



European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee on Local and Regional Government

Brief report of the workshop on “*Integration of Migrants and implementing diversity policies in local and regional administration*”

4 March 2009, EPSU offices

Background

This workshop was a follow-up meeting to the workshop in January 2008 on the CLIP project (European Cities for the Local Integration of Migrants). The objective was to assess the final CLIP recommendations on ‘equality and diversity in jobs’ and to see how we might continue with this subject in the social dialogue committee. As well as participants who attended the earlier meeting, we invited a number of city representatives.

Introduction

Hubert Krieger, Research manager, European Dublin Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions presented the main findings on the CLIP project “*equality and diversity in jobs*” (see attached ppt and also Eurofound website – www.eurofound.europa/publications/htmlfiles/ef0622.htm). The ppt is very comprehensive and contains many suggestions for further work.

In discussion we stressed the importance of both an equal opportunities and diversity approach to integration, the need for data, monitoring and follow-up of policies, and for the involvement of workers and trade unions in integration activities.

Case studies

Following the Eurofound introduction, we had three presentations of city approaches to integration:

- ✓ Vienna (*Bernhard Buzek, Diversity Manager, Integration and Diversity Department at the City of Vienna*)
- ✓ Rotterdam (Jan Boersma, Abvakabo trade union)
- ✓ Munich (*Daniel Spohn, Head of the Health-Management and Diversity of the Münchner Stadtentwässerung – ppt presentation attached*)

Vienna’s diversity strategy is firmly linked to the objective of quality management and improving services for new groups of citizens. The diversity department seeks to establish good relations with other city departments (not necessarily the heads of departments) and to encourage, rather than impose, change. They have drawn up a ‘diversity check’ for other departments to use (attached in German). The diversity department has some contact with trade union representatives, for example including them in training programmes.

In Munich, diversity / integration initiatives are relatively recent. In the city-owned water company, these initiatives are linked with tackling the poor health of the predominately Turkish-origin workers. The company saw that there were better health outcomes for workers in similar jobs in Hamburg. Through a workers survey, they found that this was partly due to poor access to overall health services in Munich. The company has set up ‘health pilots’

linked to training in health and safety to improve this situation. The trade unions are involved in these initiatives.

For Rotterdam, interest in diversity is linked to the need to recruit younger workers who do not necessarily have the qualifications to fill the vacancies on offer. (However, to note is that the city decided to keep waste collection in-house, rather than sub-contracting these out, specifically to safeguard decent low-skilled jobs.) This means that training and career development are very much on the agenda, and local works councils discuss equal rights issues. The Abvakabo trade union also offers training to members to strengthen communication and languages skills. The union receives many complaints every year from workers about discrimination, especially regarding pay.

Conclusions

These can be summarized as follows:

- ✓ There is certainly an interest and value in disseminating the CLIP results to our respective members, and in following developments at city / local level. Much of the CLIP material is available in different languages and members are asked to circulate and to encourage the link between diversity / equal treatment approaches, as well as better trade union involvement.
- ✓ Integration of migrants links in with other issues on our agenda, notably social inclusion/cohesion (and follow-up to the joint statement we agreed on this subject in 2008) and demographic change (which we discussed in previous work programme). We should continue to make these links.
- ✓ In addition, we see an interest in the Vienna example where the integration of migrants has been placed in a 'quality management' context. There are a number of developments regarding the quality / benchmarking of local services taking place that we could look at in more detail.
- ✓ Finally, there are some legal questions to be addressed, for example regarding the practical application of positive action / equal treatment.

The report of the meeting and the presentations will be circulated, and we will discuss the follow-up at the next plenary meeting of the social dialogue committee.