

In October 2023, we organized the Aerospace Diversity Day themed “Kicking Bias: How Unconscious Bias affects the Work Floor and How to Unlearn it”. This theme was so close to our heart as all of us have experienced it one way or another. Biases are present throughout society, but not everyone realizes that they are biased. As such, we invited students to join us in discovering where biases come from and how to deal with them.

The day was kicked off by neuropsychologist Philip Jordanov, who took us on a journey through the brain, explaining all the ins and outs of (unconscious) bias. Next, Commodore Saskia Siemensma from the Royal Netherlands Air Force had the audience hang on her every word with an intimate story about her experiences as a woman in the Royal Netherlands Airforce. She even took the tie off her uniform as a show of protest against the male-centered uniforms in the military! The next to take the stage, Malou van der Pal from LVNL, offered an insider's perspective on how implementing D&I made waves in such a massive company. As cherry on top of this special programme, Rahel de Vriend, our amazing chair and simply wonderful person, led the panel discussion “what can *you* do?”, where KLM, TNO, TU Delft and Transavia left us with the steps on how to become a better ally. And just when you thought it couldn't get any better, we capped off the day with a networking drink, turning moments into connections and conversations into opportunities.

Overall, we had a great audience who loved engaging in all the different topics. Everyone learned a lot from all the speakers, all the great questions and the discussion that took place.

The D&I grant enabled us to venture further than just free speakers in our program. While the voluntary speakers were a great addition to the program, Philip Jordanov's talk perfectly set the stage for the rest of the program. Without him, the Aerospace Diversity Day would not have been as big of a success. Moreover, the great chairing by Rahel de Vriend would not have been possible without the funding from the D&I grant, as the fees for hiring such a professional chair of the day are simply too much to afford without the grant. By having some budget to spend on speakers, we could spend the limited budget we had left on forming a suitable environment for all speakers and audience members. We could get good lighting and a room that proved perfect for discussions with the audience. We have provided some pictures of the day below to show how much of a success it was.

