

BRIGHT@EU PROJECT

June 2018

**IO4: E-BOOK INTERCULTURAL
DIFFERENCES IN LAW CONTEXT**

Bright@EU

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CONTEXT: WHAT IS IO4?

Intellectual Output 4 aims at facilitating the transitions of workers to the labour market by extending their professional competencies with intercultural competencies in law concept. These new competencies will increase their chances of employment and mobility within the EU labour market and will enable to understand the tradition and culture of other country and maybe even the original source of the laws.

The purpose of the output is to develop an e-book that will increase the intercultural competencies of workers and will help them to better understand the culturally mixed working teams. This e-book will focus on the development of knowledge and skills in the area of multiculturalism and diversity in the labour market. It will allow to discover, by means of examples from practice and case studies, the working environment and how working teams operate in a heterogeneous environment of different cultures.

INTRODUCTION:

WHAT ARE INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES?

One of the most important barriers that can be found when deciding to move to another country are intercultural differences. The way people live, interact, communicate... can be completely opposite if we compare a city with another.

This difference becomes even more important if we are looking for a job in a foreign country. Most employers are going to prefer someone who they can rely on and trust, and sometimes not acting in the same way as a citizen of the country may act can raise uncertainty among people. For this reason, it becomes essential to learn how to behave when dealing with intercultural differences; and one of the tools that can be used are intercultural competences.

According to D.K. Deardorff, we could consider intercultural competences as “the ability to develop targeted knowledge, skills and attitudes that lead to visible behaviour and communication that are both effective and appropriate in intercultural interactions.” Intercultural competences refer to having an appropriate level of understanding of different cultures and which problems can arise when cultures interact (UNESCO, 2013).

This means, intercultural competences are a tool that will allow the user to act accordingly to what the people around him or her consider culturally appropriate. Taken from the work of Deardorff and different universities (including GCU from Glasgow), it is possible to divide intercultural competences in three main areas: knowledge, skills and attitudes; these three areas together lead to the achievement of outcomes, which can either be internal or external.

In the following pages, you will be able to learn more about the theory of intercultural competences and their usefulness in real-life situations. But also, you will see real-life examples of intercultural facts of different EU countries (Czech Republic, Cyprus, Germany and Spain) in which you will be able to realise how different can be the situation depending on the country you decide to move to.

Let's begin!

TYPES OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES ¹

Depending on the source you decide to read into, intercultural competences are differentiated through diverse methods; for example, UNESCO divides them in a tree based on culture and communication.

Another way of dividing them is using the division created by the Glasgow Caledonian University. According to D.K. Deardorff, there are four main types of intercultural competences, each of them with as much importance as the rest. At the same time, these types are made of different types of actions, feelings, issues... these intercultural competences allow the owner to realise how culture affects the person and the environment, and to which points of a new culture should we pay better attention in order to promote a positive encounter of interculturality.

Now, let's take a look at the four types and the areas inside them.

KNOWLEDGE

If we searched for the literal meaning of the word knowledge, we would get something like this, obtained from the Cambridge Dictionary "Information and understanding that you have in your mind". In order to act accordingly to a different culture and understand the importance of interculturality, first of all you have to *know* that this interculturality exists, and that there are many different cultures around the world.

Inside knowledge, we can find four main areas.

Cultural Self-awareness

The first area to think of is "**Cultural self-awareness**". This area refers to the ability to realise how the person's culture has had an impact in the person's identity and way of thinking. Culture is incredibly important in a person as it shapes the individual at all kind of levels; and being able to realise this concept allows to also notice that depending on each person's culture, the identity and

¹ Deardorff, D. K. (2006), The Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization at Institutions of Higher Education in the United States, Journal of Studies in International Education and [GCU Article](#)

way of thinking will be different than yours. Also, it makes easier for the person to realise that, if culture has the ability to shape our opinions, maybe they are not universal and the right call for sure. This means, maybe we are not always right and people thinking differently are not always wrong!

Culture Specific Knowledge

Once you are able to realise that there are many cultures around who affect the way we see the world, the next step is being able to actually understand cultures that are different from yours.

There is one simple way to prove whether you understand other cultures or not; if you are able to explain basic information about a foreign culture (things such as the history, values, politics, beliefs...) in a clear and understandable way, it usually means you are able to “get” the culture.

In order to explain something correctly you need to know about it first; and this is what this area of Knowledge is about.

Sociolinguistic Awareness

Continuing with our little steps, if we are aware of the existence and influence of other cultures and we are able to understand them, the next point is to include some of those differences in our own abilities.

Sociolinguistic awareness refers to the ability to acquire basic language skills from other languages (and cultures); but also, to the ability to adjust the way we talk in order to ensure the message correctly arrives to the national of other culture.

This area of the knowledge competence does not only refer to verbal communication, although many cases it will be important; it also refers to non-verbal communication, the ability to communicate not only through words but gestures, voice tone, body language...

Grasp of Global Issues and Trends

Intercultural immersion has become much easier due to globalisation; however, this trend is sometimes difficult to understand, much less to explain. The competence to get a **grasp of global issues and trends** related to having the

ability to effectively explain the meaning of globalisation, and how this concept can influence local issues, relating them to more global actions.

This area requires the ability to look at the bigger picture.

SKILLS

Having “skills” as intercultural competence refers to more concrete, “realisable” competences than the ones seen in Knowledge. Skills can usually be recognised by other people or oneself as abilities that the person can perform in a correct or even expert way.

Inside skills we can find three main areas.

Listening, Observing, Evaluating

These three skills relate to the ability of the person to patiently look for the meaning of other cultures’ different identities and clues.

In order to identify differences between your culture and other cultures and through it, being able to learn new things, you need to be able to listen and to observe the differences. Once you have them clear, you can evaluate if those clues are a positive add to your own cultural mix.

These skills also diminish the ethnocentrism of the owner, allowing to increase the interculturality owned.

Analysing, Interpreting and Relating

Cultures are different, maybe sometimes can be even considered opposite, but deep down, there are usually links between them, similar causes behind apparently opposite thoughts, relations between their main parts... for example, Spanish and Greek languages are apparently very different (they even use different alphabets!) but deep down, both languages have been influenced by Ancient Greek.

Being able to analyse and interpret those similarities and differences by comparative techniques will lead you to have the capacity to relate cultures. And this ability of relation facilitates the learning of new competences.

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking refers to the ability to view and interpret the world not only through your own point of view but also through other culture's "eyes". Having the ability to see things at different perspectives allows you, first of all, to realise which is your point of view; and second, to understand better how and why other people do things the way they do and even to critically think which the "best" way of acting is.

ATTITUDES

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, attitude can be defined as "how you think or feel about something".

This intercultural competence is composed by the points that are more commonly heard when thinking about interculturality: respect, openness, curiosity and discovery. Almost everybody relates the competence to properly interact with other cultures with these four words (especially respect and openness).

And precisely their fame makes them the ones people usually try to reach first. However, it is necessary to own the competences previously explained in order to achieve the correct attitude towards multiculturalism!

Respect

Any time we see a situation in which people from different cultures relate with each other, the first word who usually comes to mind is "respect". "You need to respect other cultures, you have to respect other points of view...".

Respect refers to multiple acts: from looking at each culture's attributes and value their diversity, to being able to compare cultures and understand their differences without any type of prejudice. Being respectful is essential in order to properly relate to other cultures; and **knowing** it and having the **skills** to see the differences and uniqueness of each of them is essential in order to reach that respect.

Openness

Being open to other cultures means avoiding a preliminary prejudice of other cultures without knowing them before; instead of investing time criticising other

cultures without knowing them, using it to collect new information and learn from the differences you may have with them.

An open person is always ready to learn more, to enjoy the differences between people, and more importantly, to being proven wrong.

Curiosity

What promotes the achievement of new knowledge, new skills, new abilities...?

Curiosity is most times the reason behind any newness in our life, including intercultural relations. In order to realise the differences between cultures and learn from them, you need to curiously look for an intercultural interaction, seeing those differences as a chance to learn something new.

Curious people are aware of their own lack of knowledge and look for ways to solve this.

Discovery

Discovery relates to the ability to tolerate ambiguity, considering it as a positive income instead of a negative experience.

People aiming to discover new things are always ready and willing to get out of their comfort zone and they enjoy the ambiguity of facing something you do not know. This attitude makes easier for them to communicate with other cultures and learn from them.

OUTCOMES

Outcomes are results from a situation, an action, etc. According to Deardorff, it is possible to find two types of outcomes:

- Internal Outcomes: internal outcomes are intrinsic on the person; although other people are not able to see them, they allow the individual to acquire a certain knowledge who lets him/her achieve a more ethno-relative perspective. Internal outcomes promote flexible and empathetic people.
- External Outcomes: external outcomes are those who can be seen from the outside; things such as the way we communicate or behave, which can be studied by other individuals in order to see if the person has intercultural competences.

INTERCULTURALITY IN PRACTICE: HOW IT WORKS IN EACH COUNTRY

Even if the European Union has brought many things together for its country members, culture among them can still be really different. In the following pages, it is shown an analysis of each of the countries participating in the BRIGHT@EU project in relevant areas such as work behaviour, social behaviour or religion.

CYPRUS

Cyprus, officially the Republic of Cyprus is situated at the north-eastern end of the Mediterranean basin, Cyprus is the third largest island in the Mediterranean region, with an area of 9,251 square kilometres.

WORK BEHAVIOUR

- Job interviews in Cyprus are professional. Applicants are expected to wear professional attire and to be on time, polite and ready to answer to questions and short tests. These vary across the various industries, with the legal and accounting professions being the most formal and most competitive. You should know that in any meeting pointing a finger in a business meeting with a Cypriot partner could be considered offensive
- The Cypriot people appreciate face-to-face communication. Even if telephones and e-mails are the most employed means of communication, Cypriot businessmen will always prefer direct communication and interviews usually take place face to face, with only limited interviews of international companies also involving skype interviews.
- Even if Greek is the official language in Cyprus and Turkish is the official language in Northern Cyprus, English is considered a “business language”.
- In Cyprus you legally can't work longer than 40 hours per week, but this is not unlikely in practice. This time is usually divided at around 8 working hours per day. Usually work starts at 08:00 and lasts until 17:00 or 18:00, but usually in the summertime the majority of employers allow employees to leave earlier on Friday.

- Arranging a first business meeting in Cyprus should be done by telephone or e-mail in order to establish the time and place.
- Cypriots dress like most Europeans. Cypriot company managers will wear a formal suit when going into business meetings.

RELIGION

The majority of Greek Cypriots identify as Greek Orthodox. According to Eurobarometer 2006, Cyprus was the most religious state in the European Union with more than 81% of the population being religious. The first President of Cyprus, Makarios III, was an archbishop. The current leader of the Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus is Archbishop Chrysostomos II.

There are several Greek-Orthodox churches in each town, and between towns, of varying sizes. The majority of religious people attend the church every Sunday, although younger people only attend at major festivals. The services are in Greek and are often relayed on loudspeakers outside the buildings. People come and go as they wish – the services can last two hours or more, but it's not unusual for people to be coming and going throughout. Men and women sit on different sides of the church, but this is not a strict rule.

When visiting churches, it is customary to leave a small donation to the church or monastery, by leaving the money on the plate or box provided for this purpose.

Out of respect, visitors should avoid pointing to icons with their fingers or standing with their backs towards them.

GASTRONOMY

The Cypriot cuisine is an exotic blend of the tasteful and delicious Greek cuisine and Middle Eastern cultures, along with remnants of ancient civilisations such as indigenous Roman root vegetables or old Phoenician delicacies.

In Cypriot cuisine you often encounter the 'meze' – a variety of small dishes that are combined to create a feast, and a good starting point to become acquainted with the local dishes, such as moreish dips, braised, stewed and clay-cooked meats; local, freshly caught fish; pulses and legumes in various sauces; specialty cheeses and delicatessen cuts, and more unusual bites, all authentically prepared.

Moreover, halloumi cheese originated in Cyprus and was initially made during the Medieval Byzantine period. Halloumi is commonly served sliced, either fresh or grilled, as an appetiser. Another traditional food is “souvla”, grilled meat.

CULTURE

Cyprus is a small island with a long history and a rich culture that spans 10,000 years, making it one of the oldest civilisations in the Mediterranean - as evidenced by the many fascinating cultural sights, museums, monuments and galleries. Situated at the crossroads of three continents - Europe, Asia and Africa - the island's unique geographic position has played an important part in its turbulent past since antiquity. Its Prehistoric Age inhabitants were joined 3,500 years ago by the Mycenaean Greeks, who introduced and established their civilisation, thus permanently instilling the island's Greek roots. Many other cultures followed thereafter, including Phoenicians, Assyrians, Egyptians, Romans, Franks, Venetians, Ottomans and British, who all left behind visible remnants of their passage, and have thus created a mosaic of different cultures and periods. Currently, and for more than 40 years the Island of Cyprus is divided, due to the Turkish military invasion that took place in 1974 following which the Turkish Troops **illegally** occupy a third of the island, enforcing a division between the Turkish and Greek parts of the island along the UN Green Line.



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From: Al Jazeera

Talks about reunification have been ongoing for decades, but have so far failed to produce results. To ensure peace, the United Nations has set up a buffer zone between the two parts of the country. The UN has denounced the large presence of Turkish troops in northern Cyprus, but nothing has changed to this direction.

INTERPERSONAL CONTACT

Cypriots are generally friendly people, although they are more reserved initially than Americans and most Europeans. That changes, once they get to know you better, in which cases they tend to become closer friends. Overall, Cypriots are very hospitable and will often offer you to dine or drink with them. It is considered polite to accept at least a little of what is being offered to you even if you do not want it. This applies most often to food and drink.

Just like Greek, Cypriots are very respect respectful with their elders and people of older age are usually referred to as Kyrie (Mr) or Kyria (Mr), followed by their first or their last name. Similarly, alike with Greeks, Cypriots tend to speak loudly and with many hand and facial gestures, causing outsiders to often think that a friendly discussion is a heated debate.

Among friends (male-female, female-female), a kiss on each cheek is a common greeting; otherwise a handshake will do. Men do not typically kiss, unless they are old friends. Young female friends may also hold hands.

Being on time may be a virtue, but it is not one well-practiced in Cyprus. Being 30-45 minutes late to a social engagement is not considered unacceptable. It is actually expected.

CZECH REPUBLIC

The Czech Republic enjoys one of the most prosperous and stable economies of the post-Communist states. Since the fall of Communism, the country's highly skilled and well-educated workforce, ability to produce low-cost goods and services and central position within Europe all make the Czech Republic an obvious location for foreign investment. Many international organizations are now either setting up in the Czech Republic or working with local partners and suppliers.

WORK BEHAVIOUR

- Work styles and dress code differ between workplaces but it is important to be punctual, orderly, and clean. The norm of working relationship at workplaces is slightly more formal. Generally, Czechs are becoming increasingly informal. Women tend to dress nicely and wear sophisticated makeup in the "white-collar" workplace. The bigger the organization and the higher placed officials you visit, the more formal dress is expected, especially if you are to meet people for the first time in their official capacity.
- Supervisors, colleagues, or anybody whom you meet for the first time must not be addressed by the first name, unless there is a mutual agreement to do so - which can sometimes come at an informal party but, more often than not, never. Using a person's professional or academic title - "Pane Professore", "Pane Doktore", etc. - or "Pane", "Pani" (Mr. or Mrs.) with the last name are the only appropriate ways of addressing an adult until otherwise agreed.
- In most Czech workplaces deadlines usually come with the expectation that they will be met; although there is often some degree of flexibility. When meeting the deadline is uncertain, people will often negotiate in good faith and/or try to explain or apologize. It is rather uncommon to work considerable overtime in order to meet a deadline, though the nature of the workplace, the significance of the task ahead, or institutional custom may sometimes require it. The approach to time in terms of productivity awareness, absenteeism, etc. differs significantly between workplaces. In some of them, attitudes inherited from the former communist regime might prevail; in such workplaces, disregard for the time factor is rather

high and morale rather low. Also, on average, Czechs call in more paid "sick days" than in most other countries in Europe, if only to take advantage of very generous social provisions in this respect.

- Czechs almost never go straight to the point and meetings start with some small talk. They like very much negotiating and the first meeting is usually just for discussion on a general level. After the first meeting, they decide whether to continue or not. You should be well prepared and remember to allow enough time.
- In the workplace, people are addressed formally, e.g. Good Morning, Mrs. Krivankova. This means you use the third person rather than the non-formal second person. Formality is a must with the older generation. The dress is more formal amongst the generation that grew up under communism. A gentleman would usually wear a dark [navy blue or black] suit. Women usually wear a skirt, a blouse and a blazer. They will wear brighter clothing than the men. Women, even though they dress conservatively, will look as if they are going out for the evening. If working with a younger company [younger generation] casual slacks or semi-formal skirt is quite sufficient.
- In the Czech Republic, you legally can't work longer than 40 hours per week. This time is usually divided at around 8 working hours per day. The usual time for lunch is from 30 minutes to 1 hour by the midday. All work environments are non-smoking, some companies have the separate spaces for the smokers or it is usual to have a small break for smoking outside the office buildings.

RELIGION

- The Czechs are one of the most religiously uninvolved people – it is the fact supported by all available statistics. Despite the fact that almost half of the population admit that they belong to some faith (namely the Catholic Church), most do not attend church services or follow any religious practices. At the same time, more than 40 % of Czechs declare that they are "non-religious" or "atheist". With only a very few exceptions, this issue has no significance at all in the workplace.
- Religion has no impact on the workplace. Czechs have overcome so much history with the Jewish and Catholic cultures that there is a sense of unspoken respect for religious diversity.

- Religion plays a decisive role here, with individuals from countries of Catholic traditions tending to trust less each other's than those living in countries of Protestant influence
- Public schools in the Czech Republic provide classes of Catholic religion only like a voluntary action based on interest-based activities of the pupils.
- The Czech Republic is full of churches due to the historical importance of Catholic Religion in the country. For entering in the churches, it is not strictly prohibited to show your shoulders or your knees, although depending on the church the responsible people are more or less strict.
- Also, many Czech holidays common in the whole country are related to the Catholic religion or Protestantism (Christmas, Easter big Friday, Jan Hus etc.).

GASTRONOMY

- It is said that Czech cuisine is not the healthiest. However, from this aspect, it does not differ so much from another Central European cuisine. It is related to German and Austrian cuisine.
- Czech cuisine is very markedly influenced by the geographical location of the country. The Czech Republic is a landlocked country with a cooler climate; consequently, its cuisine has always been based on ingredients that could be grown at home, chiefly cereals, legumes, potatoes, and meat.
- **Meat** is one of the most important ingredients in Czech cuisine. Pork, beef, poultry, rabbit, and game are used. Fish are mainly freshwater, chiefly carp, less frequently trout, pike-perch or eel.
- **Gravies** and **dumplings** are Czech specialties. Gravies usually incorporate cream, butter, and flour. There are many types of dumpling, for instance, bread dumplings, potato dumplings or dumplings stuffed with smoked meat and even fruit.
- **Soups** are also popular in Czech cuisine as well as sweet pastries. Delicacies include open sandwiches, various salads, soft-ripened cheeses (Olomoucké tvarůžky) or Prague ham.
- **Beer** is an excellent accompaniment to Czech cuisine. Czech beer is world famous and has a long tradition. Czechs consider it a national drink. The best-known beers are Pilsner Urquell and Budějovický Budvar. Grapes are also grown in the Czech Republic, mainly in South Moravia. White wines in particular frequently receive awards at international competitions.

The bittersweet Becherovka liqueur, which is made in the spa town of Carlsbad, is also a popular souvenir with visitors to the Czech Republic.

- Czech people have a hearty breakfast, lunch is also a strong meal, but the diner is usually a light part of the day meals. The hearty version of the lunch or dinner including a first dish, second dish and dessert are usually only during the parties, celebrations etc.

CULTURE

- As Czech culture is characterized by the relatively strong sense of masculinity, other suitable general topics for a conversation are sports, beer, and politics with a man, or shopping or prices with women. Czechs are usually critical of politicians, but foreigners are not supposed to volunteer their opinion on Czech politics. If you want to speak about politics, remember to be neutral. For instance, don't get dragged into criticizing the former communists (or the communist regime) unless you are sure that this is not a controversial topic with you're the person you are talking to; remember that he or she might be one of the former or current communists. (Even now, one in five Czechs votes for the not-too-reformed Communist Party.)
- It is quite important to establish a personal relationship with a colleague or client before getting to business—or at least to establish a friendly and non-adversarial atmosphere for the meeting, since Czechs often make decisions based on personal impression. As there are no fixed rules in Czech culture regarding this, the best approach is to observe your colleague or client carefully and adjust accordingly.
- Personal relationships are the backbone of a good working relationship. In other countries work environments, if one has a good working relationship with someone, it is usually kept as a working relationship and not a social one. The Czechs would rather get to know you first as a friend and if that friendship is accepted then they will gladly welcome you as a colleague.
- Being friendly and jovial is a good start to forming a friendship with a Czech. Some suggested activities would be: taking a colleague out to lunch, drinks or coffee/tea/beer.
- Czech people are hard working by nature and they are eager to better themselves and their country. Many are motivated by wealth and riches,

and capitalism is a big motivator for the Czechs as well. Riches and wealth being the goals, they are not ashamed of what they do to achieve them e.g. a janitor is proud to be a janitor and would openly tell everyone about what he does and how it is helping him achieve his dream and supporting his family.

- Achieved status cultures give importance to past results, achievements or recent successes. Ascribed cultures believe status depends on the intrinsic characteristics of the person, such as seniority, gender or social connections. If ascription was the norm in communist Czechoslovakia.
- When the countries opened up, many national and foreign companies promoted young people to management positions based on their studies abroad, language skills and their competitiveness. So, older generations are more ascribed than the young ones.
- Sport is very popular in the Czech Republic, especially football, ice hockey, and tennis.
- The shops usually close at 8 or 9 p.m. every day including the weekends especially in the big cities but in the countryside usually close at 6 p.m.
- In the Czech Republic, tipping is usually compulsory in the pubs and bars and it is highly appreciated. The amount is approximately 5 – 10% of the whole amount.

INTERPERSONAL CONTACT

- At first contact, Czechs may often seem cautious and impersonal and/or indifferent, but with a tactful approach, they might become effectively engaged. You have to consider the language barrier if you don't speak reasonably fluent Czech. However, even a few words of Czech will make a good impression. Not too many Czechs are able to communicate in English or French at a comfortable level.
- As in most parts of the world, topics such as weather or "where are you from" are safe to begin your conversation with. Explanations regarding the purpose of your visit might also work as an ice-breaker. No special taboos exist, except that vulgarities/obscenities should be avoided as in any other country. Otherwise, anything positive that the person can relate to can break the ice; for instance, it is advisable to know at least a couple of names of Czech players in the NHL.

- Humour is part of traditional Czech culture, sometimes this is a "wetter" kind of humor than British or Canadian "dry" humor. This does not necessarily mean a "black" humor; at the same time, it is often a humor without any political correctness, sometimes containing "racial slurs."
- It is also extremely important to realize that Czech has two modes of speaking to one another: a) "vykání" or "polite form"—using the 2nd person plural when talking to an adult; and b) "tykáni" or "familiar form"—using the 2nd person singular when talking to a good friend, family member, or a child. When talking in Czech to an adult in the Czech Republic you must always use the polite form (vykání) unless the person asked you to use the familiar mode.
- Czechs have a stronger sense of etiquette. Coughing or yawning without covering your mouth, spitting in public, littering, chewing a gum when talking to another person, or not offering a seat to an older person or woman on public transit, etc. are considered impolite if not socially unacceptable. Don't forget to behave with a special courtesy to women.
- When encountering a Czech person for the first time in the country they will instantly make you feel welcome. Czechs want to have the knowledge of foreigner's culture and determine the differences between us and their own culture. Conversations topics are usually on how the country is filled with cultural richness, arts, music, and food. You're always surrounded by humor (lots of dirty jokes). Laughter comes from Czech history of overcoming hardship and winning victories. The one topic of conversation to be avoided is politics which always leads to debates about communism and the fall of communism. This topic always seems to leave people very bitter.
- Although Czechs generally have quite a developed sense of space in personal dealings with one another, the actual distance depends very much on the context of the situation and the individual inclinations of persons involved. Distance is usually greater when speaking or dealing with not-yet-familiar people. The best guidance here is to observe. After an initial obligatory handshake, gauge each person's degree of comfort with touching and their preference for personal space and then adjust as needed while maintaining your own level of comfort.
- Regular eye contact is required if you want to be judged as trustworthy. Czechs will not necessarily maintain continuous eye contact (especially

when they take their time to "think through" their response), but it is considered a sign of ill or "suspicious" intentions if a person refuses to make or is avoiding eye contact.

- It is customary to shake hands with both men and women when greeting them. There are set rules for initiating a handshake. For example, it is expected that one should wait until an older person or a woman offers a handshake. In a familiar setting it may be customary that men and women will give each other a hug and /or kiss on each cheek; however, foreigners are advised not to initiate such actions. While talking, men generally do not touch other men unless they have reached a fairly high level of familiarity and comfort with that person. If one of the two persons is of significantly higher age or prestige, he/she might initiate occasional touching to show his/her assurances or for emphasis. This practice applies to a lesser degree for contact between men and women and it is usually considered a test of "good manners" that a man does not initiate any touching. The rules for a woman touching another woman are similar to those for men.
- Czechs make relatively little use of gestures. It is interesting to note that they find a lot of gesturing annoying and ill-mannered. There are some gestures that are considered rude: waving a lifted fist, waiving a pointed index finger, pointing at someone, and especially pointing one's finger to one's forehead. A common, if not overly polite way of showing disapproval is by moving one's head from the right to the left while frowning.
- Czech people are very loud and expressive and yet very formal and well spoken. They will get very insulted if a person is not well mannered. A simple handshake at every gathering is well received.

GERMANY

Germany is at the center of Europe, not only geographically, but also in terms of politics and economics. The German people embrace the values of thriftiness, hard work and industriousness and there is great emphasis on making sure that "the trains run on time."

WORK BEHAVIOUR

When meeting Germans for the first time in a business context, short and firm handshakes are the normal greeting. Make sure you maintain eye contact throughout, though avoid staring for uncomfortably long.

German people set great store by titles and qualifications, so if someone does have a doctorate or a degree, make sure you refer to them as DR. or whatever their title may be. This point is also worth bearing in mind for business cards – the more letters you can put after your name the more impressed your German colleagues will be.

- In the German organizational and work culture, hierarchy is highly appreciated and well maintained. Organizations tend to have a strong management, in which the highest positions are held by a small group of the most experienced and/or qualified people. With a distinction between functions, employees are expected to do what they are told. Not surprisingly, the communication style is often done in formal fashion, notably by the use of "Sie", the formal second person address. However, nowadays the company provides surveys to gauge the needs and satisfaction of their employees.
- The decisions are taken top-down, and decisions by the chairperson are always respected. Procedures and rules are closely adhered to, and although it tends to make the decision-making process quite lengthy, it is usually associated with commitment and professionalism, in which rushed decisions are associated with a lack of such attributes. Germans are born "perfectionists" also small issues are discussed during the meetings.
- Punctuality and efficiency are paramount in the German conception of time. Meetings usually do not take longer than scheduled, often because there is another meeting planned right after.

- Long-time planning is very common in the German organizational culture. Germans plan, therefore most appointments and meetings are scheduled weeks in advance. However, it may occur that traffic keeps you from being on time. In that case, call in to mention that you will be late, or otherwise be ready to provide a very good reason.
- Workers at all levels are appreciated mostly on their competence and diligence, rather than interpersonal skills. Communication with co-workers as well as outsiders tends to be direct and not always diplomatic.
- The appropriate business attire in Germany is relatively conservative, yet formal and elegant. Men often wear neat dark coloured suits, whereas women either wear dresses with jackets, suits with skirts, or trousers with tights (also during summer). Nowadays business ethics do allow for a more casual approach depending on the company, dress code ought to be taken into account when doing business with Germans.

RELIGION

The majority religion in Germany is Christianity, with about two thirds of the population adhering to Protestantism and one third to Roman Catholicism. As mentioned, Germany is the home and centre of the protestant reformation, a major schism from the Catholic Church, and ever since Protestantism has been by far the most popular religion in the country.

GASTRONOMY

The cuisine of Germany has evolved as a national cuisine through centuries of social and political change with variations from region to region. Some regions of Germany, like Bavaria and neighbouring Swabia, share dishes with Austrian and parts of Swiss cuisine.

A long tradition of sausage-making exists in Germany; more than 1,500 different types of sausage (German: Wurst) are made. Most Wurst is made with natural casings of pork, sheep or lamb intestines. Among the most popular and most common are Bratwurst, usually made of ground pork and spices, the Wiener (Viennese), which may be pork or beef and is smoked and fully cooked in a water bath, and Blutwurst (blood sausage) or Schwarzwurst (black sausage) made from blood (often of pigs or geese). Thousands of types of cold cuts also are available.

There are many regional specialties, such as the Münchner Weißwurst (Munich white sausage) popular in Bavaria or the Currywurst (depending on region, either a steamed pork sausage or a version of the Bratwurst, sliced and spiced with curry ketchup) popular in the metropolitan areas of Berlin, Hamburg and the Ruhr Area. Strict regulations governing what may and may not be put into them have been in force in Germany since the 13th century. In the market ordinance of Landshut in it was set down that only top-quality meat could be made into sausages.

Behaviour at the restaurant

- Wait for everyone to be seated and have food on their plates before you begin to eat or drink. It is customary for the host or someone to say “Guten Appetit!” (“Enjoy your meal!”) before anyone takes the first bite. Also see Toasting below.
- Germans don’t normally drink tap water, even though it’s perfectly safe to do so. Sparkling mineral water (from a bottle) is the norm. If you prefer the non-fizzy variety (stilles Wasser), you can get that. Germans are big coffee and tea drinkers. (Decaf coffee may or may not be available.) Of course, beer and wine are usually also part of any dinner in Germany. After dinner, brandy, cognac, grappa or some other digestif is often served. Sometimes a Kräuterlikör (herbal liqueur), such as Jägermeister, may be offered instead.
- Don’t forget to tip your waiter — five or ten percent of the total is OK.

CULTURE

- Germany has been home to some of the most popular and influential writers, artists, musicians and philosophers in the history of Western civilisation, including Rubens, Bach, Handel, Beethoven, Goethe, Kant, Nietzsche, and the Brothers Grimm, to name but a few.
- “Culture refers not only how people interact and look also means refined intellectual, artistic and creative achievement, for example as in cultural knowledge, or a cultured person,” Cristina De Rossi, an anthropologist at Barnet and Southgate College in London, affirmed.
- Germans have done immense contributions to classical music, and the traditions of famous German or Austrian composers such as Johann

Sebastian Bach, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ludwig van Beethoven, Johannes Brahms, Richard Wagner and Gustav Mahler.

- Germany celebrates many of the traditional Christian holidays, including Christmas and Easter. German Unification Day on October 3 marks the reuniting of East and West Germany and is the only federal holiday.
- The country's big beer bash is called "Oktoberfest," its starts each year on a Saturday in September and ends 16 to 18 days later, on the first Sunday in October. The tradition started in 1810, with the wedding of Crown Prince Ludwig of Bavaria to Princess Therese von Sachsen-Hildburghausen, according to the city of Munich.

INTERPERSONAL CONTACT

- Germans divide between public and private life. Therefore, Germans often wear a protective shell when working. Since intimacy is not freely given, this is sometimes interpreted as coldness. However, after a period walls and barriers fall, allowing more intimate relationships to develop.
- Communication styles in Germany may be perceived as direct, short and to the point. Formality dictates that emotions and unnecessary content do not have a place in a conversation.
- Newcomers should be prepared to take the first step to introduce themselves to an established group in a new environment (e.g. office, student dormitory, social gathering, new neighbourhood, etc.).
- Giving compliments is not part of German costumes and can often cause embarrassment and awkwardness. Compliments, especially from strangers or very casual acquaintances can, in fact, be taken with suspicion ("What does he/she really mean to say or want?").
- Small talk is an elusive and difficult skill for many Germans, even at university. Germans generally speak very good English, presumption. The 55 and above aged people generally doesn't feel as secure in the language as the next younger generations, which have grown up with a prevalence of English introduced into many aspects.
- Simply placing your hand on someone's shoulder may be irritating and make you appear too authoritative. If the person is not a long-time friend

of yours, then a handshake is the only situation in which you would make physical contact with someone.

- If you should accidentally bump into someone or kick her/him under the table, then you should immediately excuse yourself, with, "Entschuldigung, das war nicht meine Absicht." ("Excuse me, that wasn't my intention").
- Germans like talking politics and philosophy but avoid Nazi references in any casual conversation. Showing sympathy for Germany is dark and ever shadows casting recent history is good.

SPAIN

Spain cultural heritage is deep and heterogeneous, due to the rich heritage the country historically has. The historical separation of the country in regions (Autonomic Communities) has also an important relevance in these heterogeneity, with clear differences between nationals' way of behaving that are noticed not only by Spaniards but by any foreign person.

WORK BEHAVIOUR

- Job interviews in Spain are known to be much more relaxed in style. It obviously depends on the recruiter personality but, in general, there's always a short gap in the interview to talk about more relaxed themes about the candidate's personality. It's usual for interviewers in Spain to ask about the applicant's background in order to break the ice and get closer to the other person.
- Although some may look gladly at this, it's very important to keep the guard up, some of the things you could say may have a negative impact in the interview outcome.
- Spanish CV's tend to have a space, specially dedicated to describing the applicant personality, hobbies or attitudes to allow the recruiter a more relaxed tone during the interview.
- In Spain you legally can't work longer than 40 hours per week. This time is usually divided at around 8 working hours per day.
- Most of the establishments leave their employees at least 2 hours to eat at midday, and for the well-known Spanish siesta. But this, again, depends on the employer policy.
- Related to the previous point, working hours usually finish later in Spain than in other countries. Many times, you finish work at 6, 7 or even 8 p.m. This is also related to the living hours of the country; Spaniards normally do things around 2 hours later than the rest of Europe.
- The clothing style you may be requested depends on the company's dressing code. In many cases mid-formal kind of clothing will do just fine, but some others may require suit and tie or even, they may give you the company's uniform. Usually interviewers address this topic when confirming the candidate's selection for the vacant position, if not, feel free

to ask it or even better, notice how your future co-workers dress when you arrive to the first interview.

- It is typical in Spain to have a short break at around 11 a.m. for “almuerzo” the second meal of the Mediterranean diet.

RELIGION

- Spain is a non-religious state, this means, the country is not adhered to any religion, according to its Constitution. However, the majority of population adheres to the catholic religion.
- Catholic religion also has a wide influence in Spanish festivities. One of the most famous is “Semana Santa”, commemorating the death and resurrection of Christ. Also, it is celebrated the 3 Wise Men.
- Public schools in Spain provide classes of Catholic, Islamic, Protestant, Jewish and Instruction religion if more than 10 students ask for it.
- Spain is full of churches due to the historical importance of Catholic Religion in the country. For entering in the churches, theoretically you cannot show your shoulders or your knees, although depending on the church the responsible people are more or less strict.
- In order for a religion to have a cooperation agreement with Spanish Government, they have to prove the presence of the religion in the country by a considerable amount of people for a determined amount of time. Currently, Catholic, Protestant, Jewish and Islamic communities have bilateral agreements with the government.
- Also related to the huge heritage of Catholic religion, all cities and towns in Spain have a patron saint, normally a female and a male saint. Most festivities of the country are related to them; for this reason, depending on the city there are different non-working days (in Valencia March 19 is holiday due to Saint Joseph, while June 24th is holiday in Catalonia because of Saint John).
- Also, many Spanish holidays common in the whole country are related to the Catholic religion (Christmas, Holy Friday, Assumption of Mary).

GASTRONOMY

- Spanish gastronomy is famous worldwide, and it is incredibly varied; each part of Spain has unique dishes. Spanish chefs are recognised worldwide (such as Roca's brothers or Ferran Adrià).
- Spanish people follow a Mediterranean diet, characterised for the types of fat used (from fish, olive oil or nuts), and the amount of nutrients included in the plates (cereals and vegetables are usually the base of most dishes, while meat is used as side dish). Spanish diet is usually composed of 5 lunches per day (small breakfast, big breakfast called "almuerzo", lunch, little snack called "merienda" and dinner).
- Spanish people have a light breakfast, contrarily to many other countries, usually made of coffee with milk, some pastries or cookies, or toasts.
- Lunch is "stronger" than in other countries, and many restaurants serve daily menu for lunch including a first dish, second dish and dessert.
- The most famous dish from Spain is Spanish Ham, "Jamón serrano", a dry-cured ham made trimming and cleaning ham, stacking and covering them with salt during around 2 weeks, after that washing the salt out and hanging them to dry between 6 and 12 months.
- Spanish Omelette "Tortilla de patatas", is another typical dish made with fried potatoes, onion in occasions and egg.
- Paella Valenciana is a dish made of rice which, typical from Valencian Region. The original recipe of paella contains chicken, rabbit, rice and two Valencian typical vegetables, called "baxoqueta y garrofó" (similar to green beans and white beans), saffron and rosemary.
- Madrilenian stew, "cocido madrileño", is a stew traditional from Madrid made of chickpeas, vegetables, and meat. Its ingredients are served separately, first the stock with noodles, then the vegetables and chickpeas, and finally the meat.
- Tapas are other of the main gastronomic traditions of Spain; a type of eating consisting in ordering many small portions of Spanish typical dishes and sharing them on the table.
- Wine in Spain is also incredibly important, as it is the most widely planted wine producing nation and the third largest wine producer in the world. The country has unique wines, such as Cava, Tempranillo, or Rioja.
- A curiosity: Spaniards usually buy fresh white bread every day.

CULTURE

- Spain is divided in Autonomic Communities. Spanish is the main language of the country, although depending on the community there may be other official languages (such as Catalanian in Catalonia, Valencian in Valencia, Galician language in Galicia, or Euskera in the Basque country).
- Spanish people have 2 surnames; traditionally, the first one corresponds to the father and the second one to the mother.
- In New Year's Eve, Spanish people eat 12 grapes with the last 12 bell sounds of the year. Historically, eating each grape at each second will give good luck to the eater!
- Sport is very popular in Spain, especially soccer, basketball and tennis. Most people in Spain can tell you without blinking their favourite soccer or basketball team.
- Timetables work differently in Spain compared to other countries; the day ends later (shops usually close at 8 or 9 p.m., and clubs and discos can be open until 8 a.m.) and eating hours are the latest in Europe; Spaniards usually take lunch at 2 or 3 p.m. and dinner at 9 or 10 p.m. (approximately).
- Spaniards' meeting times can be also seen as "late" in most countries; they can meet at 7 or 8 p.m. with friends and go back home at 10 to have dinner.
- Spaniards usually take longer lunches than in the rest of Europe; on the weekend or in family occasions, they can take up to 3 hours!
- The famous "siesta" is not that common in the country. Actually, most people do not sleep siesta during the week, the majority of people who do siesta, they do it on the weekends.
- In Spain, tipping is not compulsory as in other countries, although it is highly appreciated.
- It is typical all over the country to have groups related to the festivities of the region, that become kind of like a big family for the people (falleros from Fallas, casetas from the Feria, fogueras from San Juan, peñas from summer festivities...).
- In Spain, Tuesday 13 is the equivalent to Friday 13 to other countries. According to the Spanish proverbs "On Tuesday 13, do not marry or ship".

INTERPERSONAL CONTACT

- In general, Spanish people are very friendly and close; this may shock people from more northern countries, since they feel like the Spaniard is treating them as if they had known each other their whole lives.
- When meeting someone (independently of whether it is the first time you meet or not) always greet with:
 - o Two kisses in the cheeks in the case of two women.
 - o Two kisses in the cheeks in the case of a woman and a man.
 - o In the case of two men, always shake hands.
- Space between people when talking is usually smaller in Spain than in other European countries, especially northern ones.
- Spanish people may seem louder speakers when they are in a comfortable environment, in comparison to other cultures.
- As opposite to other countries, you should never take your shoes off when visiting someone's house; only if they ask you to.
- In Spain, people are usually addressed by their first names; only in specific cases (such as judges, doctors...) they are addressed by their first surname. This is different to other countries in the case of teachers and professors, for example; in Spain they are usually called by their first names.
- The use of the second person of courtesy in Spain has widely declined in time; currently it is only used in specific occasions (such as very high professionals, or old unknown people). When you meet someone in Spain for the first time or you talk to someone you do not know in the phone, probably you will be addressed with the common second person.
- Spanish people are, in general, always willing to meet new people; they usually like to help people learn their language or show them their cities. They usually treat unknown people very warmly.
- When talking, Spanish people tend to gesticulate a lot. Many times, they do not even say words, and directly use hand signs to show their ideas. It is interesting to learn some of the most common signs in order to avoid missing anything important.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

Interculturality is an important issue arising in all countries in the world; the relevance of globalisation and the facilities to interact with other cultures and countries is making necessary to own a certain knowledge on interculturality differences that allows the person to properly behave when interacting with a different culture.

As it has been seen in previous pages, each country has specific subjects and areas to which they react differently; and through this e-book it has been highlighted once again the need to make a previous study on the country you are going to visit, not only on its main physical sites but also on its cultural features.

This final conclusion relates even more to those people moving for a relatively long time, especially for working reasons. Living in another country for a long time gives you the opportunity to get even more immersed in its culture, but it also makes it even more essential to properly understand its differences with yours.

To finalise this document, intercultural differences and intercultural immersion is a highly positive outcome and enriches any person's life, which should be enjoyed and searched.

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