

EUROPEAN COMPENDIUM OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR THE PREVENTION OF RACISM AT THE WORKPLACE: A SUMMARY

The European Social Partners signed the Joint Declaration on the Prevention of Racial Discrimination and Xenophobia and Promotion of Equal Treatment at the Workplace in Florence in October 1995. This Declaration proposes a set of follow-up measures, amongst them the compilation of a Compendium of Good Practice, and asks the Foundation to take care of its production.

The Compendium of Good Practice for the Prevention of Racism at the Workplace includes 25 case-studies on preventing racism from the 15 countries of the European Union. The case-studies encompass private and public sector companies, trade unions, collective agreements, codes of conduct and national initiatives.

It is hoped that the Compendium will help policymakers, social partners and practitioners to learn from previous experiences and envisage future actions. In spite of the wide variety of examples selected, all case studies demonstrate that practical action to prevent racism and xenophobia and promote equal treatment at the workplace is possible. This is the main goal of the Compendium - to contribute to a broader exchange of good practices and facilitate new initiatives to counter racism and xenophobia and promote equal treatment at the workplace.

An increasing number of European countries have introduced, or are introducing, legislation which specifically prohibits discrimination in employment. However, legal prohibitions in this area, whilst necessary, are not sufficient, to tackle the problem of direct or indirect discrimination which so often reduces the employment opportunities of immigrants and ethnic minorities who have originated from outside the EU. Legal measures provide the context for more 'voluntary' actions, either at the level of an individual organisation or company in the form of equal opportunity, equal treatment or anti-discrimination policies, or at a national or sectoral level in the form of collective agreements by the social partners. The Compendium focuses on examples of 'good practice' at this voluntary level.

For this project, national researchers within each EU member state produced a report covering case studies of good practice within their own country. Most of the case studies concern policies which operate at the level of an individual company or organisation. However, sometimes activities take place at a sectoral, regional or national level, perhaps as a result of agreements between trade unions and employers' organisations. These include collective agreements, joint declarations, and information, training and education campaigns. Good examples of action at this level are therefore also included as case studies.

The Compendium of Good Practice selected 25 case studies from the 15 EU country reports, and grouped them according to their sector or nature. The first group contains private sector companies in the manufacturing, metal industry and retail sectors. The second group consists mainly of public sector organisations but also includes private sector companies involved in the provision of services. The third group are trade union organisations, and fourth group are agreements and initiatives at a sectoral or national level, usually involving the social partners. This summary selects from the Compendium just one example of a case study from each member state, covering cases from each of the four groups, to illustrate the range of initiatives which can be found across Europe in this field. A fuller account of these and the other case studies can be found in the Compendium, and a more detailed account of all of the original cases can be found in the individual national reports.



EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE



1. Private Sector Companies

AUSTRIA - iR3 Video International is a video manufacturing company where an imperfect knowledge of German by immigrant workers became a potential problem when production began to be restructured. Work teams were being formed with the authority to make semi-autonomous decisions about the production process, the organisation of time and the allocation of duties within the team. It was no longer sufficient for a production worker to be able to passively understand instructions. He or she had to communicate actively within the team, in order to contribute to the team's success.

Using the slogan "talking together - working together", the company initiated German courses for employees, comprising three principal elements: grammar, communication skills, and information of relevance to work and the company. The element of the course containing information of relevance to the company covered quality assurance, company ideals, safety at work, job specifications, and texts and topics from the company magazine. Courses were held to fit in with the times when shifts began and ended. Classes were held twice a week and initially lasted six weeks, then eight weeks during the final round in autumn 1995. All classes were held in the factory itself, to keep costs to a minimum on the one hand and, on the other, to keep down the time involved for participants.

The language courses reduced the likelihood of an adverse effect on both production and safety through misunderstandings, and also reduced the risk of immigrant workers being replaced by others with a better knowledge of German.

BELGIUM - Electrocoat-Genk is a subsidiary of one of the world's biggest electrocoating businesses. The company recruited via an agency which had been set up to provide assistance to unemployed miners in the region, which had been in recession since the closure of the local coal mines. Only people who were 'just about employable' on the labour market were sought out. Another criteria for selection was a readiness to work with and be tolerant of people of a different ethnic origin. For two out of three of the training courses it was decided to aim for a minimum of 50% immigrants.

The training consisted of six months' familiarisation on the shop floor, and included technical training, working attitude and disposition, language mastery and intercultural cooperation. The aim of the firm is to establish among the multi-ethnic workforce a working climate in which each employee feels respected and has a sense of belonging to the firm. Meetings are held at regular intervals between foremen and trainees, and any problems, the best ways of dealing with cultural differences, and so on, are discussed. Workers of Maghrebian origin can take a longer leave period in the summer months if they put in a request to do so. Those who wish to pray can withdraw to the changing rooms to do so during breaks.

One advantage gained by the company was that staff turnover was reduced to around 15% per year, which is fairly low for a firm of this kind.

FRANCE - Continent Hypermarket is a hypermarket in a large shopping complex recently opened in an urban area containing a high percentage of foreigners and French citizens of foreign origin, and suffering from many social problems. A policy of "local preference for recruitment" was initiated after vociferous lobbying by local people during the construction phase, who had felt that they were going to receive no benefit from the new shopping complex. A charter was drawn up in which retailers at the centre, undertook to give priority for jobs to people living in districts close to the shopping centre "provided they have the appropriate skills and abilities".

A training programme for Continent managers was instituted to make managerial staff familiar with the hypermarket's economic, social and cultural context, and also with its future employees. An agreement was made with a local agency to select very disadvantaged people from the Quartiers-Nord, provide them with initial training to improve their chances of being employed at Continent. Altogether, 58 of the 90 trainees were taken on "blind", without having to undergo any selection tests, by Continent before the store opened; and were employed under permanent contracts, after receiving a further two to three months' training from the enterprise.

Instead of emphasising "classic" recruitment criteria, educational qualifications, experience, etc., detailed job descriptions were drawn up. This was followed by a local public information campaign to announce the availability of the jobs. At the end of this process, more than 450 people were recruited and began the training provided by Continent. Ninety-five per cent of locally recruited employees were covered by permanent contracts of employment.

There were clear business advantages resulting from this policy. The centre suffers less crime than its counterparts in other areas, perhaps because the shopping centre has been accepted "as their own" by local people, and because most of the members of the security team have been recruited from among young people living on the neighbouring estates. Management spoke of the high motivation and commitment of the employees, and an absenteeism rate of less than half the national average.

GERMANY - Thyssen Stahl AG is a long established steel company where "foreign employees" make up 18% of the workforce. In 1996 the "Works agreement to promote equal treatment of all foreign and German members of the workforce" was signed by the management board of Thyssen Stahl AG and the company works council. This set out corporate principles of equality related to three aspects of equal treatment: personnel matters (e.g. recruitment, wages, promotions), social matters (e.g. the allocation of company housing) and vocational training. Furthermore, in collaboration with Duisburg's adult education centre, education and training is offered in a range of areas and subjects related to the agreement, including:



- German courses for employees of foreign origin who have a basic knowledge of German and wish or need to improve their German for work-related reasons
- Turkish in the form of introductory and intermediate/advanced courses for employees wishing to learn Turkish or deepen their knowledge of Turkish for job-related or personal reasons
- leading multicultural teams - intercultural training
- learning from one another: an intercultural weekend for employees of various nationalities and their partners
- German as a foreign language for wives newly arrived in Germany

ITALY - Modena Foundries Cooperative is an iron foundry in which slightly under a quarter of employees are non-EU workers. The main problems experienced by non-EU workers in the area are associated with language and housing. In the face of the considerable problems caused by landlords' reluctance to let accommodation to immigrants, the enterprise undertook to find apartments for its non-EU workers. Contracts were drawn up in the name of the enterprise, which then sub-let the apartments to its workers, with the landlords' consent. In this way, the enterprise managed not only to help workers to find accommodation but also to forge closer relationships with them.

To help workers learn Italian, the enterprise organised a one-year language course for all non-Italian-speakers; attendance was optional and all costs were borne by the enterprise. Attendance rates were high, and most of the workers who attended the course could speak Italian quite well by the end of it. Its success could be indicated by the fact that initially meetings were conducted in English so that everyone could take an active part, whereas now, meetings are held in Italian.

The measures have been of benefit to both the company and the immigrant workers. The workers have been helped with accommodation and language classes, and

some allowance made for religious differences. The organisation has benefited in retaining a workforce in a sector where recruitment and retention of workers had been difficult.

THE UK - Virgin Our Price stores sell a wide range of goods including music CDs and cassettes, videos, games, books, and other such accessories. As part of a strategy to promote equality of opportunity in the workplace, personal information forms were issued to all employees including a request to self-nominate their ethnic origin. Amongst other things, the audit revealed that ethnic minorities were under-represented in middle management and senior positions.

The company introduced positive action measures to ensure that opportunities are made known to under-represented groups, and provided training to enable members of those groups to compete on equal terms for the opportunities available. All individuals who sit on recruitment and selection panels receive anti-discriminatory training, and one personnel representative is present at all interviews. The company equal opportunity policy states, amongst other things that a serious incident of racial harassment can result in summary dismissal for gross misconduct.

The company states that its policy has a number of advantages, including:

- attracting the best from the pool of skills and talent which is becoming increasingly multi-racial and use people's potential to the full;
- ensuring that the company meets the needs of its current and potential customers effectively through a workforce that reflects the make up of the communities which it serves, and provide a competitive edge in reaching and attracting alternative new markets;
- avoiding incurring the direct costs of racial discrimination; financial, reduced employee moral and commitment, and cost to the image of the organisation resulting from adverse publicity;

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2. Public Sector and Public Services



FINLAND - Männistö Comprehensive School is committed to the system of teaching children in their own mother tongue. Among the reasons for this are that mastery of one's own language is the condition of learning other languages, that it retains links with the children's parents and their own culture, and that, in the case of refugee children, it makes moving back to the homeland possible. During the school year 1996 - 1997 there were four international classes: Somalian, Estonian, Russian and Arabic. Due to this international teaching emphasis, Männistö Comprehensive employs the largest number of immigrants in the city of Kuopio.

Training of the staff plays an important role in the implementation of bilingual and multicultural education. Some of the immigrant teachers without professional qualifications have developed themselves by in-service education which is made available. The school encourages teachers to take part in two year courses for native language teachers, partly by distance learning.

Both adults and pupils are taught to respect different cultures and values, as well as their own. Islamic dress - for example the headscarf - does not arouse any extra attention. The cross-cultural skills that the teachers have acquired have contributed to the good atmosphere at school, and teachers are satisfied that they have been able to solve some 'culture-related' problems and misunderstandings. It is a positive example of a multicultural approach in practice, which operates both to increase the educational attainment of the pupils, and to give new employment opportunities to immigrant teachers.

IRELAND - The Travellers Initiative in the Local Employment Service was established in 1996 as a major initiative to combat long-term unemployment and other aspects of disadvantage in the labour market. The largest single ethnic minority are Travellers, who experience prejudice and discrimination which has contributed to extreme disadvantage and social exclusion. It was decided to integrate a 'Traveller

specific initiative' into the Local Employment Service (LES).

An Action Plan has been adopted which includes the development of a module for use in 'in-service' training for LES staff in terms of developing their skills in relating to Travellers and their aspirations. It also includes the development of a monitoring procedure that would be used within the various local services to measure take-up by Travellers and to track their experience of the service.

There is a pilot project in one urban setting to co-ordinate existing training and employment support services. It also provides a mediation service, through which trained mediators work with a job seeker to analyse his/her position and devise a plan of action to reach the goal of suitable employment opportunities. A Mediator/Outreach Worker will identify the needs of the individual client in terms of employment, training and development and actively match them with appropriate opportunities. This work will include liaising with training providers and employers to encourage them to recruit Travellers. It will also involve encouraging Traveller participation in the LES through outreach to individual Travellers by working through Traveller organisations.

THE NETHERLANDS - North Holland Department of Public Works and Water Management is responsible for flood defences and water management, traffic, transport and communications. A survey revealed that disillusionment was one of the main reasons for the low response of ethnic minorities to job advertisements. Contacts were initiated with migrant organisations and other relevant bodies to stimulate applications. Also, agreements were concluded with temporary employment agencies that requests for temporary staff would be met in the first instance by candidates from one of the ethnic minorities.

In addition, the Department held preliminary interviews with applicants of minority ethnic origin where information was given about the organisation and the procedure, and applicants were advised on how to improve their letters of application and CVs. Preliminary interviews created a relationship of trust, so that contact was maintained after the initial application and feedback was obtained on the progress of the procedure. During selection, personnel officers were careful to see that the correct procedures were followed in the case of

applicants of minority ethnic origin and that no improper arguments were used to reject them.

Finally, inflow into short-term placements – such as work experience places and apprenticeships – was encouraged after it emerged that some applicants of minority ethnic origin possessed the necessary educational background, but not enough work experience. By 1st January 1996 the percentage of employees of minority ethnic origin was seven per cent, two per cent higher than the recommended target set by the national Civil Service plan.

SWEDEN - Stockholm County Council (SLL) has almost 18 per cent of its personnel who were born abroad. In its healthcare sector it feels that special importance should be attached to making use of the language and cultural competence of staff. Bilingual employees should be regarded as a valuable resource. Departments have been encouraged to make an inventory of the language skills which are present among immigrants with a foreign education and experience from abroad.

There are also a number of training projects. The Council is integrating cultural issues into internal training, examining the need for special educational materials for specific groups, or producing material for personnel education on the subject of cultural understanding. Employees with a foreign nursing education receive additional training so that they can work as qualified nurses in Sweden. A special ten-week course in Swedish was designed for kitchen personnel and covered the reading and writing of recipes, the comprehension of work instructions, the reading skills needed to understand work literature and the verbal and written reporting of work tasks. The course participants studied full-time with full pay. Finally, a course entitled 'Racism and Xenophobia at Work' has been provided for work supervisors, personnel with immigrant backgrounds and teachers from the healthcare college. The course addressed prejudices and hostile attitudes due to ignorance and provided the opportunity to discuss xenophobia and racism in a practical way with the aim of changing attitudes in the long-term.

SLL's programme in the healthcare sector has provided a better kind of healthcare for a multicultural society, and also provides better job opportunities for immigrants in Sweden.

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3. Trade Union Organisations



DENMARK - The N.I.F. Network of the Labour Movement International Forum is a network of ethnic minorities within the trade union movement, financially supported by the Danish trade union confederation (the LO) and a number of unions. The aim is to improve conditions for ethnic minorities in the labour market and to build bridges between ethnic minorities and trade unions. There are three main reasons why members thought that NIF was necessary: their experience of racism from their colleagues and other union members, the slowness of unions in responding to issues of importance to immigrant members, and the slowness of

immigrant members themselves in getting involved in the unions.

The philosophy within NIF is that immigrants and refugees should be in a position where they are able to fight for and secure their rights themselves, rather than be inactive, or simply 'complain'. One of the first initiatives was the publication of a booklet "An Introduction to the Danish Labour Market" for immigrants and refugees, providing them with basic information on their opportunities, rights and obligations. The NIF group has organised meetings with local unions, has initiated information and poster campaigns and has organised regular visits of groups of



trade unionists to the UK, to get ideas for further initiatives and policies.

A realistic aim for NIF is to see a committee for migrants existing as part of each local union structure, in areas where there are migrant workers. There is a precedent for this, in that unions already have committees on other issues - for example, a gender committee, an international committee and an education committee. Ultimately, the aim is to see issues of equal opportunities for migrants becoming 'normal', in all local branches.

LUXEMBOURG - The Immigrants' Section of the OGB-L, the Socialist trade union in Luxembourg, was set up in 1985. It was thought to be necessary because at the time union meetings were always held in Luxembourgish. The immigrants could not follow what was said and therefore did not feel they were involved in the union's activities. The meetings organised by this section are conducted in French, but any worker can make comments and put questions in his or her own language. Pamphlets and articles of interest to immigrant workers are translated into various languages and reproduced in the union magazine, *Actualités*.

Within the OGB-L particular importance is attached to the participation of immigrants. All the staff of the immigrants' sections are thus of foreign origin. The premise is that it is only possible to do something for immigrants if they are included and integrated into the working of the union. The division provides contact points through which immigrants are helped with problems of all kinds. Problems at work and problems with social security, housing, health insurance, administrative difficulties and the like are all dealt with

In 1996 the Immigrants' Section drew up and approved an action programme covering the various problem areas in policy as regards immigrants, both in the world of work, and outside. Among the standpoints adopted were a demand for the regularisation of the position of foreign workers from third countries, that the minimum guaranteed income must be available to everyone in need of it, regardless of period of residence and age, and

that the public sector must be opened up to everyone. The section also pressed for the introduction of explicit statutory provisions outlawing racism.

SPAIN - The UGT and CCOO Union Confederations are the two major trade union organisations in Spain, holding about 75 per cent of Spanish trade union members between them. The two unions have each created a network of special centres to deal with the specific problems of immigrants: CITEs in the case of the CCOO, and the Centros-Guía in the case of the UGT. By 1997, there were already more than 100 CITEs and information points throughout Spain. Activities include campaigns concerning regularisation and the re-uniting of families, negotiations with the authorities on issues associated with residence or work permits, as well as labour and social security issues, and complaints about discrimination. They also provide training for immigrants and for Spanish workers who have contact with immigrants. The network of the UGT's Centros-Guía was first set up in 1991 and there are now centres in the 11 Autonomous Communities with the largest immigrant populations. Where there is no centre, the trade union's social-welfare services offer special advice and help for immigrants. The Centres cover legal services such as work and residence permits, visas, and information on work-related issues, and social activities such as courses in Spanish language and culture, cultural activities to promote multi-cultural tolerance, and anti-racist awareness campaigns.

Both the unions engage in political activities to promote the integration of immigrants in the labour market, negotiating with administrative bodies on policies regarding foreigners, and campaigning to raise Spanish workers' awareness of immigration. They have both committed themselves to combating discrimination by pursuing in collective bargaining and elsewhere, for example, campaigns to give non-EU immigrants the same rights as EU nationals, promoting access to vocational training, and fighting illegal immigration by helping workers to regularise and taking criminal proceedings against employers and traffickers of illegal labour.

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4. Agreements, Codes of Conduct and National Initiatives



GREECE - Regularising Undocumented Immigrants is for the first time to become official policy in Greece. In 1997 the Minister of Labour delivered a speech emphasising that all foreigners in the country should have equal rights at work and in social insurance with those of the Greeks, and that foreigners who have been in the country for 7 or more years should have easy naturalisation procedures. It is estimated that there are about 350,000 to 450,000 undocumented economic immigrants in Greece.

In 1996 a committee was established with the purpose of formulating two Presidential Decrees for the regularisation of the undocumented immigrants, and to set the terms under which residence and work cards could be issued. The first Decree will specify the procedures for the registration of the foreigners in

Greece, and the conditions under which a Temporary Residence Card for them would be issued and renewed. The second Decree will specify the conditions under which the holder of the Temporary Residence Card may obtain a Residence Card of Limited Duration, renew it and obtain a Card of Long Duration. It will also regulate issues pertaining to the legal employment of the foreigners in the private sector of the economy and in the primary economic sector, as well as the social security obligations and rights of the foreigners and their employers.

In the medium run there may be some negative side effects of regularisation. For example immigrants may lose some of their job flexibility, become less mobile geographically or be employed in more skilled jobs and compete with the locals in the labour market. By that time however the problem of the large amount of undocumented immigrant labour will not be so acute and

the foundations for a multinational and multi-racial labour force would have been laid, in a more tolerant society.

PORTUGAL - The EXPO 98 Social Agreement was signed by the parties involved in this major civil engineering project in Lisbon. Amongst other things the measures include:

- A system to prevent the use of ‘illegal’ work. In order to enter the Expo 98 site a card has to be presented which is issued only to workers who have proved that they are legally resident in the country and are registered with the social security.
- The creation of an Employment and Vocational Training Exchange with a view to balancing the supply and demand for employment, facilitating recruitment, providing mobility, improving the

vocational skills of workers and preventing illegal contracting.

- Measures to promote safety, hygiene and health at work. Both contractors and subcontractors are required to insure their personnel against accidents at work and to take steps to ensure that pieceworkers and self-employed workers are also covered. If contractors, companies or their personnel fail to comply with the legal and contractual obligations or with the provisions in the “Safety and Health Plan” the client may suspend the works, the resulting delays and losses being attributed to the contractor responsible. A first aid post operates permanently on the site.

This measure whilst not ostensibly aiming to prevent racism, could have a positive impact in this area because of the large numbers of immigrants employed.



CONCLUSIONS

The activities described in the Compendium can be roughly grouped at a number of different levels. Firstly, at the broadest level, there are the national or sectoral agreements, statements of policy, and codes of good conduct. These are a statements of intention and starting points, and are of value in areas where things have not happened before, as a way of putting the subject on the agenda. Some national level agreements might not in themselves contain the tangible mechanisms for producing recognisable change, but they are an encouragement for others to take action at a local level.

Changing attitudes

Rather more focused than some of the broad social agreements are the campaigns (e.g. against racism) which have been recently initiated by the social partners. Some are at a national level, involving the production of media material and training packages, and are directed broadly across society. Other campaigns are more specific still, directed at employees within one organisation, and presenting information about working with foreigners, or avoiding racism. These campaigns are usually directed at changing attitudes, and can be intended to prepare the way for other changes. More specific still, and also directed at changing attitudes, are some of the training programmes described in the Compendium by organisations which offer training to their employees on, for example, “living and working together with foreigners”.

Changing behaviour

More narrowly targeted than attempts to change attitudes are those initiatives which provide information and relatively specific skills, such as the training in ‘intercultural management’ or ‘intercultural cooperation’ found in several case studies. Some case studies placed particular importance on training ‘gatekeepers’ and others whose activities could have a direct effect on the opportunities of ethnic minorities. Measures include training on fair recruitment and selection procedures, and how to comply with anti-discrimination legislation.

Positive action

Many of the initiatives listed in this Compendium are aimed at providing equal treatment by attempting to

change attitudes and practices, and removing discriminatory barriers, so as to produce the ‘level playing field’. However, there is also a strong argument that equal treatment and the provision of a ‘level playing field’ is not enough, and that action is needed over and above the simple provision of equal rights and the removal of discrimination. ‘Positive action’ measures are based on the assumption that ‘equal treatment’ is not going to be any use if migrants are starting from very different and disadvantaged positions, sometimes because of the operation of racism and xenophobia in the past. Whereas equal treatment would mean treating people who apply for jobs without discrimination, positive action means, for example, making an extra effort to encourage groups who might not normally apply. Therefore, positive action is in fact doing something extra for previously excluded minorities, something you are not doing for the national majority.

In its weakest sense, positive action could simply mean devoting extra resources to language and other training to immigrants in order to better equip them for work. This type of initiative is probably the single most common amongst all the case studies in the Compendium, and seems to arouse the least controversy. Other measures which go further than “equal treatment” are those which accommodate the specific religious or cultural needs of minority groups within the organisation. Again, these are reasonably common amongst the case studies.

Other forms of positive action might be special recruitment initiatives, such as translating job advertisements into ethnic minority languages, placing advertisements in the ethnic minority press, or using statements to encourage applicants from minorities. An increasingly used measure is that of “mentoring”. This is intended to increase the retention of minorities once they have been recruited into the organisation. In the Compendium the strongest form of positive action is the preferential treatment found in the Dutch case studies. Under Dutch law, these were allowed to announce that in the case of equally qualified applicants, they would choose the one from a minority background. However, this is still not a particularly strong form of preferential treatment as it does not entail any lowering of standards.



In the French case study, positive action training was directed at local 'disadvantaged' people to improve their chances of employment at the hypermarket, and when this was combined with the policy to give priority for jobs to people living in the districts close to the shopping centre - provided that they had 'appropriate skills and abilities' - this formed a strong and effective 'positive action' policy which borders on positive discrimination. However, this was less controversial than it might have been because it was not openly framed as positive action for ethnic minorities, but for 'local people'.

Only a minority of case studies operated a whole package of equal opportunities measures, covering, for example, the range of suggested initiatives in the Florence 'Joint Declaration', as well as others. These were case studies in the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK. Between them they operated a whole range of different practices, including special advertisements, allowances for cultural difference, positive action training for immigrants, training for staff on how to recruit and select without discrimination, and procedures for sanctioning harassment, with progress reviewed and monitored by statistics, and targets set relating to the long term proportional representation of minorities. The accurate monitoring of their workforces over time allowed these organisations to review their progress and make appropriate policy changes, and indeed, the monitoring was able to demonstrate that they had progressed significantly towards a greater representation of ethnic minorities amongst their employees.

Business advantages

Many of the case studies in the Compendium exhibited an awareness of the business advantages of their policies. Some saw a possibility of commercial advantage by making the company more attractive to ethnic minority clients, or improving the company image in a culturally diverse area. A policy might form part of an internal labour market policy to maximise the potential of existing valued employees, avoiding, for example, the poor motivation and low productivity that stems from workers employed below their capacity. In some cases the introduction of a well-managed equal opportunities programme which includes the accurate monitoring of both the existing workforce and new applicants was seen to give new and helpful insights into aspects of the organisation's human resource management. Sometimes the recognition of the benefit of the policies came from the "managing diversity" approach, which argues vigorously in favour of the 'added value' which a mixed workforce can provide.

In several cases the good practice was initiated by individuals with a broader moral and social concern over

the divisions in the social fabric which may result from unwarranted exclusion from opportunities of one section of the community, although often these concerns were mixed with the recognition of other practical benefits would also result. Other practices, however, were driven primarily by a more narrow and immediate business imperative. For example, in some cases in the metal industry the institution of special language and vocational training for immigrants, and making allowance at work for cultural or religious practices was driven primarily by the need to attract and retain immigrants in a sector where it was otherwise difficult to recruit workers. The case studies clearly show that in different ways and at different levels, many organisations perceive there to be direct and tangible business advantages in operating equal opportunities measures.

Conclusion

The case studies have confirmed that national differences of context mean that ideas and practices which are seen as quite normal in one country are quite unknown in another. Some of this variety is quite understandable given the differences in national context. In countries in the south of Europe where 'illegal' migrants suffer great exploitation, it would be completely inappropriate to talk about 'ethnic monitoring' or 'targets'. In this context, policies to provide 'equal treatment' can significantly foster improvement and integration. However, in countries where migrant populations are longer established, and second and third generations exist, a simple 'equal treatment' approach will not be adequate for preventing racial and ethnic discrimination in all its manifestations. Here, a broader range of policies with an 'equal opportunities' emphasis is more likely to be effective.

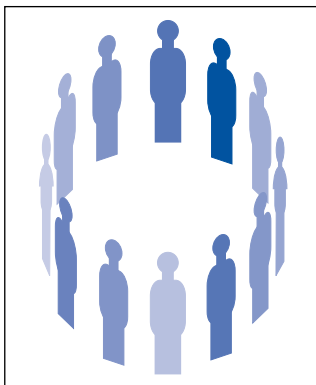
In an international comparison, there is a danger that a recognition of genuine difference in national context can be turned into a position of complete cultural relativity on this issue, denying the possibility of coming to any judgement that practices current in one country might be more desirable than those in another, and leading to the view that "while such policies are sensible in your country, they are irrelevant in ours". Whilst recognising that national practices can only fully be comprehended and evaluated in a context of a knowledge of the historical, cultural, political and socio-economic environment of that country, it is also important to recognise the principle that all parties can benefit from an exposure to the ideas and practices of others. This Compendium forms a contribution to a broader exchange of experiences amongst the members states of the European Union, helping to facilitate new initiatives to counter racism and xenophobia and promote equal treatment at the workplace.



The Research Team

The compendium was compiled for the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions by John Wrench from the Danish Centre for Migration and Ethnic Studies. National researchers within each EU member state produced a report covering case studies of good practice within their own country. The Foundation Research Manager for the project is Jaume Costa.





PUBLICATIONS

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