

Diversity truck tours Europe to boost the EU's drive against discrimination

The EU's Stop-Discrimination Truck heads off on its third EU tour tomorrow 10 August, travelling through 22 cities in 13 countries to promote equal opportunities in employment. On its four-month journey, the 30-ton mobile information platform will visit job fairs, university career days, youth festivals, and companies to raise awareness of the benefits of a discrimination-free working environment. Among other things, the Truck features a mobile 'Ability Park' which puts visitors' senses to the test to highlight the everyday challenges people with disabilities face. To mark Finland's Presidency of the EU, this year's tour starts in Helsinki.

Vladimir Špidla, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, said on the launch of the tour "Diversity is clearly a fact of life in today's Europe, however, its economic and social benefits are far from known. The Truck Tour offers an ideal opportunity to raise awareness of how diversity can contribute to our every-day lives. With this tour, we want to reach out in particular to young people who may face discrimination, especially when looking for a job."

The tour has a special focus on young people, informing them about their rights under EU legislation to equality when accessing jobs, education and training. This year's highlight is an interactive 'Ability Park' aimed at sensitising the public to the barriers that people with disabilities face in everyday life. The Park, developed together with disability NGOs, invites visitors to master a fixed course in a wheelchair overcoming obstacles such as curves, ramps and stairs. As an additional challenge to people's senses, visitors will be asked to identify everyday odours and noises without being able to see what they are.

Other new features on the truck include an exhibition presenting the best designs of the "Breaking Stereotypes" EU Poster Competition as well as a Video Vox Pops allowing users to record their personal statement on diversity issues with a video camera. Providing a snapshot of public opinion, the Vox Pops will feature as a short film on the campaign website at www.stop-discrimination.info.

To tailor the tour to the needs and context of each country, each event is organised in close cooperation with local partners which include NGOs, ministries, unions and employer associations. The programme will also feature discussions with various politicians, anti-discrimination training sessions, acting performances, live music acts, and films on anti-discrimination.

For further information on the road show and photos, please see www.stop-discrimination.info

Route of the European Truck Tour 2006

- 10.08. Helsinki Finland
- 12.08. Tampere Finland
- 15.08. Stockholm Sweden
- 18.08. Malmö Sweden
- 23.08. Potsdam Germany
- 25.08. Cottbus Germany
- 04.09. Vienna Austria
- 07.09. Novo Mesto Slovenia
- 11.09. Bologna Italy
- 14.09. Rome Italy
- 28.09. Limassol Cyprus
- 01.10. Pafos Cyprus
- 12.10. Prague Czech Republic
- 18.10. Budapest Hungary
- 24.10. Leeds UK
- 27.10. Birmingham UK
- 01.11. Utrecht The Netherlands
- 04.11. Paris France
- 09.11. Toulouse France
- 15.11. Gijon Spain
- 17.11. Madrid Spain
- 21.11. Valencia Spain

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