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Stream: Mobility Requirements in Academia and Consequences for Diversity and Inclusion in Higher
Education Organisations

Abstract

Meeting the Future Demand for Scientists in Academia via Gender Equality and Diversity Management

Due to the predicted demographic change, currently, an intensified discussion is carried out on the future shortage of scientists and engineers in the EU that will threaten the socioeconomic prosperity. However, there is a discrepancy between the awareness of this problem and the strategies that has developed so far in order to mitigate this shortage.

The future demand for academics has been highlighted hesitantly in research on migration so far. Studies which address this problem focus on the area of globalization with its demands for mobility and flexibility and the competition among the countries on the brightest.

Thus, the aim of this work is to address the discrepancy within the framework of migration and globalization studies and discuss strategies that are suited to mitigate the predicted shortage of academics. The strategies were derived from an interview study with experts working in the policy and consultant sector of highly skilled migration as well as interviews with female engineers and scientists with migration background working at German universities.

The analyses showed that a huge “brain waste” is taken place in Germany because in the context of East-West-migration after the 1990s many academics immigrated to Germany; however most of them are employed under their qualification level. Furthermore, among the highly skilled migrants were a considerable amount of female academics who face disqualification in Germany even more than their male counterparts. Yet academics who came with a working contract to Germany could in the majority continue their careers on the same level as when they left their home country.

In conclusion, even though universities and companies already avert the shortage of academics through internationalization strategies, they lose potential by ignoring academics with migration background who already live in Germany. Moreover, they also waste potential by losing women who drop out of their careers due to insufficient acknowledgement of their competencies and missing fostering of their careers.