

Press Information

13 May 2024

When the world comes together

+++ Cultural diversity is part of everyday life at the BMW Group +++ Activities to mark World Day for Cultural Diversity on 21 May and German Diversity Day on 28 May +++

Munich/Leipzig. When the team at BMW Group Plant Leipzig pick up their tools on a Monday morning, the whole world comes together: about 70 nationalities collaborate here. The team come not just from Germany but also from places like Syria, Poland, Spain, Egypt and Eritrea. "We all work together really well, it's enriching and founded on acceptance and mutual respect," explained Plant Director Petra Peterhänsel. Cultural diversity is the order of the day, not just here but across the BMW Group – and has been for a very long time.

As the team expands, Plant Leipzig is getting even more colourful and varied. Cultural diversity is key to making the BMW Group electric, digital and circular, and specialists from all fields and across the globe are needed to ensure secure supplies of labour and help align the BMW Group as closely as possible with the wishes and needs of its stakeholders in a global world that's always on the move.

Plant Leipzig exemplifies the BMW Group's fundamental belief that cultural diversity is welcome, essential to its success and enhances the company's attractiveness as an employer. It also sets the BMW Group apart, with some 150,000 employees worldwide from more than 110 different countries all doing their part for our shared success.

BMW Group to take active part in German Diversity Day

On World Day for Cultural Diversity on 21 May and German Diversity Day – established by the Diversity Charter and taking place on 28 May – the BMW Group will be seizing the opportunity to do more to promote and strengthen cultural diversity within its own ranks through numerous in-house activities.

But these are just two of various campaign days each year on which the BMW Group devotes its attention to diversity, equal opportunities and inclusion.

Plant Leipzig: the cultural mix is a challenge – but an opportunity as well

When Abdelrahman Salem followed his German girlfriend – now his wife – from Egypt to Germany, he arrived here speaking hardly a word of the language. At the age of 30, the pilot found himself having to establish a new professional focus. An opportunity arose at the BMW Group: he passed his entrance exam, learned German with the help of the company and was able to start training as a production mechanic. Today he is a specialist in battery module production, and in April of this year he was awarded German citizenship. "In terms of integration, both personally and professionally, language was key," said Salem looking back. He is also keen to share his positive experiences with others: while undergoing training himself, he already started supporting other colleagues coming in from other countries by showing them the ropes and translating technical documentation for them.

Abdelrahman Salem is part of a multicultural team at Plant Leipzig, where the share of employees from other countries has grown significantly over the last ten years. In 2017 they came from 44 different nations, rising to over 70 by 2023.

For someone like Salem to progress as he has, active integration is key. "The mix of cultures is a new challenge because not all our new colleagues speak the same language as we do. That's why we offer German courses and intercultural training to help people get along with each other, so we can all grow together," said Plant Director Petra Peterhänsel.

Practising a 'welcome culture'

At BMW Group plants in Germany, integration is actively promoted. Departments provide the basics of their specialist knowledge in different languages

as well as pictograms, and to help employees improve their language skills, the BMW Group covers the cost of the personal contribution they have to pay for language courses by the Office for Migration and Refugees. As part of its 'welcome culture' the BMW Group also works hard to show newcomers the ropes in their new jobs. And the effort is paying off: staff turnover is low and new colleagues are sending a positive message to the outside world. An important role in all of this falls to managers: as role models, they can influence the atmosphere in the team – which is also the reason managers in production undergo intercultural training, for example.

No place for discrimination

At the BMW Group, diversity is about more than just cultures: it also covers sex, age and experience, physical and mental abilities, and sexual orientation and gender identity. With sufficient understanding and acceptance of others and a sense for similarities and differences, together these dimensions of diversity become a strength. To avoid prejudice and discrimination, all employees undergo mandatory training on equal treatment and how respectful collaboration can succeed. The course is currently being rolled out worldwide.

Young talent development: Wanted! International perspectives

So that young talents gain early experience of intercultural collaboration, the BMW Group encourages international secondments. Trainees and trainee apprentices, for example, can spend time abroad via the global MOVE programme and work elsewhere in the production network, for example in the UK, the US, South Africa, China or Mexico. The international exchange scheme for graduates is the global AcceleratiON programme. Both of these initiatives aim to help young people broaden their horizons, connect and experience different perspectives.

Unternehmenskommunikation**Press information**

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Die BMW Group

With its four brands, BMW, MINI, Rolls-Royce and BMW Motorrad, the BMW Group is the world's leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles and also provides premium financial and mobility services. The BMW Group production network comprises over 30 production sites worldwide; the company has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2023, the BMW Group sold nearly 2.55 million passenger vehicles and more than 209,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax in the financial year 2023 was € 17.1 billion on revenues amounting to € 155.5 billion. As of 31 December 2023, the BMW Group had a workforce of 154,950 employees. The success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company set the course for the future at an early stage and consistently makes sustainability and efficient resource management central to its strategic direction, from the supply chain through production to the end of the use phase of all products.

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