



Belgium

“Feeding in” and “Feeding out”, and Integrating Immigrants and Ethnic Minorities

A Study of National Policies

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November 2006



On behalf of
European Commission
DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities



Introduction

This report, commissioned by DG Employment and Social Affairs of the European Commission, contains two chapters:

- the first chapter examines how social inclusion policies contribute to the revised Lisbon strategy for growth and employment ('feeding in') and, conversely, to what extent the Lisbon strategy fosters social inclusion ('feeding out');
- the second chapter is a thematic analysis of the situation of immigrants in Belgium in terms of poverty and social exclusion. Integration policies are also discussed from this perspective.

The report forms part of a recurrent assessment exercise. Our previous report (Morissens & Nicaise, 2006) provided an ex-ante assessment of the social inclusion strand of the National Strategy Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion, submitted by the Belgian Government in September 2006. For a contextual analysis of recent trends and challenges, the reader is referred to that report.

Chapter 1 : Linking the Belgian social inclusion strategy to the Lisbon Reform Programme – and vice versa

1. Feeding in analysis

1.1 Background

Prior to the National Reform Programme and the National Strategy Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion, each member state submitted a National Action Plan on social inclusion and a National Action Plan on employment to the Commission. With the new Lisbon Strategy, these NAPs have taken a different format but in terms of content, they still reflect Belgium's commitment to 'an active welfare state'. Moreover they still reflect the main social and employment policies pursued by each member state. Work and social inclusion are in this context often seen as natural allies (Marx 2005). This belief is also reflected in the social inclusion part of the Belgian National Strategy Report where work as a lever for poverty occupies a central place. Consequently, creating more jobs, especially for the most disadvantaged groups and at the same time offering sufficient social safety nets for those who cannot work or are unemployed, remains an important challenge. Another challenge is to provide sufficient incentives for people to work and to avoid that they get trapped into unemployment or dependency on social assistance. It is also here that the link between social inclusion and employment policies is the clearest. Work occupies a central role in the National Strategy Report since it is considered to offer the best protection against social exclusion but this requires also changes and adjustments in the labour market, not in the least to integrate groups that are most disadvantaged in terms of both social inclusion and labour market participation.

The aim of this chapter is to show how both social inclusion objectives and employment policies are intertwined and how they can contribute to the achievement of goals that were set out in the Lisbon strategy. Nevertheless, there remain some problems if the emphasis is too exclusively on 'work' as the key to achieve social inclusion. Having a job is not always sufficient to be protected against poverty; jobs also need to pay a sufficient wage, compared with the poverty threshold as well as social benefits. This is an area of tension, especially for the lowest skilled. High taxes on labour, which make labour

expensive for employers, make this tension even stronger in Belgium. In recent years, lowering the cost of labour was a recurring objective in the Belgian employment policies and it was taken over in the NAPs/Inclusion as well.

Another area of tension is that despite job creation and increased employment levels, Belgium still has high poverty levels among its jobless households. Thus, the creation of new jobs does not resolve the problem of poverty entirely nor does it always benefit the most vulnerable groups.

Jobs for the low-skilled in services do not always offer sufficient quality; the risk is that people employed in these jobs will continue to be at risk for poverty and social exclusion. Here it is important that there is sufficient control on the quality of these jobs, not only in terms of wages but also working hours and the job security that these jobs offer.

There is a growing need for high-skilled people in the knowledge society of today. This is a good evolution in terms of job creation in highly specialised areas but those who lack the necessary skills face a serious risk of becoming more and more excluded in the labour market. What is even more alarming is that there has only been little progress in terms of skill development among the low-skilled (Gallie and Paugam 2002:150).

Besides the group of persons that are able to work but have difficulties entering the labour market, there is also a group that has other problems than labour market problems that prevent them from working. For this group, jobs outside the regular labour market accompanied with sufficient coaching are a worthwhile alternative. Without this type of jobs, their potential would be wasted and their possibilities for social integration reduced as well.

1.2 Governmental feeding in

The National Reform programme is the result of collaboration between different actors, besides the government services responsible for employment, there has been consultation with the social partners. The latter are considered to be important actors with regard to the implementation of the measures to stimulate growth and employment. If the social partners do not back up the proposed measures, implementation would be very difficult, not to say impossible. The in 2005 concluded Generation Pact is a good example of consultation between the different actors involved and the final support from the social partners. It has become a tradition that besides the federal National Reform Programme that covers Belgium with its regions and language communities as a whole, Flanders drafts its own National Reform Plan. A similar exercise was done for employment strategies and policies to combat poverty. This report also served as input for the federal version.

For the social inclusion pillar of the National Strategy Report, there has been close co-operation between the task forces 'actions' and 'indicators'. These task forces are involved in both the preparation and follow-up of the social inclusion pillar in the National Strategy Report. Both the federal and regional levels are represented, as are stakeholders of local administrations, representatives of industry (National Labour Council), academics and associations representing the poor.

For the preparation of the National Reform programme, an editorial staff and a committee that represents the different levels of government were established. The former is responsible for the operationalisation and for the different themes there are different co-ordinators from the ministry of Finance (macro level), the employment ministry (work) and the Federal Planning Bureau (micro level). After a first draft, the political representatives can give feedback and at this point the different ministerial

cabinets are also consulted. In addition to this, inputs from the Federal Council for sustainable development and the Conseil Central de l'Economie was invited as well.

The administration for social integration is consulted for the measures related to employment that are relevant for them. It is also represented in the political committee.

1.3 The feeding in potential of the National Strategy Report on Social Inclusion and Social Protection

The Belgian National Strategy Report on Social Inclusion and Social protection retains three policy objectives:

- offering access to decent and affordable housing through intervention in the rental market;
- combating child poverty;
- activation and diversity (in employment policies).

Are these priorities translated in Belgium's economic and employment policy measures and how can they contribute to more economic growth and jobs? Put differently, do these priorities have a 'feeding in' potential?

To answer this question, we will in the first place examine to what extent these priorities are also reflected in the National Reform Programme.

Among the six tracks that were set out to achieve more jobs and growth in the Belgian National Lisbon Reform Programme 2005-2008 those with the strongest link with social protection and social inclusion are:

- a balanced budget with a long-term plan to reduce the government debt;
- strengthening social security and the multidimensional fight against poverty;
- reforming the labour market and investing in training.

A balanced budget is also an important goal in the National Strategy Report. Among other things, it is necessary to guarantee the sustainability of the social protection system in view of the ageing population. This is also a clear message in the National Reform Programme Progress Report. Reforming the labour market and investing in training are also strategies that can contribute positively to social inclusion and vice versa. Labour market reform was a central topic in the National Reform Programme 2005-2008. This reform is seen as necessary to achieve an overall employment level of 70% by 2010. The priority 'activation and diversity' in the National Strategy Report contains several policy measures that focus on training to upgrade skills and also involve changes in the labour market, so here again there is a linkage between the two reports.

The first policy priority of the National Strategy Report - with regard to housing - is the one where the possibilities for feeding in are more limited. Nevertheless, offering people quality housing at an affordable price is likely to have a positive impact on the health and purchasing power of families and children that are now living in substandard housing.

1.3.1 Activation and Diversity: transferring more persons from disadvantaged groups into work

The policy priority 'activation and diversity' has the most potential to be linked with employment policies and to have a 'feeding in' effect. What is more, many of the measures announced in the National Strategy Report largely correspond to the actions described in the Lisbon National Reform Programme and some of the targets are copied from this programme. It is a clear example of how social policies and employment policies are intertwined.

One of the overall goals of the National Reform Programme is to achieve an 'Inclusive Labour Market in an Inclusive Society'. This is also what is largely envisaged with the priority 'activation and diversity'. This policy priority aims to help more people from the most disadvantaged groups in the labour market into work. The achievement of guideline 19: 'Ensuring inclusive labour markets' is reflected in both reports and the policies described in the Reform Programme are consistent with the objectives in the SI/SP report. Having a job continues to be seen as the best protection against exclusion. This is illustrated by the low poverty risk among those who work (4%) as opposed to inactive people (28%). Consequently, an inclusive labour market is also envisaged by the National Strategy Report.

However, even if work is often successful in lifting people above the poverty threshold, work alone is not always sufficient. Jobs need to pay a sufficient wage and this is often a problem for the poor. They do not always have the skills, social capital or health to acquire the better paid jobs. As a consequence, they are often bound to take up the most insecure and low-paying jobs. Consequently, making work pay policies should be accompanied by other policies that help the weakest groups to upgrade their skills, health, social capital etc.

To improve the social situation of the most marginalised groups in the labour market, measures are taken to increase their employment. In the National Strategy Report, the focus is principally on groups that are furthest away from the labour market. The goal of both activation and diversity policies is to make access to the labour market easier for these groups. If these measures are successful they will positively contribute to the objective of more growth and employment. They will also benefit the social inclusion of these groups by making them less dependent on benefits and by upgrading their skills.

The Progress Report puts a stronger emphasis on measures to keep older workers in the labour market while increasing employment among young people. The promotion of a lifecycle approach to work as envisaged by Guideline 18 is clearly reflected in the National Reform Programme. In this regard, it differs somewhat from the Strategy Report, whose focus is broader. This is not surprising since social exclusion affects other categories than (just) older workers. Nevertheless, some of the measures in the generation pact can have a positive impact on social inclusion as well¹. In terms of increased employment levels among older workers, the Study Commission for Ageing estimated the impact of the Generation Pact by 2030 to be 2.6% for the age cohort 55-64. Overall, the impact is more modest, 0.7% (Progress Report 2006: 19).

Reconciliation of work and family life are addressed in both reports and the proposed policies largely coincide. Parental leave opportunities are further expanded and improved and serious efforts are made to increase the provision of day care. The National Strategy Report also promotes policies that help mothers to combine work and family life - this time, with a view to combat child poverty. The focus here is on eradicating poverty.

¹ The generation pact was discussed in more detail in a previous report (Morissens and Nicaise 2006)

1.3.2 Promoting Diversity: changing attitudes among employers?

Besides activation, diversity is emphasised to raise in particular the employment levels of migrants, disabled people, elderly workers, low skilled workers and women. This objective will be pursued by promoting diversity plans in companies and sensitising the social partners to take up their responsibility in this area are actions that have an influence on the pursued employment policies. The female employment rate in Belgium is still lower (53.8%) than the EU25 average (56.3%) and this despite increases in recent years. To compare, the female employment rate (in 2001 it was 51%). There are important differences between age cohorts. With an employment rate of 73% for the age cohort 25-49, Belgium scores better than the EU25 average for the 25-54 cohort, 68.9%. Low female employment is mainly a problem among the older age cohorts. Note that this group is unlikely to benefit from measures such as day care and parental leave. Insufficient or outdated skills and lack of work experience are the problems experienced by this group. These problems require a different approach than creating more day care places and making day care more flexible. Belgium is going to invest 72.9 million Euro to create 13.000 additional day care places.

It is also important to note that there has been an increase in part-time work among women and that part-time work among women in Belgium is more widespread than the European average 40.4% versus 31.6%. Flanders has the highest share of women in part-time employment (42.1%) and Brussels the lowest (28.3%).

Most of the Belgian measures to increase female employment are strongly focused on lowering barriers to entering the labour market. This is achieved by providing more day care and maternity and parental leave arrangements. The gender employment gap has been decreasing, and with the exception of the Walloon region, the Belgian regions score below the EU25 average. It has to be noted that the gap remains larger for the age cohort 50-64. The gap here is 23.4%; it implies that for the measures aimed at 'active ageing' should be targeted at older women in particular. Nonetheless, the Progress Report notes a faster increase of the female employment rate than the European average. As noted above, the overall figure masks important differences between age cohorts.

	Gender gap in employment (men-women)				
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Flanders.	17,6	16,5	15,7	14,9	14,0
Walloon region	19,1	18,6	16,1	16,3	15,3
Brussels	14,6	12,8	11,7	12,4	14,1
Belgium	17,8	16,9	15,5	15,3	14,5
EU-25	17,0	16,3	15,8	15,2	15,0

Source: FOD Economy, Direction Statistics EAK and Eurostat, Labour Force Survey (LFS)

Specific targets in terms of employment levels are set out in both the National Strategy Report and the Reform programme. The targets are: an employment rate of 70% for the population as a whole (15-64), 60% for the female population (15-64) and 50% for elderly workers (55-64%). For nationals with a non-EU nationality, the goal is to close the employment and unemployment gap with Belgians. This is a very ambitious target, especially since the measures for this group have been intensified only recently. We will discuss these measures and the possible impact on employment in more detail further on.

1.3.3 Fighting discrimination: complementary for a diversity approach

Another strategy to increase the employment level is to combat discrimination. Discrimination is at play in the labour market and affects groups differently. The anti-discrimination measures are in most cases targeted toward women, elderly workers, disabled persons and people with a different ethnic background. In the National Strategy Report, raising awareness among employers (and social partners) is envisaged by promoting diversity. In 2004, 800 companies had diversity plans in place for migrants, elderly workers and disabled persons. Although the first evaluation of diversity plans targeted at migrants (1999-2001) could not unambiguously point to an increased employment level in this group, the impact on attitudes toward migrants was positive.

The National Strategy Report envisages the implementation of more diversity plans across the different regions and communities in Belgium. The Federal administration launched its own diversity plan to increase the number of persons with a different ethnic background among its employees; it wants to set an example with this initiative.

If the earlier described diversity policies are to be successful, the anti-discrimination legislation needs to be observed and clear rules need to be available. Employment agencies and social partners have a role to play both in terms of promoting diversity and in taking actions to combat discrimination.

A diversification of measures to combat discrimination is desirable since the reasons and arguments for not hiring migrants are likely to be very different than arguments for not hiring women, elderly workers or people with a handicap. For this reason, it is a pity that migrants are not singled out as a specific target group in the National Strategy Report.

1.3.4 Activation measures

As several other European countries, Belgium took the path of activation since the late 1990s. Anti-poverty NGOs have repeatedly challenged the validity of this approach especially for those who cannot work or are discriminated against. The most vulnerable groups risk not finding a job and losing benefits. The result would be a situation of labour market and social exclusion. Fortunately, the Belgian National Strategy Report acknowledges that labour market integration is not the solution for everyone and that special measures need to be taken for the group that has other than labour market related problems.

With the Spring Programme in 2000, Belgium wanted to bring people who receive the guaranteed minimum income (GMI) back into work. The law on social integration in 2002 has strengthened the activation dimension. The introduction of the law on social integration has resulted in an increase of the number of social assistance recipients in an activation or employment measure².

The main problem with the use of Article 60 § 7 of the OCMW³ Act is that many of the persons working in this regime, move from social assistance into unemployment and that the transition to the regular labour market was rather limited. Keeping the activated persons in work remains an important challenge. If this can be achieved, it is likely that these measures contribute to economic growth and also offer better prospects for the social inclusion of this group. In this regard it is also important the measures that are taken to involve social assistance recipients in cultural and sports activities. The latter

² For more information about these policies see earlier reports (Nicaise 2005, Nicaise and Morissens 2006)

³ Public centra for social welfare

is a clear indication that the Belgian approach is more holistic than the 'work first' strategies applied in some other countries.

1.3.5 Creating more employment in the social economy

For those furthest away from the labour market, employment in the social economy can offer the work experience needed to move on to the regular labour market. Also for persons with a handicap, the social economy offers the possibility to demonstrate their skills and capacities. In terms of policies targeted at achieving social inclusion, the social economy is seen as an important actor. This is clearly reflected in the Belgian commitment to expand and support social economy initiatives. All regions have committed themselves to support the creation of a new type of social enterprise 'activity co operatives' and a framework for corporate social responsibility was developed as well. In Flanders, the existing jobs in the social insertion economy will be better monitored in terms of quality and support on the work floor. In the Walloon region, the existing jobs in the social economy will be structurally embedded in terms of financing, which should allow for more job creation in this area. Brussels will set up a platform for social economy to support the development of further activities and expand the number of jobs in the proximity services.

The successful system of 'service vouchers' will be further extended and adaptations will be made to make its financing sustainable. The efforts done by the employment agencies to employ unemployed people in this system are evaluated positively.

The above described measures are efforts that help to improve the social inclusion of the weakest groups that on their own or without help would not be able to gain access to the labour market. By employing them in the social economy, they can gain more self-confidence and a work experience. In the longer run, this experience can help them to move on toward a regular job. For those who have too serious problems, employment in the social economy still offers the possibility to learn new things and to interact with others and their potential is not wasted.

1.3.6 Increasing the level of schooling, smooth transition to work and lifelong learning

In initial education, Belgium has set the goal to limit school-drop out to less than 10% by 2010. Lower school drop-out should contribute to higher employment as well as productivity levels. For the individual, higher educational attainment is likely to have a positive effect on the earning potential and thus offers protection against poverty as well.

As regards the transition from school to work, special measures (including alternating education) are targeted at pupils in vocational schools. These schools receive support for the improvement of their infrastructure and equipment. This strategy is part of a broader strategy to reevaluate vocational training and to make it more attractive.

Thus far, the efforts to reduce unqualified school-leaving have proven rather ineffective. The indicators point to a stagnation rather than a decrease of dropout rates since the mid-1990s, which means that much more powerful measures will be needed to curb the trend down in the next four years. Although the sections relating to education in the National Strategy Report suggest that a broader range of strategies will be applied than in the previous NAPs, we think that a more thorough and comprehensive approach is desirable to break the vicious circle of educational disadvantage.

Besides initial education, the continuous upgrading of skills is important. This strategy also fits well in the life cycle approach that is reflected in the Lisbon strategy. In terms of lifelong learning activities, Belgium scores slightly lower than its European counterparts with an overall participation of 8.4% in training or education in 2005. The EU25 average is 10.3%. In Flanders, participation decreased for the first time since 2002 and fell to 9.1% in 2005; compared to 9.8% in 2004 (the objective is to achieve a participation rate of 12.5% by 2010). The Progress Report observes that the increase in participation rates that took place in recent years has slowed down. A more positive trend can be observed among those looking for work (10.7%) and inactive persons (5.4%). There are also regional differences and Brussels has the best results in terms of participation. The ambitious target that one out of two employees should be enrolled in a type of training is still far from being reached. For this purpose, employers are encouraged to invest more in training for their employees. The efforts to boost in-company training are still very fragmented and remain an important challenge for the years to come. Nevertheless, there is a commitment from the employers to invest 10,3 billion Euros in training for their employees. Flanders has committed itself to co-finance some of the training investment by companies, in particular by small and medium sized companies.

Whereas in earlier versions of the NAP/Inclusion, education and life long learning were underdeveloped, these issues received slightly more attention in the National Strategy Report. Despite the ongoing Belgian efforts, there still remains an important gap between the high- and low-skilled in terms of participation in education and training. Closing this gap is one of the targets in the National Strategy Report. The social partners are expected to play a role and both employers and employees receive financial support for their efforts.

Overall, we think that the social inclusion chapter of the National Strategy Report shows some improvement in the field of education and lifelong learning, compared with the previous NAPs. However, in the framework of the knowledge-based society, the role of education and lifelong learning in combating exclusion is at least as important as that of labour market policies. Continuing efforts will be needed to develop a comprehensive and effective strategy in this field and to achieve integrated guidelines 23-24: expanding and improving investment in human capital.

1.4 Measures to integrate migrants as an example of feeding in

A group that can benefit from both measures to stimulate diversity and measures to combat discrimination is the migrant population. These measures are set out in the social inclusion pillar of the National Strategy Report. Their employment levels remain well below the employment levels of Belgians, and whereas their unemployment rates are higher. The target to close the unemployment gap between non-Belgians and Belgians set out in the National Strategy Report remains very ambitious, given that the gap has been increasing in the past two years⁴. Immigrants are (often) discriminated against in the labour market as well (ILO1998, KUL-VUB 2005). A new study (Van Robaeys and Perrin 2006) also shows that poverty is much more widespread among the migrant population. An improvement of their employment situation is likely to benefit their financial situation as well. It is the combined approach of promoting diversity and fighting discrimination that can be fruitful for migrants. If these policy measures are able to enhance a change in attitude, which is also accompanied by an increase in migrants' employment, the activation and diversity approach as set out in the strategic approach will also have been successful in terms of employment.

⁴ In 2004, the difference in unemployment rates between EU nationals and non-EU nationals was 22.4%, in 2006 the difference has risen to 24.0%. The European averages are 9.6% and 9.4%.

Besides a diversity approach, helping migrants to upgrade their skills, and offering them a work experience are measures that are likely to contribute to their employment in the long run.

The absence of specific (social) policies targeted toward migrants, often inspired by the thought that they should assimilate or that their labour market integration would converge to that of natives over time, is maybe part of the reason why their situation today is so worrisome.

2. Feeding out analysis

With feeding out, we refer to the possible impact that strategies from the National Reform programme can have on social cohesion. In the analysis that follows we point to both positive effects but also point to some dangers.

2.1 Making work pay, preserving or creating jobs for the low skilled

The observation that high taxation on labour is a major impediment for the low(est)-skilled has led to reduced employee contributions for those at the bottom of the pay ladder and reimbursable tax credits for low-wage workers. To foster employment of disadvantaged young people, an additional reduction of social security contributions for those with low salaries is introduced. In addition to this, the work bonus will be further extended in 2006. The work bonus provides a degressive reduction of the personal social contributions. The amount of the reduction is increased, as well as the level of salary up to which the bonus can be applied. Consequently, more people can benefit from it.

These measures aim, first of all, to reduce unemployment traps. Another positive effect is a better protection against poverty since the net salary that a person can take home is higher as well. In terms of fighting poverty, these policies are effective - at least, for those who succeed to find jobs. Another approach would be to raise the lowest wages - minimum wages in particular - although this may discourage the demand for low-skilled labour.

Do such measures replace unemployment traps with low-pay traps?

People may avoid moving into better paid jobs for fear of losing their tax credit or access to other services (cheaper medical care, etc.). And employers may lock in their employees in entry-level jobs. There is little evidence to support this hypothesis.

Several studies do not even support the assumption of unemployment traps. Research on the willingness to work and the level of income protection in Europe shows mixed results. In the Scandinavian countries employment levels and the motivation among the unemployed are high despite high benefit levels. Not the level of benefits but active guidance of unemployed people, training, work experience and control seem to be important determinants of welfare-to work transitions (Loedemel et al. 2001). The measures taken by Belgium in recent years, illustrate that the country is following this approach. Besides increased control on job-search behaviour, better guidance is provided, in particular for the young unemployed but also for the weakest categories (migrants, handicapped, etc.).

Looking at the measures announced in the National Strategy Report, we can conclude that Belgium continues its efforts to make work pay: increased net wages of the low-skilled are preferred over lower benefit levels⁵. We also see that in recent years, there has been increased control on job-search

⁵ As is often the case in countries that apply workfare strategies

behaviour among the unemployed. Sanctions were first introduced for unemployed persons under age 30 and are gradually extended to other age groups. The Lisbon Strategy National Reform Programme Progress Report mentions that this measure has increased the outflow from unemployment into employment. More extensive evaluations of this measure are taking place, but the first results show a positive trend.

The increased control on job search behaviour and the sanctions this involves have met reservation both from unions and associations representing the poor. For people in a precarious financial situation, sanctions may have serious implications. Another argument is that insufficient efforts are made to create jobs for the low-skilled and for young people, the group for which the increased control was applied first.

2.2 Jobless households

The poverty rate in jobless households with children is among the highest in Europe, and alarmingly high, 70%. For households without children this is 30%. The EU average for both categories is 68% and 32%. Moreover, empirical evidence shows that rising employment rather benefits the strongest groups. As a result, the polarisation between work-poor and work-rich households becomes stronger (Cantillon, Marx and Van den Bosch, 2002; OECD, 1998). This goes against the implicit assumption of the Lisbon strategy that more employment and growth would automatically result in greater social cohesion. Thus, the question arises whether welfare-to-work measures actually contribute to improving the labour market situation of the groups that are most at risk and whether new measures are required to combat poverty among jobless households. Not only creating jobs but making them accessible to the most vulnerable seems to be the crucial issue here.

For those who cannot work, the issue of the guaranteed minimum income level comes into the picture. In recent years, in terms of adjusting benefits to the average welfare level, Belgium has lagged behind.

In the five previous years, benefit increases have only been gradually introduced despite the fact that the minimum income level is below the European poverty threshold. In a joint manifestation in May 2001 the unions and the voluntary sector demanded a 10% (real) increase of the minimum income guarantee (MIG), among other things. The government put forward a phased increase, beginning with a 4% increase in January 2002 and a further 6% spread over the next years. Until now, the overall real increase has not exceeded 6.2%. The priority to 'making work pay' as well as the tight budget constraints that Belgium faces in order to reduce its public debt help explain this sluggish increase. Efforts to raise net wages of the low paid received priority.

In the mean time, the purchasing power of the poorest households has been particularly badly affected by the above-average rise in rent prices and, most of all, energy prices. Given the higher weight of these entries in the budget expenditure of the lowest income decile, we estimate the impact of those events on their real welfare at -2% since 2001. Hence, the anticipated increase of 10% should actually be revised to 12%. This means that a further 5.8 increase of the MIG would need to take place in order to meet earlier commitments.

In September 2006, the social partners have issued an advice about linking the future increases of all social benefit levels to the welfare evolution, including mechanisms to prevent the unemployment trap. In order to allow for increased benefit levels without having to pushing up the cost of labour, alternative ways to finance the social security are explored. From 2007 onwards, the goal is to peg social benefits to welfare and the announced 10% increase of the minimum income benefit should be achieved by then as well.

3. Conclusion

Measures to increase employment are at the heart of both the National Strategy Report and the National Reform Programme. We observe a strong congruence between the two reports, particularly as concerns measures to increase employment among the groups furthest away from the labour market. Promoting diversity and activation are the main strategies used. Furthermore, measures targeted at older workers and young people have been intensified and occupy an important place in both reports.

The National Reform Programme Progress Report observes that the measures taken to achieve the Lisbon targets are beginning to pay off. Nevertheless, for some groups (migrants in particular) additional action seems necessary. The access of jobless households to active labour market programmes remains problematic as well.

The Implementation Report of the National Reform Programme refers to the National Strategy Report and considers it as complementary with attention directed to issues of social inclusion. The focus in the Reform Programme is more macro-level orientated and also deals with employment policies in a broader sense. The employment measures discussed in the National Strategy Report have a more narrow focus since they primarily focus on measures that can increase the employment levels of the weakest groups.

The Progress Report offers an overview of the progress that has been made in light of the targets set out by the National Reform Programmes. Overall, the picture is positive, although in some areas more efforts need to be made.

Yet, we have identified some challenges that will determine the relative success of the feeding in process:

- making newly created jobs accessible for the groups most at risk of exclusion (jobless households in particular);
- the transfer from activation schemes into more sustainable employment;
- the activation of older female workers;
- the design and implementation of more targeted employment measures for immigrants;
- the development of more comprehensive lifelong learning strategies for the most disadvantaged groups;

In the field of education and lifelong learning, some progress has been made in identifying key measures to meet the Lisbon targets while fostering social inclusion (e.g. reducing school dropout, raising literacy and ICT skills among adults). Yet, the development of a comprehensive 'knowledge-based social inclusion strategy' remains a key challenge. Although indicators point to a rather positive record in terms of unqualified school leaving and adults' participation in further education and training, recent trends are much less satisfactory. Unqualified school-leaving is currently stagnating or indeed rising; and the participation gap between low-skilled and high skilled workers remains large.

Finally, we have noted that growth and employment policies do not automatically result in social inclusion, as a group of jobless households are at risk of being left behind. The 'making work pay' measures may be labelled successful for those who succeeded in finding jobs; it also involves a growing deficit of jobless households. A substantial increase of the minimum income guarantee will be needed to close the income gap between the two groups.

Chapter 2: Integration of Immigrants and Ethnic Minorities in Belgium

1. Introduction: the migrant population in Belgium

At the end of 2004, 870.862 persons with a foreign nationality were residing in Belgium (NIS). This is 8.34% of the total population (10.445.852). Looking at the age structure of the foreign population, we count fewer young and old persons among the foreign population. 48.8% of the foreigners in Belgium were women. Migration from Eastern Europe is more often female. If we define migrants more broadly as persons of foreign origin, the number increases to 1.570.475; which is 15% of the Belgian population.

In terms of age, there has been a trend of an ageing migrant population, especially from Morocco, Turkey and Congo. Overall, the typical migrant is still relatively young and the migrant population contributes to the increase of the population size in Belgium. In terms of household composition, some trends indicate that migrant households are adapting to the Belgian household composition. Among Moroccan households, 30.7% had 6 members in 1991; by 2005, this share had shrunk to 15.9% (NIS/RR in Eggerickx, Bahri and Perrin 2006). Another noteworthy trend is the increase in the number of 'vulnerable' household types, with traditional nuclear families losing importance and an increasing number of single parent families among the Moroccan population. In 1991 there were 3200 single parent families, in 2005 there were already 10.000 single parent households among the Moroccan population in Belgium (Eggerickx, Bahri and Perrin 2006). This demographic change, combined with a weak labour market attachment, can have important consequences for their socio-economic situation and is a clear policy challenge in the years to come.

There is a Flemish-Walloon region divide in terms of immigrant composition. 49% of the immigrants from EU-15 countries live in the Walloon region. They are mainly concentrated in the former industrial cities and Italians make for a large share of them.

Migrants with a non-EU background are more often found in Brussels and Flanders (38%) than in the Walloon region (24%). The majority (51%) of the Moroccan migrants are living in Brussels and its 19 municipalities (Eggerickx, Bahri and Perrin 2006).

Despite the considerable share of migrants in Belgium, most of them (66%) have an EU nationality. Italians make up for the largest EU group, followed by French and Dutch migrants. Turning to the non-EU population, Moroccans, Turks and Congolese are the main migrant groups with a non-EU origin. As a consequence of the easier access to Belgian citizenship since 2000, the number of persons with a non-Belgian nationality has been decreasing. This decrease is mainly a 'statistical' one. In 2000 and 2001, the number of naturalisations peaked, with 61.878 and 62.881 naturalisations respectively. If we define migrants as persons with a foreign origin rather than nationality, they account for 11.4% of the entire population and their number has been steadily increasing. The total number of naturalised migrants is around 700.000. If migrants are defined as persons with a non-Belgian nationality, this entire group (45% of the entire migrant population) would be no longer considered as migrants. However, the Belgian nationality does not protect them from discrimination or exclusion based on skin colour, different family names or different cultural practices. Collecting better information about these different criteria is a challenge for the years to come.

Asylum seekers are not included in the figures mentioned above. Between 1994 and 2004, Belgium has received a total of 226.000 asylum applications.

Besides the migrants identified in the official statistics, there is also a heterogeneous group of illegal migrants. Some of them applied for a residence permit but did not obtain it. They were supposed to leave the country but still remain on Belgian territory. Others have entered the country illegally whereas a third group initially had a working permit but overstayed it. The number of illegal immigrants residing in Belgium was estimated at 87.000 in 2000 (FOD 2006), the highest concentrations are found in the largest Belgian cities: Brussels and Antwerp.

In the Spring of 2006, several manifestations took place to demand a regularisation or other solution for these undocumented people (sans-papiers). These actions received support from the Church, which also opened church buildings to host sans-papiers. These actions took place in the wake of the adaptation of the asylum law, which was voted in July 2006 and includes a number of adjustments, which will be discussed in more detail below. The group of illegal migrants faces serious problems related to issues of social inclusion. They have difficulties finding decent housing and are all too often easy victims for 'rack-renters'. Their access to health care is not always without problems either, despite a legal entitlement to care. This issue will be discussed in more detail in the section 'access to social services and health'.

Emigration is not an issue in Belgium. In 2005, 90.364 persons immigrated and 43.719 persons emigrated.

2. Immigrants in the Belgian Labour Market

This section will describe the situation of migrants in the Belgian labour market and the recent policy developments in this area. Besides a description of the employment and unemployment rates of migrants, the paragraph also discusses the conditions to access the Belgian labour market and policy measures taken with regard to migrants' employment.

2.1. Employment and unemployment among immigrants

For many migrants, and especially those with a non-EU background, employment is seen as an area in which much improvement needs to be made. We observe low participation rates among immigrants in Belgium, especially among those of non-Western origin. The problem with the statistics is that they distinguish between Belgians and foreigners and that they ignore migrants who were naturalised or born in Belgium. Among the foreign population, a large share has an EU-origin: this group has fewer problems in the labour market. The presence of EU institutions in Brussels is also an important factor for the high employment rates among EU nationals in Belgium. Therefore, it is recommended to break down the figures by EU and non-EU origin. Labour market figures for Belgians also hide naturalised migrants and second or third generation migrants born in Belgium. This implies that the statistics cannot tell us much about these groups. More detailed data (by ethnic background) are desirable but this is obviously a sensitive topic.

Unemployment among the non-EU migrant population is higher than among the native and EU population. In 2004, the unemployment rate among Turkish and Moroccan migrants was 45%, compared to 10% among the Belgian population. Compared to 2000, their unemployment situation has slightly worsened (+1% and 3% respectively). Congolese and Algerian migrants are also hit by high unemployment rates, 40% for both groups. The unemployment rate among EU-citizens was 16% (National Employment Office (NEO), in FOD WASO 2006).

The employment gap between persons with a Belgian or EU nationality and those with a non-EU nationality is largest in Belgium: 23.6% in 2004. The EU-15 average is 9.5%.

For migrant women, the employment situation looks even gloomier. Women with a non-EU nationality display higher unemployment rates than both their male and Belgian counterparts. Turkish and Moroccan women have an unemployment rate of 56% compared to 13% for Belgian women.

The lower educational level among non-EU migrants is not a sufficient explanation for their weak employment outcomes. Qualitative studies where job applications were simulated with two actors (where one of them had a different ethnic background) pointed to the existence of discrimination in the labour market (ILO, 1998). A recent study (for Brussels) that did not use actors but real job applicants found that discrimination based on ethnic background took place in 27% of the procedures (KUL-ULB 2005).

Employers also have higher demands toward migrants; for jobs that involve contact with the client, the argument is made that clients prefer workers with a Belgian origin.

It is likely that these discriminatory practices have a strong discouraging effect, not least on young migrants. They can be tempted to think that investing in education is not worthwhile if they are to be discriminated anyway. For this reason, it is important to achieve a change in attitude among Belgian employers. Unions are also important actors in enforcing a stricter compliance with the anti-discrimination law.

2.2. Migrants from the new EU member states

After the EU enlargement in 2004, in line with most of the other EU-15 member states, Belgium opted to limit the access to its labour market for citizens from the new member states during the transition period. Initially, this period was limited to 2 years: it came to an end in 2006. Belgium decided to maintain the transitional measures for 3 more years. Some modifications took place and citizens from the new member states can now be hired for hard-to-fill vacancies.

2.3. Access to the labour market for migrants and asylum seekers

Access to the Belgian labour market is open to EU15 nationals: they do not require a work permit. For other nationalities, the general rule is that immigrants have to apply for a work permit. There are three types of work permit depending on the country of origin.

Asylum seekers make up for a special category. In most European countries, asylum seekers are not allowed to work. Since the procedure to obtain residence often takes a long time, they find themselves in a very difficult situation, also financially. Being allowed to work could be a solution here and a working experience shortly after their arrival could also benefit their integration in the long run. However, there are also problems with this approach, as newly arrived asylum seekers often have very limited language skills. Traumatic experiences may also hamper their employment.

At present, an asylum seeker can be employed in Belgium with a work permit type C if his request for recognition as a refugee is sustained.

2.4. Undocumented workers

It is very difficult to provide an estimate of the number of undocumented migrants that work in Belgium. Nevertheless, this group is likely the most socially excluded and they face a serious risk of exploitation by employers. The NGO ORCA aims to inform this group about their rights, even if they are not working with a formal contract. In the beginning of 2006, the socialist trade union took a case of an illegal worker who had a work accident in 2000 to court. Illegal migrants can join the union for free. The Christian union started a campaign to reach illegal workers; contrary to the socialist trade union (ABVV), illegal workers have to pay contributions in the Christian union. The trade unions acknowledge that reaching the group of illegal workers is difficult and collaborate with organisations that are active in this field. Nevertheless, the exemplary lawsuit is likely to have an influence on employers' behaviour, who become more aware that hiring migrants without a contract is not always beneficial for them.

Another measure that can positively contribute to better observe illegal workers' rights is the increased control in the branches most affected by informal work: restaurants, cleaning, and housekeeping. Controls have been stepped up to combat social fraud. In 2004, 1363 workers of foreign origin were controlled; 333 of them were employed informally. (Federal Coordination Committee for the Fight against Informal work and Social fraud, 2004). It is difficult to estimate the size of the informal labour market and its impact. Whenever informal work is carried out by people with a foreign origin/or nationality residing legally in Belgium, they are likely not to report this type of income in income surveys. Consequently, official poverty rates may overestimate the problem of poverty among these groups. On the other hand, illegal migrants may also work at very low wages and experience severe poverty without being covered by surveys.

2.5. Measures to monitor the anti-discrimination directives

In 2003, Belgium has implemented two European directives with regard to the fight against discrimination. Both at the federal level and at the level of the communities, measures were taken to comply with the EU directives. Only Brussels has not executed an ordinance in this regard, but a previous ordinance (2003) prohibits discrimination.

In practice, the Belgian legislation allows for a very broad interpretation by the judiciary; this way, it deviates from the EU directives. The social inspectorate is allowed to investigate discrimination on the workplace. A policy proposal launched by the Forum of Minorities in Belgium, to treat job applications anonymously for jobs in the public sector and jobs mediated by the public employment offices (in order to prevent discrimination in the selection process) has met a lot of scepticism, including within some levels of government. However, it has at last been adopted. On the other hand, the law allowing for 'practice tests' (a sort of undercover applications to detect discriminatory behaviour among employers) appears not to be followed by the necessary implementation measures.

On the federal level, an action plan to combat discrimination, anti-semitism and xenophobia was launched. With this plan, the federal government aims to fight discrimination more efficiently and to prevent acts of hatred against people with a different cultural background and/or race.

2.6. Measures and actions to promote migrants' employment

The federal government has taken a range of measures to encourage the employment of migrants in collaboration with social partners and the regional employment offices. For employment in the public sector, a 'diversity' campaign was launched in March 2006 to encourage women, persons with a

handicap and persons with a foreign background to apply. Until now, only a very small percentage of the civil servants (0.55% in 2004) have a non-Belgian nationality. Moreover, the majority of those have an EU-nationality. A special unit was created to follow up the results of the 'Diversity Action Plan'. Note that the anonymised job application procedure mentioned above will be applied for all employment selections at the federal administrations.

Companies and organisations providing good examples of an 'equal opportunities' approach will be awarded a 'diversity label'. The federation of Belgian enterprises (FEB-VBO) also launched a call for more diversity in February 2006.

Since 1998, in co-operation with the social partners, Flanders has introduced a special programme to integrate migrants in the labour market when it became clear that their employment problems were different from those of other job seekers. This has resulted in a set of diversity plans in many companies since 1999.

In 2003, VOKA (Network of Flemish Enterprises) launched the 'Job Channel' initiative: this is an employment office that focuses on migrants, older workers and persons with a handicap, and has committed itself to mediate 5000 jobs every year.

Unizo (the organisation of SMEs) launched a brochure about setting up your own business in different languages. This initiative is targeted at the migrant population.

Since April 1 2004, the Flemish 'Integration decree'⁶ has become effective. It would lead us too far to discuss the content of this decree in detail, but the integration programme for newly arrived immigrants includes language training and careers guidance. When a second decree (voted by the Flemish Parliament in Spring 2006) comes into force, the target group will be extended to persons living in Belgium more than 1 year and who are receiving social assistance. EU citizens are exempted from this programme.

The Walloon region has also taken measures to integrate migrants. Based on a decree from 1996, seven integration centers were set up where newly arrived immigrants receive information about different aspects of life in Belgium as well as career guidance.

⁶ Inburgeringsdecreet

3. Education and training

With regard to education, several studies (Groenez et al, 2003, Mahieu 2002) have pointed at a more disadvantageous educational situation for second and third generation children. The OECD's 2003 PISA study shows that the performance gap between native and immigrant students is wider in Belgium than in most other participating countries.. The table below displays average reading scores at age 15 for Belgium, first and second generation pupils in Belgium and its regions.

Average reading scores at age 15			
	Native pupils ⁷	First generation pupils	Second generation pupils
Belgium	523	407	439
Flanders	543	450	440
French Community	494	385	443

Source: OECD 2006 based on PISA 2003

We find that native pupils have the best scores in both Flanders and the French Community. The discrepancy between native and first generation pupils is largest (109 points) in the French Community. What is worrisome is the weaker score of second generation children compared to their first generation counterparts. The former were born in Belgium, hence one would expect that they are more acquainted with the language already, but this has apparently no positive influence on their reading results. In the French Community, the results for second generation immigrants are better than those of the first generation immigrants. Results for mathematics show a similar trend.

In Flanders, the Decree on Equal Educational Opportunities⁸ was implemented in 2003-2004. Its main components include (a) a legal entitlement for parents to enroll their children in the school of their choice and (b) additional funding for schools with a concentration of pupils from socially disadvantaged families. Schools also have the right to give priority to pupils from socio-economic weaker groups, and pupils coming from families in which Flemish is not the home language, is a priority group as well.

To inform parents about this decree, information brochures are available in different languages, French, English, Turkish and Arabic.

The Walloon region also provides language courses for newly arrived migrants. In 2006, the NGO, CIRE⁹ published a guide with practical information about the recognition of foreign diplomas and the application procedure.

⁷ Native pupils are defined as pupils who were born in the country where the test was taken and at least one of their parents as well. First generation pupils are defined as pupils who were not born in the country where the test was taken and neither are their parents. Second generation pupils are pupils born in the country where the test was taken but their parents were born in another country.

⁸ Gelijke Onderwijskansen Decreet (GOK)

⁹ Coördination et Initiatives pour et avec des réfugiés et étrangers

4. Housing and related issues

In 2004, the Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism has set up a new website, www.newintown.be. This website is targeted at newly arrived migrants and provides them with practical information to get started (how to find a house? Is school compulsory for the children? etc.). The website is available in 9 languages¹⁰. 'Reception offices' that help newly arrived migrants with their integration trajectory are another important source of information.

In the Walloon region, 7 reception centres help newly arrived migrants with integration, employment, housing and education. In terms of helping migrants to find a job, the Walloon employment office (FOREM) provides training and education for migrants.

Affordable housing is a problem faced by many low-income families. Moreover, Belgium suffers from a serious shortage of social housing, which results in long waiting lists. A new Flemish housing bill ¹¹ may aggravate the situation for migrants, as it imposes a language requirement on applicants. Candidates for social housing who are unfamiliar with the Flemish language have to participate in language courses. The situation is even more serious for people living illegally in Belgium. The latter are an easy target for 'rack-renters' who rent out low-quality housing.

This is also a problem in Brussels, where 23140 persons are registered on waiting lists for social housing.

5. Access to social services and health care in particular

5.1. Income poverty among migrant households

Studies dealing with the income situation of migrant households have until now been scarce in Belgium. Nevertheless, an extensive study is ongoing. The first results (Van Robbaeys and Perrin, 2006) about income poverty among the immigrant population in Belgium show worrisome results. In 2001, 29.8% of persons from non-EU origin were living below the 60% poverty threshold. For Turkish and Moroccan inhabitants, the poverty rates were even higher: 58.9 and 55.56%. The poverty rate for Belgians was 10.2%.

5.2. Legal status

In July 2006, a new Asylum Law ¹² was voted in Parliament. It involves several changes, including the application procedure for asylum. This procedure was modified and accelerated, and should not take more than one year. During that year, only material aid in the form of food and housing can be received.

The new Law also assigns a protection status to persons who are not recognized as refugees but for whom a return to the country could be dangerous. A special procedure for persons who cannot return due to serious sickness was also introduced.

¹⁰ www.newintown.be

¹¹ Decreet over de Vlaamse Wooncode

¹² Verblijfswet

There are no specific/ permanent criteria for regularisation. The Minister of Home Affairs who has the power to decide on a case-by-case basis. But the law excludes some case, e.g. when the applicant does not dispose of identification documents or when elements used in previous procedures are re-iterated.

With regard to family reunification, which is one of the few avenues of migration left, stricter regulations were introduced:

- the minimum age was raised;
- new conditions were imposed with regard to housing and sickness insurance;
- the residence permit of the family member joining only becomes permanent after 3 years;
- a special procedure was designed for family reunification of non-EU migrants with a temporary residence permit.

The Flemish Center for Minorities¹³ points to remaining lacunae in this law. There is no special status for unaccompanied minors, nor is there any regulation for persons recognised as stateless persons.

5.3. Access to health care

Persons who reside in Belgium illegally have access to medical care based on article 57 of the organic law on public centers for social welfare and the royal decree on the 'right to urgent medical care' of 12/12/1996. Nonetheless, access to medical care for illegal migrants is still considered to be problematic by field organisations¹⁴. The reasons for this are multiple:

- many illegal migrants are not properly *informed* about their rights;
- many of them are also afraid of being reported to the authorities and removed from the territory;
- there is an important administrative burden for the centers, and a big need for a simplification of the procedure ;
- the interpretation of 'urgent'¹⁵ medical care varies across centers and depends on the discretion of social workers;
- not all medication or treatments are reimbursed; illegal migrants often do not know which ones are (not). This results in situations where they cannot pay or do not know whether they will be reimbursed for products or treatments in hospitals.

Besides the above mentioned problems, a recent change in legislation (bill was voted in Parliament on March 30, 2006) allows for the reimbursement of psychiatric aid to illegal migrants and asylum seekers. This is an important step forward, because a considerable number of asylum seekers and their children have experienced traumatic situations. A better and affordable treatment of their mental problems can also improve their opportunities in education and the labour market.

¹³ Vlaams Minderheden Centrum

¹⁴ Medecins sans Frontieres highlighted the situation in a press release in Spring 2006. The organisation has increasingly been treating several illegal migrants at their consultations. The latter illustrates that many illegal migrants do not find the way to the official care available, often as a result of fear to be reported to the authorities and to be expelled.

¹⁵ Urgent does not only refer to more acute situations in which medical care, preventive and general curative interventions are also included.

6. Information, communication and cultural issues

6.1. The right to vote in municipal elections

After long and difficult negotiations, a law that gives non-naturalized migrants the right to participate in municipal elections was finally approved by the Parliament in March 2004. This Law allows them to vote if certain conditions are fulfilled (residing legally in Belgium for at least 5 years, application has to be made and they have to sign a declaration in which they promise to respect the Belgian laws and Constitution as well as the European declaration of Human rights). However, they cannot be electoral candidates.

On October 8 2006, the first municipal elections were held in which non-EU migrants could vote. After a rather modest campaign, (Flemish Center for Minorities had brochures online and also put in place a juridical telephone hotline) the results are modest. Of the migrants who are eligible to vote, a mere 17.000 had registered on the electoral lists by the deadline of July 31 2006. This is 15.7% of the eligible population. There is variation in the number of registered persons across the regions. Flanders scores lowest with 12.6%, followed by Brussels (15.7%) while the Walloon region obtains the best result (21.3%). Looking at the results in different municipalities, the intensity of the campaign had an impact on the participation level. Besides this group of migrants who need to register, migrants who obtained Belgian citizenship are automatically registered to vote since the vote is compulsory in Belgium. In this way, the participation of migrants is larger than what the registration figures suggest.

6.2. Public opinion and migrants

The Eurobarometer Survey in 2000 showed that Belgians were less tolerant toward migrants than their European counterparts. 25% of the Belgians were categorised as intolerant. The success of the right-wing party 'Vlaams Belang' in Flanders confirms this finding.

It is likely that media play a role in the formation of the 'migrant' image. Research on this topic is scarce, but we refer briefly to some of the findings of Devroe and Saeys (2002). Most of the time, migrants are portrayed as a homogeneous group, often in a criminal and negative atmosphere. Another observation was that migrants are not often invited to express themselves in television programmes. Among the persons working in the media, migrants occupy a small share. The Flemish Public Television and Radio (VRT) launched a campaign in 2003 to recruit more persons of foreign origin.

7. Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the profile of the migrant population in Belgium, the problems that they are experiencing and how policies deal with them. Looking at the share of persons with a foreign background or parents with a foreign background, we find a steady increase and migration contributes positively to Belgium's population. Both in terms of labour market participation and income poverty, migrants face enormous disadvantages, with important differences among the different migrant groups. Migrants with an EU- background, who make up for the largest share of migrants in Belgium, have outcomes that are more similar to the outcomes for native Belgians. Moroccan and Turkish immigrants have much more difficulty to enter the labour market. There is some evidence that their lower educational cannot fully explain their employment deficit, and that discrimination contributes to the problem. In recent years, both the Federal Government as well as the Regions and Communities have

become aware of these problems and have taken different actions. Promoting diversity on the workplace, and efforts to combat discrimination effectively have been the main policy responses so far. The social partners are trying to sensitise employers. It is too early to assess the impact of these policies, but they appear to be a (necessary) step in the right direction. Without such policies, there would be a great risk that the younger generations give up their aspirations, inspired by the situation of their parents. If this happens, there would be a huge loss of human capital and the gap between Belgians and migrants would remain. Recent policy measures indicate that there is a strong willingness to monitor the situation better. Better knowledge and more information may also contribute to adjust the existing policies and to develop more targeted policies. Knowledge and information about the problems faced by migrants is still rather limited and, if available, it does not always provide information about subgroups (women, second generation, etc.). This is also reflected in the policies that (maybe too often) see migrants as a homogenous group with too little attention for the variety of needs among different migrant populations. Improving the integration of migrants and fine-tuning of the different policies will remain important challenges in the years to come.

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