



European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

Case Study on Diversity Policy in Employment and Service Provision

Antwerp, Belgium



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Foreword

This report is part of the Eurofound project "Cities for Local Integration Policy" (CLIP), which started in 2006. Antwerp is one of the 25 European cities that cooperate in exchanging information on their Integration Policies to start with on the terrain of housing and in the future on more terrains.

The project aims at collecting and analysing innovative policies and their successful implementation at the local level, supporting the exchange of experience between cities and encouraging a learning process within the network of cities, addressing the role of social partners, NGO's, companies and voluntary associations in supporting successful integration policies, providing objective assessment of current practice and initiatives and discussing their transferability, communicating good practices to other cities in Europe and developing guidelines to help cities to cope more effectively with the challenge of integrating migrants, supporting the further development of a European integration policy by communicating the policy relevant experiences and outputs of the network to: European organisations of cities and local regional authorities, the European and national organisations of social partners, the Council of Europe and the various institutions of the European Union.

The CLIP network is also cooperation between cities and research institutes. Five research institutes in Bamberg, Amsterdam, Vienna, Liege and Oxford are taking care of the publications of the CLIP project. The researchers of the CEDEM are responsible for this report on Antwerp. Together with the contact persons of the municipal of Antwerp Mrs Kris Cleiren and the Antwerp Integratiedienst (Integration Service of the City of Antwerp), an enormous effort has been undertaken to find all necessary data for this report. The report is thus mainly based on a questionnaire (common reporting scheme) filled out by the Integration Service of the City of Antwerp and on city visits (June 2007). The views expressed in this case study are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Integration Service. I would like to thank Mrs Kris Cleiren, Mrs Greetje Hermans and Mrs Els de Wacker from the Integration Service of the city of Antwerp for filling out the common reporting scheme. They have provided us with reports, statistics and comments on the concept version of this report. They got the support of Mrs Julie Van Nuwenborg and Mrs Els De Ceuster from the city department District and Counter Services, Mrs Emmy Proost and Mrs Gwendoline Landuyt from de department Learning City and Mr Ronny Holsters from the Human Resource Management department. I thank them for their support. I would also like to thank for their help Mrs Inge van Nieuwenhuyze from the Integration Service and Mrs Véronique Mampuya from WNE (Work and Economy).

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1 Belgium

1.1 Brief history of migration to Belgium and characteristics of migrants and people with a migration background

After the Second World War, Belgium signed several bilateral agreements in order to organize the recruitment of migrant workers towards its coal mining sector first and later other sectors. The first was concluded with Italy in 1946, followed by others with Spain and Greece in the 50's, Morocco, Turkey and Tunisia in the 60's and at the beginning of the 70's with Algeria, Yugoslavia and Portugal. Migrants came thus from these countries but also from neighbouring countries like France and the Netherlands. In 1974, like other European countries, the Belgian government decided to stop immigration of workers. However, data on immigration during the following decades show that, in spite of this decision, immigrants still arrived in Belgium. It happened particularly through 6 patterns of migration: mobility of EU citizens, asylum applications, foreign student's mobility, highly skilled worker's migration, irregular migration and not least, family reunion (Gsir, Martiniello and Wets, 2003).

In 2004, Belgium's foreign population reached 8.3% of the total population. This is less than in the 90s, when it was around 9%. This figure did not include either foreigners residing irregularly in Belgium, or Belgians of foreign origin. So the immigrant population and its offspring are higher. The foreign population is spread unequally around the country. In 2004, 26.3% were located in the Brussels-Capital Region, 9.1% in Wallonia and 4.8% in Flanders. In the latter, the foreign population is especially concentrated in the provinces of Limbourg and Antwerp, while in Wallonia, it is concentrated mainly in the old industrial provinces of Liège and Hainaut (Martiniello and Rea, 2003). Most of the foreigners are EU nationals (66% at the end of 2004) mainly Italians, French, Dutch and Spaniards. The number of Poles is in the increase since 1990. The other foreigners widely represented are the Moroccans (81,279) followed by the Turks (39,885). But they have highly diminished since the change of nationality law in 2000 which has facilitated access to Belgian nationality.

Between 1990 and 2004, women represented less than 50% of foreign population whereas they constitute around 51.3% of Belgian population. Nevertheless, the distribution of women among the foreigners varies, for example, with higher rate among Greek population (58% women) and the lowest 42.6% in the Algerian population. Regarding the age distribution among foreigners, people between 25 and 50 are great in number (Direction générale Emploi et marché du travail, 2006).

1.2 National policy context: law and policy on diversity in employment and service provision

1.2.1 Diversity policy at the federal level

At the federal level, Belgium has developed progressively diversity policies and antidiscrimination policy. A specialized body has been created to develop different actions in this way. The **Centre for equal opportunities and opposition to racism** or CEOOR is an autonomous federal public service created in 1993. It was at the beginning in charge of the following of the policy of integration of immigrants but its mandate has been progressively extended. Indeed, in 2003, a law has been adopted to fight all types of discrimination (Law of 25 February 2003 aiming at fighting discrimination and modifying the Law of 15 February 1993 for the creation of the Centre for equal opportunities and opposition to racism.

Published on Belgian Monitor, 7/03/2003). According to this law, all types of direct or indirect discrimination are prohibited in access to work, selection, employment conditions, appointment and promotion. Henceforth, the Centre aims at promoting “the equality of opportunities and to oppose any and all forms of distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on: 1° so-called race, skin colour, heritage, background or nationality. 2° sexual orientation, marital status, birth, fortune, age, creed or philosophy of life, current and future state of health, disability or physical trait” (<http://www.diversite.be>). Moreover, it is worth noting that the CEOOR website was named during several years www.antiracisme.be has been renamed www.diversite.be. Finally, the Commission of the Intercultural Dialogue, set up by the federal government in 2004 encouraged among others the set up of diversity plans at all levels of the public administration. Set up in 2004 by the federal government, the Commission of the Intercultural Dialogue had to reflect about Belgium as a multicultural society and about recommendations to encourage the living together in diversity. The Commission wrote a report with several recommendations. One chapter is on policies of affirmative action and fight against discrimination in the public service. There are three recommendations: (1) information and awareness campaigns; (2) positive actions to improve cultural diversity through facilitating recruitment of people with migration background and by identifying more precisely the jobs prohibited to foreigners because related to the exercise of public power; (3) initiatives to improve working environment in diversity in order to allow each employee to live according its culture or religion but in respect with the secularity principles. It insisted also on the obligation of non discrimination in providing public services to each citizen.

According to the Belgian Constitution, **statutory jobs** in the civil service are limited to Belgian citizens and also to Economic European Area and Swiss citizens as far as the jobs are not linked directly or indirectly to the exercise of state sovereignty. Foreigners can occupy **contractual jobs** that are not included in these two exceptions. In 2004, only 0.55% of more than 70,000 civil servants were non nationals and most of them were from EU member state. Three-quarters of them have a level D job, in other word no diploma is required (CEULEMANS E. et al., 2005 quoted by Service public fédéral Personnel et Organisation, 2005).

The federal diversity policy has also been developed in the framework of an **Action Plan 2005-2007 for valorising diversity inside the federal public service** (Service public fédéral Personnel et Organisation, 2005). This plan has been designed by the Minister of the Public Office after consulting academics, public servants and the CEOOR. In this Action Plan, diversity is defined as “respecting differences in the attitudes, values, cultural frameworks, lifestyles, skills and experiences of each member of a group”. And, promoting diversity in the federal public service aims at reflecting the composition of the whole society, giving an example, increasing the services quality by a respectful working environment and promoting a culture where differences are not seen as source of conflicts but of gains (Service public fédéral Personnel et Organisation, 2005). Three aspects are particularly focused: gender, employment of people with migration background and of disabled people. Nevertheless, it is pointed that other groups could be further targeted such as youth, elderly people, poor people, etc.

The **Diversity Department** inside the Federal public service Staff and Organisation (FPS SO) coordinates the diversity policy inside the federal public service. It implements the Action Plan in the FPS SO and in other federal public services with the network of **Diversity Officers** (in charge to develop a diversity policy through pilot projects in each federal public

service). The Diversity Department collaborates with SELOR (Federal Office for the selection and recruitment in the public service) for the recruitment and with IFA (Training Institute for the federal public service) for the training on diversity (<http://www.pourladiversite.be> and <http://www.belgium.be>). Finally, the Diversity Department funds some pilot projects promoting diversity inside the federal public service. Furthermore, different tools have been set up to support the diversity policy such as a website www.pourladiversite.be, a video clip, different booklets (one of them is entitled Respect of multiculturalism), a poster and a Diversity Charter of the federal public service. Most of these tools are available online at the above mentioned website or on the website of the FPS SO.

In 2005, the Minister of Employment and the Minister of Equal Opportunities have tried to promote diversity regarding employment in the society. The **Equality Diversity Label** for the companies has been created in collaboration with the Regions. Its main objective is to strengthen diversity in the working place and to fight against discrimination and stereotypes by creating and implementing a diversity policy inside the company. It targets any public and private sector and association located in Belgium. Precisely, it means that the company has (1) to respect the law regarding equal opportunities and discrimination; (2) to develop a diversity policy including the creation of a company culture in favour of diversity and the set up of a human resources management pro-diversity; (3) followed an analysis, planning, monitoring and evaluation process of its diversity policy with the participation of the employees; and, (4) to be in a continual improvement process. (<http://www.emploi.belgique.be>). Since 2006, 15 organisations (companies and cities) have committed in promoting diversity and equality within their organisation and in 2007, the Equality Diversity Label has been granted to some of them and particularly to three cities: Gent and Leuven in Flanders and Liège in Wallonia.

1.2.2 Diversity policies in the regions

Diversity policies are also developed at the regional level. The Ministry of the Brussels Capital Region (BCR) has developed its own diversity policy and considers that the BCR has to play a role as employer in promoting diversity. In the framework of the **Territorial Pact for Employment in the BCR (TPE)** various steps have been carried out in the fight against discrimination and in the promotion of diversity. One of the directions of the first TPE in 1996 was the fight against discriminations in employment and several actions have been implemented (<http://www.pactbru.irisnet.be/site/diversite/nondiscri/>). The following TPE's have pursued this policy. At the end of 2005, the Minister in charge of Employment and Economy has presented a **Charter of the Diversity in the Company**. More than 100 companies located in BCR have already signed it. This charter aims at promoting a policy of equal opportunities and diversity management. This charter encourages the implementation of **diversity plan** (a plan to develop diversity management in the company) which could be realised with the support of **diversity consultants** of the BCR. Furthermore, the jobs at the Ministry of the BCR are open to all nationalities excepting those in relations with the exercise of public power. The BCR is a bilingual region. Nevertheless, the RBC administration works according the following principle: bilingualism of the services and unilingualism of the civil servants. One does not need to know the both languages because, s/he will be affected to the service of her/his tongue (Région de Bruxelles-Capitale). This principle in itself can encourage diversity because knowledge of both French and Dutch can be an obstacle for people with migration background.

In Flanders, diversity policies have been developed since the 80s in particular through measures to help jobseekers with migration background and to raise their level of

employment. Since 2004, Flanders has had a Minister of ‘citinization’ or *inburgering* (Marino Keulen). He is the first Minister whose title bears this competence explicitly. Previously, minorities policy was more implicitly part of other competences. In his policy document 2004-2009 the minister drops the ‘old’ formulation ‘minorities policy’. The focus has shifted from the minorities approach to living together, managing diversity and promoting common citizenship and equal opportunities. The policy also focuses on a more result-oriented and thus more quantitative approach to citinization: less of a target group approach, more living together in diversity, more emphasis on the (responsibilities of the) individual citizen. The priorities of the Flemish diversity policy are encouraging cooperation between the employment sectors, investing in social economy, promoting policies of equal opportunities and supporting the organisations in developing their diversity policies. The Flemish region supports initiatives and projects encouraging diversity management. For example, in 2002-2004, it has supported the Project *Building on Diversity - Persuading SMEs to Hire "Non-Native" and Older People* (also supported by the European Social Fund in the programme EQUAL). This project aimed at facilitating the integration of foreigners and people of more than 45 years old in the labour market. It was the result of a partnership between the VDAB (Flemish Public Employment Service), Vitamine W (NGO with good contacts and experience with the target groups), a temporary employment agency Randstad and the think-tank IDEA Consult. It was implemented in Antwerp (*Les succès d’EQUAL. Exploiter le potentiel d’emploi des PME*).

Furthermore, the Flemish government aims to reach a proportional share of ethnic-minorities in the labour market in 2010 according their share of the total population. The plan of emancipation 2005-2010 “**Diversity works**” (*Diversiteit werkt*) aims to make Flemish public services a model regarding recruitment of people from disadvantaged groups. The groups targeted by this plan are women, disabled person, ethnic-minorities (*allochtoon*) and unskilled workers. The way of working of the plan is to fix quantitative objectives for each groups (4% of ethnic-minorities in the Flemish public sector to be reached before 2015) (Van Brempt, 2007). Regarding the ethnic-minorities, the diversity measures focus particularly the recruitment policy (*Les Services publics flamands et la diversité au travail*). The Flemish government will for example target among others ethnic-minorities when recruiting for a first job. The Flemish Minister for Equal Opportunities who is also in charge of the transport affirmed her will to reach quantitative objectives for example in the Flemish public transport (*De Lijn*) (Van Brempt, 2007). The Region supports also the **Equality Diversity Label** (see above). Last May, the Flemish Ministers of Citinization in the one hand and of Employment in the other hand in partnership with Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (VVSG) have launched the guide “**Diverse Talents, an added-value for your administration**” (*Divers talent, een meerwaarde voor uw bestuur*), which highlights 15 good practices of diversity policy in Flemish local public services.

Fight against discrimination and promotion of equal opportunities are among the priorities of the actions developed in the framework of the Contract of Future for Wallonia, a strategic plan of regional development existing since 2000 in Wallonia. Henceforth the Walloon government has developed specific measures for some target groups. Diversity management is also an issue. Some EQUAL projects such as the jobcoaching have been also developed in Wallonia (<http://www.acfi.be>). At the end of 2006, a general orientation policy document on diversity and fight against discrimination in employment has been presented. If until now, measures have been developed mainly in a perspective of targeting several disadvantaged groups (women, disabled, foreigners, youth and elderly), a shift of perspective is announced for 2007 and the further measures will also target the companies. In other words, diversity

has been firstly approached as a stake of equal opportunities and from now it is also approached as a stake of economy. The diversity policy of the Walloon government and in particular of the Minister of Employment and Economy aims at fighting discriminations and promoting diversity management in the companies and the local public services (General Directorate of Employment and Economy). Diversity policy target the disadvantaged groups mentioned above. Five tools are experimented in 2007. Firstly, the signature of the **Charter of Diversity for the equality in rights and treatment of employed and unemployed workers** by the Walloon Government and the social partners of the Social and Economic Council of the Walloon Region. Secondly, the signature of the **Charter of Diversity** by companies and organisations that commit in developing diversity management. Thirdly, the **Diversity and Human Resources Prize** in Wallonia which will be granted annually to relevant initiatives in diversity management in companies of the public or private sectors or NGOs (1 SME, 1 big company, 1 public service and 1 NGO). Fourthly, granting the **Equality and Diversity Label** in partnership with the federal level (see above). And, finally, granting **financial supports to diversity in human resources management** in Wallonia.

2 Antwerp

2.1 Brief description of Antwerp

Antwerp, the largest city in Flanders, is situated between the Netherlands, France, Germany and the United Kingdom, and is the centre of Europe's most densely populated area. The central location ensures optimal links to the hinterland. Antwerp is Europe's second port and the world's fourth. The port is also home to the second largest concentration of petrochemicals industries in the world. Port of Antwerp is essential to the European Union import and export trade and a major global trade hub. The city is also part of the Automotive Regions network, which was set up to strengthen the competitive position of the existing car-making industry in Europe. One of the four major car assembly plants in Belgium is situated in Antwerp. Moreover, Antwerp has grown into one of the world's leading trendsetters in fashion and is home to many designers with an international reputation. The city is also an important diamond centre, with various fairs and traders. More than 50% of the world's production of rough, polished and industrial diamond passes through the city. The diamond trade is responsible for 8% of Belgian exports, and 12% of Flanders's exports. The city offers also a wide range of high-quality education with one university, five colleges of higher education and several international schools.

The city of Antwerp is made up of 9 districts: Antwerp, Borgerhout, Merksem, Berchem, Berendrecht-Zandvliet-Lillo, Ekeren, Wilrijk, Hoboken, Deurne. The District of Antwerp can be split into various neighbourhoods: Antwerp Central, Antwerp North, Kiel, Luchtbal and Europark/Linkeroever. There are 42 neighbourhoods. They are sometimes broken down into sectors, including Spoorwegemplacement, Atheneumbuurt, Stationsbuurt, Schipperskwartier etc. There is also a distinction between locations inside and outside the main ring (the old city wall), which circles the area sometimes known as the city centre. The most disadvantaged neighbourhoods are located in Antwerp North and the social housing neighbourhoods (Kiel, Luchtbal, Europark/Linkeroever). The least disadvantaged neighbourhoods are concentrated in the Antwerp periphery.

Antwerp's population was 473 265 as of January 2007. On average there are 2 420 inhabitants per square kilometre. The population of Antwerp is fairly old. The population

dropped for a long period, but has been rising since 2001 due to positive birth and relocation balances. The latter is mostly due to the influx of new inhabitants from outside the EU. The city has 13% of foreigners of whom 8% are non-EU nationals. In a globalised world international tensions are felt at local level too. That certainly goes for Antwerp, which is home to a large community of Jews and Muslims. In recent years, the city has sometimes been a crystallisation point for a general unease about the multicultural society.

Economically, Antwerp is characterised by a large number of tertiary (service) sector businesses. Compared with other cities, the share of the secondary and quaternary sector is low. Important industries are trade, hospitality industry (hotels, restaurants, etc.) and manufacturing. 46% of all vacancies are for 'problem jobs' – jobs for which there are insufficient qualified or interested candidates. This is higher than the Flemish average (41%). In Flanders there are six jobseekers to every open vacancy. In Antwerp the ratio is one to eight. The number of unemployed jobseekers has been on the rise since 2001 and was 32 676 at the start of 2005. The unemployment rate in Antwerp is 15.9% or almost twice that of Flanders as a whole. Women are slightly overrepresented in the unemployment figure (53%). 22% of jobseekers are younger than 25 years of age, 44% are 25-39 years of age, 37% are older than 40 years of age. Almost four in ten unemployed persons are from a non-EU member state. 12.3% are Turkish or Moroccan nationals. The unemployment burden is divided unevenly among the neighbourhoods of Antwerp. Most jobseekers on benefit live in Antwerp North. The employment ratio is lower in the city centre than on the periphery. Most self-employed persons live in the city centre and in sector South. And, more than 140,000 persons make their living in one way or another from the port. Moreover, almost one in three employed persons living in Antwerp work outside the city.

2.2 Antwerp's migrant population

The history of migration in Antwerp reflects the Belgian migration history but with some specific features due mainly to the presence of the harbour and to the activities around it. As the first migrants were recruited for working in the coals mines, they arrived mainly in Wallonia where the coalfields were. As soon as the Belgian state allowed migrants to work in other sectors like industry and services, the further migrants (Spaniards, Greeks and latter Moroccans and Turks) were distributed in all other major Belgian cities: Brussels but also cities in Flanders such as Antwerp with its port or Gent. The Moroccans more than the Turks went to Antwerp (Kesteloot, 2006). After the EU enlargement of 1985, migrant workers from Portugal arrived also in Antwerp and in a larger proportion in Brussels. (Kesteloot, 2006). Furthermore and this is a typical feature of the local migration history, Antwerp has attracted Jews since centuries. After the Belgium independence, Jewish migrants arrived from Central and Eastern Europe and their community developed progressively. Before the Second World War, more than half of the 100 000 Jews in Belgium lived in the city. Nowadays, the orthodox jewish community of Antwerp (around 15 000 persons) is one of the largest in Europe.

Following a breakdown by nationality, 13.3% of the inhabitants of Antwerp are registered as foreigners in the population register. The main nationalities are Moroccan, Dutch and Turkish. Otherwise foreign nationals typically come from other EU member states, former Yugoslavia, Russia, Congo, China and India.

However, these percentage does not measure really the ethnic diversity of the city because a large number of inhabitants of foreign origin have taken Belgian nationality in the past few decades. Considering numbers of inhabitants with a migratory background (foreign national

or Belgian nationals born with a foreign nationality), they represents 26.6% of Antwerp's population. This percentage has been rising since 2000. Among them, persons of Moroccan origin constitute the largest group, followed by the Dutch, Turks, Poles, nationals of former Yugoslavia, Indians, Congolese, Russians and Western Europeans. 18.4% of the inhabitants with a migratory background are non-EU (Official survey, Sociale Zaken/ databank planning, 2007). No data on the distribution according the religion is available but, the number of muslims is roughly estimated at 12% and the number of jews around 3%. The age pyramid of Belgian nationals in Antwerp is fairly flat at the top, which indicates that this group contains many older persons. The age pyramid for persons with a migratory background is narrow at the top and broad at the base, the age group 20-24 years. There are relatively few persons under 20 years of age among EU nationals.

The number of family-related migrants is rising. Family-related migration has risen sharply since 2000. 1 742 new migrants registered in Antwerp in 2001 as a result of marriage or family reunion. In 2004 that number rose to 3 929. The number of asylum seekers (registered inhabitants) is 7,727 that is 1.6% of the population. Following the general trend in Belgium for some time past, the number of asylum seekers is dropping down. This cannot be said for the number of persons without official permission to reside in Belgium. 24 780 newcomers registered in Antwerp in 2005, 51% were Belgian.

Unemployment is higher among non-EU nationals. It is highest in Antwerp North, Luchtbal, Linkeroever and Borgerhout. The number of persons on benefit among non-EU nationals of working age is almost 10% compared with 1% among Belgians and 3% among EU nationals. 72.2% of jobseekers on benefit have a non-EU nationality; this is just 15.2% among other jobseekers. Jobseekers of Maghrebian or Turkish origin are the least well educated on average (just 5% are highly trained). Unemployment among young adults is highest among jobseekers of Maghrebian or Turkish origin. Unemployment among older adults on the other hand is more common among jobseekers from EU member states. Hardly 2% of waged employees are nationals from the Maghreb or Middle East country. Finally, among the self-employed, there are more foreigners than among waged employees (Official surveys).

The City and the Integration Service in particular has opted to use the terms allochtoon and autochthonous rather than immigrants, foreigners or Belgians with foreign origin. The term allochtoon is applied to ethnocultural minorities and includes people with a foreign nationality and Belgians born with a foreign nationality. People with migration background such as youngsters from the third generation and later who are often born Belgians are not considered as allochtoon but as Belgians.

2.3 The city authority

As mentioned previously, Belgium is a federal state with three regions (Wallonia, Flanders and Brussels Capital) and with three language communities (French, Dutch and German). Competencies are shared among the various tiers of governments. The country is also divided in 10 provinces and 589 local authorities or communes. The commune is the tier of government closest to the individual. The "communal autonomy" refers to the extensive autonomy the local politicians have in the context of the power that they exercise, under the supervision of higher authorities, mainly the regions. The responsibilities of the communes are quite extensive and cover the collective needs of the inhabitants. They cover the public works, social welfare, maintaining public order, housing, education, etc. The communes have also to implement policies of higher authorities. The Mayor is the head of the local police in

performing administrative police tasks. The Social Welfare Service (OCMW) operates, at communal level (<http://www.belgium.be>).

3 Antwerp's approach to diversity

3.1 Historical background

For several years there have been services in the city administration with each one, the task to stimulate and support the policy with respect to a specific target group, such as the Urban Poverty Department, the “Disabled People” Service, the Integration Service etc. They now all have the explicit task to work on broad diversity policy (see below). Diversity policy is approached transversally. It is in practice a matter of the IS and in principle, it is a matter of each city service.

3.1.1 Development of the diversity policy

The previous local government agreement 2001-2006 mentioned that an *“inclusive policy, aimed at the whole population and all city authorities, including the Social Welfare Service (OCMW) and the specific disadvantaged position of ethnic minorities also requires strong measures”*. In 2002 the administrative agreement included these points of departure in a City Council decree. Pursuant to this decree the *“diversity policy is a point of departure for the entire city policy”*. It instructs the directors of all city companies to determine substantive priorities with respect to the issue of dealing with diversity. They also have to appoint a diversity officer. One year later the City Council gave the directors the instruction to include the diversity issue in the operational company plans. The broad range of diversity is the point of departure, with a specific emphasis on ethnic-cultural diversity. In the second policy memorandum 2003-2005, the IS described the need to combine the diversity management and the equal opportunity policy. Diversity management is described as an inclusive task for all city services, with the IS as supporting element. In the most recent policy memorandum 2006-2008 of the IS this is reconfirmed and the tasks are described. In other words, the IS has not explicit mandate to implement the diversity policy. Broad diversity is the central theme in the new local government agreement 2007-2012 and in the Local Social Policy Plan, (see further).

3.1.2 The diversity policy and the integration service

The IS was established at the end of the 90s from a combination of the Reception Office, the Interpreters Service and the Integration Officer. The mission of the IS is *“promoting living in diversity by investing in social cohesion, equal opportunities and active citizenship”*. The mission was split in four key concepts: diversity, social cohesion, equal opportunities and citizenship. They are the four poles of the vision of the IS on living in diversity: (1) Antwerp is a city where there is a room for differences; (2) Antwerp is a city where we live not next to each other but with each other; (3) Antwerp is a city where all inhabitants have the same opportunities and (4) Antwerp is a city which active citizens that assume their responsibilities (Integration Service, Atlas Document, 2006-2008).

The last five years, two IS diversity consultants were instructed to support the city services in their way of dealing with diversity. In addition, other Integration Service Departments had contacts with the city services (for instance, around networking and contacts, around intermediation). The IS starts from the idea that diversity and equal opportunities go hand in hand. The success of a positive policy also depends on the improvement of the disadvantaged

and unequal situation in which a lot of Antwerp ethnic minorities find themselves. Furthermore, some - but certainly not all - city services appointed a diversity officer (at best, it was an explicit task, usually it was an additional task).

It is also important to highlight that the Integration Service has developed its own expertise on diversity and consequently this has led the IS to formulate a vision / an analysis about diversity.

First, the IS considers diversity as an opportunity. And, it puts forwards a number of arguments: (1) The demographic argument: Flanders and Antwerp will grow older without further immigration and births among immigrant groups. If the job market and the city are to continue to operate at the same pace immigrant population is necessary. (2) The economic argument: There are still many problem jobs. This also brings opportunities for new niche markets and groups. (3) The image argument: Visitors are probably more excited by a Córdoba on the Scheldt than a grey city without variety. Córdoba on the Scheldt (river of Antwerp) *Cordoba aan de Schelde* refers to a campaign reminding that took place in Antwerp in 2005. Antwerp as a city with an important share of various religious communities aimed at presenting itself as an example of peaceful and harmonious cohabitation like Cordoba, Spanish city where three different religious communities (Muslims, Christians and Jewish) lived together peacefully. Since 2005, Córdoba is the name of the secretary of philosophical beliefs and dialogue of the city of Antwerp (<http://www.vmc.be>). Diversity can be used as an asset to market the city. This is a condition if Antwerp wants to be Flanders' most go-ahead city. And finally, (5), the city dynamism and innovation argument: those that are able to respond to trends and turn problems into opportunities will prosper.

In other words – setting apart the moral, social and political aspects- dealing with diversity is a about effectivity, efficiency and competitiveness (a business perspective).

Finally, the approach of the City seems quite fragmented. The IS is consulted on diversity issues but not systematically. According to the city experts, this shows the importance of a clear mandate and internal procedures. This is foreseen in the new governmental agreement.

3.1.3 Diversity policy in relation with the federal and regional levels

It seems that there is no real cooperation with the other levels of government regarding diversity policy. The federal proposals are not always adapted to local and specific realities of the city of Antwerp. At the regional level, there is a strong emphasis on 'citinization' and individual emancipation, whereas Antwerp above all stresses the importance of diversity (policy) (society/services/organisations that are expected to take diversity as a basis for the policy as a whole; the concept of obligations but also rights). Antwerp only uses the term diversity policy. 'Citinization' policy and equal opportunities policy etc. are parts of a broader diversity policy in Antwerp. Furthermore, at the Flemish level, arrangements are made in the umbrella organization VVSG (Flemish Association of Cities and Municipalities) on city and local government policies. These arrangements are laid down in sectoral agreements. Regulations with respect to personnel management are also laid down in these agreements. These regulations are mostly binding and therefore they also define the applicable personnel policy. Diploma requirements and appointment conditions are two examples. At conclusion, it seems that there is a problem of internal fine tuning between the different levels of government.

3.1.4 Diversity policy in relation with the media

The influence of the media has its importance. Topics on diversity and equal opportunities have definitely been an issue in the recent years. The discussion about living in a multicultural society is present everywhere. Newspapers are filled with articles about the difficulties of living in diversity. The news is seldom good but negative images dominate. Image formation about ethnic minorities in the Flemish media is often one-sided. A lot of Antwerp (ethnic minority) residents hold the media responsible for the negative public sentiment after the riots in Borgerhout, the appearance of the Arab European League, the head scarf debate and so on. In various media, however, there is also a lot of files on themes with respect to diversity and equal opportunities (e.g. recently a newspaper dedicated various sections to Islam and religion). Also the approach of the city council is mainly in the regional and local press also scrutinized. In general, it is not about the overall diversity policy, but about real files, such as the commotion around the memorandum on the 'clothes rules for city personnel' (such as the prohibition to wear headscarves) and the decision to serve halal meals during school trips. The influence of this coverage may neither be underestimated nor overestimated, according to the city experts.

3.2 Objectives of the policy/approach

Broad diversity is a central element of the new local government agreement 2007-2012. The concept of broad diversity has to be understood as different from specific diversity which includes various policies targeting different groups discriminated for different reasons: disabled, ethnic minorities, etc. Broad diversity is featured as an inclusive policy. In other words, **diversity policy concerns all residents in Antwerp**. Henceforth diversity policy has to target all disadvantaged groups namely: ethnic minorities, holebi (gays, lesbians and bisexuals), women, disabled, poor. Nevertheless, as city experts underline, some groups are not included and there are still specific policies for them. It is the case of youth and elderly people. Moreover, the slogan of the city is "the city belongs to everyone" and this is like a flag of the diversity policy and the will of inclusiveness. This new way of approaching diversity without specifying target groups shows a significant shift from a categorical model of integration (target groups) to a more inclusive approach.

Diversity is also defined as a **horizontal objective**. The scope of the horizontal objective diversity includes: (1) a diverse personnel policy in the city and daughters as a reflection of the diversity in the city and (2) considering systematically and actively the diversity of the residents in all services delivered by the city and daughters (through products and processes). The city daughters include the bodies where the city participates through the intermunicipal cooperation agreements, social housing companies, autonomous city structures city managed non-profit associations and other agencies. According to the city all these daughters perform city tasks. The city council wants the city representatives to monitor the execution of the policy lines for the city.

The city also enters into agreements with the civil society, with schools etc., for instance the agreements of the city youth service with youth work partners. These agreements sometimes also include criteria with respect to diversity.

In the memorandum on occasion of the city council elections, the Integration Service argued for encouraging also private companies to promote diversity on their work floor. With this, The IS endorsed the vision of the Work and Economy Service (WNE, city department responsible for work and economy) to consider social and ethnic objectives such as increased labour market participation and the training and guidance of minority groups in tenders of

contracts for major investment works. At the same time the IS asked to apply this method also in the short term to smaller investment works.

3.3 Responsibility

Responsibility for diversity policy has been designated among the elected representatives for the first time after the last local elections. Since the 1st January 2007, diversity is one of the explicit competences of an alderman. Monica de Coninck is the **alderman of social affairs, diversity and counters**.

Each service involved is responsible for its own diversity policy, each department has its own manager (administratively responsible). The **Integration Service** is a supporting element. In the near future, a new city service 'diversity' (broad) will be the supporting element. It was decided in the new local government agreement to establish a new city service in the department Social Affairs – including the present Integration Service. This team bundles specific and updated experience on broad diversity and offers this to the departments. The team gives advice and follow-up. It develops instruments (for example a checklist 'limits to diversity' and an evaluation instrument).

Regarding diversity policy in employment, the alderman for personnel is the person politically responsible and the manager of the Personnel management department is the person administratively responsible. The agent responsible within the Human resource management department is staff officer and member of the executive committee. He is supported by the **workgroup Human Resources Management and Diversity (HRM)** which is a think-tank on the implementation of the diversity policy in the personnel policy of the city and the Social Welfare Service (Tactical objective Pm04 and memorandum 'Antwerp, a socially responsible city').

3.4 Collaboration with social partners and nongovernmental organisations in policy development and implementation

Firstly, the city consults with the **Higher Advisory Committee and the Basic Advisory Committee of the Trade Unions** when structural changes are introduced in the city policy. Diversity is sometimes, but surely not always, one of the subjects. There is no structural consultation with the trade unions concerning diversity.

Secondly, there is a structural cooperation with the **Social Welfare Service (OCMW)** in the workgroup HRM and Diversity, in the Local Social Policy Plan and in the horizontal objective diversity (new city service).

Thirdly, for the selection policy the city (WNE) collaborates with the **partners from the civil society** who concentrate on the training of people without a job and their road to a job.

For many years, the city of Antwerp has invested in financing and supporting an **Ethnic Minorities Council** '*allochtone overleg- en adviesraad*' in which the different migrant community organisations were represented. This council was never successful in profiling itself as an advisory body that could influence political decision making. The council struggled with a double function: advisory body on the one hand, pressure group for migrant issues on the other. This had led to a deep crisis in the council. Everything points at the actual council being dismantled in the future; it is considered old-fashioned categorical model that increases polarisation rather than strengthening the dialogue. This is considered together with other categorical councils that can still have a place in new models of advise. In the meantime, the IS maintains bilateral relations with **different federations and self-**

organisations, for example through the intensive follow-up of some 30 projects that these organisations carry out with municipal subsidies. New forms of dialogue and collaboration emerge from these projects.

3.5 Policy and practice on monitoring progress

3.5.1 Progress general policy

The city participates in the city monitor for **livable and durable Flemish cities** (University of Gent). It is a learning instrument for the 13 Flemish centre cities, for the Flemish city policy and for everyone involved in the city. The figures show how livable the cities are and how durable their development is. This instrument includes 190 indicators based on a vision consisting of targets and intentions of the city.

During the summer of 2004 the city council laid down the strategic objectives to update the administrative agreement and establish priorities. Each priority was divided in strategic, pursued and operational objectives and projects. This was linked to an extensive reporting process: per project/action two-monthly reports had to be made about the evolution (intermediate steps, time and means spent, ...), about the results (indicators) and about the availability of means/willingness/motivation etc. for the further development of the project. At regular times this was bundled and submitted (with key issues and opportunities) to the management team of the city and the City Council. The same reporting logic is included in the translation of the new local government agreement into objectives and projects.

In addition, **each city service** also presents an **annual report** and submits a report for the purpose of the Flemish City fund (every year there is a report about concrete actions and every two year there is a report on operational and strategic objectives). The **databank social planning (DSP) of Antwerp** makes every two year a **report (evolutions and trends)** that supports the reports for the Flemish City fund.

3.5.2 Progress diversity policy and progress with respect to personnel and service

In the formulation of objectives for city policy in de last few years, the IS had its own objective around integration. An other objective 'service in diversity' imposes all city services an overall task: realize a customer-oriented tailor-made service for each resident of the city. Equal result by appropriately dealing with each customer is the target. The term customer is used by the city to designate the user. An additional diversity consultant was recruited. And this is reported in the **city service reports** (see above).

As mentioned previously, diversity is also in the new objectives that are a translation of the governmental agreement a horizontal objective and all substantive objectives of the city also have to take diversity into account. At this moment the objectives are defined and worked out but it is already clear that a complete reporting process will follow also for the objectives with respect to personnel and services. Diversity will be monitored separately (**diversity report**). It was also decided to develop a **diversity scan**.

Moreover, the IS has also been reporting since 2000 to the Flemish Government for the purpose of the Flemish accreditation and to the City fund, for instance about the progress with respect to the diversity policy. Reports will also be submitted for the purpose of the Local Social Policy. Here too, diversity constitutes a horizontal element in the substantive domains. For the purpose of a screening of the objectives a broad diversity test was developed. Here too it is included in the annual report per city service.

3.6 Key challenges faced in implementation and broad lessons learnt

3.6.1 Positive results and pitfalls

During the last few years there have been a lot of positive actions and projects with respect to diversity and equal opportunities. Occasionally there was a rapid development. Sometimes it was as a result of a crisis on the street, so that the IS was asked to coordinate all city actions with respect to diversity and equal opportunities. Sometimes it was as a result of new plans and opportunities as during the summer of 2004 when the city council worked out strategic objectives to update the local government agreement and identify priorities. Furthermore, there have been a lot of intensive and good contacts between the IS (and also other services such as the Urban Poverty Department) and the city services. And in a number of them they work hard to include the diversity of the population in their policy. And in November 2006 the IS was asked to organize a two-hour training around ‘systematic diversity management in the city’ for the city’s management team. It was a good opportunity to explain the need for this kind of policy, the pitfalls and the crucial steps.

Despite of these positive results, according to the city experts, the city needs to develop a clear vision on its diversity policy, top down support and a translation into mandates and tasks at all city levels, in monitoring and evaluation. For some time there was a city workgroup on diversity – led by the IS – with in principle all city services, but it became paralysed by a lack of mandate.

The IS points some misunderstandings and pitfalls about diversity policy and management: (1) Ad hoc constructions built on sympathy, understanding and good will can lead to big problems. They are well meant, but they can trigger trends or be considered to be rights that are unmanageable in a policy context. (2) Respect means that everything is all right. To experience one’s identity has to correspond with active participation in the urban society. Living together in diversity means that not everything is possible. Therefore, the core of the common elements and the limits to diversity have to be defined. (3) Several actions form one big picture. Diversity management goes beyond an ad hoc policy and requires a permanent change process. Hasty work and symbolic interventions are often counterproductive.

Thus, the city of Antwerp has still important challenges and difficulties to face.

3.6.2 Key challenges

Firstly, there is a structural under-financing of the diversity sector in the city from the Flemish government. Hopefully, the results of an ongoing audit will bring changes and that Antwerp as biggest Flemish city will receive a fair deal from 2008 onwards. As a consequence of the insecure financial situation, the IS has to put a lot of energy in financial worries (search for money, temporary projects,...)

Secondly, at the local level there is a need for a common policy framework on diversity that would be based on a clear, not fragmented vision on society (not ad-hoc decisions), and a more structural, systematic diversity management in municipal and OCMW services. The local government agreement 2007-2012 has the ambition to realise this.

Thirdly, until now, the city did not succeed in recruiting enough allochtoon (ethnic minorities) in the municipal structures. An adapted human resources policy that consciously aims at a higher involvement of allochtoon workers is an absolute necessity. This point is also included in the new local government agreement as a priority.

Fourthly, the presence of a strong far right and anti-immigrant political party in the city council makes the topic of migration and foreigners politically heavily loaded.

Fifthly, Antwerp, as a big city, attracts many undocumented migrants. This leads to problems in the municipal health care, housing and social welfare programmes. It is the city's opinion that the federal government is unable to consistently implement its migration policy, and the consequences are passed on to the big cities. That is why Antwerp asks for an unequivocal but humane federal asylum- and repatriation policy.

3.6.3 Conditions for good diversity policy

According to the IS expertise, the conditions for good diversity policy can be expressed as followed: (1) a clearer vision on diversity ; (2) support and involvement of management (with anchoring in missions and principles); (3) a more diverse workforce; (4) an organisation in which employees are able to deal with diversity in a professional way (the organisation culture); (5) accessible service; and, (6) communication policy (internal and external).

According to the IS, **diversity policy** stands for a policy that gives due consideration in all of its aspects (mission, vision, policy concepts, communication, substantive choices with respect to services etc) to the diversity of population/customers and employees. This needed to find robust responses in all policy fields to new social challenges faced by city management as a consequence of the growing diversity of the population. It is a policy that finds a balance between the advantages of diversity and the need for shared goals and values.

Diversity management translates this policy into management focused on creating added value based on diversity. This added value relates to both internal and external aspects, to both personal and organisational benefits: improved career opportunities, improved service, more mutual respect (between employees and between employees and citizens), improved internal functioning and improved image etc. The essential goals of diversity management are:

- All employees at every level must be able to maximise their opportunities and talents;
- The City must be a potential employer of people from all target groups represented in the city's population (all levels);
- Employees have the right capacities to deal with diversity among customers;
- Every target group feels it is included in the City's policy.

As indicated in the following section, the new local government will bring some changes regarding the diversity policy for 2007 till 2012. There are major changes in the organisation in order to implement the broad diversity policy. Diversity experts for different specific target groups will work together in the same structure. In the future, one could assess whether or not these changes would help to face the challenges of the city.

3.7 Potential future policy development

Currently the entire new local government agreement 2007-2012 is translated in a number of strategic, tactical and facility objectives (all objectives have to be worked out at the pursued and operational level). In the Local Social Policy Plan (draft approved in March 2005) which is prepared for 2008-2013, diversity is one of the 'horizontal fields' connected to the contents of all domains. The policy plan is structured according to the following objectives: right to activation, right to housing, right to leisure time, right to means, right to justice, right to

health, right to a place where people can meet, talk about personal beliefs, render services. Diversity is one of the three evaluation themes (apart from ageing and cooperation/consultation).

In March 2007 the **workgroup diversity** (civil servants and externals), led by the city service Social Affairs, departed from the scope: ‘in its ambition to guarantee the basic rights, the city also wants to pay attention to diversity. This means that time after time, the city has to ask the question whether everyone, regardless of sex, origin, physical condition, sexual inclination or age can participate’. The workgroup screened the objectives of the local social policy plan mentioned above on the way they work on diversity.

The workgroup diversity asked to be and were authorized to establish a **new city service ‘broad diversity’** (under the direction of the city service Social Affairs). This new city service will combine specific and up-to-date experience with respect to broad diversity (knowledge of and contact with target groups; policy and vision development around diversity and equal opportunities; tailor-made advice and support in change processes). This is offered to the departments. The new team will give advice, follow-up and/or programme leadership and develops instruments (example: a checklist ‘limits to diversity’ and an evaluation instrument). Nevertheless, the city service involved is and will remain ‘owner’ of the necessary change processes resulting from diversity management. For actual diversity projects in a substantive domain a service agreement (SA) and a functional workgroup can be established. The team will also take care of the diversity report (monitoring) and the importance of internal and external communication is emphasized.

The predecessor of the new diversity service worked out a vision, a number of boundary conditions and the scope. Firstly, the vision is that the city (city services, city daughters, OCMW) deliver a quality service to all residents in Antwerp, regardless of their sex, origin, age, handicap, inclination, socio-economic situation. To this effect the city develops a **systematic diversity policy and diversity management**. Secondly, it requires a number of boundary conditions:

- Diversity policy and diversity management are an inclusive policy. Target group policy (actions according to category) is an instrument, but cannot replace this.
- Diversity policy and diversity management have an internal as well as an external perspective (internal management, external service and products).
- The city needs to formulate a clear vision on diversity and integrates this vision in its mission.
- Diversity policy and diversity management are anchored at all city levels in clear mandates and tasks, and in evaluation procedures.
- Top down support from the executives (vision, mandate, space, attention in plans and actual operation, ...) – in the city as a whole and in the city services – is crucial.
- And finally, the scope is a diverse personnel policy, a diverse provision of services through products and processes, internal and external communication.

4 Employment: policy, practice and outcomes

4.1 Profile of city employees

The City counts a total of 7 993 regular employees in 2006. The employment level is difficult to map since at national level there is still no agreement on the definition (of allochthonous / autochthonous people) to be used on the one hand and there is a lack of consensus on the measuring method to be used on the other hand. This discussion is ongoing at Flemish level. In 2005, a consultation with migrant platforms in Flanders and migrant organisations panels in Wallonia has been organized by the Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to racism. It focuses on the collection of ethnic statistics in order to improve fight against discrimination at work and during selection procedure. The result of this consultation was that even this kind of statistics could be dangerous, they can also be an important tool to fight against discrimination, but the collection of this data should be precisely regulated and on a volunteer basis. The organisations consulted suggested also alternatives to this collect such as implementing voluntarist diversity policies in enterprises and in particular in the administrations, anonymous CV for selection process, etc.

In Antwerp, the term “ethnic minority employee” covers employees who are not Belgian citizens and who are citizens of a South European, East European, Latin American, African or Asian country and Belgian citizens with a “foreign” first and last name. Employees with only a foreign first or foreign last name are not considered as ethnic minority employees. And, the country of birth is included as an additional criterion to determine the ethnic origin.

The share of ethnic minorities in the Antwerp working population is 30%. **457 ethnic minority employees out of 7 805 employees worked for the city at the end of 2005.** They represent 5.85% of the city employees. This share is increasing each year: 2.23 % (1998), 2.54% (1999), 2.98 % (2000), 3.59 %, (2001), 4.22 % (2002), 3.97 % (May 2003) with 313 ethnic minority employees out of 7 871 employees, 4.85 % (end 2003), 4.43 % (2004) with 345 ethnic minority employees out of 7 786 employees.

These figures include EVERY city job status including different types of social forms of employment such as activa jobs (a part of the benefit received by long-term unemployed is activated as salary and the balance is paid by the city), social Maribel (jobs with a reduction of the employers’ contribution), Wep+ (work experience plan, an employment project in cooperation with the Flemish Employment Service), Article 60 (employment by the Social Welfare Service), etc. According to IS experts and official survey, about 25% of these social employment forms are converted into regular employments within the city; either statutory or with a contract of indefinite duration.

4.2 Employment diversity policy

The city wants the composition of the city personnel to be a reflection of the active working population. The city has to set an example as the largest employer in the area. The city applies the principle of “equal opportunities for each resident of the city of Antwerp”.

Since 1999 the city has worked on the adjustment of the personnel policy. The diversity consultants encountered a lot of resistance. It has been a long process to gain confidence and to convince key figures of the importance of diversity policy. After a number of poor results in the selection exams for unskilled workers which made it clear that the city did not manage to recruit ethnic-minority employees and that apart from the issue with respect to the

applications also exclusion mechanisms played a role, under political pressure, the workgroup and the steering group HRM and Diversity was established (June 2006), with the task to change the situation.

For the realization of the principle of equal opportunities the Personnel management department, in consultation with the workgroup HRM, has worked out a memorandum “Antwerp, a socially responsible city” and later a tactical objective.(PM T04: tactical objective 04 ‘Antwerp, a socially responsible city’ (MVA, maatschappelijk verantwoord Antwerpen). Status: council decree). The tactical objective is a programme that has to ensure that the notion diversity is stimulated and made possible the overall Personnel management of the city. It stipulates how the city will continue to introduce more diversity among the city personnel. **Action areas** in this action programme are the following:

- to adjust the HR instruments to the target groups starting from the broad diversity, including ethnic-cultural diversity. This means, inter alia, to adjust the selection procedures, to adjust the training policies, to introduce competence management which allows diversity, ...to realize an actual influx of diversity through recruitment and selection.
- to support and cooperate with initiatives aimed at competence development and reinforcement with as final goal the transition to a regular job. For instance: provide opportunities for employment projects and competence-enhancing practice.
- diversity is a basic value within the city and is actively included in the training policy. Included in all relevant trainings and explicitly present in trainings for executives and selection personnel.
- to eliminate thresholds in the selection process.

In its diversity policy the city addresses the **target groups from the broad diversity**. No quotas are used in the city diversity policy. In practice, the influx is the largest for unskilled jobs. This has to do with the fact that for unskilled jobs, such as street sweeper, gardener, there are no diploma requirements. The influx to jobs with diploma requirements is more difficult. This can be explained partly by the issue of diploma equivalence for the ethnic minorities who have been educated abroad. The road to get the equivalence of foreign diplomas is long and hard. For ethnic minorities educated in Belgium, it seems that only a small number of them got a diploma of high level.

For **contractual recruitments** there are no nationality requirements (the jobs are open to all foreign nationals who have their legal residence in Belgium), except if the job is related to the public authority and the protection of the interests of the local government; for instance, a civil servant who issues births, marriages and deaths certificates, environmental police, building police, employees with the authority to draw up contract that commit the government, etc. (Article 10 of the Belgian Constitution). Temporary recruitments are also contractual recruitments (this is a contract of definite duration or a temporary contract instead of a contract of indefinite duration).

For **statutory recruitments** the nationality requirement is to be Belgian or EU citizen, unless again it concerns a job which is directly related to the execution of public authority or includes activities which have to protect the general interests of the government. In this last case only Belgian citizens qualify (for instance, city secretary or fire officers).

4.3 Challenges and tensions in development and implementation of policy

In the one hand, a stumbling block for the implementation is the personnel time that can be spent. There is a structural personnel shortage at the department Personnel management and there are so many other problems to solve which also require personnel time and which are also crucial for the proper operation of the department.

In the second hand, for the elaboration and implementation of diversity measures, resistance exists. This resistance is found at various hierarchic levels. People are willing to change if either the key figures are convinced of the importance and usefulness of the change or if the political and executive pressure is high. Firstly, willingness to change is only possible if each individual realizes the usefulness of this change and if each individual feels like the owner of the change process. Hence the policy of the IS to put the results and the responsibilities with the departments. Secondly, the organisation culture in the city does not yet create space for initiatives and experiments. For the diversity policy experiments and initiatives are very important. If the personnel are afraid of the consequences in case of failed initiatives and experiments, they are less willing to change.

In other words, within a strong hierarchical organization the middle management will only implement and support changes if it is convinced this is what the higher management and politics want. According to the city experts, vagueness blocks the creation of a bearing surface.

4.4 Recruitment, training and promotion

4.4.1 Recruitment

To make the influx of ethnic minorities more successful with the aim of letting the city personnel be a reflection of the working population in Antwerp, the memorandum “*Antwerp, a socially responsible city*” gives somme specific recommendations regarding appointment conditions , recruitment and selection procedures.

Regarding the recruitment and guidance of applicants, it recommends a strong cooperation with guidance organizations for different target groups and also to inform them regularly about city selection procedures. The guidance organizations have to train long-term unemployed and help them to find a job.

Regarding the selection procedure, it recommends: (1) to execute the conclusions of the optimization audit “recruitment and selection”, for instance by the creation of a file owner and a selection-owner for selections. (2) to pay attention to the value-related competence “dealing with diversity” in selections. (3) to pay attention to the use of culture-fair tests in selections, so that for instance ethnic minorities are not prejudiced. And (4) to protect the opportunities of disabled persons in selections, for instance by reserving specific jobs for them or by adjusting the selection procedure (for instance, adjust the duration of the tests).

4.4.2 Training and promotion

In February 2007 the department Training and development of the Personnel management department established a workgroup “diversity and personnel development”. The task of this workgroup is to make sure that, where relevant, diversity is included in trainings and, where necessary, specifically offered. For instance: the training project for executives, dealing with customers for counter employees.

The Department education of the IS also offers special training to city services with regard to cultural communications and views. According to the IS, there is a need for a more specific training of executives.

At this moment the policy mainly focuses on an immediate influx and there is no specific measure to encourage promotion within the diversity policy.

4.5 Equal pay and working conditions

The wages are determined objectively and linked to a job. The rule is that starters begin without seniority and that seniority is built up at the city. Everyone starts at the salary linked to the status. For a few problem jobs an exception is made and seniority can be granted. The seniority of employees coming from another municipal administration counts as well. Wages vary according to the job status. City employees mainly have a statutory job. A number of employees has a contractual job. The salary is not different between both statuses but pension and other benefits may vary.

4.6 Harassment

Cooperation, customer-friendliness, the approach of diversity, motivation and involvement and integrity are the core values which have to be respected by every city employee. These values are described in a **code of conduct for the personnel** and an **integrity office** was established in order to protect these values in a neutral way and advise the city apparatus in case of irregularities or questions. Personnel members with questions or complaints can address the integrity officer who will deal with the issue. With the establishment of the integrity office and the creation of a code of conduct for its personnel, the city clearly defines the attitude it expects. Racist behaviour is included in the code under the denominator 'the approach of diversity'.

Moreover, the Personnel management department disposes of the **service Sowel**. The task of this service is to guide conflicts at work to the best possible solution. The **IS** and Sowel agreed to cooperate on the solution of conflicts with ethnic-cultural aspects. The IS informs Sowel of any problem directly reported to it and Sowel informs the IS in case of a conflict with a possible ethnic-cultural component. These cases are conducted jointly. The combination of experience has a double advantage. The cases are handled with more insight and there is a mutual learning process between the two services. This agreement is effective, but it has not yet been ratified at a higher level.

4.7 Accommodation of cultural and religious needs

Neutrality of the office is a basic value. Neutral authorities are politically neutral. In the local government agreement 2007-2012 this is clearly specified in article 430: *"the city authorities want to encourage the diversity of the personnel. It must be possible for a lot of people with very different personal beliefs to work for the city. But the external signs of their personal beliefs may not be shown in direct contacts with the customers. In these contacts the neutrality of the service and respect are primordial. External symbols of personal, religious, political or other beliefs are not worn in direct contacts with the customers."*

Members of the staff of the city of Antwerp cannot express their personal beliefs in their contacts with the customers. In March 2007, in accordance with article 430, the city published the memorandum: *"Diversity: clothing regulations for city personnel"*. It stipulates that:

- Personnel in uniform does not wear any other clothes or marks, with the exception of the symbols of the city house style.
- Personnel in work clothes or safety clothes does not wear any other clothes or marks, with the exception of the symbols of the city house style.
- Personnel in direct contact with the public, customers or external partners wears respectable, non-showy clothes. External symbols of personal, political, trade union, sports, ... preferences are not worn during working hours, not even for charity. So no cross, yarmulke, head scarf, turban, HIV pin, mark of a service club or association, etc. are permitted.
- Other personnel members also have to wear respectable, non-showy clothes which express courtesy. Earrings for men are possible, but heavy nose piercing are not. A head scarf is possible but a covering veil is not.

In line with this article of the new local government agreement is also the attitude of personnel management with respect to adjustments as a result of questions asked by personnel members which find their origin in culture or religion. In practice, the questions asked by personnel members are sometimes answered ad hoc with sometimes long-term negative consequences. According to the IS, the city needs a thinking frame to deal constructively with this issue.

The IS designed a **testing frame** that can be used by those involved. It consists of about ten questions which have to be asked with each decision whether or not to introduce a specific measure for a certain group (for instance: may you pray at work or not?). For instance: is the measure in conflict with the existing legal frame or not, does this specific measure undermine the joint responsibility and the citizen's ability to try and solve problems or to prevent problems; with this action will we have to cut down on the basic quality of our services; ... ?

4.8 Health and safety

The city has not yet made any adjustments regarding health and safety targeting people with migration background.

4.9 Induction and language tuition

This is not included structurally. The city imposes language requirements on its personnel. In principle, the required knowledge of Dutch is so high that new collaborators fit in easily. In practice, however, through temporary employment statuses there may be an influx of people passing from one status to another so that the temporariness continues. For these people, on the initiative of those responsible at the city services, courses of '**Dutch at work**' are organized. These classes of Dutch are given by an external partner during working hours. At work, there is also a **language coach** who stimulates the employees to practice the language in the work context.

4.10 Recognition of qualifications

At this moment the city cannot recruit people based on their skills.

With respect of the fulfilment of diploma requirements, the IS recommends to push the higher authorities (Flemish Community) to create the possibility of opening jobs through a double entrance gate: either a diploma or Previously Acquired Skills (PAS). In April 2005 the Antwerp City Council wrote a letter to the Minister of citinization with the request to create

the possibility of opening city jobs based on the acquisition of skills. This was included in the sectoral agreements of 2005-2007. It is possible to recruit for predetermined jobs based PAS and only based on PAS. The skill screening test has to be done by a partner acknowledged by Flanders. In practice, the problem is that as a result people with a diploma cannot be acknowledged and also have to pass a skill screening test. In addition, there is still no partner capable of organizing skill screening tests.

The City of Antwerp wants to plead for a double entrance gate for specific jobs. As a result it would be possible for people who acquired the necessary skills as well as for people with the appropriate diploma to participate in the exams. At the Flemish level there is already a decree on the acquisition of a title of Vocational Qualification (30 April 2004). This decree also stipulates that each year the Social Economic Council for Flanders (SERV) has to draw up a list of problem jobs for which it is possible to recruit without diploma requirements.

With respect to the required level of Dutch, it recommends to determine the required language level and to develop specific language tests in cooperation with the Flemish Employment Service and the House of Dutch (Sources: the tactical objective PM 04 ‘Antwerp, a socially responsible city’, sectoral agreement 2005-2007, city council decree number 4552 Diploma requirements and diversity policy of 22 April 2005, decree on the acquisition of a title of Vocational Qualification of 30 April 2004).

4.11 Complaints

For complaints and complaints procedures the same structures apply as with “harassment” (see above). The city opted for a conflict mediation approach so that there is no separate complaints service which only deals with complaints.

4.12 Special initiatives

Work and Economy (WNE) is a non-profit association connected to the city. Its steering committee is composed by aldermen. It was established by the City of Antwerp to advise the city council on the elaboration of the socio-economic policy and help with the execution. WNE has been created because the Flemish policy on employment was not really adapted to the specific situation of Antwerp (language problems, discrimination). The three areas of WNE are the labour market, social economy and entrepreneurship (SME and big companies). A fourth area, tourism, hostellery and catering will be added soon. By bringing various spread initiatives in these domains together under one umbrella organization, the city council wants to achieve an integrated and coordinated approach of the socio-economic policy. The two tasks of WNE are first cofinancing initiatives regarding training and second structuring the sector of training in order to avoid overlapping among NGOs’ projects.

WNE cooperates with the Human resource management department on the influx of diversity, i.e. by preliminary trainings for problem jobs and the cooperation between the city and the job guidance network ANTONE (*het Antwerps Toeleidingsnetwerk*), a network of around 250 organisations. Some projects are organised with “*toeleiders*”, kind of guides helping and orienting the jobseekers in the first stage of search of a job. Some *toeleiders* with migration background are prone to orientate jobseekers from ethnic-minorities towards the jobshops (*werwinkels*). The *werwinkels* or “The first step to a job”. They are a specificity of Flanders. They are offices where some representatives of different bodies are present (OCMW, VDAB, and others). They simplify the task of the jobseeker by offering a direct access to different bodies in the same place.

The influx of diversity is more a consequence than the objective. Indeed, the perspective has changed with the new local government agreement. Initially, the objective was oriented toward the people (the target group) and the purpose was to include them in labour market. Henceforth, the objective is oriented toward the labour market and especially the vacancies or the *knelpuntenberoepen*, the jobs where it is difficult to find someone. The WNE will collaborate with the Belgian National Bank and other data banks in order to know precisely the city situation regarding these specific vacancies and also in order to prognose them.

For example, the WNE has carried out a project that aims at filling the vacancies in the City and in particular its mobility department. WNE had observed that, in the one hand, it was difficult to find workers with good bases in mechanics and that, in the other hand, the exams of the City were difficult. Finally, people with the requested profile preferred the private sector which is more attractive financially. The WNE organized a training for preparing people to the City exams regarding mechanics. This training included 2 days/week training, an internship in the City and another one month internship in another department. The project is not yet achieved but it seems that it will give a concrete opportunity to people with migration background to pass the city exams and to get a job for the city.

4.13 Monitoring

The changes required in the HRM policy of the city are included in the tactical objective personnel management 03 the city of Antwerp is an exemplary socially conscious employer. This tactical objective consists of a number of strategic and operational objectives where planned actions are worked out with timing. This tool is used to monitor the progress of the process. Each year the Personnel management department measures the number of ethnic-minority employees.

4.14 Impact of policy and lessons learnt

Ethnic minorities represent 30% of the active population in Antwerp, but many of them are unemployed. Only 5.85% of the members of staff of the city of Antwerp are of ethnic minority origin. Yet the city has a large offer of low skilled jobs.

The language barrier/limited knowledge of Dutch of the ethnic minorities and the excluding selection procedures and HRM tools of the city as employer have a negative influence on the employment. According to the IS, the percentage of employed ethnic minorities is remarkably higher in the non-profit associations of the city, where there is more freedom in the selection procedures. The latest figures date from May 2003. The percentage of ethnic minorities employed in the city non-profit associations was 16.6% against 4.5% if the non-profit associations and regular services of the city are taken into account together.

With respect to employment, there is an overrepresentation of ethnic minorities in temporary jobs. According to the IS, this is not good for the image of ethnic minority employees. Moreover, the concentration is sometimes too high so that the base of support at the work floor is overloaded and this may result in a negative attitude towards influx.

5 Diversity in service provision

5.1 Services provided and contracted out

The task 'provision of services' is spread over various city departments. Each city department is managed by a director. There are 8 operational departments directly at the service of the residents (in bold in the following list) and 3 logistic departments insuring that all city departments can operate in the best circumstances. The CITY DEPARTMENTS are :

- **Culture, sports and recreation** (cultural and sports activities and city infrastructure, the daily operations of museums, cultural centres, libraries, swimming pools, sports fields, etc.);
- **District and counter services** (administrative services in 9 district houses and 5 city offices);
- Finance (city tax money, city accountancy and the allocation of the necessary financial resources to the other departments);
- **Overall safety** (cooperation between the different departments with respect to safety and livability in all neighbourhoods of the city);
- **Learning City** (organization of local education, the coordination of local child care and the elaboration of the youth policy, management of the policy domains education (general education policy), youth (city youth service) and child care). The city of Antwerp organizes education (local schools as from the age of 2.5) and also pursues a general education policy for all schools (city, county, catholic and state schools) on its territory;
- Marketing and communication (internal and external communication for and from the city of Antwerp, marketing and planning, relations with customers and press and the creation, production and distribution of communication means, the strengthening of the international image);
- **Patrimony maintenance** (fulfils the logistic and material needs of the departments, also delivers the city car park and arranges accommodation for city services);
- Human resource management (recruits city personnel, makes sure that personnel are paid, organizes trainings and gives the employees guidance throughout their career);
- **Social affairs** (administrative and social assistance to the residents, housing and accommodation, work, health, environment, diversity & equal opportunities and participation);
- **City and neighbourhood maintenance** (green areas, city cleansing, cemeteries, snow and frost prevention, ...);
- **City development** (tourism, urban planning, environment, mobility and traffic, construction, archaeology, business information desk, ...)

The next sections focus on two departments and analyse them separately: the city counter services (District and counter services department) and the education (part of the Learning City department).

The Administrative affairs support the city bodies. They are responsible for the decision making of the city council, the board of Mayor and Aldermen and the management team. They also take care of the correspondence addressed to the board of Mayor and aldermen and the internal mail delivery).

In addition, there are also INDEPENDENT SERVICES which operate independently from the other city departments. They monitor finances, the integrity of the organization and operations such as the integrity service, the finance inspection, the internal audit, the fire brigade, the local police and the ombudswoman.

Considering services in the broad sense (i.e. everything the city offers to its residents) the city subsidizes a number of non-governmental organizations to render certain parts of these services to ethnic-cultural minorities. This can be realized by means of short-term projects and activities grants as well as by means of grants from regular resources, such as the city fund.

- Through the **city fund** the Antwerp minority centre De Acht vzw receives grants for its refugee project HAVEN. Refugees are included in the agreement as an umbrella term for various groups in our society, including undocumented immigrants and people with a precarious residence status.

Specifically around the theme ‘education’: the non-profit association De Schoolbrug, by order of the city council, realizes educational development projects in a number of schools. With these projects they try to avoid school tardiness and unqualified outflow by working on permanent changes with the parents, the students as well as the school. The projects are not aimed at ethnic minority students but in practice most of the time they work with this target group and with underprivileged in general.

The city is also looking for providers to offer certain groups easily accessible classes of Dutch. The Adult Basic Education Centre is such a service provider that offers easily accessible courses to more than 100 000 extra students. In addition, various service providers also offer Dutch to non-native parents who are not yet registered for a normal course of Dutch.

- The IS manages a fund that gives **grants for activities and projects which support living together in diversity**. Ethnic minority associations as well as ‘other associations’ (cooperation with an ethnic minority association acknowledged by the city) can apply for a grant. The association must be acknowledged by the IS (at this moment 184 associations). The activities grants are meant to offer a well-defined support to sensitizing and/or educational, once-only socio-cultural activities of associations in view of the emancipation of their own constituency and a positive approach of diversity in the city. Project applications also have to be aimed at the promotion of living together in diversity and/or the increase of equal opportunities, but these projects run for a longer period of time with a maximum of three years. Each year the IS also describes and defines a number of priority areas.

With respect to the theme “counter services” and “education”: with every grant round, some associations present applications for activities or projects with respect to education. With their initiatives these associations play an emancipating role with respect to the parents and the youngsters, they promote the introduction of its members to educational initiatives and influence the policy, the latter also by participating in the consultancy forums. At this moment there are three educational projects presented by associations

and supported by the IS. All this in close consultation with the city service involved, General Education Policy and other partners such as De Schoolbrug.

- Various city services have a grant system such as **culture grants** or **grants for youth and sports activities** or **grants for ‘opsinjoeren’** (initiatives by the residents). In principle, this is an inclusive scheme. It means that there is no separate grants for ethnic minority associations but the pursuance of an accessible general grant policy. In some cases a **‘temporary’ grant fund** is maintained. Example: up to last year the City Culture Service had a fund to support cultural activities organized by ethnic minority organizations’ (FOCA). In the beginning of 2007 it was transferred to the districts. In 2007 associations could not apply to this separate fund, but the districts could spend the FOCA resources on ethnic minority associations. As from 2008 this special fund will be part of the regular culture resources.

Considering diversity is sometimes an extra criterion for the approval of grants. For instance: this criterion is included as action item in the agreements with the youth service.

- In addition, the city service General Education Policy has (a) **‘a projects fund education innovation and cooperation’**, (b) a **‘working-learning’ fund** and (3) **‘an ‘incentive broad school fund’**. Schools can apply for project resources to work around (a) attractive learning and living environments, (b) real life learning and working experiences and (c) in cooperation with partners from the neighbourhood, youth work and the world of sports and culture – help socially vulnerable youngsters to discover the regular range of leisure / cultural / sports activities or start creative processes which have to increase their attraction to vulnerable target groups. The projects are not specifically aimed at ethnic minority children and youngsters, but in view of the diverse reality in the city centre, in practice, it often concerns this target group. The social fund is also accessible to all less wealthy Antwerp students. Through the intervention of the school director, parents can get a reduction for school trips (one or several days) which are required to achieve the school objectives or development targets. Each year the city of Antwerp puts 135 000 euro at the disposal of this fund.

5.2 Diversity policy in services including target sections of population and services covered

5.2.1 City counter services

In general, **all Antwerp citizens** are the target group of the city counters (a lot of counter products are laid down by law). The aim is to make the general services as accessible as possible. In addition, there are a few counters specifically aimed at foreign nationals, such as the aliens office, the sham marriages unit and the asylum seekers unit. In general, the city tries to make sure that more people can claim their rights. A network of **Social Information Points (SIP)** is active in 6 neighbourhoods or districts. The aim is to create more SIPs in other districts. The SIPs help everyone with a social question, but focus on socially vulnerable citizens. The people who come to SIP receive the correct information and a clear explanation so that they perfectly know which service could help them and what can be expected. If necessary (and with consent of the customer) SIP contacts this service on forehand (and the customer does not have to repeat the whole story). The SIP's are working with intermediaries to have contact with target groups and to deal with language problems and deal with multiple problems. The biggest advantage of SIP is the networking of partners

that engage themselves for the same goal. Doing this every organisation can make his own organisation stronger and is able to deliver a more adapted service.

The city authorities described the objective in the new local government agreement as follows: *“The city wants to render the highest quality service to a broad range of customers by offering services which combine equal treatment and tailor-made services, with convenient opening hours and easily reachable by our customers, which are round off with unique and effective contact moments, through all the channels our customers prefer.”* The city wants to implement a broad diversity policy: services and opportunities for everyone (regardless of gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, origin or socio-economic situation).

Currently, District and Counter services is working on the operationalization in strategic, planned and operational objectives that should improve the quality and the relationship with users. Already, in 2005, the main goal of the district and counter services was described as follows: *‘the city wants to offer high-quality services and guarantee an equal result for all customers’*. To realize this, the city wants to develop a diversity policy in the services offered by the city that focuses on counters and front offices. That is why a **diversity consultant** was recruited at the end of 2005. She joined the diversity team of the IS. Together with the future city service broad diversity, she will play an important role in the support of the above-mentioned objectives.

In the framework of a **discussion on ‘general or specific services’**, the IS was asked whether or not the city has to accede to the requests for specific services such as separate classes of Dutch for Jewish men and women. The IS is working on a kind of testing schedule or **testing frame** (described above) that can be applied to all policy questions. In the IS policy documents mentioned up to now: *“inclusive if possible, in categories as long as necessary”*. The question here is how to determine precisely when a specific service is needed rather than a general one. The IS considers that there is a crucial need of a manageable tool to deal with these policy questions. According to the IS experts, a ready-made solution is not possible. The tool should allow to deal consciously and consequently with these policy questions and to achieve well-founded discussions. But one standard answer to all questions is neither feasible nor desirable. Then the IS worked out 10 ‘signals’, 10 questions to be asked, from *‘is this measure a violation of the existing legal framework?’* over *‘can this measure be realized, is it workable and payable?’* to *‘does it contribute to living together in diversity?’*.

5.2.2 Education

The education policy of the city of Antwerp is aimed to all **Antwerp children and youngsters**. In the elaboration of the policy measures a lot of attention is paid to the fact that the measures are good for everyone and do not exclude a new group. At the same time the ‘general education policy’ (AOBA, the city service in which the education policy is worked out for all educational institutions) is also considered as a social policy in which special attention is asked for groups which are more than other **groups threatened by exclusion**. In other words, not only ethnic minorities, but also the underprivileged and others. Here, the broad diversity approach also applies, though sometimes specific measures are taken for specific groups. For instance: AOBA also has a team ‘education opportunities which supports education teams in their approach of the issue of the underprivileged at school.

Within the group “ethnic minorities” no distinction is made with respect to education policy, only with respect to specific measures for ‘newcomers’ in the context of the welcome classes.

This is also realized in the Local Consultation Platform on Education (LOP), in the context of the decree Equal opportunities in education), **minor newcomers** are here considered as a separate target group in conformity with this decree.

In principle, schools are also accessible to everyone. In Antwerp there are a few official Jewish schools.

In Antwerp one quarter of the population has recent foreign roots in one way or another. This multicultural reality is reflected in the education figures:

- 53.1% of the Antwerp students are ‘indicator students’ (this means that at least one of the five indicators apply to these students: parents belong to the migrating population; the mother does not hold a secondary school diploma; the student is temporarily or permanently raised outside the family; the family receives a replacement income; Dutch is not the language spoken at home).
- 43.1% are GOK-students (GOK stands for Equal Education Opportunities: at least one of the four socio-economic factors applies to these students and sometimes also the indicator ‘Dutch is not the language spoken at home).
- 40.8% of the students are marked as ‘Dutch is not the language spoken at home’.

The figures vary considerably between the districts. In the city centre the figures are always the highest (71.4% indicator students, 57.1 GOK students, 63.3% Dutch is not the language spoken at home).

5.3 Employment profile of service providers

First of all, it is important to remind that there is no official definition on 'persons of ethnic minority origin'. The data provided have to be seen accordingly.

5.3.1 City counter services

The personnel policy and therefore also the HRM and diversity policy of the city are also applicable to the city counter services. 23 persons with migration background (not born in Belgium) on a total staff of 500 persons are employed in the District and counter services department.

5.3.2 Education

The HRM and diversity policy of the city is also applicable to the service General Education (Learning City department). Strictly speaking, part of the staff members do not work for the city but for the non-profit association BAOBAB vzw. This non-profit association manages the general education resources. The city council as well as the educational networks are represented in this association. The advantage of the non-profit association recruitment is that they can apply the selection criteria with more flexibility, because they do not fall under the city recruitment procedures. The Learning City LS/AOB employs 4 people with migration background (ethnicity minority origin): 1 traffic employee (starter's job – D), 2 school spotters (starter's job D) and 1 administrative employee (indefinite duration – D). And BAOBAB employs 2 people with migration background: 1 administrative employee (indefinite duration – C) and 1 educational employee (indefinite duration – C).

The recruitments at schools are organized by the educational networks and do not come under the city's human resources Department (freedom of networks). Nowadays the local city

schools have the authority to decide on recruitments. It means that certain schools explicitly look for teachers and administrative employees of ethnic minority origin. Finally, the General Education has no survey of the number of staff members of ethnic minority origin at schools.

5.4 Access to services

The IS gives advice on the removal of thresholds for services, with respect to (internal and external) communication, personnel policy, organization culture and the range offered (products and processes).

5.4.1 City counter services

New objectives are worked out in various stages to promote the accessibility of the services for everyone (see above). With respect to the actual rendering of services, a number of efforts were recently made to ensure high-quality, accessible and effective services. These efforts consist in:

- a **social information centre** where each customer is helped. An important realization is the establishment of a local network of associations to which customers are referred and which cooperate more and more.
- **Multi-channel services**: counters, telephone, electronic, by post, etc.
- **Training**. Front office employees attend special courses (see further 6.6).

5.4.2 Education

In the education policy of the service general education policy (AOBA) there are efforts at various levels to remove the thresholds with respect to the access to the services. This does not mean that all thresholds have been removed or that ‘attention on thresholds’ in all policy steps is more than clear. At this moment AOBA has a **Department ‘opportunity groups’** which develops specific action for groups which in one way or another experience difficulties with respect to education. An example: the ‘Studiewijzer’ service which is an information point for everyone with questions about primary, secondary, higher and adult education. Studiewijzer tries to make its service generally known, it also explains its services to ethnic minority associations (see studiewijzer.antwerpen.be).

Regarding the access to education organized by the schools, according to the IS, there is – also in Antwerp – a permanent problem of admission to certain schools or departments. The **equal education opportunities decree** (GOK) of the Flemish government regulates the right of subscription. Parents and students who are refused based on colour, origin or image can still go to the school of their choice thanks to this decree. The reasons to refuse a student or to refer a student to another school are limited. In accordance with the decree, the local consultation platforms for primary and secondary education (composed of educational and non-educational partners) have the task to make arrangements on the organization of joint subscription periods. This was also done in Antwerp. As from the school year 2007-2008 all Antwerp schools apply the same subscription period. In general, there are three periods with priority measures: 1) priority measures for brothers and sisters (primary and secondary education) as of January 2007; 2) rules to give priority to children with or without GOK indicator as of February 2007 (only for primary schools). Schools decide which group they want to give priority. 3) an open subscription period as of March 2007. This restriction of the subscription periods should inform underprivileged and ethnic minority parents better when the children can be inscribed and should also limit the number of abuses by schools. A lot of

students, however, encounter problems upon the subscription at the school of their choice. The still-increasing phenomenon of concentration schools (also white schools) continues to be an important element.

In addition, schools are asked to present their information about subscriptions as clear as possible to the parents (at Studiewijzer, at the school gate, ...) and a number of non-educational partners from the **Local Consultation Platform on Education** started to register 'stories about disguised refusals'. The subscription period is still open at the moment of redaction of this report and it is difficult to draw conclusions at this moment.

5.5 Monitoring of access and outcomes identified

5.5.1 City counter services

In the period from 31 January 2006 until 10 March 2006 a customer satisfaction questionnaire was organized on the services delivered at the counter services and the operation of the district houses and city offices. 1,585 customers were interviewed after a service provided by the city. In general, there were no specific target groups (>80%). There were no interviews of specific target groups but 10% of the interviewees were foreign nationals. Points of improvement were: (1) electronic or telephone counters were not sufficiently known; (2) during the evening hours the customers are generally less satisfied about the language used and the friendliness and waiting times than at other times; (3) the comfort of the waiting space can be increased at some places; and (4) the employee responsible for the customer has to be more widely known.

Moreover the Pina Reception Office (part of the IS) has figures on the number of people referred by district houses to the Reception Office and on the number of people who report to the Reception Office. It is also possible to count the number of tickets issued at the counters of the aliens office, for instance.

The new objectives of the department District and City counter services to operationalize the articles of the new local government agreement applicable to this department also include a number of measurable elements. Thus, the City and the Social Welfare Service will guarantee a service which complies with predetermined and measurable quality standards (by means of a quality guarantee on the service and the definition of service standards / guarantees). The quality of the service will be measured systematically and periodically as well as monitored and adjusted.

5.5.2 Education

An environment analysis is one of the tasks of the Local Consultation Platform on Education in the context of the equal education opportunities decree. In Antwerp this is done by the Social Planning Database. It presents the situation of the GOK-indicators (parents with migration background, mothers without a secondary school diploma, student temporarily or permanently raised outside the family, family receiving a replacement income, Dutch is not the language spoken at home), at the level of subareas (for instance Antwerp intra muros, or district Berchem, ...) and at school level (the number of students in a school who do not speak Dutch at home'). These figures are also used to determine whether the school may exercise the right to give priority to a student with GOK indicator or not.

The Antwerp Local Consultation Platform on Education uses the VRINT-system, i.e. the Full Groups Instrument. Schools report to the Local Consultation Platform on Education the refusals of students and specify which groups are full. The VRINT instrument registers the

refusals and the full groups. Schools can use this instrument to refer students to other schools. Schools also have to inform the Local Consultation Platform on Education whether they exercise the right to give priority to students with a GOK indicator or not.

For the purposes of the translation of the new local government agreement, the Service General Education policy has defined a number of strategic, planned and operational objectives. A number of them are specifically related to the creation of equal education opportunities regardless of the ethnic-cultural origin (and regardless of other diversities). It is the intention to report in detail about all these objectives in the next six years of this management team. The new city service 'broad diversity' including the present diversity management of the IS is asked to draw up a diversity report.

Since 2003 the central registration centre has registered all problematic school careers in Antwerp schools. The general education policy is developed based on the information received so that youngsters are given a new opportunity to round off their school career in a positive way and/or move on to the labour market.

Regarding education, very little information is available on the outcomes of the policy. In 2006 Studiewijzer saw 2.161 customers of whom 1.008 do not speak Dutch at home. For the first four months of 2007 there were 835 customers of whom 283 do not speak Dutch at home. As mentioned above (5.2) 53.1% of the Antwerp students are 'indicator students'; 43.1% are GOK-students (GOK stands for Equal Education Opportunities); 40.8% of the students are marked as 'Dutch is not the language spoken at home'. The figures vary considerably between the districts. In the city centre the figures are always the highest (71.4% indicator students, 57.1 GOK students, 63.3% Dutch is not the language spoken at home).

5.6 Cultural awareness of staff

5.6.1 City counter services

It is important that the employees gain an insight into their own reference framework and into the extent it influences their thoughts and actions. Moreover, if they are open to / have attention for the customer with his or her specific profile, a lot of misunderstandings and annoyance can be avoided. For instance, in some cultures it is normal to negotiate. A front office employee may interpret this as if this person tries to get a preferential treatment. The city's training services takes measures to embed diversity in the standard courses organized by the city. Moreover front office employees attend special courses:

- **'how to deal with language'** (*taal aan de balie*), focusing on what is the procedure when a non-native speaker comes to a city counter. This practice is considered mentioned as an example of diversity practice according to the Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (*Vereniging van Vlaamse Steden en Gemeenten, VVSG*);
- **target group communication**, a compulsory course for each communication employee;
- *Stadsklap* (meeting between newcomers and 'Antwerp citizens), an opportunity for front office employees to have an informal meeting with newcomers. As a result they can notice that what is evident for them is not always evident for newcomers and by listening to their experiences they learn to understand / gain insight into their problems.
- **deal with the public**, a course for each front office employee during which the diversity of the customers is discussed in detail. The employees acquire skills to deal with the customers in a constructive and customer-friendly way.

5.6.2 Education

The City Service General Education Policy itself does not organize training courses on “diversity”, but **explanatory notes on “deprivation and education”** are available. Apart from this, there is also a broad range of training courses with respect to interculturalization and diversity for schools, such as the courses organized by ICI, the Centre for Diversity and Learning (intercultural education), or by DocAtlas (the documentation centre with learning tools for intercultural education). These include ‘**intercultural training courses**’ (insights into cultural diversity, explanation on different cultures, etc.) as well as ‘**diversity management’ training courses** (skills to deal with diversity in an organization). There is no survey available on the schools/teachers/headmasters who attended these trainings and the effect this had.

5.7 Discrimination against service users

Until now, Antwerp had autonomous accessible information or declaration point where racism or discrimination could be declared and followed-up. The distance to the Federal Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism is for the regular citizen too far. After the racist murders in May 2006 the call for a similar structure, promised since a long time, sounded louder. A working Group has since elaborated a concept. The new structure will be a part of the service of the ombudsman of the city. It will be operational in 2008.

5.8 Special initiatives

Regarding education, two initiatives to deal with the discrimination against service users can be highlighted:

- **The Education Hotline** maintained by de Acht (Antwerp Minority Centre)

As mentioned above, the equal education opportunities decree regulates inscription policy at schools. The latter may only refer or refuse students in very specific cases. In practice, however, the strict compliance of these rules and arrangements is not so obvious. Therefore, De Acht has created the Education Hotline. It aims at assisting parents and students to exercise their rights regarding education and help them to find solutions for their problems and complaints. At the same time it informs the authorities of the parents’ experiences and emphasize the existing problems. Parents and students can call the Education Hotline to ask questions and file complaints about education.

- **Intermediary Department of the Antwerp Local Consultation Platform on Education**

The equal education opportunities decree also provides for the organization of local consultation platforms (LOP), and stipulates that the Local Consultation Platforms have to establish an intermediary Department to act as intermediary for inscriptions. In addition, parents may also file a complaint with the students rights committee if they do not agree with the refusal (because the school is ‘completely full’ or because the child ‘was excluded’ - a child may be refused if during the past two school years in the school involved it has been excluded by a disciplinary procedure).

5.9 Impact of policy on access to and quality of services and lessons learnt

There is no information available on the impact of policy on access to and quality of services. However, Antwerp is faced with the consequences of the more severe policy in the Netherlands. The federal policy around migration (for employment purposes) and asylum is also felt strongly in the city.

With respect to the services the obstacles clearly include the language problems, the complexity of the legislation and the impartial attitude towards customers of the front office employees. According to the IS, the job of a front office employee may not be underestimated. They need support and appreciation.

For the first time in Antwerp the new management team has implemented a dress code to guarantee neutrality. As a result, for instance, people with a head scarf may no longer perform a front office job.

6 Conclusion: Key challenges, lessons and learning for CLIP

6.1 Introduction

Largest city of Flanders, Antwerp with more than 470,000 inhabitants counts around 13% foreigners following a breakdown by nationalities. Yet a quarter of the inhabitants have a migration background and they represent 30% of the working population. Moreover, the city attracts more than other Flemish cities an important number of asylum seekers and of irregular migrants. The city is active economically with a large tertiary sector and some poles of employments such as the harbour, the car industries, and the diamond trade. Nevertheless, its unemployment rate is almost twice that of the region and the unemployment is higher among non-EU nationals. Politically, it is important to remind that the topics related to immigration are heavily loaded in a city where one third of the population votes for the far right party Vlaams Belang, represented in the city council.

Till recently, the diversity policy adopted by the city focused specific target groups and people with migration background was one of them. It was a categorial diversity policy. And specific departments were in charge to stimulate and support the policy through specific measures and actions with respect to each specific target group. Therefore the Integration Service was supporting the diversity policy with respect to people with migration background. The IS and in particular the IS diversity consultants developed intensive contacts with some other services such as the Urban Poverty Department. There were a few meaningful steps but there were still challenges. In despite of the adjustment of the human resources policy since 1999 with the support of diversity consultants, the city could not reach its objective of recruiting persons with migration background in a proportion that would reflect its share of the city working population. In 2005, the City as an employer counted a total of 7 805 employees of whom 457 with migration background, thus only 6%. And the people with migration background were overrepresented in temporary jobs. This situation can be explained by several reasons and among others, the language barrier and also the selection procedures of the city. Therefore, since 2006, the Personnel management department has been supported by the workgroup Human Resources Management and Diversity.

Regarding the services delivered by the city, the city counters are supposed to respect a principle of neutrality and thus provide equal services to all residents including people with

migration background. And in order to reach this objective the city has undertaken different actions (network of Social Information Points, customer satisfaction questionnaire, specific training to raise the cultural awareness of the front office employees, etc.). Nevertheless, some challenges remain such as the language problems, the complexity of the legislation or the impartial attitude towards the citizens. Furthermore, the city organizes also education for the local schools and pursues a general education policy for all schools on its territory. This policy is a general policy aiming all the Antwerp children and youngsters. It is also a social policy that pays attention to groups threatened by exclusion. A specific attention is given to the minor newcomers who can be oriented towards welcome classes and also to the access to education. The city has developed actions to implement the equal opportunities Flemish decree that regulates the right of subscription at schools. Finally, considering services in the broader sense, Antwerp subsidizes a number of non-governmental organizations to render certain parts of these services to ethnic-cultural minorities. This is realized by means of short-term projects and activities grants as well as by means of grants from regular resources, such as the city fund.

Currently, there is a change of the approach, the specific diversity policy shifts to the broad diversity policy. Following the local elections of October 2006, the new local government agreement 2007-2012 develops the broad diversity policy and diversity management. Moreover, for the first time, diversity policy has been attributed as an explicit competence of an alderman of the city. The approach broad diversity and diversity management is featured as an inclusive one. It means that the policy should target all residents and consequently all disadvantaged groups including ethnic minorities in Antwerp in a non differentiated way. Target group policy can only be an instrument of this policy. Broad diversity is also defined as a horizontal objective which means that in the one hand, the diversity in the city and daughters personnel should reflect the city diversity population and in the other hand, all the service of the city and daughters should consider systematically and actively the diversity of the city population. The city wants thus to develop a systematic diversity policy and diversity management internally (internal management) and externally (external services and products). A new city service broad diversity will support this policy by providing advices, developing tools for the citys departments. It will also monitor the diversity process.

6.2 Lessons and learning – good practices

Firstly, it is important to highlight the dynamism of the city regarding diversity policy and diversity management since several years. From a general standpoint, this has brought some positive consequences such as the development of an expertise in diversity policy, rising awareness of the city personnel about diversity management, and developing networks with organisations outside the city. More specifically, the Integration Service dealing with ethno-cultural minorities diversity has developed an important expertise in the field (knowledge of the problems and of how to deal with them). The IS has also developed a large network outside and inside the city. First, outside the city, it has many contacts with non profit organizations, with ethnic minorities associations, NGO's etc. This is quite important to implement diversity policy. These contacts are fundamental and indispensable to implement diversity management in particular regarding the objective of the city to introduce more diversity in its personnel. Inside the city, the IS has developed contacts with other services supporting them in developing and implementing diversity. It is worth noting to highlight that the policy of the IS regarding this support was to maintain the autonomy of the city services and to leave them the responsibility of their diversity policy.

From a specific standpoint, the city appears particularly active in setting up structures (various workgroups on diversity) and encouraging dialogues among its services in order to improve diversity. This dynamism is sometimes unproductive (city workgroup on diversity stopped its activity because of a lack of clear mandate) but most of the times, it is fruitful. For instance, the Personnel management department in consultation with the workgroup HRM and Diversity worked out a document with recommendations on appointment conditions, recruitment and selection procedures. The document was followed by a tactical objective that has to ensure that the notion of diversity is stimulated in all city departments. Actions areas have been defined consequently. Furthermore, the department in the Human resource management department in charge of Personnel Development set up a workgroup diversity and personnel development with the task of insuring the inclusion of diversity in the training. Finally, the service general education policy has a department 'opportunity groups' which develops specific actions for groups experiencing difficulties with respect to education. Setting up **workgroups on diversity** with specific and clear mandate to develop reflection and dialogue on diversity policy and diversity management can be considered as good practice that could be develop in other cities too.

Secondly, the city approach to diversity is innovative. After experimenting unfruitful selection procedures of its personnel, the city has addressed a request to the Flemish government in order to create the possibility to recruit people for the city not only on the diploma basis but also on the skills. The city will propose a double entrance gate for specific jobs: either a diploma or previously acquired skills. This proposal aims at improving the recruitment for critical vacancies but it could also open opportunities for people with migration background, since some of them encounter problems with the diploma recognition. This **double entrance gate** procedure could be a possible good practice transferable to other cities.

Thirdly, the city diversity policy is based on partnership with other organisations in different ways. For example, the Personnel management department cooperates with a non-profit association connected to the city (Work and Economy- WNE) in order to rise the influx of diversity in the city. The WNE organized specific trainings for critical city jobs and most of the public was from migration background. Another example is the cooperation with a job guidance network of around 250 organisations including migrants organisations also in order to rise the influx of diversity. Another example is the collaboration with external partners for organizing language courses. The lack of language competence is one element that could restrain the access of workers with migration background to the city jobs. Once employed by the city, a language deficiency could impede the promotion. Therefore, courses of Dutch at work are organized. Finally, the city collaborates closely with a non-profit association managing the general education resources. Consequently part of the staff selection of the Learning city department is organized by this association and they can apply the selction criteria with more flexibility than under the city recruitment procedures; reducing consequently obstacles for the potential candidates with migration background or not. Like this **developing various partnerships** with other organisations is also a good practice for cities that develop diversity plans.

Fourthly, the city intents to include diversity insofar as relevant in all the trainings for its employees. And it gives a specific attention to the cultural awareness of the staff who has direct relation with the citizens. Special courses are organized for front office employees. Some focus for example on the procedure when the citizen is a non-native speaker or on the way to deal with diversity. Others give the opportunity to the employees to meet informally

newcomers and to exchange about their experiences. Organizing specific **training courses on diversity** in particular for the front office employees is also a practice that could be relevant in a diversity policy plan and for sure transferable in other cities.

Finally, it seems that sometimes decisions regarding diversity are not easy and consequently it could be useful to have a framework that could help to define the limits of the discussion of a topic. It is worth noting to remind that diversity issues question the norm and values and therefore it could be useful that a clear framework of the city limits be set up. It seems that the testing frame developed by the IS go in this way and it can be put forward as a good practice. A **testing frame for city diversity** is for sure a transferable practice for other cities, provided that it is shaped and formulated by each city and adapted to the own city objectives.

6.3 Key challenges

Four remarks could be laid on before pointing the main challenges of the city of Antwerp. They are helpful to remind that if some actions and good practices have been highlighted, questions are still pending.

First, as mentioned above, the city and in particular some services like the IS have developed an important experience and expertise in diversity. Nowadays, the city has opted for a new approach called broad diversity, one could wonder in what extent the expertise of the different services have been taken into account to formulate this broad diversity policy? Developing a new policy at the political level without basing it on the previous expertise of the implementation pole could undermine the objectives and above all the results of the new policy.

Second, the broad diversity policy in Antwerp is described as an inclusive objective. In other words, all substantive objectives of the city have to take diversity into account. This is important. The diversity scan appears as an important tool to sort out this question. Nevertheless, is it clear why diversity is an inclusive objective or is the link between diversity and all the other objectives of the city clear enough in particular for the city employees at all levels (top management included)? How the importance of diversity in relations with the objectives of the city is put forward? How the importance of broad diversity policy and diversity management is put forward in relations with the objectives of the Personnel management department and the District and Counter Services department?

Third, developing and implementing diversity policy has shown to the IS that diversity management requires flexibility and permanent change process. Managing diversity is not an easy task – especially in an organisation which tries to include more diversity in a difficult political context. Introducing more diversity obviously lead to raise the array of situations and questions and possible problematic situations that the city will have to face. Resistance at various levels of the employees themselves is observed for several reasons (lack of conviction, etc.)

Fourth, dealing with diversity is touching the norms and values that are accepted by the majority. Changing norms or introducing new standards could encounter misunderstandings, questions. This process thus need organizing dialogue and specifically intercultural dialogue and consultation periodically.

The first challenge of the city regarding diversity policy either in its elaboration and formulation or in its implementation within the entire city services could maybe called a **communication challenge**. The absence of a clear communication can lead to

misunderstandings. The diversity policy has to be supported by an open communication and regular information at all levels including the top management included.

In addition, regarding the diversity policy in employment, the city pursues a voluntarist policy to introduce more diversity in the city staff. A lot of efforts on the influx of people with migration background are proceeded and this is with doubt a first important step. However the following one would be to keep them in the city and to offer them opportunities of carriers (promotion). The city could probably already begin this objective. Nevertheless, the percentage of people with migration background employed by the city is still weak. And in the other hand, the percentage of jobseekers with migration background is quite high and some jobs stay vacant in the city.

The second challenge is thus a **selection and recruitment challenge**. In order to introduce more diversity in the city, the city could facilitate the access to the city jobs in the one hand and in the other hand adapting the selection procedure by, for instance, guaranteeing a diversity awareness of the selection structure.

Finally, the experience of the city of Antwerp regarding diversity policy is quite constructive with a lot of positive experiences. Nevertheless, several challenges remain. Two major challenges namely the communication challenge and the selection and recruitment challenge. There are also other challenges already described in the appropriate sections. These challenges are a structural under-financing of the diversity sector from the Flemish Region, a still fragmented vision of the society that produces ad-hoc decisions, the presence of an anti-immigrant party and also the important number of undocumented migrants in the city. The new local government agreement aims at taking some of these challenges and it is only in the future that one may appreciate the results of the broad diversity policy and diversity management adopted and implemented by the city.

6.4 Learning for CLIP

The experience of the city of Antwerp leads up to a crucial questioning regarding diversity policy. Diversity policy as understood by the CLIP project team has been defined as a public policy at the municipal level which aims at generating an added value out of cultural difference. “Furthermore, diversity policy is also different from the local implementation of a national minority or multiethnic policy in a traditionally multiethnic state. It is further different from policies such as affirmative action, quota regulations or group rights’ approaches. It finally has to be distinguished from anti-discrimination policies”. Diversity in this approach is thus seen as an objective and not as a mean. The objective of a diversity policy is to introduce, support and encourage cultural diversity but it is not the fight against discriminations based on a migratory or ethno-cultural background.

In the context of Antwerp, the broad diversity policy pretends to include all citizens who could be disadvantaged. Two remarks have to be done accordingly. First, the target groups described for the broad diversity include women, ethnic-minorities, holebis (gays, lesbians and bisexuals) and, disabled people and from now on youth and elderly people. Age is now part of broad diversity. This is an important point because youth with migration background or elderly people of foreign origin will be taken into account in a wider perspective. Second and this would be the main difficulty of the broad diversity approach, in what extent is it possible to target equally these disadvantaged groups by generating an added value out of their specific differences?

In conclusion, widening the notion of diversity at this point in the context of diversity policy and in the even more critical context of diversity management seems to eliminate/filter out the diversity. How the cultural specificities, the cultural differences that a diversity policy is supposed to respect and valorise could be regard? There is a risk to draw the differences in a norm that is still defined and formulated by the majority. In other words, the difference is denied instead of being valorised by a policy that pretends to valorise and support all differences (cultural, gender, health, sexual orientation). The risk is to erase the characteristics of the “target groups” – is it still relevant to use this term anymore then – in order to give them the same opportunities as a “standard worker”. So, the pitfall is that the “standard worker” is the autochthonous worker and there is no space anymore for the differences. Finally, does this broad diversity approach mean implicitly the development of assimilationist trend at least regarding ethnic minorities?

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