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PRESS RELEASE

Learning by playing: serious game teaches students intercultural skills

ESCP Europe combines traditional education with the most up-to-date methods of learning in the serious game "Moving Tomorrow – An Intercultural Journey".

How do we go about educating students so that they can cope with a constantly changing and complex working world as digitalisation takes an ever firmer foothold? This question not only encompasses the content and skills that need to be taught, but also the suitable methods of learning. At ESCP Europe, a serious game is now being used to enhance students' skills. The serious game "Moving Tomorrow – An Intercultural Journey" enables students to deepen their intercultural understanding by playing along with an interactive story.

The educational game was developed at the Renault Chair of Intercultural Management at ESCP Europe under the direction of Professor Marion Festing and PhD student Tobias Schumacher. "We have managed to combine current intercultural management research with modern digital methods of learning", says Professor Festing. She continues: "In research, the construct of 'national culture' is questioned very critically. Instead, cultural diversity is accounted for and addressed in an academic sense even within the country concerned. This method is a part of our learning game". The serious game enables ESCP Europe to strengthen their "Culture for Business" strategy in an innovative manner. This is aimed at educating a new generation of managers and executives to understand and take advantage of the opportunities offered by cultural diversity in companies, even in the digitalised and globalised world of today.

"Moving Tomorrow – An Intercultural Journey" assumes the format of a classic video game. Students play the part of Lucy, an ambitious young woman who is exceedingly interested in various technologies and social entrepreneurship. She works for the Berlin start-up company "Runergy", a fictitious company that stands out from its competitors as a result of its strong commitment to corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability.

Over the course of the game, Lucy works in various countries where she gets to know the local culture as well as that of specific companies and groups. Lucy engages in dialogues with other characters (non-player characters) and has to make important decisions which have a significant impact on how the story develops. Should she give important information to strangers and perhaps receive more information in return – or is it better to keep quiet? Will she be able to convince her colleagues that she is up to the task of working at "Runergy", or will she have to leave the start-up? And what is more important: private life or her work life? "We have attached great importance to the diversity and complexity of the characters", explains Marion Festing.

The game also goes well beyond a simulated group discussion, as students are confronted with difficult decisions, which have an impact on events and how the story pans out. They have to deal with the consequences of their actions. The practical experience incorporated into the game is combined with the latest constructs and theories of intercultural management research with the help of so-called insights. "This enables our students to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and realistic situations", says Professor Festing. At the end of each episode, and as part of the course (a blended learning format), students have the opportunity to reflect on what they have learnt and discuss these topics. Based on initial feedback, a lot of students have played the game so far and have thoroughly enjoyed this new way of learning.

"Digitalisation will fundamentally change learning, and teaching will no longer take place in the form of traditional lectures. Nowadays, besides gaining knowledge, developing intercultural skills and digital expertise are becoming increasingly important", says Professor Andreas Kaplan, Rector of ESCP Europe Berlin and digitalisation specialist. The European business school is taking advantage of opportunities presented by technology in order to enrich their educational programme.

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About ESCP Europe

ESCP Europe is the world's oldest business school (founded in 1819). With its multi-campus model, in existence since 1973 and located in Berlin, London, Madrid, Paris, Turin and Warsaw, it promotes and is a prime example of active European spirit. Today, more than 5,000 students start a Bachelor or Master programme at ESCP Europe every year, with over 5,000 managers and

executives taking part in seminars or taking up further education at the business school over the same period of time. There are in excess of 100 nationalities represented across the various courses and programmes. ESCP Europe Berlin is a state-approved academic institution and the first university in Germany to be accredited by all three significant international accreditation agencies – AACSB, EQUIS and AMBA. It belongs to the one per cent of all business schools in the world which have gained "Triple Crown" status. Further information on ESCP Europe Business School Berlin is available at: www.escpeurope.eu/de