

The role of management and trade unions in promoting equal opportunities in employment

Community relations

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Community Relations

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Foreword

This is one of a series of booklets designed to accompany the report *Community and ethnic relations in Europe*, published by the Council of Europe in 1991². By community relations is meant all aspects of the relations between migrants or ethnic groups of immigrant origin and the host society, and the report sets out proposals for a comprehensive approach to community relations policy in the Organisation's member States³.

Following on from its work on community relations, the European Committee on Migration has been engaged in a project entitled: "The integration of immigrants: towards equal opportunities". This project aims to promote the exchange of practical experience between people who are attempting, in a variety of different ways, to put the community relations approach into practice.

The present booklet is the outcome of a meeting held in December 1993 on: *the role of management and trade unions in promoting equal opportunities in employment*.

A consultant, John Carr, played a leading part in the preparation of the meeting. Those taking part included the organisers of a variety of practical projects whereby employers or unions aim to enable immigrants and people of immigrant origin to achieve their full potential on the labour market.

A number of government officials with policy-making responsibilities in this field also took part in the meeting. The full list of speakers and projects is given at the end of the booklet; this will enable readers who so wish to make contact with those responsible for the various initiatives.

² Available from the Council of Europe under the reference MG-CR (91) 1 final.

³ These number 39 as of 1 May 1996: Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, «the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia», Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom.

It is becoming ever clearer that efforts to achieve good community relations in European countries depend crucially on the achievement of real equality of opportunity on the labour market for immigrants and people of immigrant origin. At a time of high unemployment this is no easy task. While it is up to government, both through legislation and in its capacity as a major employer in its own right, to set a lead, this booklet sets out to show how much can be done by employers and trade unions, given the necessary determination and imagination.

Finally, I should like to take this opportunity of thanking the consultant and all who took part in the meeting, especially those whose written contributions are reproduced here.

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Director of Social and Economic Affairs
Council of
Europe

Employment equity for ethnic minorities

Discussion paper
prepared by John Carr, Consultant

Introduction

This paper reviews some of the main issues for discussion at the meeting organised by the Council of Europe in Strasbourg.

Discrimination

The discrimination in question, which is at the root of the lack of equality of opportunity, principally affects the employment opportunities available to legal residents whose physical appearance marks them out as being *visibly different* from the majority population. Linguistic, religious or other cultural factors might in certain circumstances also be a consideration, but it seems that the fact of being visibly different is the most enduring barrier to equal treatment.

A key point to register therefore is that this discrimination is entirely unconnected to concepts such as citizenship or nationality.

A second key concept to establish is that we intend to look at the actuality of discrimination, rather than the theoretical or formal position.

Hardly any companies would ever admit to giving official approval to a policy of discrimination. No European state condones or approves of discrimination. Yet discrimination continues to exist. So the important question is not so much "*What is your country's or your company's official position on discrimination?*". What matters more is "*What do you do to deal with it or to ensure that it never becomes a problem?*" Or "*If someone has been discriminated against, what remedies are available and how easy is it to access them ?*"

Simply saying "*Discrimination is illegal in our country*" or "*Discrimination is against our company's policy, therefore we have no need to do anything*" is missing the point.

We will therefore be looking at measures which explicitly acknowledge and address the existence or potential existence of discrimination, even where the visibly different minorities are perfectly well qualified to do a given job and perfectly well aware of their

legal rights. Discrimination and related disadvantage continue even among those minorities with all the appropriate qualifications and experience.

This brings us to our definition of discrimination. How broad or narrow a concept is it? Of course there are the obvious or wilful, deliberate acts of discrimination. But equally, perhaps even more importantly, there are forms of discrimination which are in no way based on a direct or malign intention to discriminate but which are every bit as effective at keeping certain types of people out of particular areas or sorts of work:

Indirect discrimination exists where a qualifying rule or condition is applied *which cannot be justified in relation to the particular job* and which disproportionately affects one or more racial or ethnic groups as compared with another e.g. to stipulate that to be eligible for consideration for a position everyone must have had *the whole* of their education in the host country, will rarely be justifiable in relation to almost any imaginable job. Doubtless some minorities could fulfil such a condition but, even without a deliberate intention to discriminate, the policy in fact works disproportionately to the disadvantage of minorities.

Sometimes a manager might refuse a job or a transfer to a minority person believing that they were acting in their best interests, protecting them from a group of workers whom she or he believes to be hostile to immigrants. The effect again is the same as if a deliberate policy were being pursued.

Similarly, a manager might worry that there would be a backlash from the employees if minorities started working in a particular area.

Lastly, a manager might make a number of assumptions about the lack of skills or aptitude of certain groups of people. Believing these assumptions to be grounded in hard facts, the manager might again refuse someone a job opportunity but at the same time remain utterly convinced that they had done nothing wrong or acted in any way unfairly. The idea of discriminating might never have consciously entered their head.

Policy background

An accepted hallmark of any liberal democracy is the extent to which it accords and respects the rights of minorities. Thus for some people, in a wide range of commercial

concerns or other types of organisations, equal opportunities is seen primarily as a moral issue, being about fundamental human rights; being about a universal imperative to afford all legal residents the same respect, the same democratic, civil rights, including equal treatment and protection by the law. Such a view is very much a feature of the various international treaties and conventions which have been promulgated over the years and which still apply today (see below Section *Legal background*).

Moreover, there is a view which says that to achieve long-term stability within a modern, industrialised society, it is essential that all groups within it feel they have a stake in its future. Within the EC framework, a growing number of measures are being introduced aimed at producing greater *social cohesion* by attacking problems associated with *excluded groups*. At various levels, it is recognised that the EC's visibly different resident minorities are a substantial part of the target audience for these initiatives, and this despite the fact that the Treaties of Rome and Maastricht do not directly address issues of race relations or equal opportunities for minorities.

A person's job determines their income. This in turn largely determines their *quality of life* and their expectations both for themselves and for their children. Thus if any definable group of people within society should become convinced that the state was, in effect, condoning a policy or practice which tended to exclude them, either from any work at all, or kept them only in low-paid or demeaning work, the threat is clear. Fuelled by a sense of injustice, such a group would become an easier target for the demagogue or others with a political agenda which threatened civic peace, and ultimately the prosperity of society as a whole. The larger the group, the greater the potential threat.

Institutions which have an eye to their longer-term self-interest will therefore understand the broader benefits and advantages of equal opportunities.

In addition, discrimination in employment acts as a barrier to economic efficiency, both at the level of the individual firm or other organisation and at the broader societal level. Even at a time of high or rising unemployment, if irrelevant and unnecessary considerations are preventing an organisation from maximising the potential of its human resources, or are preventing it from recruiting or retaining the best-qualified staff, then we are all the poorer for it. Thus one key objective of an equal opportunity policy is to remove such barriers and thereby to improve the economic performance of the enterprise.

Another motive for taking up equal opportunities might be connected to an individual firm's attitude towards how it markets itself. Some firms are very conscious of their public image. They wish to be known as being modern and forward-thinking. They see the world and their market as being multi-racial and they want to identify with it. They may even regard the presence of people with an intimate knowledge of foreign countries and their languages as an asset to be exploited through developing new export markets for their products in the individuals' countries of origin, or possibly new domestic markets.

Just as firms are increasingly advertising their environmental credentials or other aspects of their company policies, some firms think of equal opportunities as a badge which they wear to proclaim their commitment to treating people equally irrespective of their race or colour. They certainly do not want there to be any suspicion that they tolerate or encourage employment practices which treat certain types of people as inferior. This could damage their commercial prospects both in Third World countries and domestically e.g. there is a growing trend towards consumer-led boycotts of products from firms identified with a range of anti-social behaviour.

Some organisations may decide to adopt an equal opportunity programme simply because they are keen to ensure that they are upholding their country's laws, or as a purely defensive measure in order to avoid prosecution and the public disgrace which that can bring.

In the United Kingdom, some firms or other organisations are adopting equal opportunity policies and programmes because an increasing number of public bodies are making this a condition of doing business with them, or receiving grant-aid. Thus a straightforward commercial incentive has been introduced.

The latter policy is called *contract compliance*. In Northern Ireland, a similar, but much tougher, policy exists, aimed at eliminating religious discrimination. In the case of the Northern Ireland policy, a very strong reason why the present Government agreed to introduce the necessary legislation was because of pressure from the Irish lobby in the USA. American firms were being pressured to cancel or withdraw planned investment in the province unless something significant was done to combat religious discrimination.

Legal background

The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1965 and came into force in 1969⁴. It has been widely adopted by member States of the Council of Europe.

Convention 111 of the International Labour Organisation is expressed in similar terms to CERD, and again has attracted large numbers of signatories from member States of the Council of Europe.

However in their recent work⁵, Forbes and Meade documented just how wide the variation can be between nation states in relation to their domestic laws on discrimination.

Some European states have almost no specific legislation on discrimination against minorities. Others have legislation but few, if any, available remedies. Yet others have fully embraced the various treaty provisions and have extended the scope or meaning in certain areas e.g. the concept of *indirect discrimination*, which exists under UK law, could not be said to have been explicitly anticipated by the treaties although some lawyers clearly believe that the instruments do support such a notion.

In the context of the Council of Europe project, however, it is suggested that while we may need to remind ourselves of how different legal provisions in different states may have influenced the development of their responses to discrimination, in the main we should seek to learn from the concrete experience of the different projects presented. The essence of the idea, the practicalities of its implementation and its achievements, rather than the legal superstructure, ought to be the principal focus.

Adopting policy

⁴ See Appendix 1 (page 26)

⁵ Measure for Measure, A Comparative Analysis of Measures to Combat Racial Discrimination in the Member Countries of the European Community, Department of Employment, 1992.

The key to formulating or revising a policy and a programme to promote equal opportunities must lie, initially, in the acceptance of the potential or actual existence of discrimination. This is not always as easy as it sounds.

Nobody could suggest or imply that there is but a single way in which these matters ought to be approached in all organisations. However based on the experiences of a wide range of bodies, a number of themes seem to recur.

For many people in management, particularly people in corporate positions who might be a little way removed from front-line production activity, the idea of racial discrimination is so irrational or morally repulsive at a personal level that they can often find it hard to accept that it goes on in areas for which they have a responsibility. Unless approached correctly they can very easily be deeply offended by the suggestion that they might be presiding over racial discrimination. This will not help to win their co-operation for the ensuing management action. Alternatively, they might question the judgement or motives behind the initiative. However, as we have noted, not all discrimination involves a conscious, deliberate or malign intention.

Equally within any larger organisation it is entirely possible that there will be a number of people, again perhaps in management or supervisory positions, who find this issue to be very difficult or worrying. They might feel threatened, perhaps because they are ignorant of what an equal opportunity policy might entail, or because they have little knowledge of ethnic minority people or communities. Racist propaganda and unsympathetic reporting by mainstream newspapers and other media can create entirely unfounded anxieties in the minds of some people. It is no use pretending that this is not so. It has to be faced. A solution must be found, otherwise management can find themselves walking in to a situation which they might find hard to control or predict.

Thus, if an organisation is coming at this issue for the first time, or is revisiting it, perhaps in the form of a review of some kind, it is important, wherever possible, to do two things :

- * Bring key players from management and the trade unions along with you. Make sure they understand what you are proposing to do, *why* you are considering it, and the timescales envisaged for different stages of the process. Very early consultations should aim to win the support and involvement of all relevant key players in the particular organisation.

- * De-personalize the matter. Unless there are specific local circumstances it ought to be possible to present this initiative as a prudent corporate response to a corporate concern, rather than it being about the behaviour of any given individuals. In any event, unless and until a clear corporate policy has been established, it would be hard for a company or other organisation to hold any of its individual employees to account for falling short of a standard which has not yet been explicitly set in their day-to-day context.

It may be necessary or helpful in these early stages to gather together some hard data which shows that the organisation *prima facie* might already have a problem, or that it would be wise to head off the possibility of a problem arising in the future e.g. some sort of survey of how many visibly different minorities are employed, and where, doing what. How many live in the organisation's normal catchment area for recruitment?

It would be wrong to suggest that such data was always going to be necessary: often the situation will be plain enough without the need to do more. But sometimes one encounters a sentiment which suggests, "If we haven't got a problem, why do anything about it?", and this can be relatively easily answered if reliable evidence can be produced.

If an organisation does decide to obtain data, either now or at any other time in an area connected with equal opportunities, it is absolutely essential that the methodology employed leaves the data beyond reproach or criticism. It is one thing to have an argument about how to interpret given facts, it is utterly corrosive and unhelpful to have a dispute about whether or not the facts themselves are correct. The policy will never get past first base if the data on which it is based is not widely believed.

Having got to the point where the organisation, or key players within it, understand why there is a need for a policy, there are two other *caveats*:

- * Management at the highest level in the organisation must become unambiguously identified with the policy. A communications strategy must be devised which gets that commitment across. It is essential that, across the whole organisation, people believe that this is a serious policy which will be treated seriously. If key players or large sections of the workforce become convinced that this may be a temporary measure, or if they believe that top

management are only going through the motions because of political or other pressure, but they do not really believe it or take it seriously, then that will weaken the policy's credibility very quickly. It may be done irreparable harm.

- * The adoption of the policy should be linked to the formulation of a realistic action programme with a timetable, based on an assessment of what resources the organisation can devote to the policy, and what it can achieve with those resources. A policy which is adopted and then is followed by a year or so of inchoate activity, perhaps trying to work out what you do next, or no activity at all, is a policy which might never recover its credibility.

How and when, or whether, the organisation might choose to publish its action programme is essentially a tactical question. But senior managers must know how their performance under the policy is to be judged. In order to make a realistic action programme, if only of a provisional nature, it will be necessary either now or shortly after the policy is adopted to carry out a detailed audit of current practices and attitudes which might affect equality issues. This audit might look, for example, at:

- * How well-trained are the people principally responsible for recruitment? Are they aware of their legal obligation not to discriminate? Have they been trained in how to avoid racist stereotyping. Is their work monitored?
- * Do the company's documents and public advertising reflect the company's true message?
- * Is there any evidence, either from headcount data, or data on the use of any discipline or grievances procedures, or data on who is leaving the organisation and why, which suggests a racial bias ?
- * As far as a trade union is concerned, does it know how many ethnic minorities are in the industries it covers, and how is this reflected in the union's decision-making bodies, its own personnel and its membership?

The policy statement

In their book "Making Equal Opportunities Work", (1991) Pitman, Coussey and Jackson

suggest:

Many companies, especially those having formal joint consultative procedures with trade unions, have found it useful to have an agreed policy statement setting out the basis of their equal opportunity policy..... A policy statement is useful for the following reasons. It will:

- * *define the basis of your policy*
- * *define the scope of the policy;*
- * *give a signal to all staff that the company is changing;*
- * *give an opportunity to demonstrate top-level support for the policy;*
- * *give an opportunity to show widespread backing for the policy from the trade unions;*
- * *give a focus for action.*

A policy should be no more than a broad statement of intent and an expression of priorities.

British Telecom's policy could hardly be shorter or simpler. It says:

BT is committed to equality of opportunity for everyone in the company, regardless of race, religion, sex, marital status, any disability or other non-job related consideration.

The Trustee Savings Bank's reads as follows:

To achieve our business objectives, the TSB Group is committed to provide equal opportunities in employment and customer service.

We shall recruit and develop staff on the basis of the suitability of their skills and experience for the job.....

The object of such policies is to make it clear that the company is striving towards a situation where, in any decision-making about who gets jobs, or promotions or access to training or other employment-related opportunities, the outcome is not influenced by non-

job related criteria about a person's race, colour or ethnicity.

Some policies, particularly in the UK, suggest that employers will go further. Recognising that discrimination is a historic fact, and believing it is important for society to eliminate the effects of past discrimination, employers are allowed to take additional steps to assist ethnic minorities to compete on more equal terms for jobs or job-related opportunities, but this almost always stops short of allowing an employer to give a job to someone *because* of their race or ethnic origin. This is known as positive action training and can, in certain circumstances, be restricted to people of particular ethnic groups.

The action programme

The action programme is the key to the success of the policy.

Employers

In the case of an employer, the action programme will be linked very specifically to a range of job-related activities. The action programme will give shape and focus to the organisation's activity.

The action programme is also an instrument which will change and develop over time. The action programme in Year 1 ought to look very different from the action programme in Year 9. Take, for example, British Telecom's action programme for 93/94:

- * launch a Black and Asian managers network and then move on to extend cover to non-management people;
- * launch a revised harassment policy which will include making counselling available;
- * launch targeted awareness training on race equality, aimed at BT's recruiters, staff appraisers and trainers;
- * develop positive action work through a scheme to provide work experience for ethnic minority undergraduates.

This is an action programme for an organisation with quite a mature equal opportunities policy. In previous years, its action programmes have established:

- * company-wide ethnic monitoring, featuring regular updates on recruitment, promotions and voluntary redundancy;
- * regular management reporting mechanisms to keep all aspects of the policy under regular review, and presenting it to senior managers within BT;
- * focus groups of ethnic minority workers to obtain data on the impact and quality of BT's policy as it affects them concretely within the firm, and to identify further issues for action;
- * a policy on racial harassment;
- * a new style of job advertisement which communicates a positive and diverse image of BT's workforce, and avoids communicating an unhelpful stereotype.

Practice varies from organisation to organisation but frequently the adoption and implementation of an equal opportunities programme has become the spur for a revision or update, or perhaps even the initial creation, of a management handbook which consolidates all aspects of an organisation's relevant personnel policies and procedures, and ensures that they conform with equal opportunity norms. This will frequently be linked with the development of information materials for the wider workforce.

In the same vein, the adoption and implementation of an equal opportunities programme can become the spur for a much more systematic look at personnel systems generally. For example, in the UK it was not uncommon to find that job descriptions or personal specifications for particular jobs either did not exist at all in written form or were so vague as to be largely useless. It is hard to develop objective criteria for recruitment or promotion policies when there seems to be no agreed basis for beginning a discussion.

Where organisations had moved to using psychometric tests, these too have had to be looked at again as it was discovered that a number of them had introduced unnecessary and irrelevant considerations which were biased against certain categories of ethnic minorities.

Again it would be wrong to imply that there is a single blueprint for action programmes. Each organisation will have its own culture and traditions. These cannot be over-ridden or ignored: they are the basic raw material with which one must work. A company which has a strong tradition of training its workforce, of staff development and so forth, is likely to find it easier to achieve certain things than a company that has a very weak tradition in those areas. Equally, a company that is doing very little new recruitment, which is the norm these days in Europe in many industries, may wish to focus initially on qualitative aspects of working for the organisation.

In the Netherlands, for example, a special emphasis seems to be emerging on the *Management of Diversity* or *Intercultural Management*. This approach not only takes multi-racial working as a fact, and describes what steps a company ought to take to make it work harmoniously in practice, but also sees a multi-racial and multi-cultural workforce as a positive advantage to be exploited by the organisation in pursuit of its wider goals. Such a development very much mirrors progressive developments in the UK, USA and Canada.

Trade Unions

Much of what applies to employers, *mutatis mutandis*, applies also to trade union bodies. However their distinctive, representational and negotiating role marks out a separate role which only they can fulfil.

Historically, in certain countries, the trade unions have not always been identified with support for ethnic minorities and their fight for fair or equal employment opportunities. This has left a legacy of suspicion and mistrust which the unions have been doing a great deal to overcome.

In Britain, ethnic minority workers are more likely to be working in a trade unionised area, and are more likely to be trade union members, than white UK residents. However, in general, their representation within the trade union hierarchies and bureaucracies is lagging behind, as is their representation within the unions' decision-making bodies. A great deal of energy is now going into trying to change this situation.

At the level of the individual factory or plant, the attitude of the workers' representatives can crucially influence the climate within which managers have to operate.

It is particularly important to bear in mind the industrial relations aspects of equal opportunities because there can be little doubt that, on occasions, managements have used the pretext of getting involved with equal opportunities as the basis for changing working practices which employees have seen as being of value to them.

There is always the likelihood that when one side takes an initiative, the other will be suspicious and wonder if there is not some hidden agenda or some cost to them which they have not yet spotted. Hence the importance, wherever possible and appropriate, of equal opportunities becoming a joint initiative between management and unions.

Thus one key task which trade unions undertake is in relation to the education and support of key negotiators and representatives at plant or industry level. This in turn has developed into work designed to increase support for and awareness of the unions' policies on equal opportunities within the membership, through the provision of information material and other activities.

In the case of the three trade union bodies who have responded to this exercise, the German DGB (the trade union confederation), the Danish RBF (a union for hotel and catering workers) and the British TGWU (a general union), each has established specialist committees both to attract more ethnic minority people into membership, and as vehicles for ensuring that the unions themselves understand the concerns and demands of the minorities.

In the case of the TGWU every one of its 11 regional bodies has established a Race Advisory Committee which is elected every two years from geographically based and industry-based committees. These committees are serviced by the Union's full-time staff.

In one of the TGWU's recent publications, a booklet entitled "Equality for All: Winning race equality at work - a TGWU Negotiators Guide "(1991), the union provides comprehensive information both on the law and the union's policy, in an attractive and easy-to-read format. The TGWU also had copies of the booklet reproduced in five minority languages.

The publication also reproduced the results of a survey they had conducted into their record of winning equal opportunity objectives in their negotiations with employers. This information, covering 122 successful negotiations, was broken down by geographical area and gave each company's name.

Many trade unions now regularly run their own training for shop stewards and other representatives which is designed to help them fulfil their obligations to the whole of the union's membership. One potentially difficult issue they frequently have to address is how to represent workers in situations where both are union members and one is bringing a complaint to management about the racist conduct of the other.

Within many jurisdictions, it is clearly established that the employer is the one with the legal obligation not to discriminate. To that extent, equal opportunities is but one of a number of issues that they have to manage, taking into account trade union attitudes but not allowing them to be a reason for not managing.

However, in the long run, trade unions live or die according to the extent to which they are seen genuinely to represent the interests of their members. Thus there is no necessary, longer-term antagonism between management and trade unions in the field of equal opportunities.

Management and trade unions each have their own distinctive roles to play. When things are working well, the two sides will be complementing each other in taking matters forward within the workforce and the organisation.

APPENDIX 1

1. The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) defines racial discrimination in Article 1(1) as meaning

any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.

2. The same Convention requires signatories, by Article 5, to

prohibit and eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms and to guarantee the right of everyone.. to equality before the law, notably in the enjoyment of the following rights:

(e)(i) The rights to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work, to protection against unemployment, to equal pay for equal work, to just and favourable remuneration.

3. Article 6 enjoins the contracting parties to ensure that people have legal remedies available to them to enforce or protect the rights referred to under other parts of the Convention. Where such remedies did not already exist under local law, there was thus an expectation that they would be created.

Increasing the profile of people of ethnic minority origin in British Telecom

Introduction

The UK has a large community of people of ethnic minority origin. It needs to be stated that these people are seldom viewed as "immigrants" (a contentious and emotional word). In some cases, the settlement of the Afro-Caribbean and Asian population in the UK dates back centuries. The inflow of people from the Caribbean, Africa and South Asia peaked in the 1950's. Most BT employees of ethnic minority origin were born in the UK, and often their parents or even grandparents were too.

The most recent census data for the UK indicates that 6% of the population of the UK is of ethnic minority origin (broadly defined as people of African, Afro-Caribbean, Indian, Pakistani, Bengali or Chinese). This population is not evenly concentrated. The majority live in London, South-East England and the Midlands.

British Telecom (BT) and ethnic monitoring

BT declared itself to be an Equal Opportunities Employer in 1982. With regard to race equality in the workplace it took almost a decade for these words to be followed up by action. In 1992, BT decided to conduct an ethnic monitoring exercise, to measure the numbers of ethnic minority people who work for BT and to ascertain their grade/level in the organisation.

The main reasons behind the decision to carry out ethnic monitoring were as follows:

- * Management perception that this is best practice, and many large UK organisations such as Shell, Ford, British Rail and the Civil Service had already carried out ethnic monitoring.
- * Need to measure if recruitment, promotion and training policies are free of discrimination.
- * Management perception that ethnic monitoring may become a legal requirement in the UK.
- * Pressure from ethnic minority shareholders, customers and employees.

The ethnic monitoring exercise was conducted between April and October 1992. Questionnaires were sent to all BT employees in April asking them to define their ethnic origin as "White", "Black", "Asian", "Asian Oriental" or "Other". A copy of the form is attached in Appendix 1. Approximately 60% of BT people responded in the first instance. A reminder note was sent in July which resulted in a further 25% responding. Finally, line managers were asked to fill in details of the ethnic origin of non-respondents. As a result of this approach, the ethnic origin of 97% of the organisation was captured.

The result of ethnic monitoring

The results indicate that 5.9% of BT's workforce is of ethnic minority origin (around 10,000 people). This can be further broken down into 2.7% Asian, 0.3% Asian Oriental and 2.9% Black. The highest concentration of ethnic minority people is in London, where they comprise of 16% of the workforce. There is evidence of under-representation at management level. It would be reasonable to assume that if there are no barriers within BT to the promotion of ethnic minority people, then 5.9% of all grade levels should be of ethnic minority origin. This is not the case, as the following statistics suggest:

Grade	% of ethnic origin
Technicians	5

Clerical	10
Junior Management	4.4
Middle/Senior Management	2

The UK census indicates that growing numbers of the school and university population are of ethnic minority origin. This is reflected in graduate recruitment figures, where 10% of graduate recruits to junior management grades are of ethnic minority origin.

Towards a race equality strategy for British Telecom

The ethnic monitoring statistics indicate that although BT is a major employer of people from ethnic minorities, these people tend to be clustered in lower paid jobs and that under-representation occurred at management levels. The business case for improving on this situation is simple:-

- * Higher numbers of qualified school leavers and university graduates are of ethnic origin. If BT is to employ the best, it will have to persuade these people that they can have a true career with the company and that selection and promotion will be on merit alone.
- * Increasing numbers of customers are of ethnic origin. There are approximately 3.12 million in the UK. If BT is to gain their custom, it must be seen as being committed to Equal Opportunities and the composition of its workforce must reflect that of the community.
- * To succeed against competition, BT must make the most of the talents of the existing workforce. It cannot do this if prejudice or discrimination consign people from ethnic minorities to low grade jobs regardless of their talents, aspirations and abilities.

The ethnic monitoring results were presented to the BT board in November 1992, together with an Action Plan. BT is a company with a high degree of central control. Usually strategies and policies in the human resources field are designed centrally, approved by the Board after consultation with senior operational managers and implemented from the top down. This was not possible or desirable for the Race Equality Strategy. What the Company wanted to avoid at all costs was the top senior

management team (mostly white males) telling people from ethnic minorities what is best for them. Change in this instance needed to come from the bottom of the organisation and work its way up.

The following action plan was agreed by the BT Board:

- * conduct focus groups with ethnic minority employees to determine what they thought of the ethnic minority survey results and their views on how company policies could be improved.
- * distil the findings of the focus group into a Board strategy paper for their approval in January 1993.

Ethnic minority focus groups

The focus groups (a technique developed in marketing and now used by BT to gauge both customer and employee views of change) were carried out in November and December 1992. Over 100 people attended, split across 2 locations (London and Manchester). The attenders reflected the ethnic minority composition of BT (i.e. approximately 55% Afro Caribbean, 45% Asian, and 30% female). All focus group attenders were asked the following:

- * *What did you think of the BT Ethnic Monitoring exercise?*
- * *What is it like to be from an ethnic minority and work for BT?*
- * *What can BT do to improve its employment policies?*

The feedback from the monitoring question was that people had felt threatened by the monitoring exercise and that the Company could have done more to explain the reasons behind monitoring and the business benefits. Many people thought that the monitoring exercise confused racial categories (e.g. "Black" and "White") with ethnic categories (e.g. "Asian")

Regarding people's perception of what it is like to be an ethnic minority person and work for BT, respondents felt that their colleagues and superiors had a total lack of awareness of ethnic minority cultures. People felt that they had to work twice as hard as white colleagues to achieve promotion. Often they felt that once they had achieved promotion, every aspect of their performance was scrutinised for fault. Many felt the burden of being the first black professional or technician in a previously all white field and thought that if they made a mistake their manager would not promote other ethnic minority people into the same field.

The focus groups also gave clear feedback regarding the way forward on employment policies. The recommendations included:

- * A new BT policy on dealing with racial harassment
- * Training programmes aimed at managers who make recruitment, promotion

and appraisal decisions, which will raise awareness of cultural differences and the importance of removing discrimination from these processes.

- * *Example of positive action.* The 1976 Race Relations Act (UK) allows employers to launch ethnic minority only training and development programmes when ethnic minorities are proved to be under represented in a grade or professional area. BT has not used this legislation.
- * *Ethnic Minority Network.* The Company should support the launch of a network of ethnic minority employees. Meetings would be held 4 to 6 times a year, which would enable ethnic minority employees to meet each other, exchange views and information on training and promotion opportunities. The network would also act as a sounding board for new BT employment policies which affect ethnic minorities and offer advice on marketing/advertising initiatives targeted at ethnic minority people.

The findings of the focus groups were presented to the BT Board in January 1993 and a Race Equality Action Plan was agreed, as an integral part of the Equal Opportunities Strategy. More details on the overall Equal Opportunities Strategy appear in Appendix 2.

BT's equal opportunities strategy

Nationwide Campaign: Race for Equality

BT has joined together with other leading UK employers and the registered charity "Business In The Community" to launch a nationwide campaign on race and ethnic minority issues called Race For Equality. Partners with BT include Grand Metropolitan, Midland Bank, British Gas and British Airways. The campaign will be launched in summer 1994. The aim of the campaign is to encourage entrepreneurship in the ethnic communities, to improve employment opportunities and develop leadership and professional potential.

Racial Harassment

BT has circulated a booklet called "Combating Harassment at Work" to all employees. Anyone who feels they are the victim of racial harassment or discrimination can raise the issue either with their line manager or a specially trained Equal Opportunities Advisor who can help the individual lodge a formal grievance or complaint. The Advisor can also bring in an independent investigator (a senior line manager from another part of the organisation), if it is thought that the individual's line manager is part of the problem.

Ethnic Minority Student Programme

BT will start this initiative in October 1994. Undergraduates from ethnic minorities studying in their final year at university will be offered 4 months paid work experience after their final examinations. They will be allocated an ethnic minority manager as a mentor (who will offer advice on BT, career planning, interview tips, etc) and offered a recruitment interview at the end of the work experience (as part of BT's normal graduate recruitment campaign).

Awareness Training

BT's basic management training courses on recruitment and selection, appraisal and communication skills have all been redesigned to include increased awareness of how managers can deal with cultural diversity and increase the effectiveness of their teams by ensuring race equality in the workplace.

Ethnic Minority Network

A project team of ethnic minority managers has been set the task of devising a constitution for the network and drafting budget proposals, thus indicating the Company's financial contribution. It is planned that the first network meeting will take place in January 1994 and will focus initially on the following:

- monitoring programmes
- ethnic minority only training and development courses
- establishing nationwide access to the network

Chris McLaverty

Appendix 1

Equality of opportunity

Ethnic Monitoring

BT has an equal opportunities policy which aims to ensure that no individual receives unfavourable treatment on the grounds of gender, marital status, disability, race or ethnic origin.

To assess how this policy is working in practice, BT is gathering information on the ethnic origins of **ALL** its employees. For this we need your help.

Please complete this form by ticking one of the boxes below. (If you are of mixed descent, please tick the box which best reflects the way you describe your ethnic identity and racial origins.)

Your answer will be treated in confidence and will be used for equal opportunities monitoring purposes only.

I would describe my ethnic origin as:

ASIAN:

ASIAN ORIENTAL:

BLACK:

WHITE:

OTHER:

If other please state your preferred ethnic description

.....

If you choose not to complete this form your manager will be asked to do so on your behalf so that our records are complete.

BT Unions Committee is supporting the collection of this information as a means of helping to promote equality of opportunity in employment.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION

Appendix 2

BT's equal opportunities strategy

***** FOUNDATIONS

- BOARD CHAMPION
- ANNUAL REPORT TO THE BOARD
- EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES ADVISORS
- HARASSMENT
- TARGETS

***** WOMEN

- WOMEN ONLY DEVELOPMENT
- CAREER BRIDGE
- BT CRECHE
- EMPLOYERS FOR CHILDCARE
- KIDS CLUB NETWORKS

***** ETHNIC MINORITIES

- ETHNIC MONITORING
- ETHNIC MINORITY STUDENT SPONSORSHIP
- AWARENESS TRAINING
- ETHNIC NETWORK

***** PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

- EMPLOYEE FORUMS
- FAST TRACK PROCESS FOR SPECIAL EQUIPMENT
- REHABILITATION POLICY
- VALUING ABILITY BOOKLET

Positive Action at the BRTN

(Radio and Television of the Flemish Community in Belgium)

Introduction

The BRTN is the public service radio and television network of the Flemish community in Belgium, which numbers some 5½ million inhabitants. Compared with its bigger brothers in the UK, France and Germany, the BRTN is a somewhat modest undertaking, having just 2,600 full-time staff. It broadcasts daily on 2 television channels and 6 radio stations. BRTN staff are almost exclusively of Flemish origin. There are various reasons for this, amongst them the fact that until quite recently Belgian nationality was a requirement for working in a public concern. However, the ethnic composition of the staff by no means reflects that of the Flemish population. 9% of Belgians are foreigners; the number of people of foreign origin is considerably higher than this figure (recent naturalisations; second generation immigrants). The percentage of foreigners in Flanders is 4.2%, but in Brussels it is 27%.

In addition, the "immigrant question" is a subject which for years has featured on a daily basis in various BRTN programmes. The issues are dealt with by editorial teams comprising exclusively Belgians of Flemish origin.

The shock result of 24 November 1991

In the parliamentary elections on 24 November 1991, the parties of the extreme right made considerable gains, particularly in Flanders where they polled 10% of the vote. In Antwerp, the Vlaams Blok polled 25%.

These election results added to the growing concern felt in various sectors of Belgian society, and particularly amongst reporters and other staff at the BRTN. "Did the media contribute to the success of the extreme right?" was a question often asked, and sometimes the view was expressed that it had. Various initiatives have been taken to present a fuller and less black-and-white picture of immigrant communities in Belgian society. However, these initiatives lacked cohesion. There was clearly a need for a more

comprehensive view.

The example of equal opportunities for women

Since 1988, a positive action policy for women has been successfully developed at the BRTN. The policy was conceived with the support of the State Secretary for Social Emancipation. The BRTN project was a pilot one, as the legislation was not passed until 1990. Since then all public services and government departments have introduced an equal opportunities policy for women.

The policy of equal opportunities for women at the BRTN was drawn up and is monitored by a committee (the Positive Action Committee). Representatives from all sectors of the organisation sit on the committee, which is chaired by the Head of Personnel. Trade union representatives play an active part. Each year a plan is put forward to the Board of Governors.

The annual plan contains concrete measures taken with regard to:

* *Employment of women:*

- job vacancy notices encourage women to apply
- courses are organised on career development and assertiveness
- there are measures to counter sexual harassment at work

- child-care facilities are provided (crèches and organised activities during school holidays)

* *The image of women on radio and television*

- meetings with directors and reporters
- a book with contributions from female experts
- research

* *Consciousness-raising: study days, brochures, etc.*

This positive action policy has produced its first concrete results and is being followed-up

year by year. The number of female reporters has increased, there are now more women on screen (and in different roles) and the attitude of staff has changed considerably.

Positive action for ethnic minorities

At the end of 1992, the Board of Governors decided to broaden the equal opportunities policy and include ethnic minorities. This step was not taken without much debate, but eventually a plan was adopted which contained measures relating to the employment and image of immigrants at the BRTN.

With financial assistance from the King Baudouin Foundation, a pilot scheme was launched to improve the linguistic abilities of 4 immigrant reporters. These four are employed on the TV-2 multicultural programme "Local Colour" and on programmes with an international dimension.

A study day and various workshops have provided opportunities to alert dozens of producers and directors to the problem.

In collaboration with the Belgian Journalists' Association, a guide-book written by immigrant spokesmen and experts is in preparation. The nationality requirement has now been dispensed with for the majority of employees.

It is too early yet to make a clear judgement on the results of this policy, but it has undoubtedly helped to change people's attitudes.

Flip Voets

Foreign colleagues in the workplace

Henkel KGaA, Düsseldorf

When I was first confronted with this subject, it came as a surprise. I work in a company with more than 40,000 employees world-wide, of whom more than half are non-Germans. I believe that this will explain my surprise.

When we look at the history of our company, we can see that the first foreigners started work at our headquarters in Düsseldorf-Holthausen towards the end of the 1950's. Looking at the figures, it is noticeable that the number of foreign nationals employed was its highest in 1973, i.e. 1,600 - or a quarter of our blue-collar workers. At that time, they came from 24 countries. The number of foreign nationals working at our headquarters in Düsseldorf has since sunk to roughly one fifth, i.e. 1,000 workers. But the number of nationalities has doubled.

The largest contingent within these nationalities is formed by the Greeks with a total of 325. They are followed by workers from former Yugoslavia, Italians, Turks, Austrians, Moroccans and Dutch.

Of the roughly 1,000 foreigners employed, there are about 750 men and 250 women. When analysing the ranking structure of these people we have to acknowledge that 90 per cent are subject to collective bargaining agreements and 10% are exempted or on the executive level - right up to the very top. There are two foreign nationals on our board.

What is the position of our foreign nationals with regard to training? We can say that roughly a third have completed some kind of formal training; looking at it closely this means that about 22% have a vocational training diploma and 13% a polytechnic or university degree.

The next question deals with their function as superiors, especially in production. We have 3 *Meister*, i.e. highly-qualified foremen supervising a considerable number of workers and foremen, 3 district *Meister*, 1 shift-leader and two foremen. These foreign nationals are - and this applies especially to the *Meister* - responsible for a relatively large number of workers who are of German nationality.

In the Federal Republic of Germany there are so-called *Vertrauensleutekörper*. These consist of workers, elected by the workforce of the individual departments, who represent the interests of the department in dealing with the works council. Here, too, we can find 5 foreign delegates and also 5 deputies. These were elected by the German part of the workforce too. In our works council comprising 32 representatives, there are also two foreign nationals, one man and one woman, both of Greek nationality.

Originally our foreign colleagues were housed in so-called *Gastarbeiter* housing. Those were apartment-houses. Today, these no longer exist as all foreign members of our workforce have moved to private or company flats. Of about 2,000 company flats, 231 are occupied by foreign nationals.

In the last 3 years, we have had 80 foreign nationals celebrating their jubilee, i.e. foreign men and women who have been with Henkel for 25 years.

Our foreign colleagues are also very much involved in our cultural and sports programmes. We have - for example - once a year an art exhibition called: "Shapes, Colours, Imagination". The participation of foreigners is very high.

As a spare-time occupation, I am the president of the biggest Düsseldorf sports club and in this club foreigners also play a very important part.

The awful riots and attacks on foreigners in Germany inspired us to organise a large-scale poster campaign drawing attention to the situation of our foreign colleagues. In our company, it is quite usual that our German and foreign colleagues celebrate together - and not just on official occasions, but also in private functions.

When I think of what has been said, I can only say that with us our foreign colleagues are the same as our German ones, i.e. problems of integration in the workplace are non-existent. Nationality does not play an important role for Henkel as an employer. The problem is not a problem.

Hans-Joachim Rabe

Commercial opportunities meet equal opportunities

**A project designed for better utilisation
of the competence of immigrants
so as to increase Swedish exports**

Background and aim

In the autumn of 1992, the Swedish Trade Council and the National Immigration Administration began discussions about how to utilise the competence, experience and networks of qualified immigrants so as to help Swedish companies to increase their exports and to internationalize.

The Immigration Administration then took contact with the AMU group, which has been successfully engaged, over a long period of time, in utilizing the diverse competence of highly educated immigrant groups. The AMU Group/South in Estlöv has become a natural centre in Sweden for this type of work and has well-functioning co-operation with the County Employment Board in Malmöhus County, which buys the training courses and finances the activity.

The guidelines for the project were quickly drawn up by a group of representatives from the National Immigration Administration, the Swedish Trade Council, the AMU Group/South and the County Employment Board in Malmöhus County. As early as the spring of 1993, the outline and details of the guidelines had become so clear that a date could be set for launching the project.

Three factors lie behind this collaborative project:

- * Many small and medium-sized Swedish companies have products/services with international potential which is not fully utilized owing in part to the lack of economic and personnel resources.
- * Many attractive markets are not developed, even by relatively experienced export companies, because of lack of knowledge and exaggerated respect/fear. This can apply to the new free markets in the former Eastern Europe, but also to more distant markets with strong growth potential, e.g. the NIC countries or other countries in the Far East, the Arab countries, etc.
- * In Sweden, there are a large number of immigrants with a lot of experience and competence in international sales and marketing. This competence of course applies chiefly to their former homelands. Thus far, this competence has only been used to a very small extent.

Unemployment administration in Sweden

Before describing this collaborative project, it may be useful to provide a brief explanation about how unemployment in Sweden is "administered" as well as how the methods for making use of immigrant competence have evolved.

No formal difference is made in Sweden between nationals or immigrants as regards the measures adopted to deal with unemployment or as regards the social benefits provided.

When a refugee has become thoroughly resettled in a municipality, i.e. he or she has received a Swedish residence permit and a domicile, efforts then begin to find a job. Extremely few refugees are able to find work on their own. The next step therefore is to contact the Employment Exchange, which in principle has three different ways of tackling an unemployment problem:

- To assist the unemployed person, by offering the service that is available, in finding work through his/her own efforts.
- To provide temporary employment for the person concerned,
- To allow the unemployed to receive training of some kind;

The Employment Exchange Offices, or their county organisations, do not carry out any training themselves; instead, all training courses are bought on a competitive basis. One of the largest educational companies is AMU Personnel Training Group AB. The AMU Group is an entirely state-owned company, and its services to the County Employment Boards and the Employment Exchange account for perhaps 80-85% of its revenues. The reason for the high figures is historical in that, previously, AMU was formally attached to the County Employment Boards. In order to increase efficiency and reduce costs, the government has now decided that, in purchasing courses and other types of training, the County Employment Board shall be guided by commercial considerations.

When market conditions began to improve at the beginning of the 1980s, the County Employment Board in Malmö "discovered" that many immigrants with academic degrees from their home countries were without work or had jobs with unskilled work responsibilities. The AMU was then assigned the task of starting a course for immigrants with Master's degrees in Engineering. The starting-point was that the immigrants already possessed basic technical competence, but that their linguistic competence and knowledge of industry and commerce had to be supplemented. Since knowledge of ADP was variable, this item was also included. In order to provide course participants with the opportunity to demonstrate their competence at a company, the course concluded with 13-week periods of practice. Finding practice placements for the participants was as difficult as finding real employment. In this way, during the first 4-5 years, efforts at finding relevant work were successful for about 70% of the participants after completion of the course.

Some of the participants obtained work where they did their placement, and others found work in other companies with the help of references from their place of practice. However, the figures have fallen during the current recession. This is the background to the utilisation project that AMS is conducting at present.

Quite soon a course for immigrant economists was established. Practical economics can differ quite sharply from one country to another. For example, national legislation requires special knowledge. The course for economists therefore received quite a considerable contribution on the Swedish economy. This course was also concluded with a period of practice.

Within the AMU Group there was also a course for immigrant lawyers. This might at first

seem odd. To an even greater extent than economics, legal knowledge is tied to the country from which the lawyer comes. The aim here was to utilise the legal philosophy, which we assumed to be reasonably similar regardless of the country of origin of the person concerned. As a consequence of this, we also worked on the assumption that legal systems were fairly similar on the whole, irrespective of country. After completion of the course at AMU, the participants received the opportunity of supplementing their education with a basic course in law at the University of Lund. This course has not yet been evaluated.

As a further example of educational efforts of this type, utilisation of the competence of immigrant teachers may also be mentioned. This project was conducted in co-operation with the School of Education in Gothenburg.

Description of collaborative project

The parties taking part in the discussions and projects indicated above, are the National Immigration Administration, the AMU Group/South in Eslöv, the County Employment Board in Malmöhus County and the Swedish Trade Council. The County Employment Board began the work by identifying the target group of unemployed immigrants with the background and competence needed for working in Swedish export companies.

A first batch of candidates was recruited through the Employment Exchange Offices for the three assessment weeks, during which a closer examination and screening took place for a final selection for the project. The obvious head and organizer of the investments in the project was the County Employment Board in Malmöhus County.

A large number of applications poured in during the assessment weeks and after a first selection was carried out by personnel from the AMU Group and the Employment Exchange, 15 course participants were left from each assessment week.

During the assessment week the course participants were tested in Swedish by means of active and passive tests, both written and oral, in mathematics as well as in ADP/computer usage. Every course participant was interviewed on two occasions, once by the Employment Exchange personnel plus the course leader, and at another time by representatives of the Swedish Trade Council plus the course leader. We considered it important to establish the prospective export salespersons' levels of communication and

practical competence, since it would be necessary for them to function not only in their former home countries but also in Swedish export companies.

Files containing all documentation (test results, written presentation and relevant parts of the interviews, together with a photograph were compiled for each course participant in an effort to facilitate the final selection process.

Based on the results of the three assessment weeks, the 45 course participants were divided into three groups: very suitable, less suitable, and unsuitable as export salespersons. The following criteria were applied in this connection: previous experience in selling and marketing, analytical ability, the possibility of returning to the home country and the chances of operating there, previous contact networks, knowledge of goods and line of business, as well as relevant theoretical education.

Of the 45, we selected 20 "very suitable" participants whom we divided into two groups. One group was considered to be well qualified and in need of only five weeks theoretical training, primarily in international marketing and export techniques. The participants in this group were then matched with the help of the Swedish Trade Council, with small or medium-sized companies which wished to export to the countries/areas concerned and, which preferably could offer employment to the export salespersons concerned.

The other group received 20 weeks of basic theoretical training. This comprised a five-week basic course in economics, further studies in international marketing and export techniques, and supplementary training in ADP and business communication.

The swedish language was given great importance. We placed a lot of emphasis on presentation techniques through video, articulation techniques through use of the language laboratory, discussions with intercultural understanding as the goal, comprehension of what Swedes mean when they express themselves and how they understand what is said, the forms and meaning of body language - in other words, the reality behind perceptions.

At the beginning of January this group will be able to begin their practice period of 20 weeks, under the same conditions as those for the "well-qualified" group.

When we finally decided on the "very suitable" participants, we also took their home countries into consideration. In this respect, we more or less felt our way forward. Thus,

we were quite sure that China would be a very interesting target for Swedish export companies and that, at the other extreme, Somalia, at least at present, would be quite uninteresting. It turned out, however, that our reasoning was not completely correct and that the export situation was not as predictable as expected. Here, there is room for future surprises!

The work of matching persons with companies rests with the Swedish Trade Council, which is a semi-state-owned service agency for Swedish trade and industry in matters concerning export and internationalization.

From the Swedish Trade Council's customer/contact register, companies were sought partly on the basis of proximity to the persons concerned in southern Sweden and partly on the basis of the companies' interest in the markets represented by the persons in the project. Moreover, other companies in various lines of business were also contacted in those cases where relevant candidates were considered to have an attractive background.

In general, the companies were to have access, cost-free on the whole, to the persons during their period of practice, but great importance was attached to the consideration of whether, apart from showing interest in this offer, the companies would be willing to make a continued commitment by offering permanent employment. Discussions were therefore discontinued with companies that had a freeze on employment or which did not have resources to continue internationalising after the placement period.

A large number of contacts with companies were necessary before the first ten persons could be placed, since so many factors had to tally: the background and knowledge of the persons concerned with the company's situation, plans and resources. Although the companies do not pay the trainees' salaries, a great commitment is asked of them in the way of introduction and guidance, as well as in the form of direct costs for travel etc.

However, the first group has, on the whole, been successfully placed, and at the same time the work involved in placing the next, not equally qualified, group has begun. After about sixth months at the earliest, it will be possible to start drawing some clearer conclusions about the project - how the companies and the participants have experienced the collaboration how many were employed, what they contributed to the companies, etc. An account of how the various sub-projects are viewed at present, is however, presented below.

Experience after three months

A female participant from Italy is placed with a small biochemical company specialising in vitamin-enriched foods and animal feed. She will travel to Venice in December in order to take part in a scientific experiment concerning the company's products. It may be presumed that she has a good chance of being employed.

A female participant from Poland is placed with a company that makes milling machinery for agriculture and industry. She has compiled a register of Polish contacts in this area. However, she is receiving poor support in her work from the company's management. Probably, no employment will ensue after the placement.

A young man from Austria is working for a one-man business that distributes tourist information about Sweden, written in German, in Germany. The company's income is based on advertisements. Our trainee is engaged in selling advertisements. Some prospects exist for a continued commitment from the company.

An Iranian man is placed with a company that sells construction machinery world-wide. After a number of telephone and telefax contacts with his country, he discovered that new regulations for the import of used goods had come into effect. He, therefore, cannot proceed with his work.

A Polish man is placed with a company within the dental trade. He has been in Poland and tried to map out a market for the company's products. So far, his manager is satisfied with his efforts.

An Arab man is placed with a telephone company. He has utilised his Arab contacts to the full. He is going to travel to Poland shortly in order to explore the prospects there. He also speaks Polish as he has been educated in Poland.

A Chinese man is placed with an insurance company in Oslo. He has a good chance of being placed in Hong Kong.

A Chinese woman has been at a computer exhibition in China for a week, assisting a Swedish computer company. She does not yet have a placement, but has made contact

with a company engaged in water purification that has received a large order from China. She is still awaiting a decision.

A Chinese woman is placed with a company that manufactures geared motors for the processing industry. She is currently learning about the company's products.

Summing Up

This collaborative project intended to utilise the competence of qualified immigrants in Swedish companies is at a very early stage. So far, the experience is positive, but a more long-term evaluation will only be possible after several months. However the project is so promising that the parties involved plan to set up similar projects at other locations, using the experience from the Eslöv project.

Ulf Eriksson
Curt Lovan and Mats Hennius

The guidance and occupational rehabilitation service

(France)

Characteristics of the group

During the experimental period of the guidance and occupational rehabilitation service, 52 persons of immigrant or foreign origin were received. All of these people had just been laid off, been given notice or were threatened with losing their job.

These persons were characterised by their youth (30-52 years old), poor level of qualifications and/or by qualifications held in sectors marked by high unemployment. On the other hand, it should be noted that most of them had had varied work experience (often short: 38 of them had less than 5 years of work experience).

Thus, a young, mobile and poorly qualified group made use of the service.

The great majority of them were of Algerian nationality or origin. This is explained by the wave of persons of Algerian origin who arrived in Dunkirk and the surrounding area during the 1950's and early '60s, where they were mostly employed in the steel industry.

Characteristics of the action

A. THE PROBLEM

Unemployment is generally seen by this group of people as something inevitable which they are powerless to resist. They show a detachment about their personal situation which is seldom seen in persons of Western origin.

When we consider the material and financial consequences of their situation, we observe that their previous experience of redundancy or employment in contract work has often made them acquire cautious consumption habits. Moreover, their family support enables them to feel financially secure. How often we heard, "I have money put aside. I have no debts. My parents can help me. There are friends and cousins I can count on". This

peace of mind about material aspects allows them to be more available for job-hunting, in contrast to many other clients of the service for whom material considerations take precedence over an effective job search for employment.

Their second main characteristic is an almost total scepticism about their chances of finding a job. They emphasise that racial discrimination and the current labour market situation greatly reduce their chances on the job market. All cite personal experiences where they believe their ethnic origin precluded them from getting a certain job and say that, despite their best efforts, they have little chance of finding work.

This kind of attitude, which varies in degree and is more pronounced among young men than among young women, is incompatible with an efficient job search (lack of enthusiasm and little will to make approaches for interviews or use contacts, lack of perseverance in the job search, discouragement and consistently blaming the lack of success on racial discrimination). In order to give encouragement and to strengthen their chances of job placement, we set out a rational approach to job hunting with regular indicators allowing us to measure the attempts made to get a job (the number of personal or business contacts who could help in the job search, the number of companies known to the job-seeker, etc.).

We were struck by the weakness of relational networks among this group of people, especially in comparison with people of French origin of similar age and work experience. Few participants had more than ten useful contacts, compared with an average of more than fifteen for young people of French origin with comparable age and experience. The immigrant group has access neither to a sufficient variety of useful sources of information nor to contacts who may be able to help them. Consequently, they

- do not detect job offers at an early stage;
- do not have contacts who could vouch for them
- rely on traditional channels such as the press and employment exchanges where competition is fierce.

It should be noted that on average only 30-35% of job offers are made through these channels. 65-70% of job offers therefore never come to their attention.

B. SOLUTIONS

It took a lot of effort to break down the racial analysis which leads to this self-excluding behaviour. ("There's racism anyway, so I don't bother looking for work, applying for jobs or making the most of my skills"). We marked out the job search with indicators which give a precise idea of the effort put into the job search (number of CVs sent in one week, number of replies, number of appointments made, ...). Thus, we were able to measure the average number of phone calls needed to get an interview and the number of interviews needed to get a job offer. We could also estimate the degree of reluctance to recruit people of foreign nationality or origin.

Such reluctance is evident: our clients need 20% to 30% more contacts to find a job offer. This implies a longer search period for foreigners which can more easily lead to discouragement and also that it is easier for a young French person to change jobs. Many deny this fact, however.

The level of discrimination varies according to the work sector. Secretaries and salespersons require two to three times more contacts and interviews to get a job offer. On the other hand, jobs for factory and skilled workers are easier to find but are still more open to people of French origin.

As far as these young people are concerned, it is often necessary to correct behaviour which impedes the job search. Important details like shaving and dressing well for an interview are not necessarily obvious to them. They find it difficult to speak with an interviewer about their professional experience and ethnic origin without becoming emotional. All this requires time, frequent simulation exercises and a lot of psychological insight.

This psychological and behavioural dimension applies not only to matters of technique and method but to the job search effort as a whole.

Those responsible for training job-seekers in this approach have to get them to understand that they need to make greater efforts than their French contemporaries if they are to have a real chance on the job market. They need to see this as an additional handicap to be overcome, rather than a determining factor in their search for a job.

Louardi Boughedada
Eliane Van Lancker

Equality of foreign workers as a task for trade unions

The German Confederation of Trade Unions (DGB)

The German Confederation of Trade Unions (DGB) and its member unions has always understood itself to be a body representing the interests of all workers, i.e. all workers in the Federal Republic of Germany. The word "German" in its name only refers to the territory it covers and not to the nationality of the workers themselves.

Therefore, there is no differentiation based on national origins within the trade unions, and there never has been; nationality has always been irrelevant.

There is no trade union legislation in the Federal Republic of Germany. The legal basis for the establishment of the trade unions is Article 9, para. 3 of the constitution, which states: "Everyone and all trades and professions are guaranteed the right to form associations in order to safeguard and improve their economic conditions and conditions of employment". Therefore, it was not the parliaments or the political parties which determined what rights workers have in the trade unions but the workers and the trade unions themselves. So within the trade unions, all workers, including foreign workers, have the same rights.

The German trade unions have always been interested in an orderly job market, in order not to let any imbalances arise which would have come about through the creation of underclasses among the workers or the formation of a sub-proletariat.

As the Federal Republic of Germany has never regarded itself as a country of immigration and has therefore not pursued an immigration policy, the trade unions did not, until three or four years ago, have to consider what attitude to adopt towards immigration or their relations with immigrants.

However, for as long as there has been industrial production, there have been people who have moved from areas of under-employment to the industrial conurbations in order to work, i.e. to earn their living as migrant workers. Migration, which initially took place within a country, was followed later by migration across national frontiers.

When in the middle of the 1950s it had to be decided whether or not to bring foreign labour in the Federal Republic of Germany, the DGB, as a partner of the Federal Labour Office, was consulted and gave its approval in order to overcome temporary bottlenecks on the job market.

However, enforced rotation and seasonal work were firmly rejected because every person must have the possibility of planning his or her own life.

The DGB held the view that foreign workers should have the right to decide for themselves whether they wish to remain in the Federal Republic of Germany or to return home, and, in the event of their returning home, to determine themselves when to do so. The DGB gave its approval to the recruitment of workers from abroad subject to the following conditions being fulfilled:

- * Equality with respect to labour legislation
- * Equality with comparable German workers with respect to social legislation, and
- * The employer to be obliged to ensure that accommodation was provided for the workers.

The reason for these demands was not only international solidarity, but also the desire to prevent workers from abroad becoming objects of exploitation because of their lack of knowledge of the situation in the host country and their social situation as part of the international labour reserve. The aim was to prevent the development of a *lumpenproletariat* or sub-proletariat entering into competition with German workers for dirty work. These considerations were based on historical experience, particularly the period of early capitalism and liberalism.

The DGB was thus able to get its proposal accepted for workers to be given contracts entitling them to union rates of pay when they were recruited, a right which was not even enjoyed by German workers not organised in unions.

They were included in the health insurance, pension and unemployment insurance schemes, just like German workers.

Under pressure from the trade unions, the government concluded bilateral social

insurance agreements with the workers' countries of origin in order to regulate the payments of benefits across national borders.

The employers were placed under an obligation to provide accommodation. This was subject to inspections by the Federal Labour Office as it formed part of the agreement, and works councils had a right of consultation under the Industrial Relations Act.

The aim of the trade unions was to get the foreigners to become union members, to train them to become union officials and to enable them to work alongside the Germans, i.e. the nationals of their host country, in looking after their common interests as workers.

In order to accomplish this, a foreign-language section for trade union work was established. The first foreign DGB secretary, an Italian, was appointed as long ago as 1 April 1956.

Due to the demands made by the trade unions and to their activities in this area, the right of foreigners to vote in elections to works councils and staff councils, and the right to stand for election to them, was incorporated into the new Industrial Relations Act of 1972 and the Federal Staff Representation Act of 1974 respectively. It was to be a special task of these councils to ensure that this right was exercised: the law requires that both works councils and staff councils try to integrate foreigners into the workplace and to promote understanding between German and foreign workers.

It was therefore immediately possible to vote foreigners on to the works councils. From one election to the next, the number of elected foreign members on the works councils increased, even though from the middle of the 1970s until the end of the 1980's the number of foreigners in the workplace declined continuously.

Today, we find that more and more often foreign members of works councils receive more votes than the number of foreigners employed at the workplace, which means they are increasingly being elected by Germans. Only recently, at the last election to the works council at a mine a Turk received 1200 votes although only 300 foreigners are employed there. A sign of successful trade union work towards integration in the workplace!

There are now in the Federal Republic of Germany 8,381 elected foreign members of works councils.

At 558 workplaces, foreigners have been elected to the chair of the works council.

Foreigners placed their trust in the trade unions right from the very beginning because, together with the works councils, they looked after their welfare with complete lack of self-interest from the moment foreigners began to be employed, and the latter were quite conscious of this.

Both the works councils and trade union officials therefore stood ready to help them - solidarity in action, which many of them had not experienced up to then.

The foreigners expressed their gratitude by becoming members. Approximately 50% of foreign workers from the main countries of recruitment are members of unions.

In spite of having differing views, employers and trade unions have always worked together on the basis of mutual trust with respect to the question of foreign workers.

A joint working party established in 1973 regularly meets every six to eight weeks, and has continued to work at times of serious disputes as the only link between the DGB and the Confederation of German Employers' Associations (*Bundesvereinigung der Deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände*). The trade unions and the employers' associations have considered matters involving foreign workers to be too serious and too sensitive for them to try to deal with them in an atmosphere of confrontation.

Through this work and through the action taken by the trade unions, the integration of foreigners at the workplace has largely succeeded, which is unfortunately not true of society as a whole.

As a result of the continued recruitment of foreign workers, which became more and more uncontrolled - many employers virtually hoarded foreign labour - and of an anticipated decline in the job market following the first oil crisis in 1973, the DGB demanded a stop to the recruitment of foreign labour, and this was ordered by the government in November 1973.

This occurred in order to prevent chaos on the employment market and to protect the jobs of both Germans and foreigners living legally in the Federal Republic, but also in order not to restrict the free movement of workers from EC countries.

The recruitment of workers from abroad was initially judged to be a temporary phenomenon by all concerned: those politically responsible, the employers, the trade unions and the workers themselves.

In the meantime, however, the Federal Republic of Germany has de facto turned into a country of immigration, due to the strengthening of the residence status of the foreign workers who were recruited, to the fact that many more dependants came to join them after the embargo on recruitment was imposed, to the arrival of asylum-seekers and to the immigration of Germans from Eastern Europe. The Federal Republic of Germany has to all intents and purposes become a country of immigration, so that the trade unions are also confronted with the phenomenon of migration and/or immigration.

70% of foreigners have now been living in Germany for over ten years. Of the 1.2 million children under sixteen, 750,000 were born here. Since 1960, 1.7 million children have been born in Germany to non-German parents. Foreign workers and their families have long had their homes in Germany, their lives are centred on the country and they have in the meantime become part of our society. The Federal Republic of Germany is on the way to becoming a multicultural society.

For the DGB and its member unions, the development that has taken place has also meant rethinking the situation and extending their commitment beyond the world of work to cover society as a whole. However, this has not just happened recently: as long ago as the beginning of the 1970s, the DGB and the trade unions also worked to promote the interests of the foreign workers outside the workplace. The issue now was equality and equal treatment in all areas of life. The first prerequisite for this is a secure right of residence enforceable by law. As long ago as the beginning of the 1970s, the DGB therefore demanded the amendment of the Aliens Act (*Ausländergesetz*) in order to promote the integration of the foreigners living in our country.

For the DGB, integration means giving foreigners the possibility of shaping their lives in the same way as German citizens are able to shape theirs, and of living peacefully with Germans without having to give up their ethnic, religious and cultural identity. To further this process, we demand that they be granted the right to vote and to stand for election and that it be made easier for them to become naturalised - and this includes the acceptance of a person having dual nationality.

The DGB and the trade unions have been active in the field of education of foreigners for over 30 years. Thus, seminars for foreign workers, which are held in their own languages, take place at the local, district and national level. Each month, the DGB publishes in the main languages spoken by the foreign workers a newsletter providing information both on their rights with respect to labour and social legislation and on their political rights.

Foreigners are represented on all trade union bodies, up to and including the DGB's Federal Conference. At the last Federal Conference in Hamburg in 1990, the question of policy towards foreigners played an important role. A document based on the proceedings was published (available in German only).

For many years, the DGB has worked closely with the trade unions in the foreign workers' countries of origin. This has led to the formation of joint trade union committees with the unions in the main countries of origin. These meet once a year or as necessary to discuss and solve foreign workers' problems which involve both countries. In addition, the DGB participates in looking after the interests of foreign workers and their families (or, to put it a better way, immigrants), in the bodies of the international trade union movement.

In order to bring about equality and equal treatment for foreign workers and their dependants, the DGB and its member unions believe it is their duty to work towards the creation of equal opportunities. According to surveys, the unemployment rate among foreigners is still higher than among native Germans. However, this does not indicate particular discrimination but is due to the fact that the majority of foreigners do not have any job qualifications. Unemployment among native Germans without any special qualifications is also correspondingly high.

Our aim is, firstly, to motivate the foreign workers, once they have been recruited, to undertake further vocational education or obtain a further qualification. Legislation to this effect has already been enacted. Secondly, it is very important to bring the following generations up to the educational and training standards of native Germans.

While over 70% of young native Germans of the same age undergo job training, among foreigners it is only 32%, although the proportion varies considerably according to nationality. This shows what a big task lies ahead of us. On the other hand, however, there are indications that we are on the right path, and we can already point to

successes achieved.

The foreign workers of 1993 are not the same as those of 1970. At that time, foreign workers were almost entirely without job qualifications. Today, 19% of foreign employees are salaried staff, and of the foreigners working in the various trades and in industry, 24% are qualified as skilled workers. We need to continue working along this road, but to do this it is not only necessary to create training places but also to overcome foreigners' reluctance and to explain that it is also necessary to have qualifications in order to safeguard jobs.

Because of an increase in immigration, due partly to a rise in the numbers of political refugees but also to ethnic Germans coming from Eastern Europe and the former East Germany, a certain amount of pressure has built up on the housing and job markets. The lack of accommodation and jobs has created fears among a certain section of the population which have been exploited by nationalistic groups for their own political aims. This led initially to people having reservations with respect to foreigners and finally to open racism and xenophobia.

The DGB and its member unions fight uncompromisingly against all forms of discrimination, xenophobia and racism.

To do this it is not only necessary to show solidarity with other associations and institutions and to take a common stance, but also to educate people in an objective way, and this includes enlightening them with respect to those political parties which wish to make political capital out of false information and stirring up hatred towards foreigners.

The foreign workers are part of our society. Without foreign workers, the German economy and German society can no longer exist. The federal Republic of Germany has, like the rest of Western Europe, become a region of immigration. It is important to give the immigrants in this society support in their struggle for equality.

One thing appears to be especially important in the creation of the single market. We cannot afford to have two sets of rules in a common Europe. Therefore, we as trade unions also want nationals of third countries who live legally in the European Community to have the same rights with regard to freedom of movement and political activities as the nationals of EC member states.

Western Europe, especially, the federal Republic of Germany, has always had foreign immigrants. This has not done us any economic harm. Without the immigration that has taken place over the past 50 years, both the federal Republic of Germany and Europe as a whole would not have developed economically into what they are today. The future must be seen in the light of this knowledge, i.e. Europe must continue to take in immigrants, who will be enabled by means of a properly conceived immigration policy to find a place in which they can live on neighbourly terms with the local people.

Karl-Heinz Goebels

Integration of Immigrants on the Danish Labour Market

The Restaurant and Brewery Workers Union (RBF) was established in 1990 and is an amalgamation of four old unions. The Union has 30,000 members and is a relatively small union in Denmark.

The hotel and restaurant sector in Denmark is a sector which has a lot of immigrant workers. The main reason is that there are a lot of unskilled jobs, and a large turnover of personnel. The immigrants work mainly as house-keepers and on dishwashing, jobs that Danish people dislike, because of the bad working conditions, long working hours and very low wages.

RBF'S immigrant initiatives

According to our rule book, we work for integration and take an active part in the struggle against racism and discrimination towards immigrants and refugees.

The Union aims:

- * to secure the legal, social, cultural, economic and residential rights of immigrants, on a basis of equality with other members of society.
- * to send out material and information about salaries and wages, the labour market, unemployment benefit and social welfare, where possible in the immigrants' own languages.
- * to secure education for immigrants taking their own level as a starting point.
- * to take part in political discussions.
- * to make refugees welcome in Denmark, trying to influence the

political system in that direction.

- * to offer practical assistance to our members in the everyday situations that arise in their daily lives.

The Union has an immigrant committee, and we found it necessary, at the beginning of this year to establish a secretariat to co-ordinate activities. The work is in an early phase, but we have already started on many fronts.

Our local branches organize courses in Danish language and industrial relations. We have planned a new course for our members in co-operation with the Workers Educational Association. The participants will be mixed, so there will be 50% immigrants and 50% Danish members. The aim of the course is to give them the opportunity to learn about other backgrounds and cultures. There are special courses for immigrants in health and safety, especially for safety representatives.

In the autumn of 1992, the union established a Philippine network, for members of RBF. The initiative was taken by one of our local branches, which took up the cause of a number of Philippina house maids involved in a dispute. The network is already a very big success and the people who are involved now feel they have some influence and a greater knowledge of Danish society. The union believes strongly that immigrants have to learn about legislation and rules, so they can be integrated more successfully into society.

RBF has just started to publish part of our trade union magazine in English. Later we will try to publish it in other languages too. We plan to publish part of our agreement and other questions about the labour market on tape, because we have a lot of illiterate immigrants. RBF has a very large unemployment rate. 25% of our members are unemployed, twice the rate for the rest of the country.

The Union's initiatives

The Danish Trade Union movement under LO has just started a very big campaign against racism and hatred towards foreigners. The aim of the campaign is, through debate and information, to throw light upon the situation of foreigners and to remove the insecurity many people feel with regard to foreigners, and also to try to force a discussion

inside the union. Seminars, talks, courses and local branch activities are being planned.

Danish Society

Barriers on the labour market

A meeting was held in the Danish Parliament in the spring of 1992 about the opportunities for immigrants on the Danish labour market. There was a general consensus that on grounds of social equality, as well as in order to counteract internal tensions within society, a special effort must be made in this field. This has resulted in a report about immigrants on the labour market (the *Barrier Report*), which is the source of the statistics given below.

Higher unemployment among third world immigrants

The union has no special unemployment statistics for immigrant members, but the latest figures for Danish society in general are disturbingly high for this group. The figures for people who get unemployment benefit are on average:

- * Danish males, 11%
- * Turkish males, 41%
- * Danish females, 14%
- * Turkish females, 51%

If we compare the unemployment figures for the citizens from other Scandinavian countries and EU-countries, then the unemployment rate is at most 19% for these citizens. It is evident from the figures, that immigrants from third world countries have the lowest standing on the Danish labour market.

Third world immigrants not only have the highest rate of unemployment but they are also unemployed for longer periods. Citizens from countries outside Scandinavia and the EU are on average 1.5 times longer unemployed than citizens from countries in Scandinavia and the EU. Citizens from Turkey, Pakistan and Morocco have the longest unemployment periods.

The hardest hit are the young Turkish immigrants aged between 15-24 years. Of those who left school without a leaving certificate, 90% are unemployed. For youth, in general, the unemployment rate is 45%. This group is hit twice as hard as other groups. For immigrants, in general, a tendency towards higher rates of unemployment for the age group 16-24 has been registered in the period 1987-1991; the opposite was the case for Danish youth in the same age group. The figures show clearly that immigrants have greater problems than Danish youth, and the Turks have the biggest problems of all.

A very frequent reason mentioned is lack of knowledge of the Danish language, but this is only part of the problem. The generation who came into the country in the 1960s, is in the main, still not very good at speaking Danish and is, in general, badly educated; some are still illiterate. But the figures show, surprisingly enough, that the Turkish group between 30-59 years of age, has lower unemployment rates than Danes in the same age group. However, there is a growing fear that this group will be hit harder as technology develops further, demanding professional and technical knowledge and skills rather than manual work. They will not have the opportunity to obtain such skills due to their lack of education and training.

We must concentrate our efforts on second generation immigrants

It is utopian to think that first generation immigrants will get the opportunity to go back to work. The main reason is inadequate knowledge of the Danish language and education, but their children, who have grown up in Denmark, must be given the same opportunities as their Danish counterparts to create a secure future, or else there will be disorder and tension in society. They have been through the same education system as Danish youth and should, for that reason alone, be integrated into society.

The reason why they do not obtain employment or vocational training or even get as far as an interview, is due to *discrimination, racism and prejudice*. These factors play a considerable role when young immigrants and refugees are denied work or education. It is a fact that young immigrants have more difficulty in getting employment, even when they have the same qualification as Danes.

Are Danish society and the Danish government doing anything to reduce

unemployment among citizens from other countries?

There have been some special arrangements for young immigrants and some groups of refugees regarding education and employment, but no overall assessment has been made of their results. In Copenhagen there are a lot of different projects, private and public, for young immigrants and refugees, with the limited aim of making them better equipped for the future. The projects are useful, but they do not solve the problems. We have here a very weak group of people, who have to fight for the very few jobs available on the labour market. *The Barrier Report* draws the conclusion that young immigrants do not have access to the same networks as Danes when jobs are being given. This means they do not have the same opportunities to enter the labour market.

Positive special treatment is the way forward

This conclusion should lead to a kind of positive special treatment, with the specific objective of giving people the same opportunities. Society has not taken any initiatives to make the employers realise the great wealth of resources represented by the background of young immigrants and refugees, e.g. knowledge of foreign languages, foreign societies and different ways of thinking.

There are many ways of tackling a problem but first one has to consider the following points:

- * With regard to immigrants and refugees, where the aim is permanent integration into the labour market, grants, projects and educational training are not enough if they do not lead to permanent work; this situation can result in resignation and passivity.
- * If young immigrants and refugees are not allowed to work, just because of their colour, religion, culture or name, they will lose:
 - confidence in Danish society
 - self-confidence

- motivation for education
- confidence in their own background

This is a very dangerous development for society.

We need the cultural background of the immigrants

There are obvious opportunities for young immigrants and refugees on the labour market. Every local authority needs translators, bilingual teachers, nursery assistants, social welfare advisers, cultural workers and so on.

In the private sector, it is evident that the link with their parents' homelands can be useful because it gives them extensive knowledge of the cultural background.

It is very important for the development of society that immigrants are visible at all levels of society. Why do we have no immigrants on television, or why do we not have an immigrant with his or her own show? Why are there no immigrants in the Police Force? If immigrants only get the bad jobs they will remain at the bottom of the hierarchy, with all the frustration this entails. The only way to deal with this development is by positive special treatment.

The public sector will have to accept responsibility for the educational training necessary to ensure a better future for these young people than their parents had. It could be decided that a certain percentage of people employed in the public sector have to be immigrants or refugees. It should be possible to give subsidies to those who give an immigrant vocational training. This is, of course, also a possibility in the private sector.

There is no doubt about the resistance to positive special treatment. However, subsidies of many different kinds are widespread in Danish society and in the labour market, so it ought to be possible.

Many immigrants are not invited to job interviews, just because they are called Mustafa, Hassan or Ali. Many of these young people speak fluent Danish, were born and grew up in the country, and even change their names, the colour of their hair or use coloured

contact lenses, in order to get a job. This is a disgrace in democratic society.

Maj-Britt Hoffman Bidstrup

Conclusions

**prepared by John CARR
(Consultant)**

Introduction

This document is intended to be a summary of the presentations and of the main points of the discussion at the meeting on the role of management and trade unions in promoting equal opportunities in employment. It also lists the main conclusions.

There was considerable discussion about the terminology which was used in different Member States to describe people in the labour market who were legal residents and legal workers but who nonetheless were, for any number of reasons, *visibly different* from the majority population in that country. *Foreign worker* or *migrant worker* was appropriate for some and unacceptable to others, whereas *ethnic minority* was acceptable to some and inappropriate for others. For the remainder of this statement the term used is *immigrant*, unless the specific context requires otherwise. This accords with the previously agreed position of the Council of Europe, as stated in their Community Relations Report of 1991.

Summary of presentations

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

It was recognised that there was a shortage of data concerning the position of immigrants in the labour market.

However, it seemed clear that it was misconceived to think of immigrants generally as being a homogenous group. There was great variety in the educational, social and employment backgrounds of immigrants in Europe. Thus any policy responses which addressed their position in the labour market would have to recognise this diversity.

International Labour Office (ILO)

Notwithstanding the lack of comprehensive data on the position of immigrants in the labour market, it was accepted that ILO studies show that discrimination against immigrants in employment is a fact. There seemed to be a need to develop a broadly acceptable method for measuring the extent and nature of discrimination, both at the

entry point and subsequently during employment with a given enterprise.

In addition, there was a feeling that the concept of discrimination needed to be more clearly defined i.e. it is possible to take a narrow view of what constituted discrimination in employment, or instead to have a broader perspective which included, for example, aspects of indirect discrimination.

British Telecom (BT)

The BT representative put a case for equal opportunities as an efficient business strategy. Quite apart from the fundamental moral or legal considerations, which were always present, because of the changing demographics of certain urban areas and because, linked to this, there was a change in the ethnic composition of its customer base, BT had recognised the business imperative of ensuring that their employment policies and practices were helping them to achieve their business goals.

A successful equal opportunity policy will recognise that the immigrants themselves are an important source of data about the issues within the organisation. This can be both a matter of recognising the training needs of the workforce, or sections of it, or at a more profound level it can be about the dominant culture of the organisation. BT had found it necessary to collect ethnic origin data in order to evaluate the success or failure of their policy.

Henkel KGaA (Düsseldorf, Germany)

The representative of employers in Germany explained that they placed great emphasis on training and education provisions which enhanced the skill base of the immigrant population. This also helped them to compete on more equal terms with the majority population. There was a need for continuing systematic, targeted policies in education and training to aid occupational integration.

Rotterdam Regional Police (Netherlands)

A public service provider needs to ensure that they are in a position to pick up the signals

from all sections of the local population. It also needs to be sure that it can correctly interpret those signals. In the case of the Rotterdam Police, this had led them to the conclusion that they had to broaden the basis of their employment so as to encompass a variety of ethnic and linguistic backgrounds.

There had been resistance within the force to some or all parts of this policy. In overcoming that resistance, the decisive factor had been the on-going commitment to the policy from senior management. This was linked to, and under-pinned by, a major investment in training which, at all levels of the organisation, sought to explain, gain understanding and win support for the policy.

Radio and Television of the Flemish Community in Belgium (BRTN)

It was acknowledged by BRTN that without representation of immigrants on their professional staff it was more difficult for them to report effectively on matters of concern or interest to the immigrant communities, or report them to the majority community. A plan of action was devised to recruit staff from these communities. This also resulted in the network being able to present, for the first time, an immigrant person on the screen, reporting both generally and also on a programme targeted at the immigrant audience.

External funding had been used to develop a training programme for TV journalists from the immigrant communities, and this was linked with awareness training for the station's general editorial staff.

A major impetus for the initiative at BRTN had been the shock of the election results in 1991 where extremist parties took between 10 and 25 percent of the votes at a General Election. This had caused many sections of Belgian society, but in particular the media, to reflect on their role and responsibility for these matters.

In shaping their activities, BRTN had benefitted from the advice from other broadcasting concerns which had gone through similar experiences.

Sigma Coatings (Netherlands)

When faced with major technological change, Sigma had found it to be more cost-

effective to retrain and *upskill* its existing shopfloor workers than to look afresh in the labour market.

As a significant proportion of their workforce was from non-Dutch speaking immigrants, it was found that language, numeracy and other training were necessary to equip these workers to operate the new computer-based machinery. However, this approach also revealed a high level of similar training needs among ethnic Dutch workers so they too benefitted from the programme.

The key to the success of the initiative had been leadership from management, consultation with the workforce and an accurate assessment of training needs. The training needs of the workforce was now established as a matter which was kept under continuous review within the firm.

Brewing and Catering Union (RBF) (Danemark)

The representative from the RBF trade union in Denmark suggested that, based on their experience, the climate and attitudes towards immigrants can change very quickly in times of recession. This is particularly so if there is an absence of clear political leadership and if the media, at times, seem only to be interested in exaggerating and over-focusing on what otherwise would be regarded as trivial matters.

Against such a background, RBF believed that trade unions might be one of the few institutions which could play a positive role, seeking to provide material assistance to the minorities, as well as applying pressure for change.

Inter-Cultural meeting centre - European Training and Cooperation Institute (CICR-IFEC) (Dunkirk, France)

In the Dunkirk area of France, CICR had conducted a small, local research project. It indicated that, on average, people of non-French origin had much smaller personal networks on which to draw when job-seeking. The evidence suggested that, in general, their *relational networks* might contain only half the number of indigenous French people. However, in certain sectors of the economy e.g. office cleaning, immigrants also have relational networks which can make finding a job a speedier process.

While accepting that one could not generalise from such a small database, CICR's experience nonetheless seemed to indicate that people of non-French origin generally had to attend significantly more job interviews than people from metropolitan France before winning an appointment. It was suggested that part of the explanation for this lay in the candidates of non-French origin having insufficient experience, knowledge or skills in how to deal with hostile or biased lines of questioning at job interviews.

The consequence of this pattern of exclusions produced in some unsuccessful candidates the belief that their race or ethnicity was partly, or wholly, responsible for their failure. This led to a feeling of exclusion from broader French society, a loss of confidence, negativity and an increasing unwillingness to risk repeated humiliation by making further job applications. In certain instances, it was suggested that this feeling of exclusion might result in anti-social behaviour.

Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU)

The TGWU pointed out that the European Union's citizenship requirements create anomalies for a number of legal residents who still retain the nationality of third countries. This can lead to real problems for people who, for their work, might be required to move frequently between different European countries.

The TGWU had found that trade unionists often needed assistance in understanding and furthering equal opportunity questions. Therefore, the TGWU had given a high priority to the education and training of its own members, both lay officers and full-time officials.

The union had created specific structures to deal with the lack of representation of immigrant members, so as to enable those with direct experience of the problems to take part in articulating them and finding solutions. They had also successfully pressed for this approach to be adopted by the umbrella body for all British trade unions, the TUC.

Equal opportunities has become a standard part of the negotiating activity of the union with all employers. They have had many successes e.g. Ford, Rover, public service. One of the results of their negotiations had been the establishment of joint machinery at national and local level to monitor or advance equalities issues.

German Trades Union Confederation (DGB) (Germany)

The German trade union federation, the DGB, saw from the very beginning the importance of establishing for immigrant workers exactly the same terms, conditions and wages as German workers.

A major aim of the DGB was to recruit immigrant workers into trade unions and to encourage some to become trade union officials. Over the years, several hundred immigrant workers had been elected or appointed to positions within the trade union movement and to works councils. This had only happened because they had been able to attract support from their German fellow-workers.

The DGB lays particular emphasis on the issues to be confronted within the context of the creation of a single market in the EU. The DGB does not believe it is desirable to have two sets of rules in a common Europe. Therefore, the DGB supports the proposition that the nationals of third countries who are legal residents should have the same rights with regard to freedom of movement and political activities as nationals of EU Member States.

Temporary Employment Agency (Ecco SA) (France)

The representative of ECCO suggested that the questions being considered at the thematic meeting had become harder to resolve because of broader societal changes and because of changes in the structure of industry and commerce. The old ways of qualifying for work were becoming irrelevant but not everyone was keeping up with these. Increasingly, it was becoming important to *individualise* the assessment of a person's training needs and employment potential.

Smaller working units, utilising more flexible working practices, were leading firms towards a more participative management style. This places a greater emphasis on the importance of social skills in gaining or remaining in work. However, many younger people from the minorities seemed to have difficulty in embracing the established values of French society and its broader social codes. This compounded the problem.

In the experience of ECCO, employers used certain codes to give an idea of the kind of employee they were looking for e.g. *BBR* or *Bon Breton*. This could have discriminatory

consequences, even if that was not the intention. The law could be used to reinforce better methods of personnel recruitment and selection.

However, the experience of ECCO in France suggested that if one persevered with an employer it was possible to break down their negative stereotypes of immigrants, to break through their code, and to get them accepted into the company on the basis of their personal qualities and skills.

ECCO thought that a person's ethnic background might be only one of several factors which could influence their opportunities in the labour market. These factors had a cumulative effect. However, the speaker doubted if it was either accurate or necessary to suggest that the ethnic factor was any more or less important than any other personal characteristics.

Doubts were expressed about the wisdom of creating special structures or categories which might identify a person's ethnic origin.

Swedish Trade Council and the Regional Employment Training Board (Sweden)

The Swedish project recognised the competitive advantage which could be gained for a country's industries and commercial enterprises by utilising the linguistic and other specific knowledge of foreign markets that immigrants brought with them.

Having established for themselves the particular competencies and skills of the highly qualified immigrants, the Swedish County Employment Group facilitated supplementary training to equip them to move into a working environment in Swedish firms.

The firms who participate in the scheme, particularly the smaller and medium-sized Swedish companies, thus have an opportunity to seek to develop new markets for their products overseas.

Conclusions

It was acknowledged that there were important differences in terminology in this field. These reflected the different histories and practices of the Member States. However, it

was accepted that, within a framework of upholding democratic values, there was a considerable consensus as to the objectives of policy.

There was widespread agreement that there was a need for more concrete data to be obtained which described the position of immigrants in the labour market.

Rules about citizenship affected the ability of legally settled residents to move to other countries. While, strictly speaking, this issue was outside the scope of the thematic meeting it was felt particularly by the trade union representatives to be of some importance now, and likely to become more important over time.

It was acknowledged that governments had a role in setting the framework of laws and policy to encourage equal opportunities for immigrants. In particular, the law could be used to reinforce better methods of personnel recruitment and selection.

Governments are able to assist specific initiatives in a range of different ways e.g. through providing subsidies or other forms of material support for training. They can also give a lead by example through their own equal opportunities employment practices. Employers and trade unions need to have clear policies linked to implementation programmes.

The media have a vital role to play in setting a positive tone in reporting on events concerning immigrants and equal opportunity issues generally. It was acknowledged that the media had a duty to report significant events within the community, but equally the manner and frequency of the reporting helped shape attitudes both those of the general public and those of politicians and other key decision-takers.

There was considerable discussion about the method of monitoring used in the UK and the Netherlands. Doubts were expressed about the extent to which such a system could be applied elsewhere at present; however, it was very broadly accepted that there was a need to find effective and accurate measures or indicators for this area of policy.

It was felt to be important to win the support of as broad a cross-section of society as possible for any special measures which might be needed to help immigrants, otherwise there is a risk of creating resentment which, in turn, could exacerbate the problems.

The importance of leadership by senior managers or other key officials within different

organisations was constantly referred to. Education and training was seen as being of particular importance in ensuring that they had a correct appreciation of the issues and of their role providing leadership and support.

Managers would also benefit from education and training which would help them avoid unknowingly perpetuating discrimination through the application of biased criteria.

Moreover, there was a need to acknowledge the positive value to the organisation of a diverse workforce in a diverse society.

In Europe, much experience has been gained through the pursuit of equal opportunity programmes for women and, by analogy, race equality can benefit from similar approaches.

There would be great merit in establishing a system for exchanging information on good practice. This will give positive reinforcement and encouragement to managers trying to advance policies in their own organisations.

Codes of conduct were seen to have a use in relation to implementing solutions to specific problems and removing obstacles to equal opportunities. These too could be circulated through an information exchange system.

Through consultation and other methods, it was important to discover from immigrants themselves what they saw as being the barriers to advancement at work or into work, and to involve them in formulating the solutions. This would help ensure that equal opportunity questions were discussed in a context which suggested that the immigrants were active participants and not passive victims of a system which they did not understand and with which they did not involve themselves.

Unions and management needed to work together to make an equal opportunity policy effective in the workplace, and in particular to tackle harassment.

List of speakers and projects

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