

## INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS AND ETHNIC MINORITIES

### (1) Introduction

The EU officially recognizes immigrants and ethnic minorities as particularly vulnerable to the risks of social exclusion<sup>1</sup>. So they deserve special attention in the designing of social inclusion programmes. The peer reviews, in particular those carried out in the *Czech Republic*, *France* and *Sweden*, gave the opportunity both to analyse the social situations which explain this particular vulnerability (1), and to discuss the policies addressing the specificities of these populations (2)<sup>2</sup>.

### (2) Social situation of ethnic minorities and immigrants

#### (a) The social situations as such

To begin with the **immigrants**, the peer review process confirmed, first of all, the **diversity** of this social category. Beyond the basic social variables (age, gender, education, professional status etc.), other differences to be taken into account are: origin; time passed since their – or their parents' or more distant relatives' – arrival in the country; motives of migration; administrative status, etc. Social problems may vary significantly according to these different variables. Migratory flows, and thereby migrant populations, are also subject to **rapid changes** over time<sup>3</sup>. The main other features of immigration are:

Immigrants, by definition, have experienced one or several **“breaks” in their personal and social pathway** related to their moving from one country to the other. Belongings had to be left at the place of their former residence; social links have to be rebuilt; new housing arrangements have to be found; in many cases, migrations are linked to the starting of a new occupation; eligibility to social protection schemes has to be recovered, in some instances requiring the fulfilment of waiting periods, etc.

Immigrants differ from nationals of the host country in terms of **mother tongue, socialization and cultural background**.

People sharing the same origin and, thereby, the same language and cultural background may maintain social ties between them, or to form more integrated **groups or communities**. They also may seek to settle together, forming local communities in neighbourhoods from where native people tend to withdraw, a process of spatial segregation sometimes named “ghettoisation”<sup>4</sup>.

Within these groups or communities, **women are confronted with particular problems**. They may suffer, on top of the problems related to their migration, inequalities or discriminations conditioned by their culture of origin. Mothers, as an effect of a traditional understanding of their role in the family, have to deal with many of the practical issues related to the migration process. Young girls have to cope with the gap that may exist between the social norms of their community of origin and the standards of the host society<sup>5</sup>.

A particular kind of difference between immigrants and nationals of the host country concerns the **administrative personal status**. Here the considerable differences which also exists between immigrants may be related to their origins (see nowadays, in Europe, the differences existing between the status of nationals of other EU member states, and nationals of countries not belonging to the EU<sup>6</sup>), to the circumstances of their arrival in the country (regularly registered immigrants; illegal immigrants; asylum seekers; recognized refugees), or to their career in the host country (short or long term residence permit; permanent residence status).

The social situation of migrants is conditioned by the existence, among the remaining population, of **negative stereotypes**, which may lead to discriminatory attitudes and practices.

Most of these characteristics also apply to **ethnic minorities**, depending on the historical circumstances of their establishment in a given country<sup>7</sup>.

#### (b) Factors of vulnerability

Some of the characteristics listed are factors of vulnerability as such. Breaks in the personal and social careers may have severe effects, in particular in matters of education and employment (recognition of academic and vocational qualifications), as well as housing<sup>8</sup>. Culturally originated discrimination may isolate women in the host society as well as in their community of origin. Processes of spatial segregation lead to the “vicious circle” of social degradation<sup>9</sup>. Lack of language skills is a huge obstacle on the road to employment<sup>10</sup>. This is obviously also the case for the lack of residence permit, which makes it hard for people to obtain support when necessary. This vulnerability, however, relates to the political option of preventing and combating illegal immigration. This is a rather controversial issue, dividing officials of State agencies on the one hand, and representatives of non governmental organisations, on the other hand<sup>11</sup>.

Differences in language and cultural background are also likely to contribute to the vulnerability in the sense that they create obstacles to the access to social services and in the establishment of relations with people of other origins.

Immigrant communities have an ambivalent effect on the social vulnerability of individual immigrants. On the one hand, solidarity ties existing within the community may be a source of support – one could speak about the “social capital” of ethnic communities – thus reducing vulnerability. On the other hand, the community may, in some cases, hinder immigrants in accessing people or services appropriate for the treatment of their problems, thus increasing vulnerability.

Negative stereotypes among the host population strongly contribute to the vulnerability of migrants and ethnic minorities. Firstly, they may motivate overt or indirect discriminatory practices causing harm to the newcomers. Secondly, nationals are less likely to take, advocate, or support measures against problems faced by persons of foreign origin, since they are not considered as “one of us”. Consequently, policies providing support to ethnic minorities are less likely to be supported by the electorate, and thus less likely to be adopted by politicians<sup>12</sup>.

### (3) Inclusive measures addressing immigrants and ethnic minorities

#### (a) Specific policies

A holistic effort to tackle problems met by ethnic minorities, mainly Roma<sup>13</sup>, was discussed in the case of the *Czech Republic*. There, People in Need, a non governmental organization, has specialized in the counselling of people facing discriminations. It employs trained field social workers operating in different places of the country, ensuring a long term follow up of individual cases, with a strong empowering orientation, encouraging people concerned to become active players in the handling of their problems. People in Need also carries out lobbying and public relation activities in favour of ethnic minorities.

A comprehensive device addressing newly arrived immigrants was discussed in the case of *France*. There, “platforms” are currently being set up throughout the whole country to receive newly arrived migrants. The reception procedure includes a medical examination and an in-depth “social audit”. Immigrants are also invited to sign a contract with the French State. This contract commits on the one hand, the French State to supply free language and civic education training programmes, and, on the other hand, the immigrant to recognize the basic values of the French society and to attend the training programmes. If necessary, individual social support is provided.

In *Sweden*, acute problems of spatial segregation led the government to set up a programme stimulating local authorities to engage in “local developments agreements” fostering the participation of ethnic minorities resident in the area. In a markedly bottom-up approach, the needs of the local population have to be identified. On this basis, municipalities, with the support of the State, finance equipment and activities likely to improve the quality of life and reduce spatial segregation and its effects.

#### (b) Relevant aspects of policies addressing immigrants and ethnic minorities

The policies presented in the peer reviews served as an opportunity to discuss more in particular several aspects for consideration in the design of other concrete policies addressing immigrants:

To tackle the problems related to migrations at the right moment, i.e. **as soon as possible after a person has moved** to another country. One solution is, like in France, to relate the reception measures to the delivery of the residence permit.

To support the design of **continued follow up**, paralleling the “**pathway**” that corresponds to the integration process of the immigrant<sup>14</sup>. In France, the pathway is traced by the contract. Follow up relies mainly on the entities in charge of the training programmes, and, if included, of the individual social follow up. Another solution has been adopted, for example, in Germany and Sweden, where private social institutions or the municipalities are in charge of the follow up, on the basis of an integration plan previously agreed upon with the individual immigrant.

To develop measures **addressing discriminatory behaviours**. On the one hand, general preventive measures are required<sup>15</sup>. On the other hand, individual situations have to be met, if necessary, by judicial means, while victims of such behaviours have to be supported to undertake legal action<sup>16</sup>.

To ensure **detailed information** about the problems faced by immigrants. The design and implementation of supportive measures require information, given the diversity and complexity of the social situation at stake. The organization of the French ‘platforms’, and in particular the social audit which takes place there, makes it possible to gather comprehensive data concerning the people received. However, collecting these data may, in some cases, conflict with the principle of non discrimination, when the identification of a person requires the use of a variable likely to be considered as racially or ethnically discriminating<sup>17</sup>. Moreover, their treatment data has to comply with existing regulation protecting the rights to privacy of the concerned people. Beyond the gathering of relevant information, it is crucial to submit it to **accurate scientific analysis**<sup>18</sup>.

To provide support **orienting people** to the agencies competent to deal with their particular problem. Here we meet a more general problem in the field of social inclusion. European welfare states have developed a high level of complexity. Knowledge and understanding of the different services offered may prove difficult to acquire, notably by newcomers or people with poor capacities of understanding the institutional context<sup>19</sup>. Thus the complexity of the social protection system becomes itself an obstacle to access, to be solved by efficient measures of information.

To **involve a broad scope of actors**, public and private, and to favour as much as possible the cooperation between these actors within a framework of integrated intervention. It is necessary to involve the concerned persons themselves in an empowering way. This is of particular importance in the case of immigrants and people belonging to ethnic minorities, who may lack the experience of their rights as citizens<sup>20</sup>.

### (c) Policy dilemmas

Three policy dilemmas will have to be faced when developing more specific measures based on the concrete problems identified:

The general aim of all measures taken within the framework of inclusion policies is to (re)build social ties between the person concerned and others, i.e. to (re-)include him/her in groups or collectivities. Regarding immigrants and people belonging to ethnic minorities, the dilemma is whether to give priority to the links to the **communities** made out of people of the same origin<sup>21</sup>, or to the links to society in general? Both options have their strengths and weaknesses. Concrete communities are more likely to offer concrete human support. They may act as mediators between their members’ people and the host society<sup>22</sup>. But they also may also isolate them from **society** in general. Moreover, the effectiveness of communities, in certain cases, may be questioned<sup>23</sup>.

On the other hand, to improve the relationship to the host society in general provides the concerned people with tools of more general use. This is what language and civic training courses aim at, and this is why such courses are nowadays advocated at EU level<sup>24</sup>. However, the weak tie established by a common language and some common understanding of basic values may not be sufficient to include, in the real sense of the term, the person concerned in the collectivities that form the host society<sup>25</sup>.

A sensitive question is whether problems faced by a particular category of people have to give rise to measures addressing this category of people **in particular**, or if **general** measures are to be preferred, to which, in practice, this category of people would be eligible in the first place. The first option may favour a better targeted action but may have a stigmatising impact, reinforce social stereotypes, or even trigger hostile reactions among the public. This point relates to another – open – debate: should discriminated people benefit of measures of “positive discrimination”?<sup>26</sup>

An organizational question is whether measures addressing migrants have to be managed at local or at central level. Several EU countries have given priority to the local level. This option, adopted notably in Sweden, is based on the assumption that local authorities are best placed to know the needs of the population, and to efficiently cooperate with private actors based locally. A centralized scheme, like the French platforms, however, favours equality of treatment of migrants and promises a more efficient gathering and management of relevant information. Migrations are large scale processes, which often require responses organized at a large scale as well. It has been noted that differences in the reception procedures between regions may trigger regional migratory flows within a country. Responses to migration have to be designed at national or even European level.

If a conclusion can be drawn from the peer reviews on these last points, it would be that, concerning these three dilemmas, mixed solutions have to be found, creating a balance appropriate to the most pressing social problems met in each country, to its sociological features, and to its political and administrative cultures.

#### (4) Relation to other EU policies

The co-existence of populations of different origins, be it a result of migrations or not, raises various problems, requiring differentiated policy responses from the part of the EU and of the Member States. It is important to maintain an overview of these different policies, in order to improve their global impact, by favouring:

- the cross-fertilization of the different debates to which they give rise;
- the sharing of relevant data and expertise;
- an efficient co-operation between the agencies involved;
- from the part of the concerned people themselves, a better access to all measures on offer.

The peer reviews here summarized offered an occasion to appreciate the relevance of these links between policies. In particular, the case of the French "platforms" highlighted the links between focussed policies of inclusion of particularly vulnerable immigrants, on the one hand, and general policies of reception and integration of immigrants, on the other hand<sup>27</sup>. The case of the field social work carried out in the Czech Republic gave the opportunity to discuss the links between inclusion policies and non-discrimination policies<sup>28</sup>.

Other links worth considering exist in particular between the policies here under discussion and policies in the fields of employment, education, cultural development and civic participation<sup>29</sup>. Other, more specific, EU policies worth a mention here are:

In the broader domain of policies of migration flows management, as well as combat against illegal migration and human trafficking:

family reunification, given the relevance of family ties in the social inclusion processes<sup>30</sup>.

transformation of undeclared work into regular employment, assuming that regular employment is a key factor of social inclusion<sup>31</sup>.

access to residence permit to third nationals who are victims of trafficking in human beings. Agencies offering legal advice to immigrants will have to pay attention to the impact of the EU Directive recently adopted on this issue<sup>32</sup>.

In the broader domain of migration and development:

support to diaspora organizations, as a means for both, strengthening the links to the countries of origins and of empowerment of minorities in their country of stay<sup>33</sup>.

In the broader domain of social security coordination:

extension of the EU coordination regulations to nationals of third countries<sup>34</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> See the *Joint Report on Social Inclusion (2004)*, which sets among the priorities of social inclusion policies “reducing levels of poverty and increasing labour market participation of immigrants and ethnic minorities”.

<sup>2</sup> Immigration and ethnic minorities were discussed in the following contexts: in the **Czech Republic**, field social work addressing ethnic minorities, notably Roma communities (see the *discussion paper* and the *minutes*); in **France**, the reception and integration of newly arrived migrants (see the *discussion paper*, the *synthesis report*, as well as *documents* later issued by the French authorities based on the peer review); in **Sweden**, the promotion of local development agreements as a tool to combat spatial segregation, in particular of ethnic minorities (see the *discussion paper* and the *synthesis report*). Moreover, immigrants were identified as a main target group in the **Netherlands**, where new tools of social activation are experimented (see the *discussion paper* and the *synthesis report*). In Denmark, old migrants were mentioned, as particularly at risk of homelessness (see the *discussion paper*), and in Austria, young migrants, as being in need of special orientation in educational matters (see the *discussion paper* and the *synthesis report*).

<sup>3</sup> See, among many examples, the differences between immigration from Africa and from Eastern Europe in Portugal (*comment paper in the France peer review*), or the increasing number of refugees in *Sweden*.

<sup>4</sup> The process of spatial segregation is discussed in the Synthesis Report Sweden (*Lukkarinen, 2004b, p. 11 f.*)

- <sup>5</sup> The problems face by young female immigrants have particular incidence in matters of education and transition to working life, as is has been noted by several participants in the Austria peer review. See *Von Bothmer, 2004a, p. 25* and *Heckl, 2004, p. 10, 17*.
- <sup>6</sup> The legal status of non-nationals in EU Member States, both of EU nationals, and of third country nationals, has recently given rise to EU Directives worth being considered in the discussion of the situation of foreigners across Europe. For a short introduction and links to the original texts, see the website of the Directorate-General of Justice and Home Affairs on *Directive 2004/58/EC* of 29 April 2004 (EU Citizens) [[http://europa.eu.int/comm/justice\\_home/fsj/citizenship/movement/fsj\\_citizenship\\_movement\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/justice_home/fsj/citizenship/movement/fsj_citizenship_movement_en.htm)] and on third country nationals *Directive 2003/109/EC* of 25 November [[http://europa.eu.int/comm/justice\\_home/fsj/immigration/fsj\\_immigration\\_intro\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/justice_home/fsj/immigration/fsj_immigration_intro_en.htm) (Section “Long-term EU resident status”) ]
- <sup>7</sup> Actually, the existence of ethnic minorities is often linked to – former – migratory processes. See the case of Roma who migrated from Slovakia to regions of the Czech Republic, or, more recently, from Eastern Europe to Spain (see the minutes of the *2005 Czech Republic peer review*, p. 9). See also the case of “Travellers”, for example in Ireland and the United Kingdom, a specific case of domestic migration (minutes of the *2005 Czech Republic peer review*, p. 8, 25)
- <sup>8</sup> Housing appears to be one of the most pressing problems faced by newly arrived immigrants in France (*Guibentif, 2005, p. 24*). Older immigrant workers are among the most vulnerable to the risk of becoming homeless (about the cases of Denmark and France see *Meert, 2005, p.11*). Considering the relevance of this problem, the European Commission ordered a thematic study on *Policy Measures to Ensure Access to Decent Housing for Immigrants*, which results should be issued within the next months (research mentioned in the *Overview* presented at the *EAPN Conference Strengthening the EU Inclusion Strategy* held in April 2005).
- <sup>9</sup> Vicious circle discussed in the case of Sweden (*Lukkarinen, 2004b, p. 12*).
- <sup>10</sup> The impact of insufficient language skills has been discussed in particular in the case of the Netherlands (*Nicaise, Meinema, 2004, pp. 6, 12, 14*).
- <sup>11</sup> See the comments of the Stakeholders (*EAPN, RETIS*) in the French peer review. This point is also emphasized in a recent paper assessing the relevance of the Common Basic Principles adopted by the European Council in November 2004: *European Policy Centre, 2005, p. 8*.
- <sup>12</sup> The problem raised by the political cost of measures addressing ethnic minorities has been emphasized in the Czech Republic peer review (*minutes, p. 6, 11*). Increasing intolerance towards immigrants and its impact on national politics has been pointed out on several occasions in the French peer review (*Guibentif, 2004, p. 2 ; 2005, p. 36-37*)
- <sup>13</sup> Documents issued within the framework of this peer review (Minev, 2005a, 2005b) aptly complement the report *The Situation of Roma in an Enlarged European Union* (European Commission - DG Employment and Social Affairs, 2005)
- <sup>14</sup> The relevance of the concept of “pathways” in the design of inclusion policies has been pointed out in many peer reviews, regarding migrants as well as other vulnerable people (see the *Final Report 2004* issued by the management of the peer reviews).
- <sup>15</sup> See the case of France, where such measures have been taken in co-operation with the French High Audiovisual Council (*Guibentif, 2005, p. 8*). For an overview on projects focussing on the attitudes of the media towards migrants and ethnic minorities, see the Policy Briefs issued by the EQUAL programme on *Reflecting the colours of the world* [[http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/equal/policy-briefs/etg1-reflecting-color-world\\_en.cfm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/equal/policy-briefs/etg1-reflecting-color-world_en.cfm)].
- <sup>16</sup> For a discussion of the relationship between this type of measures and other measures implementing inclusion policies, see *Minev, 2005a, p, 8 ff.*
- <sup>17</sup> This problem was met by researchers in the Czech Republic.
- <sup>18</sup> A need felt in particular in the case of the Czech Republic (*minutes, p. 7, 8, 12, 26*).

- 19 This need for orientation, apart from the need for measures of concrete support, has been emphasized in particular in the *Austria, Czech Republic* and *France* peer reviews.
- 20 This point relates to the discussion of the concept of “capability” put forward by A. Sen and discussed in *Nicaise, 2004, p. 13*. Empowerment is an explicit issue in the *Swedish* and *Czech* policies.
- 21 This relates to the concept of community development work, referred to in particular by *Lukkarinen, 2004a*, p. 7, 9.
- 22 Community mediation is a tool developed by several projects supported by the Community Action Programme to Combat Discrimination (more on this programme in the relevant *endnote* of the present concise paper). For an example, see a *Cultural Mediation Project* [<http://www.accessireland.ie/culturalmediationp.html>] set up in Ireland.
- 23 So the question has been raised to what extent it makes sense to speak about a Roma community, likely to serve as an effective ground for policy measures (*2005 Czech Republic peer review, minutes, pp. 9, 25*).
- 24 See the Commission’s *First Annual Report on Migration and Integration* (2004), as well as the detailed recommendations included in the *Handbook on Integration* recently issued by the Commission (*DG Justice, Freedom and Security, 2004*).
- 25 This leads to the question of the relationship between the concepts of “social inclusion” and “social integration”, briefly discussed in *Guibentif, 2004*, last section.
- 26 The stigmatising effect is referred to within the context of the 2004 Austrian peer review, concerning measures of support in the transition to working life (*Von Bothmer, 2004b, p. 21*). Positive discrimination is an issue in the 2005 Czech Republic peer review (*minutes, p. 15, p. 18*).
- 27 See *Guibentif, 2005, p. 11*. On the level of the EU, a comprehensive report was issued 2004 (see the Commission’s *First Annual Report on Migration and Integration* (2004). In the meanwhile, the two most significant measures were: the adoption, on 18 November 2004, by the European Council, of *Common Basic Principles for immigrant integration policy* [[http://europa.eu.int/comm/justice\\_home/funding/doc/council\\_conclusions\\_common\\_basic\\_principles.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/justice_home/funding/doc/council_conclusions_common_basic_principles.pdf)]; the publication a *Handbook on integration for Policy-makers and practitioners*. A public discussion these issues has been launched by the *Green Paper on Economic Migration* (European Commission, 2005a) For a detailed comment on the Common Basic Principles, see European Policy Centre, 2005. On the EU integration policy, see also the information supplied on line by the *European Parliament* [[http://www.europarl.eu.int/comparl/libe/elsj/zoom\\_in/07\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.eu.int/comparl/libe/elsj/zoom_in/07_en.htm)] and the Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee (...) on Immigration, Integration and Employment (*OJ C80, 30 March 2004, pp. 92-102*) [[http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2004/c\\_080/c\\_08020040330en00920102.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2004/c_080/c_08020040330en00920102.pdf)]
- 28 The relationship between these two policies has been discussed in the Thematic Paper produced for the Czech peer review: *Minev, 2005a, p. 8 ff*. A crucial device in EU Anti-discrimination policies are the two relevant directives. For a short introduction and links to the original texts, see the page *Anti-Discrimination & Relations with Civil Society* [[http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/fundamental\\_rights/legis/legln\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/fundamental_rights/legis/legln_en.htm)] on the website of the Directorate-General for Employment and Social Affairs Affairs on Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 (Racial Equality Directive) and Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 (Employment Framework Directive). Among many other initiatives, let us mention the recently launched by the European Commission *For Diversity. Against Discrimination* [<http://www.stop-discrimination.info/>]. On the European Union Anti-Discrimination Policy, see, among other sources, the information made available on-line by the *European Parliament* [[http://www.europarl.eu.int/workingpapers/libe/102/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.eu.int/workingpapers/libe/102/default_en.htm)]
- 29 For a short survey on policies carried out in these domains, see Rudiger / Spencer, 2003. On cultural development, see in particular *Policy Studies Findings – 2*, published within the framework of the Community Action Programme to Combat Social Exclusion. Concerning civi participation, see INBAS (2003).
- 30 The EU adopted recently a directive on this issue. For a short introduction and a link to the original text, see the website of the Directorate-General of Justice and Home Affairs on Directive

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[[http://europa.eu.int/comm/justice\\_home/fsj/immigration/family/fsj\\_immigration\\_family\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/justice_home/fsj/immigration/family/fsj_immigration_family_en.htm)]

- <sup>31</sup> On the relevance of policies of transformation of undeclared work into formal employment within the framework of immigration policies, see the *Annual Report on the development of a common policy on illegal immigration* (...), Commission Staff Working Paper SEC (2004) 1349 of 25 October 2004, point 7. For a short introduction to the EU action in this field, see the newsletter *Social Agenda* 7/2003, p. 12. [[http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/soc\\_agenda\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/soc_agenda_en.html)] See also the report *Undeclared Work in an Enlarged Union*, to be published soon under the auspice of the European Commission. [[http://158.169.134.71/comm/employment\\_social/publications/2005/kean04002\\_de.pdf](http://158.169.134.71/comm/employment_social/publications/2005/kean04002_de.pdf) link currently not operational]
- <sup>32</sup> For a short introduction and links to the original text, see the EU Commission's website on Directive 2004/81/EC of 29 April 2004 [<http://europa.eu.int/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/l33187.htm>]. For a presentation of this measure, see *Annual Report on the development of a common policy on illegal immigration* (...), Commission Staff Working Paper SEC (2004) 1349 of 25 October 2004, point 6.
- <sup>33</sup> On the relevance of diaspora organization for immigration policies, see European Commission, 2005b, p. 6.
- <sup>34</sup> For a short introduction and a link to the original text, see the website of the Directorate-General of Employment and Social Affairs on Regulation 859/2003 of 14 May 2003 [[http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/social\\_security\\_schemes/third\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/social_security_schemes/third_en.htm)]