil and Gas company signed the charter, the sample company INA, thus having succumbed to the isomorphic pressure. Nevertheless, *Status* is not covered, and no competitors are signatories, supporting the conclusion that pressure is high but not very high. The same dimension is missing in the Hungarian charter, and *Status* in the Latvian Charter, while in Romania no dimensions are specified. In Romania (OMV), Hungary (BP and Shell), and Bulgaria (Shell) foreign competitors signed.

(Insert Table 5)

Regulative pressures

Examining the regulative contexts shows that each sample country has codified the equality of all citizens in their constitution. However, there are distinct differences concerning explicitly addressed diversity dimensions. Latvia refrains from mentioning any dimension of diversity in its constitution but instead grants everyone equal treatment. Poland also refrains from mentioning any dimension except *Gender*, where the constitution grants equal rights to women and men. Except for Latvia, all countries specifically mention protecting the rights of all genders. The protection of women is mentioned in Hungary, and all genders are protected from

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3 discrimination in Romania and granted equal rights in all the other countries. Croatia lists
4 gender equality among its highest constitutional values. The *Age*-dimension is only listed in the
5 Hungarian constitution, where the elderly are granted special protection. Disability is also
6 granted special protection in the Hungarian constitution and equal rights and freedoms in
7 Slovenia. Except for Poland and Latvia, all countries specifically mention some form of
8 *Ethnicity*, *Spirituality*, and *Status* by granting equal rights or protection from discrimination.
9 None of the examined countries names *Sexuality* in their constitution.
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20 Nevertheless, each country has put regulations in place to provide additional protection. While
21 all countries prohibit discrimination on behalf of or grants equal rights based on *Gender*, only
22 Latvia and Slovenia specifically codify equality concerning working conditions, remuneration,
23 and careers of women. Russia on the other hand prohibits women from joining almost 100
24 professions deemed too dangerous, thereby limiting equality and inclusion significantly
25 resulting in a lack of pro-diversity pressure. Each country prohibits discrimination or foster
26 equal rights based on *Age*, *Spirituality*, and *Ethnicity*. Latvia and Slovenia more specifically
27 promote non-discriminatory pay, working conditions and career paths. The same applies to the
28 *Sexuality* dimension. Each country except for Poland protects against discrimination or
29 provides equal rights regardless of *Status*, whereas Latvia and Slovenia again grant the
30 aforementioned advanced guarantees. Concerning *Ability*, each country except for Latvia has
31 codified affirmative action. While affirmative actions are represented by quotas of employees
32 with disabilities ranging between 2 - 6 % depending on the number of employees, Romania
33 also offers an option to contribute to an inclusion fund to avoid integrating. Consequently, we
34 can state that the dimensions of *Gender*, *Ethnicity* and *Ability*, are all thoroughly integrated into
35 the sample countries' regulatory framework and *Gender*, and *Ability* are most intensively cared
36 for.
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52 *Cultural-cognitive pressures* 53

54 The analysis of the EVS results representing the cultural-cognitive pillar shows a heterogeneous
55 picture. In the *Gender* dimension, people in Russia express traditional views of gender roles
56 with the man as the breadwinner and the woman taking care of housework resulting in low
57 institutional pressure. At the same time, values in Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Poland, and
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3 Serbia exert medium pressure. Croatia and Slovenia show little preference for traditional gender
4 roles, resulting in high cultural-cognitive pressure. In the second category for the *Gender*-
5 dimension regarding female leadership, the picture is similar but less pronounced. Russia exerts
6 the lowest pressure but here it is medium, while in Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Poland
7 the pressure is high and in Croatia and Slovenia it is very high. Except for Slovenia and Croatia,
8 the region still has a patriarchal concept of *Gender* roles. In the *Age*-dimension, caring for the
9 elderly creates medium pressures in Russia, Hungary, and Serbia as well as high pressures in
10 Romania, Bulgaria, Poland, Croatia, and Slovenia. Quite the opposite can be found in the
11 *Ethnicity*-dimension, expressed through a statement of immigrants taking away jobs. Pressure
12 in Russia and Hungary to implement DM measures in this dimension is low, in all other
13 countries, the pressure is medium. Country values on taking care of people with physical and
14 mental disabilities (*Ability*) result in high pressures for such action in Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia,
15 Poland, Bulgaria, and Romania. In Russia, the pressure is only medium, and in Hungary it is
16 low. Homophobic values, like objecting to homosexuals as neighbours, are interpreted as
17 antipodes of DM on the *Sexuality* dimension. The institutional pressure is low in Russia and
18 Bulgaria, where over 60 % of the respondents expressed homophobic values, medium in
19 Romania and Serbia, and high in Hungary, Poland, Croatia, and Slovenia. Pressure on actions
20 regarding *Spirituality* is low in Romania and Serbia, medium in Russia, Bulgaria, Poland, and
21 Slovenia, but high in Hungary and Croatia. For *Status*, using data on caring for unemployed
22 people, we find very low pressure in Hungary, low pressure in Russia and Poland, medium
23 pressure in Romania, Bulgaria, and Serbia as well as high pressure in Croatia and Slovenia.

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40 (Insert Table 7)

41 42 43 *DM in the CEE Oil and Gas industry*

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45 To answer research question one, the application of the Western dimensions is indicated in the
46 following. We found a striking heterogeneity of communicated DM practices among the
47 investigated companies within and across countries. Bulgargaz and Srbijagas relied almost
48 entirely on financial insights and only reported on the proportion of women in management and
49 technical positions in their reports. On the contrary, for companies from Poland, Slovenia, and
50 Hungary the information was diametrically available. In Russia, due to the broader sample of
51 companies there, data availability and reporting activity were mixed.

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54 In terms of *Gender*, the female workforce ratio ranges from 11 to 41 % in the sample companies.
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60 Particularly, the Oil and Gas MNEs in Russia have a ratio of between 26 to 37 % of females in

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3 managerial positions, the local and regional companies a lot less. In comparison, Polish
4 companies presented a range between 22 and 31 % and 26 % in Serbia. At MOL from Hungary
5 and Romgaz, the gender ratio was not disclosed. While LOTOS from Poland and Petrol from
6 Slovenia presented female company representatives and managers, only Gazprom displayed
7 pictures including women without a particular discernible function within the company,
8 indicating tokenism.
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14 The majority of the firms, except for Romgaz, Bulgargaz and Latvijas Gaze, disclosed that they
15 invest in initiatives for young talents. Such practices in the *Age*-dimension were particularly
16 well-reported in Russian and Slovene companies, where the initiatives and financial programs
17 supported young as well as third-age employees or promoted recruiting regardless of age in
18 employment plans. Additionally, in the Polish MNEs, there are mentoring programs, where the
19 older employees provide consultations and mentoring to younger ones.
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25 Actions on the *Ability* of employees have been reported in Slovene, Polish and Hungarian firms
26 as they invest significantly into employee well-being activities such as sports events, medical
27 check-ups, and healthcare days. Nevertheless, reports on the *Ability* of employees varied
28 strongly across the companies. While Latvijas Gaze and Bulgargaz did not present any action
29 on disabled employees, the Russian companies reported charitable actions like donations to
30 funds for people with disabilities and financial support for disadvantaged groups, especially for
31 families with lower income. MOL, INA, PKN Orlen, LOTOS, Petrol and Romgaz, on the other
32 hand, reported DM in this regard.
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39 Companies referring to *Spirituality* as well as *Ethnicity* and *Sexuality* are Petrol and INA, which
40 claim respect to all religions during recruitment as well as respect for all ethnic groups and
41 sexualities.
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48 Only where at least one home country's institutional pressure on an etic dimension is high, DM
49 is reported in the Oil and Gas companies. Nevertheless, not the normative but cultural-cognitive
50 factors matter in driving DM reports. Additionally, EU membership and the resulting obligation
51 to include diversity reporting did cause a slight increase in reported DM practices. Overall,
52 though, regulative, and normative pressure are not driving forces to implement DM practises
53 but rather cultural-cognitive. On average the companies report less than three etic dimensions
54 (2,8 average) and local companies only report one etic dimension on average. We find the Oil
55 and Gas firms with international activity (MNEs) to show higher DM activity and report on
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3 more etic dimensions. MNEs operating in Western markets (3,5 average) are significantly more
4 active than their counterparts which are only regional players in CEE (1,7 etic dimensions on
5 average). The MNEs most often report on *Gender*, followed by *Ability*, but neglect the *Ethnicity*
6 dimension (except for Petrol). Due to the medium regulative pressure across CEE countries, as
7 well as partially discriminatory regulative actions like in Russia, it's either cultural-cognitive
8 or foreign market pressure that makes CEE Oil and Gas MNEs take up DM measures without
9 legal necessity.
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17 Discussion

18 Supporting Williams *et al.*'s (2014) findings from the Oil and Gas industry, 14 of 17 MNEs
19 have reported on *gender*. Their actions might bring changes in the not-so-distant future to tackle
20 the traditionalized gender roles in CEE (Morley *et al.*, 2016), because the findings of Williams
21 *et al.* (2014), and Rick *et al.* (2017) of women remaining underrepresented can be supported
22 for the CEE region as well. Williams and colleagues' (2014) findings on tokenism, however,
23 cannot be supported in CEE corporate communication except for Gazprom, while overall
24 representation is very low. Additionally, Williams *et al.*'s (2014) findings on *Age* can be
25 supported for nine CEE Oil and Gas companies, making it a relevant dimension. Yet more than
26 the CEE Oil and Gas industry reports on two additional etic dimensions, being *Ability* in eleven
27 companies and *Status* in eight. Thereby the CEE companies seem to surpass the global industry,
28 even though recent data are lacking.
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38 Concerning *Proposition 1* and in support of the findings by Konrad *et al.* (2016) and Abdullah
39 *et al.* (2016) we found contextual influences on DM in CEE. Contrary to Woodhams and
40 Corby's (2007), Heisz and Milovecz's (2014) and Milovecz and Prikrylova's, (2016) findings,
41 regulative impacts have not been a relevant driver of DM reporting in CEE just like normative
42 pressures. Our findings partially support Konrad *et al.* (2016) in a way that the field adheres to
43 cultural-cognitive pressures.
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49 Contrary to the findings by Tang *et al.* (2015) in China and partial support of *Proposition 2*,
50 CEE MNEs report on Western definitions of diversity, even though sexuality, spirituality, and
51 ethnicity are only found in a maximum of two companies. Nevertheless, CEE Oil and Gas
52 companies with purely domestic operations are following etic DM mandates to a much lesser
53 extent, confirming *Proposition 4*, and supporting the findings by Bader *et al.* (2022) as well as
54 Kuskü *et al.* (2021) on differing pressures to implement DM depending on local context.
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3 The multinational activity of CEE Oil and Gas companies on the other hand has a positive
4 impact on DM actions. CEE Oil and Gas MNEs with an established presence in the global north
5 are westernising their business practises to a considerably larger extent, thereby supporting
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8 *Proposition 3*. They go beyond home-country institutional mandates to address DM in a
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10 Westernised way to fit foreign market demands. This supports a convergence towards dominant
11 Western practice (Smith and Meiksins, 1995; Pudelko and Harzing, 2007; Paik *et al.*, 2011),
12 which is driven by the international market presence and isomorphic processes in Western
13 markets affecting CEE MNEs, to attract investors, global customers, and employees (Carrillo
14 Arciniega, 2021; Velinov *et al.*, 2018; Kostova and Roth, 2002).
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21 **Conclusions**

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23 We conclude that MNEs from CEE operating in the West may assume a pioneering role in
24 bringing DM topics forward within their national and regional organisational field as well as in
25 their home and host contexts in general due to a global convergence and the dominance of
26 Western approaches to DM. Our study shows that the CEE institutional environment is barely
27 a driver and partially a barrier for the introduction of diversity management practices
28 exemplified through queer-free zones in Poland, laws banning same-sex marriages in Hungary
29 or barring women from certain jobs in Russia. The necessary pressures to break the resistance
30 to implement DM are either cultural-cognitive or foreign target market-based.
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40 *Theoretical implications*

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42 Answering calls by Özbilgin and Tatli (2008), Erdur (2020), and Adams *et al.* (2021) to
43 consider different and non-Western contexts in DM research, our findings also support the
44 resistance paradigm (Dass and Parker, 1999) and the findings by Bader *et al.* (2022 concerning
45 the necessity of pro-diversity pressure. We advance the convergence-divergence debate in
46 HRM by showcasing the importance of international activity for a convergence of DM based
47 on the application of globalised etic DM in CEE Oil and Gas companies competing in Western
48 markets, while regional or purely domestic companies are still divergent. We thus transfer the
49 findings by Smith and Meiksins (1995) and Pudelko and Harzing (2007) of the dominance of
50 Western practice to DM.
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60 *Practical Implications*

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3 DM practices may be a gateway to being active in Western markets for CEE and other
4 companies from the global south and east. Additionally, those companies may benefit from a
5 more inclusive climate in the home country through better access to human resources on a
6 global, national, and local scale and better access to foreign markets, which may drive them
7 towards seeking an alteration of emic institutional structures through institutional
8 entrepreneurship as long as they are still endowed with sufficient resources and power to lobby
9 on their behalf. They may add to the global dominance of the Western approach to DM. While
10 adhering to etic Western DM approaches could bring business success, it could also trigger a
11 backlash in local contexts since CEE Oil and Gas companies tackle etic notions of diversity
12 more skilfully than emic concerns. An accompanying emic approach to diversity on macro- and
13 meso-levels is necessary as dominant etic approaches to diversity are insufficient to deal with
14 local complexities of diversity. Our study suggests that responsible DM in the Oil and Gas
15 industry requires organisations to navigate between Western demands and emic, i.e., national,
16 and institutional circumstances, which may provide the impetus for organisations to innovate
17 in HRM to effectively manage diversity in challenging contexts across CEE.
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31 *Limitations and Future Research*

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33 Western dimensions of diversity are not undisputed. To be culturally sensitive, it is necessary
34 to acknowledge that Western values of diversity are not superior to other ideologies or local
35 concepts of equal societies and responsible organisations. It is to abstain from cementing old-
36 fashioned Cold Warsque juxtapositions of a progressive West and a hidebound East.
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41 The information on meso-level DM based on corporate communication is treated as brushed-
42 up versions of company DM practice, assuming that organisations have an interest in reporting
43 on DM to meet external expectations. As suggested by Bowen (2009) though, public documents
44 can't paint a full picture of how an organization operates as we should not treat their
45 publications as firm evidence. In contexts that are less welcoming to DM practises, companies
46 and representatives deliberately choose not to disclose information publicly, fearing a political
47 or social backlash. The analysed regulations may not fully depict juridical national practice on
48 affirmation and discrimination. The normative power of voluntary commitment may also be
49 disputed. Similarly, the secondary data gathered on cultural institutions present a limitation
50 because we relied on questionnaire results as proxies for this institution, which may only depict
51 certain elements of the diversity dimension the represent, instead of broader assessments or
52 profound analyses of local cultural values towards each specific diversity dimension. Gathering
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3 data on DM in CEE is difficult in times of crisis, after covid and with the ongoing war in
4 Ukraine, as cross-country travel and research in the field have become severely limited,
5 especially further to the east. In the aftermath of the war in Ukraine, Russian MNEs may deviate
6 even further from Western values either by choice or due to home country pressures, despite
7 possible negative repercussions abroad. Other CEE countries though, especially members and
8 prospects of the European Union, may be driven further towards Western values. In order to
9 detect and understand the motivations behind the communicated DM practices and to
10 understand future developments better, in-depth interviews with decision-makers in further
11 studies may be employed. Further, the industrial and regional foci are obvious limitations to
12 global generalizability. Future studies may engage in comparative studies including developed
13 and emerging markets as well as other regions and industries.
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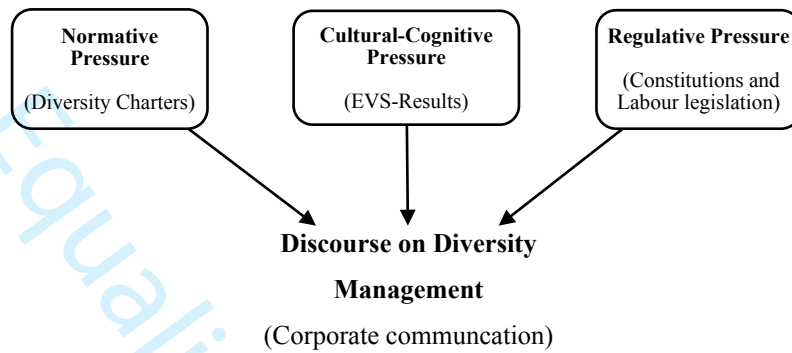
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Figure 1: National institutions and the affected corporate discourse in the CEE Oil and Gas industry with the corresponding data sources in brackets.



Tables

Table 1: Sample of Oil and Gas companies from CEE.

Country Oil and Gas Companies

Bulgaria	Bulgargas						
Croatia	INA						
Hungary	MOL						
Latvia	Latvijas Gaze						
Poland	PKN Orlen	LOTOS					
Romania	Romgaz						
Russia	LUKOIL	Tatneft	Rosneft	Gazprom	Surgutneftegas	Zarubezhneft	Novatek
Slovenia	Petrol						
Serbia	SrbijaGas						

Table 2: Sample company international presence.

Domestic	+ Regional (CEE)	+ Western Europe	+ Global North Outside Europe
Bulgargaz Latvijas Gaze Surgutneftegas	Romgaz SrbijaGas Zarubezhneft	Petrol LOTOS INA Novatek	LUKOIL Tatneft Rosneft Gazprom MOL PKN Orlen Rusneftegaz

Table 3: List of analysed documents of the CEE Oil and Gas firms on Diversity Management

Country	Oil & Gas Company	Analysed documents
Bulgaria	Bulgargaz	Corporate Website, Non-financial declaration 2018, Annual Report 2019
Croatia	INA	Corporate Website, Integrated Annual Report 2019-2020, Sustainability Report 2020
Hungary	MOL	Corporate Website, Annual Reports 2019 and 2020, Sustainability report 2020, Code of Ethics
Latvia	Latvijas Gaze	Corporate Website, Annual Reports 2019 and 2020
Poland	PKN Orlen	Corporate Website, integrated Annual Report 2019 and 2020, Diversity policy 2020
Poland	LOTOS	Corporate Website, integrated Annual Report 2019 and 2020, Corporate Governance Report 2019
Romania	Romgaz	Corporate Website, Annual Reports 2019 and 2020, Sustainability Report 2020
Russia	Gazprom	Corporate Website, Code of Ethics; HR report 2020, Annual Reports 2019 and 2020
Russia	Tatneft	Corporate Website, Annual Reports 2019 and 2020, Code of Ethics

Russia	LUKOIL	Corporate Website, Code of Conduct 2020, HR Report 2020, Annual Reports 2019 and 2020
Russia	Rosneft	Corporate Website, Annual Reports 2019 and 2020, Code of Ethics
Russia	Surgutneftegas	Corporate Website, Annual Reports 2019 and 2020
Russia	Zarubezhneft	Corporate Website, Annual Reports 2019 and 2020
Russia	Novatek	Corporate Website, Annual Reports 2019 and 2020
Russia	Rusneftegaz	Corporate Website, Annual Reports 2019 and 2020
Serbia	SrbijaGas	Corporate Website, Annual Reports 2019 and 2020, Sustainability Report 2020
Slovenia	PETROL	Corporate Website, Sustainability Report 2020, Code of Conduct, Annual Reports 2019 and 2020, Diversity Report 2018

Source: own elaboration

Table 4: Categorized questions from the European Values Survey (2020).

Gender (Average of both)	- Percentage of people that agree or strongly agree with the statement that a man's job is to earn the money, a woman's job is to look after home and family. - Percentage of people that believe that men make better business executives than women.
Age	Percentage of people that are much or very much concerned about the living conditions of elderly people in the country.
Ethnicity	Opinion on a scale of 1 to 100: Immigrants take jobs away from citizens.
Ability	Percentage of people that are much or very much concerned about the living conditions of sick and disabled people in the country.
Sexuality	Percentage of people that wouldn't like to have homosexuals as neighbours.
Spirituality	Percentage of People that trust people from another religion completely or somewhat.
Status	Percentage of people that are much or very much concerned about living conditions of unemployed people.

Table 5: Normative pressure based on national diversity charters.

Charter Data	Bulgaria	Croatia	Hungary	Latvia	Poland	Romania	Russia	Serbia	Slovenia
Initial Funding	European Union	European Union	Domestic Public Authority	Domestic NGO	Domestic Public Authority	European Union	(-)	(-)	European Union
Domestic Oil and Gas Signatories	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Foreign Oil and Gas Signatories	1	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0
Diversity Dimensions	7/7	6/7 (sans status)	6/7 (sans status)	7/7	7/7	unspecified	0	0	7/7

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7 Table 6: Regulative pressure: Constitutional rights and labour regulation.
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Dimension	Bulgaria	Croatia	Hungary	Latvia	Poland	Romania	Russia	Serbia	Slovenia
Gender	Equality before the law	Equality among highest values	Special protection of women	Equal rights to all human beings	Equal rights	Non-discriminatory	Non-discriminatory; Exclusion of females	Non-discriminatory	Equality of rights and freedoms
Age	(-)	(-)	Special protection of children and elderly	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)
Ethnicity	Equality before the law	Equality of rights and freedoms	Non-discriminatory	(-)	(-)	Non-discriminatory	Non-discriminatory	Non-discriminatory	Equality of rights and freedoms
Ability	(-)	(-)	Special protection	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)	Non-discriminatory	Equality of rights and freedoms
Sexuality	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)
Spirituality	Equality before the law	Equality of rights and freedoms	Non-discriminatory	(-)	(-)	Non-discriminatory	Non-discriminatory	Non-discriminatory	Equality of rights and freedoms
Status	Equality before the law	Equality of rights and freedoms	Non-discriminatory	(-)	(-)	Non-discriminatory	Non-discriminatory	Non-discriminatory	Equality of rights and freedoms

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Table 7: Cultural-cognitive pressure based on the European Values Survey (2020).

Dimension	Bulgaria	Croatia	Hungary	Latvia	Poland	Romania	Russia	Serbia	Slovenia
Gender	54,67	34,43	47,75	(-)	40,64	50,01	62,19	42,99	21,37
Age	77,48	71,22	46,3	(-)	63,7	71,36	57,11	58,65	60,73
Ethnicity	54,25	42,45	62,9	(-)	50,98	56,3	68,62	59,62	47,16
Ability	73,08	79,96	39,08	(-)	63,23	68,76	49,94	64,56	66,46
Sexuality	65,99	37,24	37,23	(-)	30,2	54,27	66,06	47,19	29,84
Spirituality	43,88	65,68	62,32	(-)	46,7	29,53	40,49	36,58	37,88
Status	43,01	65,4	15,9	(-)	30,64	43,71	25,48	49,25	40,81

Table 8: Application of etic dimensions of diversity across the sample CEE Oil and Gas companies.

Oil & Gas Company	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Ability	Sexuality	Spirituality	Status
Bulgargaz	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
INA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
MOL	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
Latvijas Gaze	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
PKN Orlen	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
LOTOS	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Romgaz	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Gazprom	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Tatneft	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
LUKOIL	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Rosneft	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Surgutneftegas	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Zarubezhneft	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Novatek	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Rusneftegaz	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
SrbijaGas	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
PETROL	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Total	14	9	1	11	2	1	8