

# The “Top Ten” Recommendations

European Conference

Maison de la Mutualité Paris  
22nd & 23rd November 2007

**INTERMEDIARIES** / Integrating skills for dealing with discrimination into the working practices of employment intermediaries

**LOCAL ACTORS** / Giving priority to activities carried out by local authorities, the relevant level for comprehensive action plans to fight discrimination

**INTERMEDIARIES** / Developing new services and new forms of co-operation in order to facilitate the integration of minorities facing discrimination

**TRADE UNIONS** / Putting the fight against ethnic discrimination at the heart of trade union action: appeals, collective bargaining, regulations

**ENTERPRISES** / Ensuring diversity in the workforce for better economic effectiveness

**TRADE UNIONS** / Reinforcing the role of mediator in trade unions in order to provide specific assistance to immigrant workers

**ENTERPRISES** / Making sure that competencies, not appearances, are the main criteria in recruitment procedures

**NGOs** / Recognising skills and experience, and promoting the development of new occupations

**NGOs** / Increasing the level of co-operation between non profit-making organisations, employment services and enterprises, for better integration of migrants into the labour market

**NGOs** / Combining the fight against ethnic discrimination with gender mainstreaming

## European Platform

# Acting against Ethnic Discrimination in Employment

The fight against ethnic discrimination remains a highly topical issue in Europe. Discrimination is a recurring part of everyday reality in the European Union, despite the increase of initiatives to fight it. In some cases, several forms of discrimination combine and require mobilisation not only from institutions, but from all of civil society.






The French Ministry of Economy, Finance and Employment responded to the European Commission's proposal to implement a series of thematic events focusing on the achievements of the EQUAL programme and committed itself, with the help of the French technical assistance, to setting-up a Platform to take action against ethnic discrimination in the European labour market. A European steering committee was set up with the European Commission (EQUAL Unit), the German Ministry of Labour and the Swedish European Social Fund Council. The Committee has been extended to all Member States wishing to take an active part in it. The Platform also takes place within, and has received the label of, the "European Year of Equal Opportunity for All", instigated by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union. For France, national institutions involved in implementing public policy in this area, in particular the High Authority to Fight Discrimination and Promote Equality (HALDE), the Department of Populations and Migration (DPM) and the Agency for Social Cohesion (ACSE), along with the Office for Women's Rights and Equality, are also involved in this work. The European Platform is funded by the European Commission (EQUAL Unit) and by the Member States.

### The European Platform has two objectives:

- sharing experiences of EQUAL projects and learning together about ethnic discrimination on the labour market,
- ensuring better coordination of political and field initiatives, at Member State and European level, by reinforcing links between actors and decision-makers.

The Platform is original in that it has chosen a practitioner-based approach, bringing together "peers" so as to facilitate experience-sharing and to stimulate more effective contributions. Each seminar gave the opportunity to examine, with some twenty EQUAL projects and resource people, the experiences of each category of practitioners, identify obstacles and/or stumbling blocks encountered, look at the pre-requisites for mainstreaming successful experiences, provide examples of best practices, personal experiences, tools and methods, as well as come up with some recommendations.

### As part of this work, five Peer Review Seminars took place, bringing together:

-  **employment and training intermediaries:** in Paris, on the 8th and 9th February 2007
-  **trade unions:** in Hamburg, on the 19th and 20th March 2007
-  **non-profit-making and non-governmental organisations:** in Hamburg, on the 22nd and 23rd March 2007
-  **enterprises:** in Stockholm, on the 26th and 27th April 2007
-  **local actors:** in Hanover, on the 21st and 22nd May 2007.

All these results will be put up for discussion and exchange with decision-makers at the final event which will take place in Paris in November 2007.

The Platform's overall objective is, upon completing the seminars, to have analysed the achievements and fields in which progress is expected, identified the resources required for true progress in Europe and proposed operational recommendations at the European and national level on this issue.

As the time comes for an initial appraisal, prior to the final event in November 2007, it can be noted that the seminars gave rise to very enriching exchanges. The diversity of the approaches, based on very different cultures and experiences, made it possible to explore ever more avenues, without necessarily seeking consensus. EQUAL's main priority is to strive for greater effectiveness on the part of professionals with the aim of helping ethnic minorities to access the labour market, whatever the concept behind their action: diversity, equal treatment, affirmative action or mainstreaming.

## The question of “why?” continues to be raised

In the face of denial and reluctance to commit, there are always questions as to the legitimacy of the projects. Again and again, the rationale behind the fight against ethnic discrimination must be substantiated, and local diagnostic tools, statistical measures and questionnaires have all been brought into play under a number of EQUAL projects to establish this legitimacy and raise awareness in all of civil society.

**Diverse concepts and reference points.** The motto used by the EQUAL project in Bradford, “one landscape, many points of view”, which could also be expressed as, “one objective, many paths”, effectively illustrates the diversity of the concepts and reference points on which the Equal projects are based, to take action against ethnic discrimination.

**The law and equal treatment.** Whether one looks to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (as in Portugal) or national laws transposing European Directives (France, Sweden), the legal response to discrimination contributes to the intention of making the weight of discrimination bear down on professionals, rather than on victims. The central idea remains, in particular in France, that victims of discrimination are not hurt so much by a lack of integration as by the shortcomings of the organisations themselves.

**Promoting diversity.** This is to be taken as part of an affirmative action policy, in particular in the United Kingdom. Diversity entails action focused on good corporate practices, based on arguments about the benefits of diversity; and the proof of economic benefits, in particular for SMEs, of integrating people from very different horizons into their teams. It takes on very concrete forms, in particular with the creation of tools to assist in diversity management for companies.

**Integration through qualification and intercultural openness.** In some EU Member States, in particular Germany, Finland and Italy, many forms of discrimination have been rooted in the absence of concern for the needs of migrants in vocational and social integration. But, in recent years, new strategies have been developed to address this gap. EQUAL Development Partnerships have delivered new approaches to support the effective implementation of these strategies which involve fostering the intercultural openness of the labour market and developing pathways to improve the access of immigrants to training and employment.

## Solutions for promoting non-discrimination in employment

There are three components to achieving this progress: changing professional practices within organisations and institutions; developing new services outside current institutions; and implementing integrated systems, in particular at territorial levels, to make things happen in institutions, all the while providing support to individuals trying to access the labour market.

4 At each seminar, two approaches were explored in turn: first, to impact the systems, by

changing the practices of organisations and, second, to support and assist the target groups. The two approaches mutually enhanced one another. Lastly, a comprehensive approach, in a specific territorial setting, can enable combined action on “supply” and “demand”.

**Bringing about tangible change in organisations.** How can organisations be made to shift from the inside? Through bottom-up efforts, top-down efforts, or both? Whatever the case, the two approaches must come together, at some point. If they do not, the changes in the organisation will necessarily be limited. EQUAL projects change organisations overall, to provide better services to their users and, for this reason, can hope to have a lasting impact and mainstream its activities. All in all, anti-discrimination actions take on an irreversible dimension when they become central to the organisations’ commitments, and are legitimised at all levels of management. They can gain from visibility and promotion: charters stating commitments against discrimination and in favour of diversity create the circumstances conducive to real change in professional practices. It is not only a matter of providing support to victims, but also of having an impact on the organisations, systems and, thereby, the “professions”: training for employment intermediaries, employee representatives, company managers, leaders of non profit-making organisations and local actors. The aim is to change the system by challenging professional practices themselves. The issue of mobilising the law was also debated, giving rise to controversy. Some feel that “there is already too much regulation”, and that “the use of the law scares companies”, while other project representatives feel that “actors must make full use of all legal avenues and keep the law “alive” by supporting all forms of legal recourses”... Emphasis was placed on the divergences between legislation in different Member States, as well as on the fact that this legislation is very recent in certain countries. The combination of different forms of discrimination was also central to many experiences discussed, but even more so the connection between different anti-discrimination efforts. The answer could never be to classify victims of discrimination by level of priority, but rather to combine the approaches aimed at helping all categories. The Swedish seminar, focused on companies, offered a reminder of the clearly-recognised economic benefit the latter have in opting for diversity management: far more than a “politically correct” attitude, it also offers benefits for everyone. The aim is to achieve outcomes borne out by their economic impact. Based on the needs identified and skills required, companies must be provided with the appropriate tools for making recruitment an objective process. Furthermore, an “employability toolbox” must be built.

**New services and new roles for better integration of individuals.** The process often begins when shortcomings are identified in the consideration given to the integration of minority populations. The “intercultural” approach takes on its full meaning here. To implement this, new roles are emerging, such as “mediation” and “representation”, external organisations that provide support, counselling, training and create connections with institutions or enterprises, to which they demonstrate the value of integration. Many EQUAL projects have created mediation roles, and some among

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them have attributed this role to ethnic minority organisations themselves. The positioning of these organisations WITHIN or on the OUTSIDE is crucial. The sustainability and therefore the long-term funding of these new roles, beyond the life of EQUAL, have been discussed. By creating new services, often provided by external organisations, several EQUAL projects also assert the need to individually tailor the responses offered to job-seekers. Individual support helps establish a cultural bridge between the discriminated minorities, enterprises and society. This action fosters the integration of individuals, in particular when it is carried out by people who are themselves from ethnic minorities.

**Integrated systems.** These are defined as the implementation of joint action, in particular at a territorial level, based on a shared diagnosis and a jointly-devised methodology. Some partnerships are based on the experience of various non profit-making organisations and aim to break down the barriers between non profit-making organisations and public services, as is the case of the Finnish project Promenio. Encouraging organisations which often work alone in their specific fields of expertise to work together is an essential benefit of the EQUAL projects. Due to its systemic nature, discrimination always requires joint responses by different actors.

The principal result of the local actors' seminar was to prove the added value of local action and its key role in dissemination. It is a comprehensive approach enabled by the coordinated action of the actors involved and the central role of the municipalities. Town and city administrations in particular provide stable bases for activities: their more limited size allows better planning of action, giving this action meaning, pooling of resources, and sharing of needs, expertise and demands.

**Lastly**, how can each actor have a direct impact on change? The seminars focused in very large part on the issue of empowerment, as many projects carried out their activities with the minority populations concerned.

**In conclusion**, the different lines of thinking underpinning Equal projects in Europe can contribute, in a complementary manner, to changing professional practices in order to overcome ethnic discrimination in the labour market. This requires a fine, reasoned blend of concrete solutions, mobilising the target populations, as well as all categories of actors. The aim is to get institutions moving and to better respond to the needs of those faced with discriminatory situations, whether "visible or invisible".

Patrick Aubert, from the French Department of Populations and Migration, summed up this reciprocal inspiration that resulted from these seminars in the following manner: "The Finnish project offers an abundance of lessons, at many levels: how to work with small non profit-making organisations, create network leaders, deal with specific structures, etc. France, which focuses its work more on institutions than on target beneficiaries, should draw inspiration from this."

## The Final Event in Paris

The final event will bring together the conclusions from the five Peer Review Seminars, implemented in France, Germany and Sweden between February and May 2007, and provide an arena for debate on them. It will also be an opportunity to integrate the recommendations from the work on "Media and Discrimination", led by Sweden. This European event will provide a shared setting for discussion and dialogue with decision-makers and other key actors in the field, around the concrete recommendations emanating from the Peer Review Seminars.

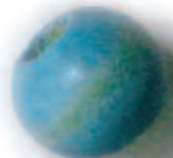


It will involve the main actors from the Equal programme (European Social Fund Managing Authorities, National Support Structures, related administrations, project managers), as well as groups from outside Equal, such as: European, national, regional and local decision-makers, opinion leaders, the media, peers of Equal project managers who will be able to draw inspiration from the outcomes achieved by their counterparts. The Platform, through its final event, aims to make an impact at two levels: national, where training policy, access to the labour market and anti-discrimination policy are concerned; and at European level, in the fields of the European Employment Strategy, and Integration and Anti-discrimination policies. A large number of European stakeholders are expected to take part in the conference.

Beyond the Platform's work, the European Social Fund's Regional Competitiveness and Employment programmes for 2007-2013 should help carry forward the achievements from the Equal programme and ensure that anti-discrimination become an automatic policy component.

## The "Top Ten" Recommendations

Equal's principal achievement is to have developed a series of prototypes which should be "mass-manufactured". The work begun in 2007 constitutes a contribution to all the current debate on policies to implement in this field. This is why the work carried out by the diverse actors involved in the Platform has led to this list of "Top Ten" recommendations, which will be the guiding theme throughout the European conference.



# Employment and training intermediaries

Actors from public and private employment and training services, temporary work agencies, and training and guidance organisations were involved in Equal projects related to fighting ethnic discrimination in employment and took a large variety of approaches. They acted in the name of the right for equal treatment, for diversity or intercultural integration. Ultimately, however, the issue is to change institutions in order to better respond to the needs of people faced with discrimination, be it visible or invisible.

## Recommendation 1

*Integrating skills for dealing with discrimination into the working practices of employment intermediaries*

**New forms of training must be promoted and implemented at a large scale that enable professionals in employment services and other labour market actors to better detect, and cope with, discriminatory practices that immigrants and ethnic minority groups often face in recruitment and placement processes.**

## The problem raised

This recommendation seeks to generate support for mainstreaming and transferring EQUAL approaches which have successfully tackled a particular problem that was identified at the seminar:

- Victims of discrimination suffer not only from a lack of integration, but also from institutional shortcomings. Public employment services play a vital role in the fight against discrimination as guarantors of compliance with the law and equal opportunities for all.
- Issues of racism and ethnic discrimination in recruitment and placement processes are not properly addressed in the work of employment services and there is little awareness of these issues amongst employment and training intermediaries. Thus, many workers in these services feel isolated and at a loss when they are faced with concrete instances of discrimination in their professional practice. However, only by taking a tough stance on these issues can employment services play their role in enforcing compliance with anti-discrimination legislation and in promoting equal opportunities for all in access to work.

EQUAL Development Partnerships have piloted different approaches to strengthening the capacities of intermediary services for employment and training in this field that could be replicated and implemented on a wider scale.

## Types of action

Professionalise workers, train them to identify and fight discrimination. The integration of skills for fighting discrimination is essential; this must become a skill specific to each institution, so that it can be replicated.

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- Generalise training modules tested in Equal, especially on the management of diversity, intercultural knowledge, mobilising the law and intermediation techniques.
- Adapt intermediation techniques and tools (profiling, relating supply and demand, response to a discriminatory request from a company).
- Disseminate the charters drawn up among public and private employment service actors.
- Raising the profile of action and getting the best from the results obtained, through strategies and appropriate communication tools.

## Equal Good Practice

**ESPERE** is an iconic French project with an inter-institutional partnership bringing together all the components of the French public employment service [central institutions, agence nationale pour l'emploi (national employment agency), association nationale pour la formation professionnelle des adultes (national training agency), local agencies, etc.] The project has made it possible to see how public employment and training intermediaries can, through their mediation activity, generate discrimination or pass it on. The aim of the project is to develop the means to end this problem by working on professional practice. An offer of training for the public employment service, a network of trainers and a public employment charter are the main project assets.

**LATITUDE** has developed a systemic approach to discrimination in temporary work in France, starting with a diagnosis of discriminatory demands from temping agencies in a number of areas and sectors. A vast in-house training programme included awareness-raising and skills upgrading for 3500 private temping professionals, at Adia and Adecco, from managers to local workers. A large number of tools have been designed, particularly presentations for public and private intermediaries, human resources directors and business leaders. A training reference manual for equality, designed with the Portuguese partner, and a commitment charter for temping businesses are the main project outputs.

In the North of France, in Roubaix and Tourcoing, the **Plan intercommunal de lutte contre les discriminations raciales sur le marché du travail** (Intercommunity Campaign Plan against Racial Discrimination in the labour market has allowed employment intermediaries and professionals in the fields of training, social work and integration through economic activity to become qualified. 250 people have been through a 4/5-day training module. The training combines analysis of professional practice and theory (legal aspects, definitions, etc.). The project resulted in a joint declaration of commitment by the organisations involved in the fight against discrimination, the design of a teaching tool for action (“the guide”), and the creation of a watchdog cell, responsible for analysing cases encountered by employment professionals. A tool for alerting the watchdog cell to cases has also been designed. Finally, a reference guide for professionals has been designed to help them react when confronted with discrimination in their day-to-day work.

Starting up in 2001, in a local situation where talking about discrimination was taboo, the city of Marseille set up **Solimar**. The project has helped to develop a common culture among all actors in the area, in particular businesses and employment intermediaries. A teaching approach was taken, not assigning blame to individuals. Awareness and training activities were organised with employment intermediaries (trainers, business relations officers, employment support workers, integration advisers, etc.), for whom these anti-discrimination tools were designed. Setting this up was not easy: some professionals refused offers of training intended to give a professional attitude to discrimination, probably because in doing so they were recognising a lack of skill in the subject. Commitment by organisations to anti-discrimination measures is a precondition for the success of these training programmes.

## Recommendation 2

*Developing new services and new forms of co-operation in order to facilitate the integration of minorities facing discrimination*

**The idea is always to anticipate groups’ requirements, take their particular needs into account and seek an individual response. The fight against the discrimination of which people of immigrant origin are particular victims cannot be won without them: cooperation with the groups concerned must always be sought. This is achieved by recognition of the proven and/or potential victims and their representatives, as full participants in the strategies of change in professional practice. Involving groups in public action and enabling them to gain access to citizenship is one of the paths explored by EQUAL projects. Participation by groups must be sought as the means to best adapt action to needs.**

## The problem raised

In many contexts, especially in Germany, Finland or Italy, a great deal of discrimination originates in the poor knowledge employment intermediaries have of migrant populations. Likewise these populations may not be aware of the codes of communication of the host

country. An intercultural approach seeks in particular to strengthen professionals’ ability to listen through intercultural training. In their diversity, the Equal projects have contributed to a renewal of roles within public and private sector employment intermediation. In particular, they have developed new mediation functions for jobseekers from other countries.

## Types of action

- Develop new employment services, e.g. access points specifically for migrants, reception and careers guidance centres, specific or otherwise, arrangements for access to micro-credit to encourage the setting up of small businesses, support, counselling, coaching. These new services must set up bridges with general employment and training services.
- Strengthen new roles for careers counsellors, mediators, coaches, professionals trained for inter-cultural support, especially those with a minority background, in co-operation with associations and NGOs.

## Equal Good Practice

**Promenio** is a Finnish Equal project that has built up strong cooperation and effective communication between the public employment service and 60 organisations and associations supporting migrants, starting from the basis that both parties are equal. Throughout the project it has been necessary to find forms of collaboration and common reference points for the actors who were striving to share different objectives and modes of action. There have been many concrete achievements. Intercultural training may make it possible to resolve these difficulties.

**Kumulus Plus** in Germany involves the employment and training agency and migrant associations. The widening of the skills of career guidance counsellors is at the heart of the initiatives of the German project running in Berlin, so as to avoid creating situations of discrimination. Intermediation between public services and migrants is done on the basis of proper knowledge of the needs of both parties. Starting from a relation based on confidence and respect, Kumulus Plus develops an individualised approach of empowerment of migrants relying on people’s qualifications. Counsellors take on two new roles: those of expert and coach. Specific training allows them to handle any subject: information on jobs, behaviour, intercultural communication ... The approach is thus based on both migrant involvement and the know-how of multicultural teams.

**Visibili-Invisibili** is an Italian project, run by a cooperative bringing together business and the University of Eastern Piedmont. An access point for immigrants was set up within jobcentres, as part of a move towards individualisation of responses to people’s needs. This counter offers information on all civic services in the area, careers advice, help with writing a CV and contacts

with businesses. 700 people have used this new service since it started up in April 2006. A guide for employment intermediaries has been designed, as well as communication tools and a model virtual counter. Project products are incorporated in the catalogue of services and tools of the Piedmont region, open to all actors involved in policies to combat unemployment in the region.

In the United Kingdom, the **Bradford Equality Employment Project** runs in an urban district that is home to the largest Muslim community in Great Britain. The ethnic minorities in the area face problems in housing, academic underperformance and unemployment. The project focuses on employment problems for ethnic minorities: training programmes have been set up to help individuals to obtain professional qualifications and experience, with an emphasis on unemployed but highly qualified people. Alongside this, important work has been done with businesses so as to facilitate recruitment of people from ethnic minorities. An employer's toolkit has been developed in order to contribute to the sustainable diversity of staff. This approach demonstrates the advantages SMEs can gain in economic terms from recruiting members of the ethnic minorities. In all, over 1000 jobs have been created this way.

The **Migrações & Desenvolvimento** project in Portugal, promotes a culture of cooperation, conviviality and intercultural dialogue across the area. It is intended for immigrants and ethnic minorities as well as for the services responsible for integrating them. An area pact was set up for intercultural dialogue, a citizenship resource guide, a training manual and a presentation entitled "What if it was you? Benefits of non-discrimination and cultural diversity in business".

## Avenues for the Future



**All public and private employment services**, including agencies for temporary work, should explicitly state their commitment to, and adopt a clear strategy for, building up their capacity to counteract discriminatory practices. Managers of these services should ensure that all their labour market intermediaries have access to, and benefit from, specific training enabling them to identify, and effectively cope with, instances of discrimination in placement and recruitment processes. Such training should focus on issues related to respecting ethnic and cultural diversity, intercultural knowledge, anti-discrimination legislation and non-discriminatory intermediation techniques. In summary, the aim is to bring to life the various charters for diversity, and create the connections for mobilising players through the law with awareness-raising for managers, in order to convince them to take action against discrimination.

**Member States' ESF managing authorities and national authorities** should encourage initiatives that promote new approaches to capacity building and anti-discrimination training in public and private intermediary services for employment and training. They should also

support communication and dissemination activities to ensure that key actors and practitioners in this field are made aware of relevant approaches and practices that have been piloted through EQUAL.

**National decision-makers** should support programmes to individualise responses. Individualisation may involve taking into account all aspects of need (housing, administrative status, health, etc.). This requires relations of partnership going beyond the sphere of employment, especially for social workers or assistance networks.

**The competent services of the European Commission** should stimulate, within the transnational cooperation networks that foster transfer of good practice demonstrating the role of employment services in overcoming ethnic discrimination in the labour market. They should also encourage the European Network of Heads of Public Employment Services (HES) to more explicitly recognise, in its Mission Statement, the vital role of these services in preventing discrimination in access to work, and to address this issue in the work programme of the network. Moreover, in monitoring progress on the implementation of the European Employment Guidelines, the European Commission should draw attention to achievements and gaps in public employment services' responses to the common objective of combating labour market discrimination against certain groups, including immigrants and ethnic minorities.

## Questions for debate



How can the necessary change of scale be implemented to ensure that staff training becomes an automatic and widespread part of the landscape? How should the charter agreements be expressed at local level, in conjunction with the charters and labels for diversity?

How can the employment intermediation services for enterprises and jobseekers be improved to deal with discrimination? What kind of work should be done on job offers and objectifying the recruitment process? What kind of special support should be provided to job-seeking migrants?

At European level, how can these issues be integrated into the action of the existing placement networks?



# Trade Unions

In the workplace, trade unions and their representatives have a major part to play in fighting discrimination on the basis of origin, and fighting for equal treatment for all employees and the successful integration of all. Two approaches stood out from the peer seminar: individual support for people from minorities suffering from discrimination, through new roles, in particular that of mediator; action on trade union organisations themselves, by providing training to union representatives and setting up award systems and labels. This naturally brings about challenges to the collective bargaining process in the branches and enterprises and revives action on the regulatory framework.

## Recommendation 1

*Putting the fight against racial discrimination at the heart of the union action: appeals, collective negotiations, regulations*

**Trade unions can bring the issue of discrimination to the forefront of public debate and make it a preoccupation of national and European collective bargaining, labour market and social policy, and law. On the shop floor, properly-trained trade union representatives can identify the existence of discriminatory practices, fight against individual or collective cases of discrimination and implement preventive measures to ensure that ethnic discrimination does not take place.**

## The problem raised

In order to win the fight against ethnic discrimination, trade unions and their representatives are crucial levers for change. However, though trade union action on this issue does exist, it is generally not a priority. Despite the fact that the European-level social partners issued a joint declaration in October 1995 on the prevention of racism and xenophobia and promoting equal treatment at work, this issue has rarely been high on the political agenda of trade union organisations, whether at national or grassroots level. Trade union representatives seldom receive specific training in this field. Few men and women from ethnic minorities confronted with racism at work would initially turn to their trade union for help. Only a handful of trade union representatives are members of ethnic minorities.

Knowledge and understanding of ethnic discrimination issues need to be mainstreamed throughout trade union organisations and racial discrimination should regularly be included as a topic for collective bargaining. These issues should be more prominent in trade unions' priorities at national, branch and enterprise level.

## Types of action



EQUAL projects have piloted a number of approaches for strengthening the role of trade union organisations and their members in preventing and counteracting ethnic discrimination in the workplace. They successfully tried out a variety of measures; including training and awareness-raising activities; development of guidebooks for trade union representatives and campaign materials; dissemination of good practice examples of trade union action against racial discrimination; strategies to ensure better representation of ethnic minorities in trade union membership and leadership; the creation of high-profile awards and advisory services for trade union representatives dealing with equality/racism and support for local branches of trade unions. Thanks to these activities, the issue of racial discrimination has become a much greater, and shared, priority within the trade union organisations involved in these EQUAL projects. However, these initiatives remain exceptional cases unless they are mainstreamed throughout the trade union movement.

## Equal Good Practices



### Training for migrant women to integrate them into union activity, Denmark

This project is aimed at helping migrant women move forward in their careers and build up their role in the unions. A non-governmental organisation (NGO), the main player in the DP, set up an eight-week training programme designed to encourage 29 women to take initiatives on their workplace and in the unions. Some of them have been elected union representatives. They have created a network in their union in order to act as reference models and motivate other migrant women. This project is supported by unions and public bodies. The programme includes Danish lessons, training in the Danish democratic system and the labour market in Denmark, as well as on the functions of a union representative. The final objective is to integrate this training programme into the Danish public education system.

### COOL, Project One Workplace Equal Rights, Scotland/United Kingdom

Given that very few men and women from ethnic minorities, when faced with racism in their workplace, turn to their unions, this DP asked union representatives to talk about the problem of equality and ethnic discrimination in the workplace. The Scottish Trade Union Congress, which carries out the project, has set up a variety of initiatives, including conferences for union members about the best practices for achieving equal opportunity amongst workers, the production of « campaign kits » and material promoting racial equality in the workplace and consultations with the employers. In addition, the project includes other resources and initiatives that provide union members with an online consultation services, a guide on best practices for unions and a training DVD.

### The fight against discrimination: building up union practices, France

This DP, represented by the CFDT, is a stakeholder in a study carried out by the CFDT and CADIS (Centre for Sociological Analysis and Action) on racism in the workplace as a reality of the business world.

Against this setting, several local and vocational entities are aiming to raise public awareness about the existence of discriminatory practices. The DP's main objectives are to build up union practices to fight discrimination in hiring and encourage joint activities combining unions, research institutes, public authorities, employers and NGOs. This DP supports initiatives with the objective of developing support tools and has launched a national mobilisation campaign to overcome the feeling of powerlessness and isolation often present when such issues are handled at the local level.

## Recommendation 2

*Developing new mediator roles and offering new trade union services that provide specific assistance to immigrant workers*

**Trade unions are often the first point of contact in cases of discrimination in the workplace and they can play a key role in providing information about workers' rights and advice services linked to the specific situation of migrants and ethnic minorities. A number of EQUAL projects have demonstrated how this particular position of the Trade Unions can be harnessed to facilitate the integration of migrant and ethnic minority workers. They have piloted new mediation roles and services which can now be replicated at a wider scale.**

## The problem raised



Trade unions have a unique position as intermediaries between employees and employers which can be used to provide assistance and advisory services for immigrant workers and employees of different ethnic origins.

Trade union representatives have strong negotiating skills and a good understanding of wage mechanisms, but they often lack "softer" skills in dealing with social problems and discriminatory practices faced by immigrants and ethnic minorities. Therefore they need training on anti-discrimination issues enabling them to address the prejudices and stereotypes that employers or non-immigrant colleagues may hold, and to identify, and successfully deal with, specific problems encountered by migrant and ethnic minority workers.

As workplaces become more diversified, developing new mediator roles and advisory services is also a crucial step in the modernisation of the trade union movement.

## Types of action



A number of EQUAL development partnerships involving - or run by - trade union organisations have tested the creation of new roles of Trade union mediators in order to provide specific assistance for workers of immigrant origin.

These mediators are located either within the enterprise concerned (in-company mediators), or act as external consultants or advisors. In the different projects, they are known by a variety of names: "intercultural mediators", "ethno-equality advisors", "diversity consultants", "ethno-mobbing advisors", "cross cultural mediators", "international communicators" or "equality reps".

In some projects, the mediators themselves are deliberately chosen from members of specific migrant or ethnic minority groups (Moroccans, Indians...) prevalent in the enterprise; in others, the mediator can be of any ethnic origin.

In order to facilitate the relationship between workers of different cultural backgrounds and with employers, the mediators carry out a wide variety of roles including:

- awareness-raising and educational activities on intercultural issues for indigenous workers and employers;
- personalised assistance for migrant and ethnic minority employees;
- intervention and intermediation in labour conflicts caused by cultural differences;
- advice for managers and employers on cultural factors;
- promoting diversity within the workplace;
- detecting and reporting discriminatory situations that may take place within the enterprise.

Another, smaller, group of EQUAL projects involving trade union organisations have set up specific services for newly-arrived foreign workers. The services include: assistance with the employment contract; social support; legal assistance; information on Trade Union activities; access to language learning; assistance with accommodation; careers orientation and training.

## Equal Good Practices



### Empléate, Spain

Focused on finding solutions to intercultural conflicts between employers, Spanish workers and workers from ethnic minorities, the project aimed to carry out awareness raising with employers, workers and unions on the topic. The Government of Aragon, which led the project, cooperates with a variety of public bodies, unions and employer organisations. Inside the network, the unions offered training to workers and union representatives wishing to work as intercultural mediators in the workplace, in order to provide support to people who need to solve issues or situations arising from intercultural problem. In Spain, the intercultural

mediators belong to ethnic minorities and are, for the most part, of Moroccan descent. The concept of intercultural mediator, developed as part of this project, is a new variation on the social mediator, still well-established in union settings.

### Colourful Workshop, Belgium

In light of the high unemployment rate amongst ethnic minorities, in particular Turkish and Moroccan, living in the Flemish Region, this DP encourages positive attitudes toward diversity at all levels of Belgian unions. The socialist union ABVV, project organiser, set up a training programme aimed at trade unions and union member. ACV, a Christian union, and the liberal union ACLVB followed in its footsteps. The training offered comes in two formats, lasting either six weeks or a single day. Eighty members of the target group have already participated. The DP's objective is to create the tools that can be used by all of the Belgian unions to promote awareness about the topic of diversity. At the same time, the unions are supported by consultants specialised in this area.

### Etno Segregation, Italy

The lack of awareness and information about immigration in unions is clear, according to the DP. For that reason, the DP is aimed at raising union awareness about the issues of integration, racism and discrimination, as well as on the problems and needs that arise from this. At the same time, the union UGL wishes to increase the participation of foreign workers by advising and informing them, and offering them training. To achieve these objectives, the DP has focused on two types of action, directly involving the unions: designing and organising a five-module training programme for union members; and the upcoming development of a service for foreigners already in unions (provide by an ad hoc association, SEI, founded in 2000 in the union UGL). The first type of action is aimed at helping participants gain the skills, knowledge and tools required to advise foreign workers in a union setting. The second deals with social aspects and employment for foreign workers and social issues and provides advice and information about all aspects of their rights.

## Avenues for the future

In order to generalise these solutions, a number of barriers need to be addressed:

- Trade union confederations at local/regional/national level should:
  - include a clear commitment to combating racism in their statutes;
  - set up guidelines on collective bargaining which cover issues of specific concern to migrant and ethnic minority workers;
  - actively promote knowledge and understanding of ethnic discrimination issues amongst its members and provide training for them on issues linked to migrants and ethnic minorities;
  - develop a strategy to increase the proportion of members from migrant and ethnic minority communities and to support them as candidates for elected workplace representatives, such as members of works councils.

- The ETUC should support such initiatives and reappraise them in the context of its action plan on migration, integration and combating discrimination, racism and xenophobia.
- The Commission should underpin such endeavours through the European level Social Dialogue and by stimulating ESF Managing Authorities to encourage active Trade union involvement in relevant ESF funded activities.
- Trade union confederations (at national and European level) must be convinced of the importance of providing assistance to workers from ethnic minorities, and of supporting diversity in the workforce.
- Public services (employment, social, integration...) must recognise the role which trade unions and their mediators can play to support their own activities aimed at integrating migrants and ethnic minorities.
- Institutional actors at national level (ministries, national anti-discrimination agencies...) and European level (European Commission, European agencies...) can support these initiatives by providing funding for the development of these new trade union mediator roles .

## Questions for debate:



How can in-house action for trade unionists and managers be combined with external action, in the company?

How can the creation of a European trade union Forum be sped up in order to share tools and concrete experiences in the field of combating ethnic discrimination?



## non-profit-making and non-governmental organisations

The starting point for action taken by non-governmental/non-profit organisations involved in Equal was to identify gaps in the various public and private employment services: absence of intercultural openness, insufficient knowledge of migration phenomena and their consequences, and coverage of issues specific to migrants. To overcome these shortcomings, the organisations develop new professional approaches to accompany minority populations. While doing this, they built new bridges between public and private employment services, enterprises and the populations at risk of discrimination. Complimentarily among institutions and associations is key to successful integration.

### Recommendation 1

*Increasing the level of co-operation between non profit-making organisations, employment services and enterprises, for better integration of migrants into the labour market*

**Migrants Self-Organisations (MSOs) hold an important role of building bridges between employment actors and ethnic communities. Recognition of the value of MSOs' work will advance the process of intercultural opening of the organisations that work with MSOs. It will heighten the knowledge about both the individual and collective problems that migrants are facing in the labour market and about the specific potentials that migrants can offer. So it will help to develop together better services.**

### Why?



On the one hand, people of immigrant origin have a less favourable access to the labour market and to vocational education, as well as to measures for further education. On the other hand, private and public employment actors often do not have any access to people of immigrant origin. This gap could mainly be filled by MSOs who have assigned themselves to the job of building bridges between private and public employment actors and migrant communities. MSOs have taken on the task of indicating lacks in employment services and seek to fill in these gaps by developing and implementing support for ethnic minorities. However, this endeavour requires a reinforcement of professional capacities of of MSOs.

### Which concrete actions?



- Building a common platform with tools that are relevant to both immigrant organisations and institutional stakeholders: and information and advice network, career guidance in the user's native language; support in job-seeking, mentoring, etc., as in Promenio (Finland),
- Publishing guides and manuals,
- Holding exchanges between associations and public services in order to foster better reciprocal understanding,
- Providing training to migrants, taking into account their specificities, in particular cultural, in designing the teaching methods,
- Where employers are concerned, training in affirmative action and assistance with diversity management.

### Equal Best Practices



#### **Cuirad Calon Cymru, Great Britain.**

Key areas of work include the empowerment of black and minority ethnic communities and facilitating access to employment for Eastern European economic migrants, contract workers and refugees. The DP provided skills-building workshops and different kinds of training for the target group, and offered positive action training to employers to address the issue of the under-representation of immigrants.

#### **DiverCidade, Portugal:**

The DP aims at strengthening and empowering groups of immigrants who have experienced poverty and social exclusion. The project has set up a training course which values the experiences of individuals to reflect their experiences as being not just an individual, but also a collective issue. The training provides the participants with the status of an "experience expert". The DP aims to achieve recognition for this training as a vocational qualification.

#### **Competence and Diversity, Germany.**

The project has developed an innovative strategy to fight discrimination and to improve migrants' participation in the labour market by providing different services for employers, employment agencies and unemployed migrants. The DP has been successful in raising the awareness of employers regarding the existence and the benefits of cultural diversity within the workforce.

#### **MigraNet, Germany.**

The project seeks solutions to problems faced by employment agencies regarding migrant populations: their unemployment rate is considerably higher than the regional average and their underemployment is significant. A new interface function has therefore been tested, bringing together employment agencies and NGO consultancy bodies. Support, counselling and training for public employment service workers, organisation of cultural events and themed conferences have been put in place.

## Recommendation 2

*Recognising skills and experience,  
and promoting the development of new occupations*

**The qualifications and skills of immigrants from third countries are generally not formally recognised on EU labour markets. New approaches in EQUAL have demonstrated how immigrants' competences can be made visible and utilised in the labour market, for the mutual benefit of both immigrants and employers.**

### Why?

Many immigrants from third countries experience a process of de-qualification which may ultimately lead them into social deprivation and poverty. Their formal qualifications are not recognised and their potential is not perceived by employment intermediaries and the business world. However, the integration of immigrants can be greatly facilitated if the qualifications and competences that they have acquired in their country of origin are valued properly on the labour market.

### Which concrete actions?

Whilst formal recognition of the qualifications of third country immigrants is hindered by a complicated web of administrative regulations, NGOs involved in EQUAL have made progress by ensuring that employment and training intermediaries, relevant multipliers and immigrant workers are well informed about how to navigate through these regulations. This will help them to provide better guidance and advice to facilitate access to jobs and training opportunities that offer some form of accreditation of such qualifications.

In cooperation with employers, professional associations and relevant public bodies, NGOs in EQUAL Development Partnerships have piloted more flexible ways of ascertaining, profiling and validating the competences and potential of immigrants from third countries. These assessment methods have proved to be successful in making visible all of immigrants' occupational, communicative and social competences.

EQUAL projects have also developed new further education programmes that build on immigrants' existing qualifications and offer them new perspectives for employment and occupational advancement in jobs that require intercultural competences. Examples include new courses that prepare immigrants holding a relevant qualification for work as intercultural counsellors or mentors, or for setting up their own business.

## Equal Best Practices

**InterCulturExpress**, Austria: The project was aimed at promoting immigrants' hitherto untapped competences and potential on the labour market and at combating the process of de-qualification to which many of them are exposed because they have to accept jobs requiring a level of skills below the qualification that they had originally achieved. Main activities included: mentoring approaches, the creation of professional networks and customised vocational training that builds on immigrants' existing qualifications and competences. The DP also piloted new approaches to coping with issues related to the recognition of qualifications which have been acquired outside the EU.

**KUMULUS-PLUS**, Germany. The project offers particular expertise in running skills assessments for immigrant job seekers and developed different assessment modules for immigrants who have already been involved in initial counselling but need further assistance to ascertain their vocational interests, their potential for personal and professional development or their competences and experience related to a specific job or vocational field. Similar to the Austrian InterCulturExpress project, KUMULUS-PLUS also piloted a new training programme for immigrants who have a (non recognised) degree in pedagogy or psychology. The programme and its final certificate offer the participants a chance to qualify for professional intercultural guidance work, for instance in job centres, public or private agencies, schools or training organisations.

## Recommendation 3

*Combining the fight against ethnic discrimination  
with gender mainstreaming*

**The issue of multiple discrimination was at the heart of numerous experiences presented, particularly the issue of articulating these various combats. It is impossible to give priorities to different forms of discrimination, but combining approaches is necessary.**

### Why?

Being a woman AND a migrant expose immigrant women to double discrimination in the labour market. It is more common for women with an immigrant background to be discriminated when accessing to the labour market than for young men. This observation reflects existing labour market inequalities between men and women, but adds the inequality of ethnic discrimination.

The discrimination faced by young women from an immigrant background is less well-known and less publicised than that experienced by their male counterparts. The challenge is to put in place actions aimed at improving the professional integration of these young women, who more often than not are graduates, attending the very same universities as French women, but who face greater problems finding suitable employment.

## Which concrete actions?



- Raising the awareness of specialists (careers guidance, training and recruitment) to the obstacles faced by these women in their professional life, including the young women themselves.
- All of the aspects of career paths of migrant women must be considered from a gender perspective: guidance, access to employment, careers and professional promotion, in an approach based on the empowerment of the women themselves.

## Equal Best Practices



### Trade Union Qualification for Migrant Women (Denmark)

The project aims to empower migrant women to develop their careers and their roles in the trade unions. An NGO and leading organisation of the DP has developed an 8-week training programme that has already encouraged 29 women to be active at their place of work and in a trade union. Some of these women have been elected as shop stewards and have created a network within the trade union to motivate other migrant women and to act as role models. Trade unions and public institutions are supporting this project. Elements of the course are: the Danish language, the democracy model of Denmark, the Danish labour market model and information about the shop steward function. The goal is to integrate this course into the state education system of Denmark.

## Objective 3 Best practices



**Feminin Technique – Fête (Bourgogne, France) :** The hypotheses on which the project was based is that, consciously or not, companies are not the only factors of discrimination, in fact the whole chain of recruitment is implicated. This project experimented the concrete actions presented below. More specifically :

- Help in finding employment for women from an immigrant background;
  - Starting a mobilisation campaign and encouraging a change in practices with the stakeholders - including the young women themselves;
  - Setting up a support group for young women from immigrant backgrounds;
  - Reaching a common position on discrimination by gender and origin by the steering group.
- Creating awareness raising tools; posters, booklets and a DVD (in progress);
- Survey of 1 000 companies;
  - Producing a transferable best practice guide.

## Avenues for the future



- Initiatives that strengthen the MSOs' role of indicating lacks of support and building bridges between public and private employment actors on the one side and ethnic communities on the other side: in particular, the associations that work with many groups of migrants of differing origins, should be supported by national and territorial stakeholders. Capacity-building of MSOs for these objectives is also needed.
- Outsourcing certain services for employment services and enterprises: associations can become service providers for employment services and enterprises, giving them the benefit of their own experience. The aim is to rationalise their reciprocal contributions, all the while resisting the temptation to do the institutions' work for them.
- New approaches to capacity-building and anti-discrimination training in public and private intermediary services for employment and training in co-operation with associations and NGOs is to be supported by national and territorial stakeholders.
- At the national level, communication and dissemination activities to ensure that key actors and practitioners are made aware of relevant approaches and practices that have been piloted through EQUAL should be implemented.
- In EQUAL, many innovative approaches for supporting migrants in making their potential more clear or developing new professional roles for them have been developed. The European Commission and the European Member States should stimulate further such initiatives which lead to the recognition of informal and formal qualifications and support further education. The associations can give impetus for a legal appeal or regulatory change, in order to adjust the legal framework governing recognition for qualifications obtained outside the EU, whether they are formal or informal and build up a vocational training framework and making it possible to build bridges between the original qualifications and jobs available.
- Integrating the concept of women's equality and the gender perspective into the common framework of diversity.



# Enterprises

Within enterprises participating in Equal projects, various types of actors are involved: directors, human resources managers, diversity managers... Equal projects work most often with the entire managerial line, seeking a consensus based on the agreement, or the motivation, of directors. The projects sometimes mobilise inter-enterprise actors: members of clubs of directors, multi-sector federations, occupational branches, networks, chambers of commerce and, for example in France, collecting organisations for vocational training funds. Strategies to promote diversity are encouraged in the joint interest of the employers and the discriminated-against minorities. Issues focus on more objective recruiting procedures that highlight competence. Work with tutors was also pointed out as being key to strategies for implementing organisational changes.

## Recommendation 1

*Making sure that competencies, not appearances, are the main criteria in recruitment procedures*

**Recruitment procedures are to be objective- and skills-based to overcome discrimination at the workplace. The development of objectively based HR-policies to be used in recruiting, but also in organising work, and negotiating wages and salaries is also recommended. The introduction of objective recruitment methods is the best way to find the competences needed by companies.**

## Why?



To be profitable and internationally competitive companies need to find the most competent employees. It is also an important business advantage if all employees contribute with the whole scope of their abilities and with their unique experiences. With new international markets companies need an internationally competent staff.

A strong incentive to economic development in companies is fair rules and conditions. The recruiters are often unaware of the extent to which their own values and backgrounds affect their judgement of applicants. This leads to discrimination and non-diversified workplaces.

## Which concrete actions?



The first step is frequently to conduct diversity audits. Auditing discrimination and diversity within the company is necessary to conceive adequate action plans. Communication and

Human Resources tools should be analysed.

Developing a structured and non-discriminating recruitment model (as a guide), that focuses on competence, based on studies of best practices in the European Union. The aim is to establish the competence profile of the applicant as objectively as possible, including assessment of job experience and personal characteristics. To illustrate, all of the tools and recruitment methods have been adjusted – in particular the profiling tools – and the anonymous CV has been adopted on an experimental basis.

Training programmes covering law, exercises showing stereotypes, action plans are negotiated between management and trade-unions, practical exercises on awareness for recruitment personnel and managers developed.

In order to encourage managers and heads of Human Resources to become aware about and implement non-discriminatory approaches, internal diagnostic systems in companies are developed. In order to understand the impact of this issue on employees a comparison of the conditions offered to employees at work are carried out.

## Equal Good Practice



**The Swedish FAIR project - Future Adapted Inclusive Recruitment** - has developed a non-discriminating recruitment model that focuses on competence. The model is based on best practice in the European Union. The model is applicable not only to ethnic diversity, but also to gender, sex orientation, age and disability. The main tool was a competence-based, structured interview of job applicants. The work place climate has been analysed and the staff have been taught to “take the FAIR temperature” of their workplace. Managers and the HR staff have been educated in the recruitment method. The result so far is that recruiting with the FAIR method has started. The FAIR project has resulted in a method to work systematically and objectively against discrimination and inequality.

In **DISI, Diversity in the Swedish Industry**, seven companies cooperated in a diversity project. Through dialogue and reflection, common days twice a year of inspiration and education, group activities and seminars the project initiated internal work at the companies. The dialogue took four parallel ways - there was a dialogue with individuals, with management, with unions and employees. The strategy was to connect diversity to business, as in the case of the companies Plastal, Volvo and Finnveden. Plastal was the most active participant in the project. They developed a diversity policy including all aspects of discrimination and more women were recruited as team leaders and to management. The mapping of skills surprised employees, knowing more than they thought they did. Personal interviews showed that employees felt they had a personal development through the project. Finnveden is a group of small companies forming a large global company. In this company they mapped skills, and categorised based on these skills instead of on origin. New recruitment routines were introduced, and more women were engaged in management.

According to Adia and Adecco, temporary work agencies, preventing all forms of discrimination offers both economic and ethical and relational benefits. The **Latitude** project

was an opportunity for them, with the support of the Populations and Migrations Department in France and the National Agency for Social Cohesion and Equal Opportunity (ACSE) to take action against discrimination, using an approach based on equal treatment for all. IMS-Entreprendre pour la Cité, a network of companies taking action to promote sustainable development and corporate social responsibility, has also joined the project.

Latitude was instituted after an independent assessment demonstrated the existence of discrimination on the labour market in recruitment agencies. Awareness-raising initiatives and training programmes were held at Adecco and Adia, in response to clients who made discriminatory requests. 3 500 staff members received training, from top executives to field workers. A reference base on training on equality was built up with its Portuguese partner organisation. Underpinning all of the aforementioned action was the consistent message that recruitment should be based solely on skills. A White Paper, concrete sets of arguments and guidelines for a legal framework were developed. At the end of 2004, the two agencies signed the Charter on Diversity in Enterprises. Monitoring tools, such as the Annual Social Report, internal documents and Web sites on the topic of corporate social responsibility have strengthened the fight on discrimination with regard to all employees. This experiment has now spread beyond the project, with the achievements and tools from Latitude transferred to the temporary work sector's trade union, Prisme.

## Recommendation 2

*Ensuring diversity in the workforce for better economic effectiveness*

**Highlighting positive implications of workforce diversity management on the firm's performance is a good way to challenge ethnic discrimination in employment. Aiming for diversity in work teams is first and foremost a positive way of broaching the subject of discrimination in companies and giving priority to convincing managers.**

## Why ?

At European level, the social partners made a joint declaration in October 1995 on the prevention of racism and xenophobia and promoting equal treatment at work in Europe. But just like the unions, employers have another focus than antidiscrimination. The main task of every employer is to develop a prosperous and profitable company, to produce, to buy and to sell. Other tasks such as working against discrimination are seen as important but are more seldom on the agenda of management or the national employers.

So how are the employers to find the time and energy to spend on anything else than the main task of profitability? One possibility developed in these EQUAL projects is that employers and their organisations become more aware of how counterproductive discrimination is. The challenge is to find a way to coordinate work against discrimination with the overall goals and everyday activities of the companies.

Employers are not aware of the benefits they can use to expand internationally, by integrating employees from diverse backgrounds. "Once the company has positive idea of diversity, then discrimination drops", said Ahsan Malik from Cemesme (UK).

Enterprises, if they are to win the competitiveness game, must be a reflection of their clientele – that is the price to pay if they want to conquer new markets. Moreover, on the brink of major demographic change, it would be unsafe for them to deprive themselves of significant human resources. The issue of diversity is thus an economic one as well.

## Which concrete actions ?

- Using specific courses for young graduates from ethnic minority backgrounds. It is possible to give them the opportunity to integrate the job market and also an opportunity for small and medium-sized firms to increase their international market.
- Signing a Diversity Chart is an obligation to act. Diversity charts and Codes of Conduct for diverse non-discriminating companies are a solid base to change professional practices in order to avoid discrimination. "To sign a charter of diversity is a public commitment in the spotlight of the employees and the press", said Henry de Rebol, from the French Elmer Project.
- The concept of diversity is preferred by some employers to the concept of anti-discrimination. Instead of underlining the differences between groups and individuals, a concept of profitability through equality is recommended.
- A broad corporation between social partners, NGOs, state authorities, media and banks has developed successfully.

## Equal Good Practice

**CEMESME - Contribution of Ethnic Minority Employees to Small & Medium Sized Enterprises** - is a project in Great Britain "selling the business case for diversity". The concrete objective is to show employers in SMEs the value of the contributions of ethnic minorities. CEMESME offered 200 SMEs post graduate students in a mentoring programme to improve the international performance of the companies, for instance exploring markets in other parts of the world. The concept of diversity was introduced later on after letting management realise the benefits of diversity in the company. Eventually the managers from the SMEs took active part in training seminars at the university to develop diversity as a business advantage. The plan of the CEMESME project is to increase the number of SMEs participating and to mainstream their methods on a European level.

**The Ahead project - Accompanying Handicraft Entrepreneurs Against Discrimination** - is a broad cooperation in Italy. IPRS, the Psychoanalytic institute for social research - identified forms of discrimination on the labour market. IPRS also trained unionists and employers in SMEs in the handicraft sector. An employers' union in the handicraft sector raised awareness in their structures and helped in the training. A media company, contributed information

campaign material on equal opportunities and discrimination, and multilingual material to inform minority groups. Panafrica is an NGO that works against discrimination with a focus on refugees and immigrants from Africa and other parts of the globe. They cooperated with an Italian bank to introduce a code of conduct for diverse non-discriminating companies. SMEs that implemented the code would get access to credits at the bank. The bank opened counters for immigrants staffed by Panafrica, culturally mediating the bank contacts. The objective of AHEAD is a cultural attitude change and more conscious human relations at the companies. The aim is to convince entrepreneurs there is a win-win situation in addressing discrimination. In AHEAD the word diversity is not used since it emphasises differences. The goal is to see human beings instead of different ethnic groups, to see beyond differences. AHEAD uses the concept of equal opportunity.

**ELMER** is a French project that addresses diversity management in companies. The objective of the project was inclusion, but not to measure or get a list of different groups. The aim is to raise awareness on non discrimination and diversity among French companies. Some of the methods were management process analysis and training. The result was diversity audits, awareness raising tools, training programmes and workshops on diversity. Participants were 160 French companies. An important tool to organise the employers was The Charter of Diversity Promotion in France that was disseminated in many partner employers' federations in connection with the ELMER project. This charter so far got 1 500 signatures "a public commitment in the spotlight of the employees and the press, and an obligation to act".

## Tracks for the future



The diffusion of the results from the Equal projects on local, national and EU level is crucial. Some projects have achieved mainstreaming of their methods nationally. "In Italy we are in the first stage of tackling discrimination. Awareness is increasing and there are more and more initiatives, but there is a long way to go", said Sabine Ravestein, from the Ahead Equal Project. The development of the cooperation of employers' organisations is indispensable to move towards equal opportunities in the European labour market.

Highlighting positive implications of workplace diversity management on the firm's performance is a good way to challenge ethnic discrimination in employment.

## Questions to be discussed



How can the goal of profitability be used as a motor for non-discrimination?

What are the best sources of leverage for ensuring that non-discriminatory practices are extended to all enterprises? What role does training play in this respect?

Could a transnational platform be helpful in continuing the work carried out on diversity and anti-discrimination?

How can pro-diversity and anti-discrimination approaches be transferred to new Member States?



## local actors

The local level has turned out to be best-suited to the fight against discrimination, with local action plans acting as a catalyst. They form a holistic approach based on coordination between actors, in which the municipalities play a central part, for they make it possible to give the activities a concrete anchorage point, while also giving them meaning and making them easier to broach, as a result of the cities' size. The most concrete aspects of the local level's added value include: "one-stop shopping" service counters where users can come to have their needs identified and seek most suitable responses; and the formation of multiple links between companies, intermediaries, researchers, the media and associations.

### Recommendation 1

*Giving priority to the action of local authorities, a scale well-suited to holistic action against discrimination*

**Strong partners on the local level are crucial. The most successful stories of EQUAL-Projects are often found at the regional or local level. These experiences show that the success and sustainability of project work largely depends on the active involvement of regional and local authorities. Raising public awareness at the local and regional level is needed to achieve enduring success in fighting ethnic discrimination. The territorial approaches piloted through EQUAL that involved action at the level of counties or municipalities have had a strong impact, because they were well designed to take account of particular local situations.**

## The problem raised



Regional and local authorities hold a central role in fighting ethnic discrimination on the job market. Municipalities and public institutions have to develop their own political and technical solutions which often generate new ideas for measures that are to be decided at higher levels. However, it is the local level which offers the most promising opportunities to combine actions of different actors and to set up integrated action plans.

Within the context of EQUAL, many partnerships mobilising all local actors have been formed to counteract and prevent discrimination. Cooperation networks at local or regional level have brought together authorities, employment and training intermediaries, associations and businesses.

The added value of this territorial approach is:

- a neighbourhood logic on a controllable scale
- the association of private partnerships facilitating access to employment
- the replication of good practice models in different places
- networking of actors with complementary competences and the creation of “early warning systems” to identify discriminatory practices
- the emergence of a common “anti-discrimination” culture at local level
- problems of housing, academic underperformance and unemployment can be dealt with jointly.

Most EQUAL DPs represented in the Peer Review Seminar “local and regional actors” were integrated into the structures of local and regional administrations. Others were NGOs cooperating closely with local and regional authorities.

## Types of action



When institutional, discrimination always calls for joint responses from actors. Dialogue and action at the local level involve:

- seeking the appropriate area scale
- jointly formulating a shared diagnosis and methodology
- breaking down barriers between the actors: making all organisations work together

Building and improving local integration plans, mobilizing all local actors to overcome ethnic discrimination by local networking between minority organisations, educational facilities and local administrations, trade unions, companies and NGOs.

Setting-up educational campaigns and information to media concerning migration, integration and fighting against discrimination (Society of Goodwill, Slovakia and Network for the Promotion of Interculturalism/ Greece)

Awareness raising by supporting the Diversity “Charters” and offering training courses (Equality and Citizenship and Accede (France))

For instance, local action makes it possible to connect actions of very different kinds, calling upon contrasting forms of expertise and many types of links:

- jointly-prepared diagnoses and rationale,
- training for actors to enable them to cope with discrimination,
- qualification for migrants to enable them better access to employment,
- enterprise mobilisation,
- regular interaction between the public and private employment services,
- professionalisation of actions.

## Equal Good Practices



### Album, Germany

This project was designed to improve migrant integration on the job market and operates through cooperation with different target groups. The strategies implemented by ALBuM include training and qualification, developing a network connecting local minority organisations, school infrastructures and the municipal administration. All of these players were brought together under the slogan “Experiencing and sharing intercultural riches”. The training courses, which combined theory and practice in enterprises, make it possible for migrants to become “foreign trade specialists” and “advisors specialised in intercultural issues”.

The project also offers assistance for organisational development or skills-upgrading for staff at companies headed by members of ethnic minorities, and companies with multicultural staff. Also offered are advice and training programmes aimed at employees and employers, as well as an intercultural training programme for representatives and employees intended to prevent or attenuate intercultural conflicts. At the current time, the administration is developing a “local integration plan”.

### Accede, France

To fight systemic discrimination resulting from multiple sources, this local project aims to initiate a change in local practices, in order to reach equal treatment. Key areas of activity are: co-operating with enterprises with the aim of reaching equality of treatment; working together with employment intermediaries to identify and fight ethnic discrimination using appropriate procedures, and working together with immigrants by providing them with assistance in using the legal system. The project experienced that local flexibility makes it possible to mobilise the key stakeholders who should be involved more easily.

### Polis, Czech Republic

To curb the difficulties experienced by those socially excluded from society, the majority of whom are Roms, as they seek employment, housing and education, this project sought to develop networks with the main players at local level and work in conjunction with them in order to raise awareness of the mechanisms of social exclusion.

Its aim was also to help them by developing strategies and policies aimed at solving the problem. The players in the network are municipalities, schools, employment agencies and employers. People in Need is an NGO that aims to analyse local needs, consult with municipal representatives in planning educational services, organise seminars and workshops for the municipalities, school establishments and employment agencies about social exclusion, and design local strategies aimed at remedying the problems identified. Lastly, People in Need puts together school education programmes in favour of intercultural education and cooperates with local employers. Project participants are currently putting together a document summarising the strategies used to take on social exclusion at the local level and come up with suggestions through consultation with local civil servants.

### Igualdad en la diversidad, Spain

This project wishes to help migrants find jobs (or better jobs), fight prejudice and boost their professional integration capacity by developing a local network of actors including administrations, trade union organisations, enterprises, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). The activities implemented consist of establishing a platform of entities and public bodies in the region in order to share information, experiences and recommendations, and improve the job marketplaces shared by the networks' various stakeholders. It has also implemented theoretical and hands-on training sessions designed to satisfy employee needs and assessment initiatives on the informal skills of the unemployed.

During the debates that followed the presentation, participants wondered about the tie between the platform for employment and placement. The importance of the employment platform as a supplement to the public service was emphasised. Participants also raised questions about assessing the profiles and their results. Emphasis was placed on the fact that assessment must open doors, such that employers and qualified migrants can come together. In the past, employers have often criticised the lack of qualified migrants likely to work for them.

### Network for the promotion of interculturalism, Greece

This project is aimed at fighting prejudice against migrants, the lack of infrastructures for informing and supporting them and the lack of tools for action. The project wishes to provide responses to these problems through two newly-created initiatives, for training and documentation for ethnic minorities: cultural mediator training and a course designed for media professionals. Another activity is the creation of assistance structures for migrants, including assistance centres for people of foreign descent and multicultural centres. Municipal institutions, migrant organisations, research institutes, training centres and organisations for equality are project partners.

The project has already come out with a professional profile on foreign labour in Western Greece: 7 assistance offices for foreign citizens, 3 multicultural centre and 6 assistance units for foreign parents have been founded. As of the present time, the project is preparing documentation for journalists and other groups, as well as a multi-lingual guide intended for foreign employers.

## Avenues for the future

To ensure long-term local political commitment, it is necessary to build up knowledge for local and regional authorities concerning issues of discrimination and diversity. They have to understand the difficulties of people from minority communities to become secure and strong partners in the fight for ethnic discrimination in the labour market. It is also needed to promote the exchange of experiences in the field of fighting ethnic discrimination in municipalities and local authorities in the EU .

Intensive awareness-raising for the wider public is necessary to be successful in the long term in fighting ethnic discrimination at the local and regional level. Positive examples of successful labour market integration should be used to emphasize the mutual benefit of majority and minority. Awareness-raising remains also an important instrument to gain strong partners in the fight of ethnic discrimination. It is necessary to provide more understandable information to key actors in municipalities, local authorities, also in companies and in the media.

Involvement of elected officials and managers is an important factor for change. In addition to the legitimacy that they give to the action against discrimination, they make resources available and allow the fight against discrimination to be displayed strategically in organisations.

ESF Funding and regional/local authorities should promote initiatives which ensure long term political commitment on the regional and local level through municipalities and communes.

This includes the support of:

- knowledge building/ awareness-raising with focus on local and regional authorities on ethnic discrimination issues.
- an exchange of experiences in the field of fighting discrimination among municipalities and communes in the EU.

## Questions to be discussed:



- How can capacity building of all local actors be ensured ?
- What are the best levers to ensure the involvement of politicians and managers ?

This document was written with the support of the European Steering Committee of the European Platform to acting against ethnic discrimination in employment :  
the French Ministry of Economy, Finance and Employment,  
the German Ministry of Labour,  
the Swedish European Social Fund Council,  
the European Commission  
and Racine, French Equal Support Structure.

Many thanks to Claude Rack, Sandrine Reis, Stefan Schulz-Trieglaff,  
Katherine Koch, Eva Loftsson, Gerhard Welbers, Fernanda Mora, Vicki Donlevy,  
Fabienne Beaumelou and Sthépane Ouazan,  
for their active involvement.

Editing : Racine  
Graphic design and layout : Studio SurSud  
Translation : Anne Trager et Ubiquis  
Corrections : Lisa Davidson

Contact : [info@equal-europlatform.eu](mailto:info@equal-europlatform.eu)  
Site : [equal-europlatform.eu](http://equal-europlatform.eu)