

Case Study on Housing

ANTWERP (Belgium)

Author

Sonia Gsir

2007

FINAL VERSION

Centre d'Etudes de l'Ethnicité et des Migrations

Institut des Sciences Humaines et Sociales

University of Liege

7 Bvd du Rectorat, bât. 31, #45

B-4000 Liege

fon +32-4366-31-28

fax +32-4366-47-51

<http://www.cedem.ulg.ac.be>

Director

Dr. Marco Martiniello

Structure

Foreword and Acknowledgements

1. Background information on Belgium

- 1.1. History of migration and composition of migrant populations
- 1.2. General national integration policy

2. Background information on Antwerp and its integration policy

- 2.1. General structural data of Antwerp
- 2.2. History of municipal migration and composition of migrant populations
- 2.3. Municipal integration policy
- 2.4. Inter-city cooperation

3. Housing situation of Antwerp

- 3.1. Housing stock and housing market in general
- 3.2. Housing situation of residents with migration background
- 3.3. Segregation: Spatial concentration of residents with migration background
- 3.4. Accessibility of the housing market system for people with migration background

4. Institutional setting and relevant actors

5. Discourse, concepts and policy concerning housing

- 5.1. Vision, concepts and policy of administration and Local Council on the issue of access to affordable and decent housing, segregation and integration of migrants
- 5.2. Public discourse on housing, segregation and integration of migrants

6. Interventions on housing and integration: measures and projects

- 6.1. Interventions to improve access to affordable and decent housing for migrants
- 6.2. Local policies related to spatial segregation

7. Highlights and Failures: Learning for CLIP

Foreword and Acknowledgements

This report has been realised in the framework of the CLIP (Cities for Local Integration Policies for Migrants), a European network created in spring 2006. It is mainly based on a questionnaire (common reporting scheme) filled out by the *Antwerp Integratiedienst* (Integration Service of the City of Antwerp) and on a city visit. The views expressed in this case-study are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Integration Service.

We would like to thank Mr. Dirk Willems, Mr. Bob Van den Broeck, Mrs Greetje Hermans from the Integration Service of the city of Antwerp, Mr. Roland Syvertsen from the Division of Social Housing of the City of Antwerp for filling out the common reporting scheme. We would also like to thank for their help Mr. Pieter Rotthier from *Sociale Zaken Databank Sociale Planning* (Social Planning Databank of the city of Antwerp) and Mr. Johan Vandenberghe, head of *Huisvesting Antwerpen cvba* (social housing company in Antwerp).

This report is based on information until December 2006.

1 Background information on Belgium

1.1 History of migration and composition of migrant populations

After the Second World War, Belgium signed several bilateral agreements in order to organize the recruitment of migrant workers towards its coal mining sector first and later other sectors. The first was concluded with Italy in 1946, followed by others with Spain and Greece in the 50's, Morocco, Turkey and Tunisia in the 60's and at the beginning of the 70's with Algeria, Yugoslavia and Portugal. Migrants came thus from these countries but also from neighbouring countries like France and the Netherlands. In 1974, like other European countries, the Belgian government decided to stop immigration of workers. However, data on immigration during the following decades show that, in spite of this decision, immigrants still arrived in Belgium. It happened particularly through 6 patterns of migration: mobility of EU citizens, asylum applications, foreign student's mobility, highly skilled worker's migration, irregular migration and not least, family reunion (Gsir, Martiniello and Wets, Belgium report in Niessen J & Y. Schibel (eds.), *EU and US approaches to the management of immigration. Comparative perspectives*, Brussels, MPG, 2003:62-63).

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

Between 1990 and 2004, women represented less than 50% of foreign population whereas they constitute around 51.3% of Belgian population. Nevertheless, the distribution of women among the foreigners varies, for example, with higher rate among Greek population (58% women) and the lowest 42.6% in the Algerian population. Regarding the age distribution among foreigners, people between 25 and 50 are great in number (Direction générale Emploi et marché du travail, *L'Immigration en Belgique. Effectifs, mouvements et marché du travail. Rapport 2006*. Bruxelles, Service public fédéral Emploi, travail et concertation sociale, 2006).

1.2 General national integration policy

The federated entities (Regions and Communities) of Belgium are in charge of most issues linked to integration (education, health, housing and partly employment). Flanders and Wallonia have developed their own approach of integration of migrants. Flanders developed multicultural policies inspired by the Dutch model, whereas Wallonia has been influenced by the French Republican model of assimilation.

From the 80's, the Flemish government encouraged the involvement of migrants' associations in integration policy. And in 1996, it passed a decree defining a policy for ethnic-cultural minorities. This minorities policy is threefold: (1) emancipation of the so-called 'allochtones' (legal foreign residents), (2) integration of newcomers and, (3) emergency support for irregular migrants. Since 2003, the Flemish government has developed its integration policy for newcomers with the concept of *inburgering* ('citizenisation'). It is made of a compulsory integration programme for all newcomers arriving in Flanders as from April 2004. It includes Dutch and civic courses, and job orientation. Furthermore, since 2004, Flanders has a minister for citizenisation who tries to shift the minorities' policy towards a diversity policy.

Instead of a proper integration policy, the Walloon government has opted for general anti-exclusion policies. In the mid 90's, it passed a decree on integration without however defining precisely the concept. The task was entrusted to six regional integration centres that were recognized by the decree. Later, the Walloon government adopted measures linked to cultural diversity such as in education a decree about "positive discrimination", in other words a kind of affirmative action.

The Brussels-Capital Region tries to develop its own approach which is largely inspired by the two models developed in the north and the south of the country.

At the federal level, integration has been above all stimulated by access to the Belgian nationality. Consequently, the Belgian nationality code has been modified several times and is currently one of the more liberal in Europe. (Gsir, Martiniello and Wets, Belgium report in Niessen J & Y. Schibel (eds.), *EU and US approaches to the management of immigration. Comparative perspectives*, Brussels, MPG, 2003). Since 2004, another step forward has been taken. The right of vote at local elections has been granted to non-EU nationals. They still do not have the right of enfranchisement. Prior registration on electoral lists is mandatory whereas for Belgians the vote is compulsory. Nevertheless, civic and political rights are henceforth a further mean of integration in Belgium.

2 Background information on Antwerp and its integration policy

2.1 General structural data of Antwerp

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

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

Antwerp's population was 470,044 as of January 2006. On average there are 2,420 inhabitants per square kilometre. The population of Antwerp is fairly old. The population dropped for a long period, but has been rising since 2001 due to positive birth and relocation balances. The latter is mostly due to the influx of new inhabitants from outside the EU. The city has 13% of foreigners of whom 8% are non-EU nationals. In a globalised world international tensions are felt at local level too. That certainly goes for Antwerp, which is home to a large community of Jews and Muslims. In recent years, the city has sometimes been a crystallisation point for a general unease about the multicultural society.

Economically, Antwerp is characterised by a large number of tertiary (service) sector businesses. Compared with other cities, the share of the secondary and quaternary sector is low. Important industries are trade, hospitality industry (hotels, restaurants, etc.) and manufacturing. 46% of all vacancies are for 'problem jobs' – jobs for which there are insufficient qualified or interested candidates. This is higher than the Flemish average (41%). In Flanders there are six jobseekers to every open vacancy. In Antwerp the ratio is one to eight. The number of unemployed jobseekers has been on the rise since 2001 and was 32,676 at the start of 2005. The unemployment rate in Antwerp

is 15.9% or almost twice that of Flanders as a whole. Women are slightly overrepresented in the unemployment figure (53%). 22% of jobseekers are younger than 25 years of age, 44% are 25-39 years of age, 37% are older than 40 years of age. Almost four in ten unemployed persons are from a non-EU member state. 12.3% are Turkish or Moroccan nationals. The unemployment burden is divided unevenly among the neighbourhoods of Antwerp. Most jobseekers on benefit live in Antwerp North. This neighbourhood with Luchtbal, Kiel and Europark have the highest unemployment percentage. The employment ratio is lower in the city centre than on the periphery. Most self-employed persons live in the city centre and in sector South. And, more than 140,000 persons make their living in one way or another from the port. Moreover, almost one in three employed persons living in Antwerp work outside the city.

2.2 History of municipal migration and composition of migrant populations

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

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

However, these percentage does not measure really the ethnic diversity of the city because a large number of inhabitants of foreign origin have taken Belgian nationality in the past few decades. Considering numbers of inhabitants with a migratory background (foreign national or Belgian nationals born with a foreign nationality), they represents 26.6% of Antwerp's population. This percentage has been rising since 2000. Among them, persons of Moroccan origin constitute the largest group, followed by the Dutch, Turks, Poles, nationals of former Yugoslavia, Indians, Congolese, Jews, Russians and Western Europeans. 18.4% of the inhabitants with a migratory background are non-EU. The age pyramid of Belgian nationals in Antwerp is fairly flat at the top,

which indicates that this group contains many older persons. The age pyramid for persons with a migratory background is narrow at the top and broad at the base, the age group 20-24 years. There are relatively few persons under 20 years of age among EU nationals.

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

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

2.3 Municipal integration policy

For some years, the City has the following slogan “*t stad is van iedereen*”, “the city belongs to everyone”. This catchphrase reflects well the municipal integration policy which aims at living together in diversity (“*Samenleven in diversiteit*”). Nevertheless, the recent local elections (October 2006) will give a new local government agreement that could modify the policy described below.

Diversity policy is in any event high on the political agenda.

The mission of the Integration Service, responsible for the diversity policy, is the following: ‘Promoting living in diversity by investing in social cohesion, equal opportunities and active citizenship’. The mission is split into four key concepts: diversity, cohesion, equal opportunities and citizenship, which are also the four poles of Antwerp’s vision on living in diversity: (1) Antwerp is a city where there is room for differences; (2) Antwerp is a city where we live not next to each other but with each other, (3) Antwerp is a city where all inhabitants have the same opportunities and (4) Antwerp is a city with active citizens that assume their responsibilities.

Furthermore, there are five major policy lines which reflects the action headlines of the Integration Service and partners: (1) Investing in cohesion and liveability in the neighbourhoods and contacts between people; (2) City policy in the main spheres (work, housing, learning, leisure and service) eliminates inequalities and is increasingly permeated by an integral diversity strategy; diversity as starting point; (3) Those who live in Antwerp

have to learn Dutch and there is a pragmatic approach to multilingualism; (4) Engaging inhabitants about their responsibilities and linking this to rights and obligations – integration for new inhabitants as the first step to active citizenship; and (5) Governing on behalf of all Antwerp inhabitants and working towards broader social support for living together in diversity.

The experience in the past five years taught the City that the development of a coherent policy on living together in diversity (diversity and equal opportunities on the one hand, integration and language on the other) is a long process. Selected resulting criteria for failure and success are: inclusive approach; clear policy framework and vision; top-down steering and communication; four-sphere policy (diverse workforce, organisational culture, accessible service, communication); permanent measurement, evaluation and adjustment process. The city government considers that it is responsible in this context to guarantee a liveable city with basic rights for everyone. At the same time, there is the awareness of a lack of important tools to pursue a consistent diversity policy (dependence on many higher government bodies). Since 2004, Flanders has had a citizenisation minister (minister Keulen, whose portfolio also includes housing), the first minister whose title bears this competence explicitly. Previously, integration and ethnic-cultural minority policy was more implicitly part of other competences. In his policy document 2004-2009 the minister drops the 'old' formulation 'minorities policy'. The focus has shifted from the minorities approach to living together, managing diversity and promoting common citizenship and equal opportunities. The policy also focuses on a more result-oriented and thus more quantitative approach to citizenisation: less of a target group approach, more living together in diversity, more emphasis on the (responsibilities of the) individual citizen. In other words, the starting points in Antwerp also have resonance at Flemish level.

There is a strong emphasis on citizenisation and individual emancipation, whereas Antwerp above all stresses the importance of diversity (policy) - society/services/organisations are expected to take diversity as a basis for the policy as a whole; the concept of obligations but also rights - and the importance of empowerment and self-organisation - openness to others can only grow from self-confidence; a community can only build bridges when it feels it is itself on solid ground.

Following the Integration Service, more uniformity, demarcation and clarity are needed with respect to the concepts of minorities, citizenisation and diversity policy. Antwerp only uses the term diversity policy. Citizenisation policy and equal opportunities policy etc are parts of a broader diversity policy.

Under the influence among other things of recent events, the national debate is becoming harsher: tackling undocumented migrants, compulsory housing of asylum-seekers in municipalities covered by the OCMW *Openbare Centra voor Maatschappelijk Welzijn* (Public Social Welfare Centre) to which they have been assigned, etc.

2.4 Inter-city cooperation

Antwerp is active in several international and European networks. First, it was member of EUROCITIES, network of major European cities. It provides a platform for its member cities to share knowledge and ideas, to exchange experiences, to analyse common problems and develop innovative solutions, through a wide range of Forums, Working Groups, Projects, activities and



events. EUROCITIES gives cities a voice in Europe, by engaging in dialogue with the European institutions on all aspects of EU legislation, policies and programmes that have an impact on cities and their citizens. In 2001, Antwerp participated in EADE, the Eurocities Antidiscrimination Exchange Project, as one of the eight EADE partner cities. The Integration Service was responsible for Antwerp's contribution. A local working group was set up comprising City and several private partners which authored a text evaluating the local discrimination policy and offering proposals with respect to combating discrimination in public services, institutional change and improving the participation of discriminated groups. Pursuant to Article 13 of the Amsterdam Treaty, the aim was to draw parallels with the fight against discrimination in other fields (age, disability, gender, sexual inclination, religion) and to investigate potential for joint action. There were two transnational exchanges with the delegations of all partner cities. The project produced a good practices guide and website.

Second, the reception agency for newcomers Pina (*Stedelijk onthaalbureau voor nieuwkomers Antwerpen*) which is part of the Integration Service was a member of the EQUAL network in 2002. The mission of the European community initiative EQUAL is closing the gap between supply and demand on urban job markets through transnational partnership and exchange with respect to methods and expertise. At City of Antwerp level, in 2001 a partnership of private organisations and City services submitted a project proposal to improve the employability of unaddressed and inadequately addressed jobseekers on the job market. The development partnership consists of De Acht vzw (integration centre), the OCMW (Public Social Welfare Centre) and the City: Pina, the Employment and Job Market Service, the VDAB *Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding* (Flemish Public Employment Service) and Vitamine W (an employment project). A transnational partnership was set up with actors in Denmark, Finland, Italy and the Netherlands.

Third, the City takes part to the URBACT Programme which aims to develop exchanges of experience between European cities and the actors, which have been involved in the URBAN Programmes. The work of URBACT is primarily focused on cities and their neighbourhoods, which are facing high levels of unemployment, delinquency and poverty, and inadequate levels of public services. Antwerp takes part to the UDIEX-ALEP (Urban Diversity and Inclusion Exchange) a thematic network of 24 EU partners and 3 partners from new member states. It consists of an action-learning programme for the transfer of experience and staff development

Fourth, it is member of the EUKN - European Knowledge Network. EUKN shares knowledge and experience on tackling urban issues. EUKN aims to support policy makers and practitioners across Europe in developing effective urban policy and to promote the vitality of Europe's towns and cities.

Fifth, Antwerp was member of QEC-ERAN, Quartiers en crises: Residents in regeneration network. Qec-ERAN is a network of cities promoting the integrated approach to the revitalisation of disadvantaged areas, with the involvement of politicians, technicians and local residents in that process. It aims at exploring original and innovative ideas of citizens' participation.

Sixth, it was also member of IQ-Net, a network of regional and national partners whose aim is to improve the quality of Structural Funds programming through exchange of experience. The network exchanges experience on aspects of programme development, management and evaluation, bringing together ideas from across the EU and sharing information on good practice.

Finally, Adviesbureau Allochtoon Ondernemen (the advisory agency for entrepreneurs with a migratory background, which is now part of the City's general business service) used to be subsidised by the EU through LIA (Local Integration Action) and ESF (European Social Fund). LIA

was a two-year European policy line programme and a transnational partnership with partners in Utrecht, The Hague, Barcelona, Sheffield, Aarhus and other cities. ESF involved not a transnational but a Flemish partnership. Both programmes focused on citizenisation and enterprise.

3 Housing situation of Antwerp

3.1 Housing stock and housing market in general

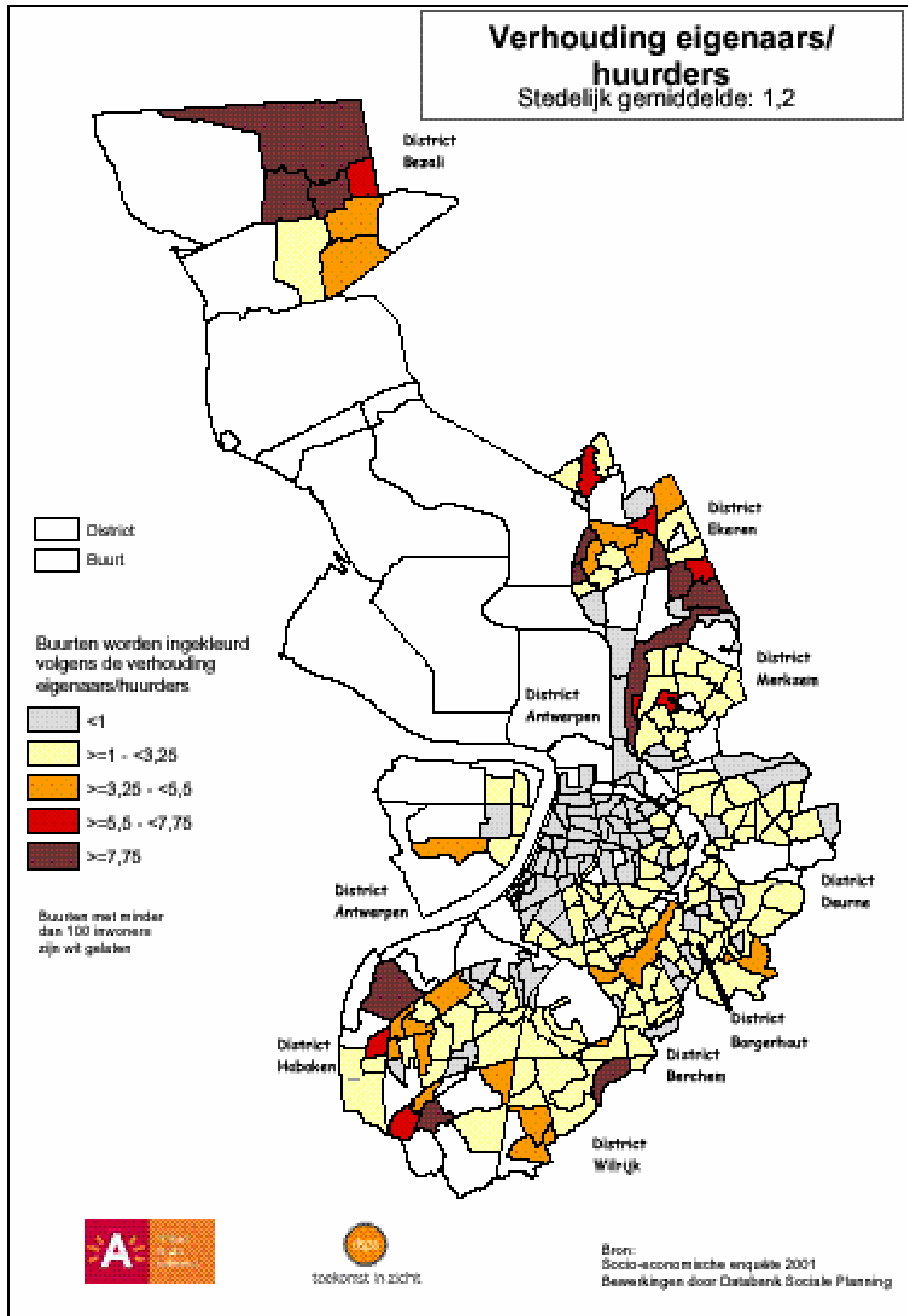
- Housing market segmentation

	Owner	Tenant				Ratio of owners to tenants
		Private	Social or public institution	Private company	Total	
City of Antwerp	104426	56540	20940	9253	86733	1.20

(Source: Housing City Service)

Taking the city territory as a whole, it can be seen that there are more owners than tenants in Antwerp (unreturned surveys not included). Most of the tenants use the private market. A significant minority is housed by a social housing corporation. The ratio of owners to tenants is obviously not the same in all districts, or in all neighbourhoods of a district.

At district level, the ratio of owners to tenants in the district of Antwerp is negative. 41,035 households rent a dwelling in this district, whereas only 27,333 households own a dwelling. The ratio is only just positive in the district of Borgerhout (8,639 owners versus 7,548 tenants). In all the other districts the owner share is even higher. At neighbourhood level, the situation varies greatly depending on the district. It is often said that the current tenants are people who have financial difficulties. The map shows the ratio of owners to tenants (source: *Atlas van kansarme en kansrijke buurten in Antwerpen*, 29 June 2005). The darker colours show higher ratio of owners.



- **Role of the City on the housing market**

According to the socio-economic survey conducted in 2001, there are approximately 216,738 dwellings in Antwerp. The majority of them are flats/apartments and studio flats (58%), while single-family dwellings account for 38%. Owner-occupied dwellings account for approximately 48%, dwellings rented on the private market account for 30% and social housing units account for over 11% of the total. Vacant or uncategorised dwellings make up the remaining share, which is close to 11%.

Antwerp has a large stock of social housing, although it is not spread evenly through the territory. In 1998 there were a total of 23,813 social dwellings in the city. By the end of 2004 this had risen to 26,103. These are studio flats, regular flats/apartments and single-family dwellings with 1-4 bedrooms. Dwellings with 5 bedrooms are fairly exceptional. There are some 2,467 single-family dwellings and 23,636 flats/apartments. Social housing is clearly not distributed evenly. 11.6% of households in Antwerp live in social housing. In some districts that percentage is higher; in the district of Antwerp for instance the figure is 20%. Compared with Flanders (average 6%) Antwerp has a fairly high percentage of social housing units. That explains why politicians are sometimes reticent about increasing this share.

To manage the housing market, the City has several means, the City participates in six social housing companies and holds the majority of the shares of four of them. The other companies are Ideale Woning and ABC, a merger company with Gent and a real cooperative company. There is no cost price for the City. Only through the City fund some companies get the necessary means to set up projects around well-structured consultation. Together with the other local authorities in the province, the City of Antwerp also participates in the operation of the Sociale Bouw- en Kredietmaatschappij Arro Antwerp (Social Construction and Credit Company), a small social housing company specialised in building and selling social housing units (no rentals) and granting social loans.

- **Affordability, quality and overcrowding of housing units**

A square meter of land is quite expensive in Antwerp. It is almost two times more than Flemish average. The purchase of a house in Antwerp is also very expensive. Only in Brussels a house costs more. The last few years, prices in Antwerp have increased more than elsewhere. Average sales price for detached houses and town houses in Antwerp is far above country average. Nevertheless, for purchasing an apartment, Antwerp is one of the cheapest cities. In 2004 an apartment cost 106,476 euros on average against 125,919 euros on Belgian average.

The City does not dispose of any recent information on the occupation of houses. There is no statistical material available. Overcrowding probably exists but this is most likely mainly a problem with people staying illegally in the city and the country. Most of the time government institutions are not aware of overcrowding problems. Sporadically they are informed through complaints.

- **Problematic neighbourhoods**

The way used by the City for identifying neighbourhoods considered to be problematic is by employing clear criteria. The City considered that the advantage of this approach is more objective. This approach was first used in the *Atlas van achtergestelde buurten* (Atlas of underprivileged

neighbourhoods) by Christian Kesteloot *et al.* This Atlas uses data from the 1991 census of population and dwellings. A number of neighbourhoods are described as deprived in the Atlas based on seven indicators: (1) percentage of dwellings without minimal conveniences; (2) percentage of manual employees; (3) percentage of single-person households compared with the total number of households; (4) percentage of inhabitants with Moroccan or Turkish nationality; (5) average taxable income per person; (6) percentage of unemployed persons compared with the total working population and (7) percentage of households with a telephone compared with the total number of households. The three latter are added that were not clearly identified in the factor analysis, but that do have a strong substantive connection to poverty and social exclusion. These indicators were selected from a longer list of 23 variables extracted from a factor analysis, which identified four factors, each measuring one aspect of deprivation according to Kesteloot. The most representative variables were in turn selected as indicators from these four factors.

A similar exercise with a slightly different approach and methodology to the first Atlas was conducted at Antwerp level in 2005 by **the Social Planning Databank**. The aim was to achieve the purest possible measurement of deprivation and privilege. Six criteria were taken for measuring deprivation and privilege: (1) percentage of risk groups in the population (young people, pensioners, ethnic minorities, natives; single-parent families with one child and with two children); (2) job market data (percentage of jobseekers unemployed for more than one year, percentage of employed persons compared with the population of working age); (3) housing data (vacant and neglected, ratio of owners to tenants); (4) education data (percentage of secondary school students following academic courses, (part-time) secondary school students following vocational courses, year repeaters) ; (5) income poverty (average net taxable income, percentage of people on benefit) and (6) illegal tipping data.

Based on these variables a number of City maps was drawn up that clearly show which neighbourhoods are deprived and which are privileged. The maps are included in the *Atlas van kansarme en kansrijke buurten in Antwerpen*.

The fight against deprivation is approached in an integrated manner, with strengthening of the neighbourhood (social cohesion), more neighbourhood watch activities, more housing inspections, more job market guidance, renovation contracts for dwellings, renovation equipment lease opportunities etc.

Various characteristics of the “problematic neighbourhoods” have been highlighted by the socio-economic survey 2001 undertaken by the National Institute for Statistics:

- Around four-fifths of Antwerp households are satisfied with the condition of their dwelling. One in five feels that major or minor repairs are needed to the guttering, the roof, the electrics or interior walls. Exterior walls and windows are given a less positive evaluation: 23.6% of the households are of the opinion that major or minor repairs are needed to the exterior walls and 26.8% of the households are of the opinion that the windows are in need of repair. At neighbourhood level, there are a number of neighbourhoods in which defects to dwellings are observed more often. These neighbourhoods or blocks often have a high deprivation index score. The condition of the dwelling is not always an adequate criterion however. It is striking that Antwerp North and Borgerhout inside the town do not always score as neighbourhoods in which there is a need of repair.



- The Social Planning Databank, using the socio-economic survey, drew up a number of maps showing the situation per item (need of repair to electrics, interior walls, exterior walls, windows, guttering and roof) at neighbourhood level.
- The survey collected also a number of data on the occupied dwellings. For the City of Antwerp, it revealed several features. First, the number of single-family dwellings in Antwerp has risen by 9.9% since the survey in 1991. In 2001, 39.2% of households lived in a single-family dwelling. Of the five large cities (Brussels, Antwerp, Ghent, Charleroi and Liege) only the capital city Brussels performs worse. Second, the number of households living in a large flat complex fell slightly in 1991-2001. 20.9% of households in Antwerp live in a large flat complex. Ghent, Charleroi and Liege score lower. Third, the number of dwellings with no more than two bedrooms surprisingly fell in this period. Dwellings are getting bigger, whereas the number of small dwellings (less than three living spaces) has fallen sharply, from 45,921 to 23,867 units. The total floor space of the living spaces (kitchen, living room, sitting room, dining room, office, playroom, relaxation room, and bedroom) in most dwellings is 85m² or less. Fourth, in Antwerp 11.6% of households live in a dwelling that is less than 20 years old. Major renovation work was carried out in 9.2% of the dwellings in Antwerp in the past decade. Renovation here means a change to the total floor space or the number of rooms. Other renovations like new bathrooms, kitchens, electrics, windows or roof are not included. Fifth, more than half of Antwerp's households are owner-occupiers. And it is relatively cheap to rent a dwelling in Antwerp. Almost 7% of rented dwellings are rented in a furnished state and three in four dwellings in Antwerp have central heating.
- It appears that the inhabitants of Antwerp are relatively satisfied with the aspects cleanness and appearance of the buildings in the vicinity. The average inhabitant of Antwerp is less pleased with air quality or peace and quiet. For these aspects, the number of enthusiastic households is lower than the number of unsatisfied households. The inhabitants of the periphery are typically more satisfied than those that live in the centre of Antwerp. Compared with the results for Belgium as a whole, Flanders or the twelve other Flemish centre cities Antwerp does not score so well.

Finally, according to the City experts, there is not obvious correlation between housing quality generally and neighbourhoods considered as problematic. In 2060 for instance, housing quality is not as bad as everywhere, in fact, there are some areas with high residential potentials (planned zone along the Leien). Peripheral highrise estates in Antwerp often offer much better housing quality than inner city homes of similar price and type. Housing quality or affordability is in general not the main driving force for area based policies. Officially, there is even a shift in policy attention towards areas with potentials -for gentrification, urban development-, rather than problems (whereas in practice of course, problems, but not necessarily housing problems, remain an important trigger for politicians; neighbourhoods that combine both stands the greatest change of receiving attention).

▪ **Mobility within the city**

In Antwerp, the mobility within the city has to be considered regarding also the external moving movements, mainly because the City policy is aimed at getting and keeping two-income households with young children in the city. Yet it appears from the analysis that two groups, i.e. 9-year olds or younger and 30-year olds leave the city to move to the suburbs. 20-year olds move to the city, 30-year olds leave the city centre. Contrary to the other groups, i.e. European citizens and non-

European citizens including Moroccans and Turks, more Belgians leave each year the city than come to the city.

In 2004, Antwerp had a migration surplus, mainly due to two groups: 20-year olds and ethnic minorities. For all nationalities, there is a rather high positive migration balance for 20-year olds. In other words, the city is attractive to young adults. There is also a negative balance for children (9 years or younger) and 30-year olds. But this negative balance is mainly due to Belgian citizens. Young Belgian children and their parents leave the city. For foreign citizens the balance is positive for all ages.

In absolute figures most moving movements (the total number of moving movements analysed per neighbourhood) occur in most neighbourhoods in the city centre, Kiel, Merksem and parts of Deurne. Calculating the average moving movements (in proportion to the population in the beginning of 2004), the rate is very high in the city centre and parts of Antwerp North. On the one hand, the internal moving balance represents the number of arrivals from another neighbourhood in Antwerp and the number of departures to another neighbourhood in Antwerp. Thus it shows which neighbourhoods lose or gain citizens from other neighbourhoods. On the other hand, the external moving balance represents the number of arrivals from outside the city and the number of departures to another place outside Antwerp. It shows the interaction with the areas outside the city. Both are calculated in proportion to the population. Splitting the general migration balance in an internal and external migration balance, the neighbourhoods in areas such as Antwerp North, Oud-Borgerhout, the neighbourhood around the city park, parts of the southern part of Antwerp and the city centre lose citizens to other neighbourhoods in the city. Thus, the outskirts gain citizens. The external balance indicates the opposite: intra muros areas gain citizens, while the neighbourhoods in the outskirts very often lose citizens moving to areas outside the city.

The division according to age shows that the city centre is popular, except among children and 30-year olds, probably the children's parents. These two groups have a positive balance in the outskirts (Ekeren, Merksem and Hoboken). There are less 20-year olds in a number of areas in the outskirts but they move in large numbers to the city centre. For other age groups the patterns are less distinctive. Belgians leave almost every neighbourhood, only the city centre is popular among this group. For other groups there are mainly positive moving balances. It is striking that Moroccans and Turks, often less well-off groups, leave richer neighbourhoods such as Zuid and Zurenborg. For other non-EU citizens there is a negative balance in the areas around the city park and the eastern part of Antwerp North and Oud-Borgerhout.

Examining the migration balance according to nationality shows the following results. First, most of the Antwerp neighbourhoods show a negative moving balance for Belgians. Remarkable losers are Merksem Dokske, Oud-Borgerhout and the social housing areas. The areas which gain Belgian citizens are mainly situated in the historic city centre. Second, except in Bezali most neighbourhoods show a positive migration balance for EU-nationals with a positive migration balance in the poorer areas (social housing neighbourhoods, Antwerp North, Oud-Borgerhout) as well as in a number of richer areas (Zuid, Eilandje and Wilrijk). Third, there is also almost everywhere a positive migration balance for Moroccans and Turks but a negative balance in the richer neighbourhoods Zuid and Zurenborg. In Antwerp North, Oud-Borgerhout, Deurne North, Merksem-Dokske, Hoboken and the social housing areas the number of Moroccans and Turks increases. And finally, for the other non

EU-nationals, it is a diffuse image. In general, for most of the neighbourhoods there is an increase of this group, but in a number of neighbourhoods such as the neighbourhoods around the city park and certain parts of Antwerp North it decreases.

3.2 Housing situation of residents with migration background

▪ Distribution of migrants in the housing sectors

According to the City experts, residents with migration background (particularly former guest workers) used to be restricted to privately rented housing, often of modest or bad quality; in the 1980s quite some of these moved into (often precarious) homeownership. In the 1990s, due to more strict application (reduction of clientelism) of conditions of access in terms of for instance upper limit to household income, more recent immigrants (asylum seekers on allowance) as well as established population of migration background on low income moved into social housing relatively rapidly.

According to the 'Atlas note 2006-2008' (a policy document of the City Integration Service), "Though there are no recent figures, the housing situation of many ethnic minorities is inadequate. They are often in a bad position with respect to comfort and quality. The share of owners is lower among ethnic minorities. Though, they are catching up. The property acquisition knew an increase from the beginning of the 80's, when more and more Turks (and to a lesser degree Moroccans) proceeded to the purchase of often cheap houses of bad quality. In professional literature this group is indicated by the term 'emergency buyers'. They bought their own house to leave a bad rental situation or because they were discriminated on the private rental market. Now, many years later, the housing quality of the emergency buyers is relatively good. Step by step they renovated their houses. The property acquisition by ethnic minorities remains nonetheless smaller than the acquisition of real estate by non-ethnic minorities.

Nowadays newcomers encounter as many problems on the private rental market as the emergency buyers before. They end up on the secondary rental market in deprived neighbourhoods. Asylum seekers, people with a precarious status and people without legal residence documents are most likely to become victims of slum lords. The high number of these population categories found in slums during law enforcement actions proves this theory. 109 out of 150 people that qualified for rehousing belonged to this category. Or two out of three. This is not all. In many cases they cannot claim compulsory rehousing from the authorities. Most of the time they end up in a slum again.

Over the last few decades urban exodus and migration have thoroughly changed the composition of the population and the social web in neighbourhoods of special attention. Those who could afford went to live in the outskirts or outside the city: initially non-ethnic minority groups, later on also the well-off ethnic minority groups. Their place was taken by new immigrants. This creates **transit neighbourhoods** with high percentages of non-Dutch speaking newcomers, high-migrant schools and community problems. This also leads to segregation and intergenerational transfer of backwardness." (Atlas note 2006-2008). According to the City expert, it seems that migrants as a vulnerable group are pushed in the neighbourhoods of the periphery. This mechanism of exclusion is coupled with a process of gentrification observable in some neighbourhoods like Borgerhout.

Furthermore, it has to be mentioned that a large part of ethnic minorities also live in social housing offered in the city. By overemphasising new population groups, cohabitation and face of this form of

housing have strongly changed. It also explains political willingness to do something about Dutch knowledge in this group.

Keeping in mind that in social housing, number of housing units with more than four bedrooms is exceptional, that more apartments are offered than one-family houses and that the decretal criteria on occupation have to be taken into account, it is logical that for large families – though decreasing this still often occurs among some ethnic minorities – it is not easy to apply for social housing. Even on private rental market they encounter problems. Not only because of the price setting for large houses, but also because owners/lessors, according to some jurisprudence, may prefer a family with few children over a family with many. “A family with 5 children will cause more wear and tear to a house than a family with 2 children, willing to pay the same rent for the same house.” With respect hereto according to case law, lessor did not commit an illegal action. (Joke Kusters, “Discriminatie ten opzichte van allochtonen op de private huurmarkt” in *‘Vrijheid en Gelijkheid’*. *De horizontale werking van het gelijkheidsbeginsel en de nieuwe antidiscriminatiewet*, Antwerp, Maklu, 2003).

In his thesis on “*Sociale Huisvesting. Een vergelijkend vierstedenonderzoek rond verdraagzaam samenleven*” (Social Housing. A comparative study on four cities around tolerant cohabitation) former Antwerp mayor and Public Social Welfare Centre president Bob Cools deals with the issue of social housing. It appears that from 1999 to 2004 number of non-ethnic prospective tenants has decreased from 45.72% to 16.50%. In the same period, share of foreigners has increased from 37.9% to 65.72%. In this group the category of new Belgians is not taken into account. New applicants come from new countries of origin, i.e. people from Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Iran ... Nonetheless, this case cannot be extrapolated to the Flemish level. The proportion according to nationality is still “in favour of” the Belgians. 79.74% of the candidates are Belgian. Furthermore it appears from the statistics that compared to most other parts in Flanders Antwerp has a very high number of prospective tenants.

- **Housing-related aspects of some neighbourhoods**

Health

Currently, the City has not enough information to make a precise health environment analysis per neighbourhood. A first start for a general analysis was made as exercise for the draft of a local health policy plan developed by the city and the Public Social Welfare Centre (OCMW). This plan acknowledges the importance of information at neighbourhood level and per target group. For instance, cancer or suicide registration at neighbourhood level can be useful information to develop policy options. However, this information is not yet available. Therefore some interesting investigation results are not always linked to the neighbourhood. There is, probably, a connection between the inferior quality housing of ethnic minority groups in – based on the human poverty index – a problem area.

Regarding health, several elements can be highlighted from various sources. Firstly, from a general poverty survey it appears that the life expectancy of people living in poverty is less. Secondly, the investigation by *Kind & Gezin* (Children and Family Care), the Flemish public institution for the children well-being shows that families with a negative health score can be found in well-defined Antwerp neighbourhoods. The high-risk neighbourhoods are Stuivenberg and Oud-Merksem and to a lesser degree Merksem Heide-Tuinwijk, Dam-Eilandje, Kiel and Hoboken North and West. Thirdly, the Health Survey shows that in Flanders, financial position is decisive in using health care and people with a lower social-economic status have more chronic diseases. Fourthly, Antwerp does not

escape typical metropolitan phenomenon due to increasing poverty: presence of certain serious and contagious diseases. Thus, tuberculosis infection reappeared in statistics in Antwerp, more frequently than in other Flemish cities. For the Flemish Community the incidence figure (number of registrations of tuberculosis per 100,000 inhabitants) is 7.6; for the city of Antwerp it is 24.1. Since 2000, Antwerp has always had the second highest incidence figure compared to other Belgian cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants. According to the Flemish Association of Respiratory Health Care and Tuberculosis Elimination, differences between Antwerp and other large Flemish cities (Ghent and Bruges) are mainly due to population profile, with, in Antwerp, a larger share of high-risk groups. After a serious increase in 2004, however, it seems possible to close 2005 with a more positive result than last year. There are striking differences between the Antwerp postal zones. For postal zones 2060, 2000 and 2030 (district of Antwerp) and Borgerhout, the incidence figure is remarkably higher than the Antwerp average figure. The districts of Antwerp (i.e. postal zones 2018, 2020 and 2050) and Hoboken do not differ much from the Antwerp average figure but also here it is much higher than Flemish average. In Flemish Community, five nationalities among non-nationals were most frequently infected with TB in 2003: Moroccan, Indian, Chinese, Turks and Pakistani. Certainly with Asian nationalities (except Turkey) there is a clearly higher risk of infection. Among asylum seekers there is also a higher risk. We may assume that people from these high-risk groups also in the city of Antwerp belong to a high-risk group. All these high-risk nationalities are relatively strongly represented in postal zone 2060, except Indians. In postal zones 2020 and 2018, there is also a relatively strong representation of Moroccans and Turks. In Deurne there are relatively more Moroccans; in Berchem there are relatively more Turks. Chinese people mainly live in postal zones 2000 and 2060 and in Wilrijk. Indians mainly live in Wilrijk and postal zone 2018 and Pakistanis mainly in Deurne and Borgerhout and in postal zone 2060. Refugees also live there. They also live mainly in Deurne, Borgerhout and Hoboken and Linkeroever.

Education

Obviously, in deprived neighbourhoods, almost always with a large number of ethnic minorities, more children need special education. In this type of education, divided into sub-types, education is tailor-made to suit the needs of children with certain disabilities. Indeed, there is a larger concentration of special education children in neighbourhoods such as Luchtbal, Antwerp North and Hoboken-Centrum. School retardation occurs when a year has to be repeated or when elementary education is started at a later age. Here too, school retardation is not the same in all neighbourhoods. Antwerp North, Borgerhout extra muros, Luchtbal, Kiel, Antwerp South and Oud-Berchem have a larger concentration.

This clearly shows that the number of general education students (*ASO Algemeen Secundair Onderwijs* – General Secondary Education), focused on general knowledge and higher studies, differs at neighbourhood level. Antwerp North, Borgerhout intra muros and Kiel score badly.

At the level of Vocational Secondary Education (*BSO Beroeps Secundair Onderwijs*) – a practical type of education where a particular job is taught combined with general knowledge – there is another movement. There are more students in vocational education in Antwerp North and Borgerhout intra muros, Deurne North, Luchtbal, Oud-Berchem, Kiel and some neighbourhoods in Hoboken.

Also other information clearly shows differences between the neighbourhoods. The majority of minor non-native newcomers live in Antwerp North. Together with Borgerhout intra muros and Kiel this neighbourhood is also better represented in part-time vocational secondary education (a combination

of part-time school and professional training) and in special secondary education (pupils with disabilities). In these three neighbourhoods, and for instance in Luchtbal, Deurne North and Oud-Berchem, there is more school retardation.

Unemployment

In the *Arbeidsmonitor* (Labour Monitor) the City of Antwerp described each semester job opportunities and unemployment degree in the city. Certain neighbourhoods in Antwerp are hit more by unemployment than others. Problem areas are once again Antwerp North, Luchtbal, Europark (Linkeroever) and Kiel.

3.3 Segregation: Spatial concentration of residents with migration background

The concentration of each population group (Belgian, other EU, non-EU nationals) reveals the districts and neighbourhoods with a higher concentration of foreign nationals. The table below shows that the districts of Borgerhout and Antwerp have a high concentration of foreigners and particularly non-EU nationals. EU nationals, other than Belgians, are mainly concentrated in the district of Antwerp. All other districts score lower than the citywide score. The lowest scores are registered by Berendrecht, Zandvliet and Ekeren whereas Hoboken, Berchem and Deurne have the highest percentage of ethnic minorities.

Tabel 22: Leeftijdspiramide niet EU'ers

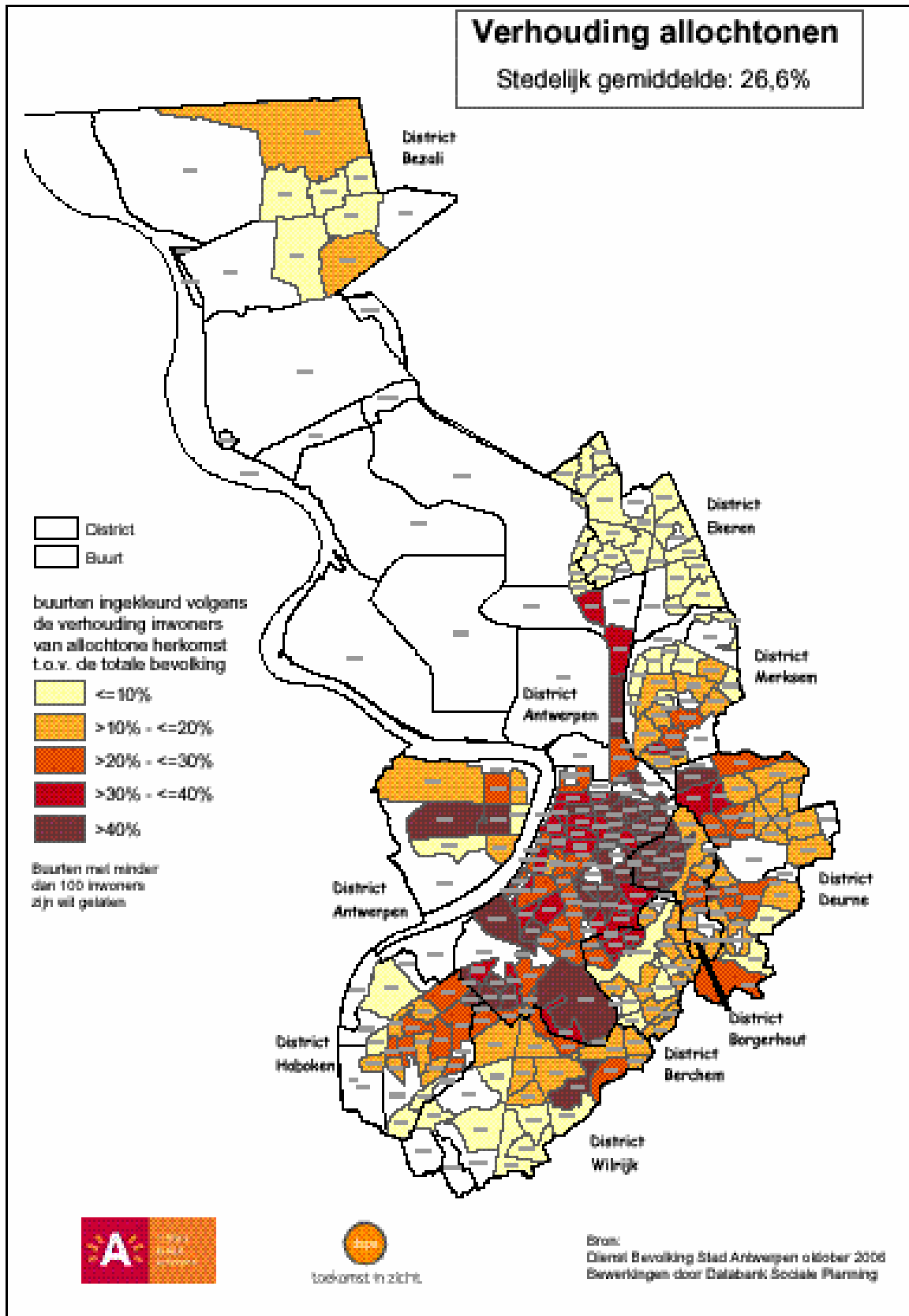
District	Belg		EU		Niet EU		Totaal
	Aantal	%	Aantal	%	Aantal	%	
Stad Antwerpen	404.772	86,7%	24.086	5,2%	37.933	8,1%	466.791
Onbekend			3		2		5
ANTWERPEN	134.306	79,7%	13.394	7,9%	20.798	12,3%	168.498
BERCHEM	35.948	89,4%	1.923	4,8%	2.320	5,8%	40.191
BERENDRECHT	5.756	96,9%	131	2,2%	56	0,9%	5.943
BORGERHOUD	34.526	82,2%	2.094	5,0%	5.404	12,9%	42.024
DEURNE	63.283	90,6%	2.438	3,5%	4.123	5,9%	69.844
EKEREN	21.491	96,3%	553	2,5%	268	1,2%	22.312
HOBOKEN	31.962	92,2%	888	2,6%	1.813	5,2%	34.663
MERKSEM	38.396	93,2%	1.242	3,0%	1.560	3,8%	41.198
WILRIJK	35.631	92,6%	1.264	3,3%	1.573	4,1%	38.468
ZANDVLIET	3.473	95,3%	156	4,3%	16	0,4%	3.645

Bron:
Stad Antwerpen, Districts- en loketwerking, Dienst Statistiek oktober 2006,
Bewerkingen door Stad Antwerpen, Databank Sociale Planning

At neighbourhood level, the various ethnic minority groups are spread as follow. The areas around the Ring have a particularly high percentage of ethnic minorities. They are most highly represented in Antwerp North, Oud-Borgerhout, the Diamond neighbourhood and the social housing neighbourhoods (Kiel, Luchtbal and Europark/Linkeroever), where they account for more than 40% of the population. While the neighbourhoods in Ekeren, Bezali and the south of Wilrijk are home to a low percentage of ethnic minorities (see map below on the repartition).

EU nationals tend to live in the blocks in and around Oude Binnenstad (Old Town) and Het Eilandje. And, those from a non-EU country are mainly domiciled in the nineteenth-century belt and the social housing neighbourhoods. Non-EU nationals make up more than 40% of the population in Antwerp North, most parts of Oud-Borgerhout and Het Kiel.

Non-EU Europeans (including former Warsaw Pact countries and Russia) are most highly concentrated in Antwerp North, the area around the main railway station and the area extending from there towards Oud-Borgerhout and Deurne North. Inhabitants of Moroccan origin are very highly concentrated in Oud-Borgerhout and the area extending from there towards Antwerp North and the blocks around Provinciestraat. The percentage of ethnic Moroccans is also high in Het Kiel, while this group is well represented in Deurne North, Luchtbal, Merksem Dokske and parts of Hoboken. The Turkish community is mainly based in Zuid, Kiel (and the adjacent part of Hoboken), Antwerp North and Oud Berchem. Inhabitants of Asian origin (not including Turkey) are very highly concentrated in the Diamond neighbourhood. These are most probably Israelis and Indians, who are very well represented in the diamond trade. There is a fairly high concentration of Africans (not including Moroccans) in the social housing neighbourhoods Linkeroever and Luchtbal.





High concentrations of ethnic minorities are found in both district and intra-district neighbourhoods. Thus, diversity is concentrated in some parts of the city, but it is expanding into other areas. Generally, the percentage of migrants is highest in the city centre, specifically in the districts Borgerhout and Antwerp (almost 40% of the population). A comparison between 2000 and 2005 shows that, there is also an important percentage of migrants outside the ring. The city centre has thus as many migrants as all neighbourhoods. According to the City experts, residents with migration background are concentrated predominantly within the contours of the 19th century city, although recently, there is some movement to the interbellumdistricts. Newly arriving immigrants still end up in the areas in the 19th century city with the least attractive housing stock, although from the 1960s onwards, the dominant reception area has moved from Antwerpen-Zuid (1960s) to Borgerhout (1970s-1980s) to Antwerp North (1990s-2000s). Recent signs of gentrification in Antwerp North ('2060') signal that this area will equally be succeeded by another in due time. Consequently today, Antwerp North is the area with the greatest diversity (the greatest number of nationalities). Residents from immigrant origin in Borgerhout are mainly of Moroccan descent. The orthodox Jewish neighbourhood between Central Station and the city park expands towards the south along the railway to Berchem. Antwerpen-Zuid has ceased to be an important ethnic neighbourhood, with the exception of a small established Turkish community. Berchem intra muros retains a mixed Turkish-Moroccan population that has stabilised however. Residents of mainly Moroccan descent (less so for Turks) are spreading towards interbellumdistricts, resulting in a lower segregation index than 10 years ago. Overall segregation indexes for foreigners are lower than before.

Upper class immigrants live partly in upper class areas within the city limits (Middelheim park and surroundings for instance have become an 'Indian enclave' in recent years), but most of them (mostly Dutch) live in the suburban green belt on relatively large estates to the northeast of the city (Kalmthout-Kapellen-Brasschaat-Schoten-Schilde). The rest of the suburban area and the main part of the post-war extensions within the administrative borders of Antwerp have a very homogeneous population of Belgian origin.

3.4 Accessibility of the housing market system for people with migration background

Belgium is confronted with a specific housing situation in the sense that housing competences are divided in a particular way. Whereby regions are competent for all social housing related questions as well as for fight against dilapidation, federal government is only in charge of related competences that might influence private housing market, namely competence for VAT percentages, recognition of real estate agents and funding socio-economic initiatives in urban areas as well as for fight against racism and discrimination. The percentage of social dwellings in Belgium is significantly lower than in neighbouring countries. Moreover, Belgium has a high rate of home-owners.

In general, housing market can be divided in two parts: private rented sector and social housing. Social rental offices act as a bridge between both. On private rental market the law of supply and demand applies. In optimal conditions tenants and lessors find each other when they agree on price and contract. Tenants associations will point out that tenants are the weakest party and that they are often forced to accept financial conditions laid down by lessor, and that nowadays dwellings are too expensive. This is certainly the case for socially weak groups such as deprived groups, newcomers

or people without legal residence papers. However, in private rented sector legal rules have to be observed. In case of a dispute, the weak contracting party, i.e. the tenant, has to apply to the judge. Furthermore, it is generally assumed that in private rented sector racist or discriminatory refusals to rent are numerous. Yet, this does not result in the development of extensive case law (difficulty with respect to burden of proof).

According to experts, policy-regulated housing allocation refers mainly to social housing; there are little rules about allocation in private rental or privately owned housing except for anti-discrimination law. Due to pressures from below (established residents) and from the social housing companies, there are now attempts to control access to certain residents of migrant origin. Antwerp social housing companies, organised social housing residents and local politicians take the lead in lobbying for these changes in policy regulation at the Flemish level. For considerations of 'liveability', the Flemish minister of housing wants to restrict access to social housing to those speaking Dutch or willing to learn it. Illegal immigrants have already been denied access to social housing by a circular of the federal minister, and, when the coming asylum law will provide for material relief, including housing in asylum centres or small-scale asylum infrastructures, access will be denied to asylum seekers too.

According to expert opinion, whether and to what extent real estate in the city is affordable in general and for ethnic-minority groups in particular is unknown at the moment. Considering the increasing real estate prices – though at this moment the housing market is cooling, this is partly set off by the higher interest rates asked by banks – and the weak social-economic position of (part of the) immigrant population, it is not unlikely to assume that large part of this population lacks the financial means to buy a house. They can only turn to the private or social housing rental market.

Immigrants with the financial means to buy a house usually choose affordable houses. Unfortunately “affordable” often means “inferior” quality. This means extra costs. The absence of insulation or defective insulation leads to higher heating costs. In addition, there is also a tendency to take out loans from bank institutions that ask higher rates. For bank institutions this is their way to anticipate possible payment problems.

The subscription and allocation of a social housing unit is subject to certain rules. For instance, the Social Housing Act stipulates that a prospective tenant has to fall into a certain income bracket that registration of a tenant in the register has to comply with certain rules and that, at the moment of the execution of the agreement; tenant may not own any real estate.

The number of housing related complaints received by the Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism never exceeds 10% of the total of complaints. Nevertheless, it should be underlined that housing related discrimination suffers from high levels of underreporting. People looking for a new dwelling and being confronted with some form of discrimination will probably continue looking for other possibilities rather than reporting the discrimination to (semi-) official instances. It is only the most flagrant cases that are reported to the Centre.

At the demand of the Housing and Discrimination working group of the Interministerial Conference on Housing, the Centre has issue an overview of the types of complaints most frequently encountered. From this qualitative overview, six types of complaints become apparent. The first relates to cases where the victim feels that s/he is discriminated against without being subjected to clear

discriminatory statements from the owner. These owners are often very familiar with the “freedom of contract”-principle which allows them to select a candidate on the basis of the objective (e.g. solvability) as well as more subjective (e.g. confidence) criteria. Discriminatory practices are then hidden behind these accepted criteria. The second type of complaints relates to victims that are overtly discriminated. The third type concerns refusals after an initial oral (sometimes even written) contract has been concluded. Fourth, a very specific type of discrimination exists whereby the owner allows tenants to sublease a dwelling if and only if the tenant applies certain discriminating criteria. In such cases the tenant finds himself in a very delicate situation because subleasing is not a tenant’s right, it can only be allowed by the owner. Property (rental or buying) advertisements can contain discriminating statements are a fifth type of complaints. Finally, the Centre is also confronted with complaints about deliberate discriminatory practices by real estate agents. Based on mere economic reasoning, real estate agents deliberately proceed to discriminatory practices well covered up in order to please their clients. Putting quantitative figures to this qualitative list of complaints is impossible. Whatever the type of the discrimination, it will always be very difficult to prove discrimination, except in the case of written discriminating statements. This might be another explanation for the high levels of underreporting.

4 Institutional setting and relevant actors

In Flanders, the minority policy is mainly an inclusive matter. In this context the housing policy with respect to ethnic minorities is always included and dealt with as a task for the **City Housing Service** which coordinates the housing policy and has to realise basic housing right. The Housing Service monitors housing quality, gives information and advice and coordinates social housing. The main objectives are preventing vacancies and dilapidation in the city and procure adjusted quality houses, increasing the range of social rental houses and social houses and facilitating access by administrative simplification and increasing the range of affordable, high quality owner occupied properties in the city. The Housing Service consists of the cell Housing Offices (housing advice, etc), the cell Social Housing and the cell Housing Inspection (preventive investigations, transit houses).

Up to now the contribution of the **City Integration Service** has been very limited in the housing debate, unless for the rather special target group: the gypsies, travellers and caravan dwellers. It has played a central role in the management of the travellers sites of the city of Antwerp. The traveller site manager translates the signals given by the occupants into the policy. He is the intermediary and trusted representative and at the same time he monitors the observance of the City regulations. Currently, this management is transferred to Housing Service. Indeed, caravan dwelling can be considered as a special form of social housing. The Integration Service assists the Housing Service in the juridical analysis of rehousing issues. At the request of the Housing Service, the Integration Service finds ethnic minority organisations that want to work around liveability in social housing. Finally, the contribution of the Integration Service in housing policy is mainly ad hoc.

The Housing Service and the Integration Service are both part of the unit Social Affairs. Together with the other services of the unit, they meet weekly for reporting and policy consultation. This meeting assembles coordinators of the various services under direction of unit manager. At a higher level managers of the various City business units meet in the management team. The Housing Service is



under the political responsibility of the competent alderman who sets out the policy lines in conformity with the managerial agreement.

Specifically with regard to senior housing the **Public Social Welfare Centre** (OCMW) is an important player. The OCMW also acts as social lessor. It also disposes of an extensive real estate patrimony and may be considered as a social housing company. At this moment the OCMW lets out more than 2,000 houses and flats to less well-off citizens. By putting these houses on the rental market, the OCMW contributes considerably to the existing supply of social housing. However, there is still a great need for suitable, affordable houses in Antwerp.

The autonomous City company for real estate and City projects, AG Vespa, takes care of the programming of City projects and monitors the City projects supported by public-private cooperation or aimed at a commercial return.

In short, local authorities are the directors of housing policy. Based on the Flemish Housing Act, they dispose of several instruments to improve housing stock. Subsidies comes from local or supra-local means. The latter are often made available by means of projects through the City Fund or the Federal UrbanPolicy

There are six social housing companies in Antwerp. **Huisvesting** is the largest housing company in Flanders. The other five companies are **ABC**, **Perisfeer**, **De Ideale Woning**, **De Goede Woning** and **Onze woning**.

An interesting step between the private rental market and social housing are the **social renting agencies** *sociale verhuurkantoren/Agences Immobilières Sociales*. At present, they are a growing player on housing market. They rent a house on private rental market and sublease it to people with low income. Since 1997 social housing offices are legally embedded in the Flemish Housing Act. These offices serve the interests of tenants and lessors. The former is sure to have a quality home at an affordable price, the latter is sure to receive a fixed (and always paid) rent monthly and in principle, for a nine-year period. However, the rent is lower than what lessor would normally receive for the house. But this price difference is offset by worries reduction for the lessor. Indeed, the payment is guaranteed and small works are carried out and neighbour quarrels are solved by the social rental office. As such social renting agency stands between the owner-lessor and the subleser. Presently, there are three social renting agencies in Antwerp, still handling a limited number of houses. Nevertheless, during the last City council elections (8 October 2006), several political parties proposed to promote these offices.

Few ethnic minority organisations specifically focus on housing. In Flanders, on the one hand, the **Ethnic Minority Forum** (*Minderhedenforum*) is the voice of ethnic-cultural minorities and on the other hand, there are of course organisations defending the interests of tenants. According to the Integration Service there is no organisations specifically focusing on housing problems of ethnic minorities. There are probably a lot of organisations that occasionally have to deal with housing issues. The Ethnic Minority Forum wants to enforce social position of ethnic-cultural minorities in Flanders and improve the relationship between communities. In the past the Ethnic Minority Forum worked around this theme on account of the (still pending) discussion on knowledge of Dutch as a condition for social housing. According to the Forum, the knowledge of Dutch is important but it may not to be linked to social housing. The right to decent housing is a basic right. The Ethnic Minority

Forum strongly opposes any proposal imposing extra conditions with respect to access to social housing. In the past the Forum also questioned caravan site policy.

The **Flemish Minority Centre** (*Vlaams Minderhedencentrum*) is an expert centre specialised in ethnic-minorities questions. It investigates how people from different countries or with different cultural backgrounds can live together and be equal citizens. It advises Flemish government on various aspects of minority policy. With respect to social housing, this was up to now mainly concentrated around caravan dwellers, a group which is by decree considered as an ethnic-cultural minority.

The **Antwerp Social Tenants Platform PASH** (*Platform Antwerpse Sociale Huurders*) was established in September 1999 and coordinates at present 13 residents associations of different social housing complexes in Antwerp. It represents the tenants and wants to contribute to the liveability in their neighbourhood. Residents associations are important too. They give incentives, promote cohesion and make housing culture more pleasant. The Housing Service supports PASH in its dialogue with social housing companies, the local authorities and Flemish government. In 2005 a PASH-A ethnic work group was established within its organisation. That year this working group met 5 times. **RISO's Hoogbouw- Construction** team (*Regionaal instituut voor samenlevingsopbouw – Regional Institut for the construction society*) tries to involve ethnic minority tenants in PASH. The language barrier is a key issue. The Housing Service entered into a few agreements at neighbourhood level with **RISO**. Other important players are **KOSOVA** (*Koepel Sociaal Verhuurkantoren Antwerpen*), the umbrella organisation of the social lettings offices and the **Vlaams Overleg Bewonersbelangen** VOB (Flemish Dialogue of the Tenants' interests), only active in Flanders.

5 Discourse, concepts and policy concerning housing

5.1 Vision, concepts and policy of administration and Local Council on the issue of access to affordable and decent housing, segregation and integration of migrants

In an advice the Council of State explained the application of the right to decent housing as described in the constitution encouraging the government “to make every endeavour to ensure that everyone can live in a house which with respect to safety, quality and size is adjusted to the social and economic situation of the society.” Also the Flemish Housing Act includes such obligation for Flemish government to promote the availability of a good and affordable house, in a decent environment and with enough security. The Act also stipulates a rehousing obligation for occupants of premises that were declared unfit for habitation except for people with a precarious status and people without legal residence documents. In addition, there is a dispute whether for local authorities this obligation implies an obligation to guarantee a certain result or an obligation to perform to the best of one's abilities. In the Aliens Act of 15 December 1980 an extra article was added that considers slum lord practices and multiple renting of the same premises explicitly as an offence.

In his third book over Antwerp, "*The best is still to come*", Patrick Janssens (sp.a- spirit), Antwerp's mayor since July 2003, gives his vision of housing policy in particular in the chapter "the City to live in". First, he considers that "town planning is so important for the future of the city that we can't leave it to chance. This is a plea for authorities that steer more, not for authorities that suffocate everything." (Janssens, P., "*Het beste moet nog komen*", 2006, sp.a.-spirit). Furthermore, Patrick Janssens assesses that "almost as important are the large City development projects which have to make living and working in the city more pleasant. A number of housing projects that are now under construction are for the city as far-reaching as the city extensions in the nineteenth century (...). The city developments of Spoor Noord, Nieuw Zuid, Militair Hospitaal, Eksterlaar in Deurne, Galgenweel in Linkeroever, Neerland in Wilrijk ... create thousands of new houses. (...) A city like Antwerp is by definition an appropriate place for families in every composition possible: classic, young, old, single, living together, blended, hetero and gay, independent, unemployed, white and blue collar workers, blank and coloured, religious and free-thinking, rich and poor, highly skilled and shortly trained. More than before, we have to keep working hard for an affordable and comfortable residence for all these people. Yet the city has to make an extra effort for one target group: young families with two salaries and young children. It is for the future of the city of the utmost importance that we can keep the families of two-income households with young children in the city. Or, even more ambitious, that we can convince these families to come and live in the city." (Idem, p. 37)

"We do not only have to increase the supply of good houses. The City (housing) policy in the next few years has to fulfil a second big ambition: it has to counter the increasing social segregation in the city. In the 50ties and 60ties the gap between owners and people in need for a house was made smaller by the construction of large social housing projects in Hoboken, Linkeroever, Luchtbal, Rozemaai and Kiel. Today these neighbourhoods, much more than in the early years, create a strong concentration of the weakest people in our society. It is just the opposite for instance in the neighbourhood Zuid. By the revaluation today in this neighbourhood there is a large concentration of people with higher salaries, and therefore an elimination of people with less money. We have to break this segregation. We have to strive for a well-balanced population structure in the various neighbourhoods and therefore a varied housing offer." (Idem, pp. 37-38)

"A lot has to be changed in our large social housing blocks. Which adjustments are required? The recipe contains three main ingredients. One: in Antwerp we have to forget about the exclusive attention for social rental houses, and we also have to offer social owner-occupied housing. Two: we have to open our social housing blocks not only for people with the lowest (replacement) income. This would lead to a better mix of the population groups. Three: the social housing companies and the private sector have to cooperate more often." (Idem, p. 43)

"We have to adjust the adjudication rules for social rental housing considerably. The (due) care for people who are financially vulnerable has to be set off against the care for quality housing for these people. The creation of unliveable social ghettos was or is not the task of social housing. Precisely to avoid ghettos we have to attract tenants with an income from labour (and not from social benefits). (..) The housing companies have to decide more and more who can live in their apartments. They have to make sure that especially in their large buildings there is a liveable mix of young and old, working people and unemployed, ethnic and non-ethnic minorities, singles and families with children, poor people and people with a good income (...) For the allocation (of social housing units, note from the editor), objective standards have to be applied. But the (lower) income may no longer be the only decisive criterion." (Idem, p.45)

5.2 Public discourse on housing, segregation and integration of migrants

According to the Integration Service, urban living and disadvantaged/problematical neighbourhoods have definitely been an issue in the media in recent years. In this time a lot of attention has been given – certainly in local media, but also in the national media – to living and coexistence problems in such Antwerp neighbourhoods as Seefhoek (and Antwerp North in general), Het Kiel, Europark /Linkeroever, Hoboken, Deurne North etc. Some of these issues were: (1) slum landlords (with a link to asylum seekers and the problems connected with smaller municipalities that ‘dump’ asylum seekers allocated to them in the city); (2) dilapidation and government campaigns to encourage owners to renovate; (3) social housing, an area in which the media have followed many issues like waiting lists, geographical concentration, access for specific migrant opportunities groups (e.g. proposal of the competent minister to make command of the language a criterion of housing allocations, recent proposal of city management to no longer offer social housing to asylum seekers whose applications are still being processed) and the coexistence problems in housing blocks; and (4) all kinds of nuisance phenomena, with littering and illegal waste dumping at number one and all kinds of coexistence problems (loitering by youths etc).

In general these media reports project a negative image of problematical neighbourhoods – mainly based on objective problem detection, but sometimes also with a somewhat one-sided focus on this side of the problem. The result is a certain degree of stigmatising; the picture that people from outside the city have of these neighbourhoods for instance is more negative than the picture people who live there have. The latter also experience good things in addition to problems. In the past two years in particular the press on life in Antwerp’s problematical neighbourhoods has definitely been more positive, they include for example city renewal projects in these neighbourhoods that are linked to ‘living’ (e.g. new large-scale ‘mixed’ housing projects in various parts of the city); the ‘rolling fund’ used by the autonomous City company for real estate and City projects Antwerp Vespa, which buys up and renovates slum dwellings, selling them off again as high-quality family dwellings, has had a great deal of positive press. The same goes for the new city park Spoor Noord in Antwerp North; and the new élan in some problematical neighbourhoods, e.g. the fact that some of them are attracting more young families again.

Furthermore, the way to report on these problems differs a lot according to the type of media. In Flanders, just like elsewhere in the world, there is a difference in style and tone between the so-called quality newspapers and the tabloids. Some media would love to make a defamatory article about a deprived area. Other media would rather present a well-balanced image, indicating that between this visit and the previous one a lot has changed for the good. The presentation of housing problems in the media is of course very different, depending on whether it is done by local television, local newspapers or tabloids. Or more extensive, with national press attention by written press as well as by television channels. In short, reports are sometimes objective, sometimes biased.

As far as the Integration Service is aware, over the past few years the City has given much more attention to communication policy. It has developed a kind of City marketing by spreading everywhere in the city the white capital letter A, initial of Antwerp and the City slogan *‘t stad is van iedereen*”, “the city belongs to everyone”. One can find the A and the slogan in many places in the city and on all kind of medium, giving a dynamic and positive picture of the city for its own inhabitants and its visitors. Moreover, ‘positive’ reporting about the investments in (urban renewal in the) problematical neighbourhoods is definitely stimulated in the media. For instance, by organizing activities such as

“Your-Neighbourhood-Now”(buurt in zicht). This presents another view on Antwerp neighbourhoods which usually receive a lot of negative attention (eg Antwerp North). The last few years a lot of young families have invested in these neighbourhoods. They have bought a cheap, old house and started renovation works. These occupants are proud of their work. They want to convince outsiders that living in these neighbourhoods can be very pleasant in these nice and affordable houses. Living, neighbourhood life, urban renewal and coexistence are themes that are also given attention in the City’s own communication channels (the City’s newssheet *De Antwerpenaar* and the eponymous television current affairs programme, the City’s website etc).

Antwerp has a sleeping **City Advisory Council for ethno-cultural diversity policy**. The aim is to optimise communication between migrant communities and their organisations on the one hand and Antwerp’s City management on the other. The aim of the City Advisory Council is to strengthen the involvement and participation of migrant communities and their organisations in the City’s ethno-cultural diversity policy. Its tools are the development and expression of recommendations and positions, as well as dialogue with migrant communities.

According to expert opinion of the Integration Service experience teaches that this tool is too restrictive and categorial to guarantee the broad involvement of migrant communities. The representativity of the representatives of the migrant communities is not self-evident, particularly in religious matters. That being said, the Integration Service is now at starting a structural dialogue with Muslim communities.

There are many good contacts through sub-projects; dialogue is blocked however at the level of the categorial Advisory Council. This formula appears to stimulate more of an ‘us and them’ mindset and the polarisation of migrant umbrella organisations, in spite of good bilateral contacts. It seems that effective participation policy requires a more inclusive and pragmatic approach with various mechanisms. The migrant umbrella organisations are funded by Flanders based on the support of the migrant member organisations.

6 Interventions on housing and integration: measures and projects

The City housing policy, just like in all other domains, is inclusively oriented and focused on the improvement of deprived areas by City renewal projects. Financing comes from City generated resources as well as from supra-local funds – for instance from Urban II or the Federal Urban Policy. Considering the social-economic profile of many ethnic minority groups in the city, at least in theory this policy is also favourable for them.

On the one hand the City renewal management takes the initiative, by pursuing an active sites and premises policy, by renovating city parts or creating new city neighbourhoods, by strictly watching dilapidation and slum lords. On the other hand management leaves inhabitants enough space by creating incentives in the form of redevelopment grants. A housing policy aimed at the restriction (or promotion) of segregation and/or integration was only pursued by the City to a limited extent. For

instance, in the administrative agreement 2001-2006, an initial impetus is given to an integrative policy by pleading for more social mix (by spreading the social housing projects), an opinion that goes together with attention for the restriction of social elimination (by establishing social housing projects in new city parts). These initiatives are real, but even more so are the initiatives aimed at keeping two-income households with young children in the city or attracting them to the city.

Moreover, the City has always based its housing policy on general principles: fight against slums and vacancies, against slum lords, premiums to promote house improvement, housing offices for information. Whereas most of these measures are aimed at that part of the housing market that also has lots of ethnic minorities as occupants, a specific policy has never been considered up to now.

The recent events referred to in the explanation (9/11, van Gogh) did not result in a change of policy with respect to these elements. Opinions on the renewal of deprived neighbourhoods date from before, in any case from the beginning of the 90s.

At the regional level, the spatial planning competences include urban development and spatial planning, urban renewal and housing and zoning policy. The Flemish Region in recent years opted for a policy relating to "living in diversity". In its programme 2004-2009, the Flemish government states that Flanders will pursue housing policy "oriented to organising diversity in neighbourhoods in a more liveable way, by combating the departure of those that have improved their social and financial position, and distributing newcomers and existing inhabitants. This can be achieved through: (1) stronger stimulation of home ownership provided the housing corporations agree and there is sufficient social housing to allow some social housing stock to be sold; (2) a more focused and harder policy on slum landlords; (3) a better spread of social housing across and within all towns, cities and municipalities; (4) more space for the social housing corporations to allocate social housing based on objective criteria in order to achieve an appropriate and good mix in social housing complexes" (Flemish government programme, pp. 46-47).

This principle is worked out in annual policy documents. In the latest (2006-2007), Marino Keulen, Flemish minister of domestic government, cities policy, living and integration, refers to a number of coming amendments to Flemish Housing Code Decree of 15 July 1997, to make "optimal liveability in the neighbourhoods, the promotion of the social integration of inhabitants and the promotion of equal opportunities for everyone special objectives of Flemish housing policy." As such the aim of Flemish housing policy is to "contribute to achieving optimal development opportunities for everyone."

Furthermore, the rule that potential social housing tenants must show a willingness to learn Dutch is an important one that has been discussed a lot in the media. "Knowledge of Dutch plays an essential role in mutual understanding and positive interaction between individuals. It is examined whether the involvement of residents of social housing projects can be stimulated and supported. This also benefits liveability and coexistence in the social housing neighbourhoods. I want to promote giving Dutch lessons in the social housing complexes so that the largest number of tenants is able to learn Dutch. I applaud the offer of residents groups to assist these lessons, which are oriented to both language and social integration, and I will study it further" (Idem).

The willingness entails "to be registered, as well as meeting the existing conditions with respect to the possession of real estate and household income, a person must also show a willingness to learn Dutch." (Ibidem) The potential tenant also falling within the scope of application of the Citizenisation Decree must also meet those conditions. In this manner the minister wishes to "encourage every potential tenant to show a willingness to learn Dutch as soon as she registers for social housing and

so prior to the allocation of the dwelling.” The above willingness will be checked again at the time the social dwelling is allocated. The willingness to learn Dutch and the willingness to citizenise where the Citizenisation Decree is applicable are incumbent on the tenant (Ibidem).

This policy measure has caused a political commotion. Not so much at Flemish regional level as federal level, chiefly among French-speaking politicians. They view this measure as an illegal means of fight against gallicizing the Brussels periphery. After parliamentary questions and debates in the federal parliament and the parliament of the Brussels Capital region, the Council of State has said that this measure “does not entail any infringement of the equality principle or of the constitutional right of residency or of the European Union rules on free movement of employees and people and that the draft does not entail any lowering of the degree of protection that the social constitutional laws guarantee” (press release of the office of minister Keulen, 2 May 2005). Even so, Walloon Region and French-speaking Community Council have invoked a conflict of interest, leading to temporary suspension of the measure. This is one of the most important points of discussion between the two levels of power (or rather between Flemings and French speakers).

Another continuing point of dispute is the distribution of asylum seekers all over the territory. Up to now this has meant that rich or richer rural municipalities have been able to transfer their asylum seekers to the large cities and centre cities. The limited financial penalties that these municipalities could suffer have never had much impact. For this reason a rule has now been introduced – although it has yet to come into force – that asylum seekers are obliged to reside in the place allocated for the duration of their application procedure.

The lack of government control on housing market impedes issuing a true housing policy targeted at needs of people with an immigrant background. Yet, increased government control would be welcomed since the experience of the Special Body on Racism and Discrimination shows that different types of housing discriminations exist. NGO action is and will be taken to try to influence policy makers regarding this issue. The market is dominated by private sector. As mentioned, the lack of policies to improve access to housing for immigrants is problematic. Nevertheless, there seems to be an increased interest in all regions of Belgium to increase social housing. In every region, *sociale verhuurkantoren*/Agences Immobilières Sociales (social renting agencies) are set up. These NGO’s aim to overcome difficulties in the private rental market by guaranteeing landlords that rents will be paid in due time, by keeping an eye on the housing quality and by offering tenants a suitable dwelling at an affordable price. Despite their appeal, they only control a small share of the housing market, which leads to the conclusion that the overwhelming majority of housing is determined by market conditions, whereby tenants are often subject of discrimination.

Finally, at the federal level, many urban renewal initiatives limited to the country’s large cities and centre cities are shaped by the Federal Service for Large Cities Policy (or Urban Policy). Since its establishment in 1999, the Urban Policy has focused on the social and economic progress of underdeveloped neighbourhoods. The federal government wants to stimulate its dialogue with other players, especially “the towns, cities and municipalities, the regions and communities that are principally competent, and the EU governments, to achieve the best coherence in the actions.” Urban Policy has 12 core areas, including housing and urban renewal. Through its housing policy the federal government subsidises “a number of housing projects, renovations to dwellings in underdeveloped neighbourhoods, initiatives to improve the living environment, employment projects for people with little schooling on housing renovation projects”. Through its urban renewal projects it

encourages overall city and neighbourhood development in which dialogue with residents is considered to be essential to the success of the City projects.

6.1 Interventions to improve access to affordable and decent housing for migrants

The **City Fund** (*Stedenfonds*) is a Flemish instrument to finance actions with respect to the metropolitan (social) policy (2003-2007), such as “urban housing”. With respect to Housing Service, this mainly includes social housing projects. On the one hand the City works on an operational social housing plan in order to increase number of social housing units, but according to the principles of small scale projects, infill development and social mix. On the other hand the City wants to increase the liveability of social housing units by structured consultation between social housing companies and their tenants.

Occasionally tenants are entitled to **premium**. This rent subsidy only applies if the applicant has to move from a (an unhealthy and irreparable or overcrowded) house with certain defectives to a house that complies with certain standards, and the (joint) net taxable income of the applicant and other occupants of the house is less than a specific income bracket (€ 13,930.00). To qualify for a subsidy maximum net rent (without additional costs) may not be less than € 371.84 or € 446.20 with 3 dependent persons. The rent subsidy is a monthly subsidy up to a maximum of € 123.94, to be increased per dependent person. The calculation is based on rent and salary.

The **Federal Urban Policy – City Contract** (*Federaal Grootstedenbeleid – Stadscontract*) is an agreement between the City of Antwerp and the Belgian state in the context of the Urban Policy (2005-2007). In general, this contract focuses on “liveable neighbourhoods in liveable cities”. There are five strategic objectives and one of them is a better social housing supply. The Housing Service concentrates on its fight against vacancy and dilapidation. The extension of the Slum Property Inspection Team and the conversion of the cell Housing Quality to Urban Housing Inspection fit in this project.

The **Federal Urban Policy – Housing Contract** (*Federaal Grootstedenbeleid – Huisvestingscontract*) is an other agreement between the City and the Belgian state (2005-2007). The Federal government had four main objectives: (1) to increase number of quality rental houses adjusted to present and future needs of occupants; (2) to facilitate acquisition of property for families with a low or medium-sized income and for young people; (3) to reinforce urban policy with regard to the fight against slumlords, vacancies and unhealthy houses and, (4) to set up transversal actions for reintegration of deprived groups by giving them access to housing. At the same time the Federal government stipulated that the available means could only be used for investments and not for operational costs or personnel costs. In this contract the Housing Service is responsible for the realisation of three projects: (1) to enter into redevelopment contracts for 369 houses; (2) to enter into renovation contracts for 100 houses and (3) to create 22 places in transit houses.



To reverse the selective urban exodus and increase the strength and attractiveness of the city, in 2002 the City established **AG Vespa, the autonomous City company for real estate and City projects Antwerp**. It had to be a powerful instrument to realize and execute the City's development policy. The City council and the board of mayor and aldermen elaborate this policy and set out the main political lines. AG Vespa takes care of the programming of City projects and monitors the City projects supported by public-private cooperation or aimed at a commercial return. The company handles the real estate transactions for the City, develops its own patrimony and manages the City properties. The funds management is also entrusted to this company.

AG Vespa also takes care of the execution of the local sites and premises policy, focused on firstly rolling fund purchases (acquisition and renovation of vacant and slum sites in deprived areas and introduction of renovated premises on sales/rental market). The company aims at projects that make the street image visible and prominently attractive. Secondly, the strategic purchases (acquisition or destination/redestination of strategic sites and premises in view of desired development of certain part of the city). It is not necessary for the company to realise an immediate financial return. The emphasis is more on making the most of the opportunities that enable or accelerate the development of a part of the city. Finally, since its creation, the autonomous City company has built up and renovated slum dwellings and has been able to sold them offas high-quality family dwellings.

With the instrument '**Schipperskwartier**': **renovation and monitoring contract**, the Housing Service tries to improve the housing quality in the well-defined area 'Schipperskwartier'. Issues such as quality of the houses and environment are tackled. Special attention is paid to maintain typical current mix of occupants in this neighbourhood. The aim of the project is: a strategic city renewal process, an improvement of the housing quality, an additional instrument in the quality policy of the City with respect to private rental houses, an improvement of the street image, a community / integration project that provides for affordable housing in a multicultural neighbourhood and a mixed and high-quality housing project with a broad social mix. The goal of the project is to renovate approximately 100 houses. 50% of these houses will be put on the private rental market at a socially acceptable price. This target will probably be met.

The renovation and monitoring contract is a contract between owners of houses in the neighbourhood and the City of Antwerp. If owners carry out renovation works to improve the quality of their property and put the property on the rental market at a socially acceptable price, the City pays 50% of the renovation costs. The budget for this project comes from the Urban Policy of the federal government. They finance the wages of a project architect and the renovation costs for about one hundred houses.

The project is monitored daily by a project architect who handles applications presented by owners, gives them advice before and during the building process, checks the houses and reports to the workgroup housing policy instruments 'Schipperskwartier'. This workgroup is composed of members of various City services (monument care, City planning, social affairs, housing inspection, prostitution policy, ...) and it considers the applications.

The success of the project can probably be explained by the fact that it fits in a broader town planning project for the 'Schipperskwartier' area. This main project was initiated at the request of the occupants and after thorough analyses of needs and potentials of the neighbourhood where a lot of attention was paid to the occupants' participation. Because this project is embedded in this broader

story, it is directly aimed at specific requests from the neighbourhood. Moreover, the desired number of approved applications for a renovation and monitoring contract is reached each year.

6.2 Local policies related to spatial segregation

▪ The City Neighbourhood Dialogue

The City Neighbourhood Dialogue is City of Antwerp's neighbourhood-level mechanism for two-way (top-down and bottom-up) dialogue and consultation between citizens and (City and district) management scaled to the neighbourhood. It means: (1) channel of communication from management to citizens and vice versa; (2) broadening the basis for policy decisions or good governance without loss of time; (3) working on the authority of districts and City management: dependent on powers; (4) scaling to the project, target group and area (street, neighbourhood, district); and (5) employing an optimal methodology and communication mix (oral and written). The general aim is to intensify the involvement of residents in local administration and create a broader basis for policy decisions among the target group.

The City Neighbourhood Dialogue has thirteen teams (three persons each) allocated to the nine districts of City of Antwerp's decentralised administration. These teams are run by a five-person staff. Local members of staff are responsible for the practical side of neighbourhood dialogue and the harmonisation of City services at neighbourhood level. Internal coordination is based on work and team meetings, intervision and management meetings.

Dialogue and consultation are organised with all 470,000 inhabitants of Antwerp's nine districts and forty-two neighbourhoods. The City Neighbourhood Dialogue also organises external dialogue with actors in the neighbourhood (socio-cultural organisations, residents groups, City services). The City Neighbourhood Dialogue does not work with standard concepts, but is rather scaled to firstly, street, neighbourhood, district (geographic); secondly, target group, stakeholders; and thirdly, preconditions (time, budget). It works on two-way communication: on the one hand, informing citizen-stakeholders (residents, businesses, visitors) about policy decisions and implications (top-down) and on the other hand, gathering signals from and opinions of citizens and determining their significance for policy (bottom-up).

The City Neighbourhood Dialogue develops a proposal with communication campaigns that it considers desirable and feasible. An optimal communication mix of campaigns and channels is sought (oral, written, electronic). This proposal is discussed with the relevant service and submitted to the competent authorities, which must approve it. These authorities decide on whether there will be communication and whether dialogue is desirable. Approved communication is organised by City Neighbourhood Dialogue.

The following case illustrates how this mechanism works practically. The district of Antwerp took the decision to relay the streets Pelikaanstraat, Simonstraat and Mercatorstraat. The draft plan was first discussed with representatives of the Jewish community and gold store traders as part of a separate focus group dialogue. The entire neighbourhood was then invited to attend a public hearing. The competent portfolio-holders in the district administration and a representative of Belgian State Railways gave a presentation explaining the draft plan, prior to the meeting being opened up to questions from the floor. The next steps in the project were also stated. After the building permit was



issued City Neighbourhood Dialogue organised an information meeting for all stakeholders to explain the final project plan. The project timetable was announced and agreements made to minimise disruption during the work. A report of the meeting was published in the City authority's newspaper *De Antwerpenaar*. Due to the large scale of the project and its division into phases, each household received a newsletter to keep residents informed of progress. The newsletter was also published online. The project is part of a broader urban development programme centred on the area around the central railway station (Gemeentestraat, Astridplein, Kievitplein, Van Immerseelstraat, HST route). City Neighbourhood Dialogue works with other City services to communicate the projects in this programme. Channels include an exhibition and a newsletter.

Furthermore, as the City Neighbourhood Dialogue is responsible for policy that is supported by citizens, the critical success factors are (1) the willingness of government, administrative services and residents to enter into dialogue and communicate; (2) the clarity on the role of stakeholders and (3) time for made-to-scale work and a labour-intensive approach. Regarding the question of representativeness and reach. There is a contradiction between, on the one hand, the administration wishing to communicate with all citizens, which leads to mass communication (rather than target group-oriented communication), which in turn obstructs the transmission of the message and, on the other hand, the fact that just 10-20% of the population is willing or able to participate in dialogue activities according to International research.

The City Neighbourhood Dialogue's function has been stabilised since the evaluation and adjustment of the working model for City neighbourhood dialogue in 2004. Improvements have been introduced in the following areas:

- (1) the service has been embedded in the district administrations;
- (2) work agreements have been outlined with the relevant City units;
- (3) the district administrations have been given clarity on the mission;
- (4) the nature and extent of Neighbourhood Dialogue has been clearly defined. Resident groups have been given a place in the structurally organised neighbourhood forums..

▪ **The Neighbourhood Action Service**

The Neighbourhood Action Service is part of the City's social affairs operations. In association with other City services – including culture, sport and integration, a few subsidised private organisations (the most important of which is building a society), the Neighbourhood Action Service pursues a policy oriented to social cohesion.

Neighbourhood Action Service was recently given the job of coordinating the efforts of these external partners, but the service is first and foremost a doer. Six departments of Neighbourhood Action are active in the neighbourhoods every day:

- (1) Opsinjoren offer residents various opportunities to improve life in the neighbourhoods. These people support volunteers that help keeping the city clean, fund street parties, help shutting off street to traffic so that children can play safely and stimulate clubs and associations to work to keep the city clean etc.



(2) Fifty neighbourhood supervisors help create the conditions for coexistence through a daily presence on the streets and a willingness to listen to residents. They help create a situation in which residents feel responsible for where they live.

(3) Three meeting centres provide low-threshold meeting opportunities for residents. The meeting centres welcome all visitors and offer neighbourhood residents a varied programme in association with local clubs and associations. In the coming years, more meeting centres will be created. The objective is to have fifteen centres in the whole city.

(4) The City square development department offers children and young adults opportunities to take part in sports and games at various squares.

(5) Four canvassing programmes to accompany large infrastructure works in the city, with the aim of improving life in the neighbourhoods together with clubs and associations, and residents groups.

(6) Seven projects in different neighbourhoods to improve community relations.

The Neighbourhood Action Service works throughout the city, but special attention is reserved for neighbourhoods where there are coexistence issues, sometimes due to large infrastructure works. These are typically neighbourhoods characterised by great ethno-cultural diversity and large number of people in poverty. The projects, city square development, neighbourhood supervision, the meeting centres and the canvassing programmes are concentrated in Antwerp North, the area around the main railway station, schipperskwartier and the parts of the city built in 1800s (Zuid, Kiel, Oud-Berchem, Deurne West, Oud-Borgerhout).

The Neighbourhood Action Service is currently working on a social cohesion policy plan. The strategic goal is: "In Antwerp residents, organisations and government have skills and tools to develop and maintain social cohesion in an urban environment". This is translated into three operational goals. First, residents, organisations and government have skills and tools to organise meetings that stimulate that social cohesion. Second, they have skills and tools to networks that stimulate that social cohesion. And third, they have skills and tools to assume and make possible active citizenship.

The social cohesion policy is mostly funded by the Flemish and federal governments.

The whole social cohesion policy area was integrated into urban priority objectives, which were translated into various projects, actions and indicators that will be finished by the end of the current legislature at the end of 2006.

The current social cohesion policy is not yet sufficiently focused on the interplay with and between the many actors involved in coexistence issues. In the future the service will intensify its coordination of the City's social cohesion policy and its steering of external partners that work to fulfil this policy.

The social cohesion policy is evaluated by the City on the basis of indicators (see above). The higher government, which provides some of the funding, conducts its own evaluation, using experts from other cities.

▪ The City Integral Safety service

The City of Antwerp's safety policy is entrusted to various players, particularly the police service, which has a legally defined remit, and the City Integral Safety Service.

The police policy on neighbourhood safety has two main objectives: tackling crime and improving an integrated approach to local safety. This policy is based on the principles of community policing (see legal aspects of local and federal police – Local and Federal Police (Organisation) Act of 7 December 1998). *Tackling crime*: The first objective is to tackle high-priority crime in Antwerp, particularly high-crime neighbourhoods. This aspect of policing is mainly reactive, but a more proactive approach is also being employed. The main goal is to tackle those types of crime considered a priority for Antwerp and covered in the National and the Federal Governmental Safety Plan. Legally speaking, the priorities are set by the Local Safety Council, which consists of the mayor, the public prosecutor, the chief of police and the regional federal police commissioner. Although the chief of police directs and monitors police policy based on crime statistics, it is the Local Safety Council that evaluates this approach.

Improving an integrated approach to local safety: High-crime neighbourhoods are often – albeit not always – areas that are challenged in terms of poverty, nuisance behaviour, integration problems, social deprivation etc. These aspects play an important role in the integrative or joint approach developed for these neighbourhoods. It is important to communicate with the people who live in these areas to help them be more self-reliant and involve them in a joint approach. The police service takes part in several community initiatives to communicate on social or safety problems together with the City of Antwerp. This makes a joint approach more likely to succeed. For the police service, increased community-orientation is a new challenge.

The City of Antwerp's Integral Safety Service has placed 'neighbourhood directors' in various neighbourhoods as part of the Neighbourhood Direction project. Their job is to set up actions and campaigns that promote a positive perception of the neighbourhood. The neighbourhood director initiates a dialogue with the neighbourhood associations and official bodies to identify solutions to nuisance and quality-of-life problems. There are three central tenets in Neighbourhood Direction. *The neighbourhood*: the project is active in neighbourhoods that were identified based on a nuisance analysis. *Addressing different sources of nuisance*: social and physical source of nuisance, coexistence problems, safety issues and the feeling of being unsafe are addressed. *Networking*: the neighbourhood directors bring together the array of services, projects, neighbourhood associations and initiatives to create a platform for information sharing and harmonisation between all stakeholders. That is also the great strength of the project: that all actions and campaigns are conducted by different City and non-City projects, services and organisations in association or complementarily. As such, all actors contribute to improving the quality of life in the neighbourhood.

Antwerp currently has thirteen CCTV cameras in public spaces (Grote Markt, Meir, De Coninckplein). In association with the Diamond High Council, another fourteen cameras were recently installed in the Diamond neighbourhood. The City also recently took the decision to procure another fifty cameras for installation in Antwerp North and Borgerhout to complement the traditional presence of police and others (e.g. neighbourhood watch). These will be installed in locations identified on the basis of the criminality and nuisance analyses and in close consultation with the police service and neighbourhood watch agents who are familiar with the area. The cameras serve the following purposes: (1) They prevent and record criminality and nuisance behaviour; (2) They improve the



detection and investigation of criminal acts and infringements of administrative law; (3) They increase the likelihood of offenders being identified and caught; (4) They optimise the performance of the police service on the ground; and (5) they optimise the City's range of prevention measures.

Although footage is monitored round the clock by police offices, the Integral Safety Service is responsible for organisational matters, coordinating the actions of all involved services (police, public prosecutor, assistance services) and closely evaluating the impact of CCTV.

- **The Safe City Plan**

The purpose of the Safe City Plan is to make Antwerp a safer place. The plan initially met with strong resistance from a number of civil organisations and neighbourhood working groups. While Antwerp has become a safer place according to the figures, there continues to be a strong feeling of lack of safety among Antwerp residents. Twenty per cent of the population always or often feel unsafe. The Safe City Plan is a small step in reducing this feeling of lack of safety. It works on two levels: an area-specific hotspot-based approach and a target group-oriented hotshot-based approach. (Hotshots are a varied collection of well-defined offenders and risk groups.)

Finally according to the expert opinion, the local police service has been working on improving its image since 2002. The service's reputation of being discriminating and racist in its actions continues to live on in problematical neighbourhoods and specifically among migrants. The Diversity Unit was set up in the police service to maintain contacts and develop relationships with the various communities. This unit has a partnership with the Integration Service. In the event of intercultural conflicts the unit is notified so that colleagues at the local police service can be given assistance on cultural differences. In the event of conflicts between local police and migrant communities the Integration Service's intercultural mediators are called in. These assume the role of neutral urban actor between the police service and the communities. These colleagues mediate and defuse conflicts, so that parties can get back to discussing things round the table rather than on the street. In our opinion, the police still have to invest in their own service to guarantee equal treatment of all citizens. The police service must not only have a more diverse composition, it must also employ a better selection procedure to recruit committed officers. Permanent training and positive experience are necessary to avoid producing bitter, prejudiced police officers. This is needed to detect and act on social problems in the various neighbourhoods.

7 Highlights and Failures: Learning for CLIP

Antwerp is the largest city of Flanders with 470,044 inhabitants (2006). The city has 13% foreigners among whom 8% are non-EU nationals. Antwerp has 26.6% inhabitants with migration background, most of the from a non-EU country. Moroccans are the largest group followed by the Dutch, the Turks, the Poles, the former Yugoslavians, the Indians, the Congolese, the Russians and Western Europeans. There is also a autochthonous Jewish community of approx. 15,000 persons.

The city economy is dominated by a large tertiary sector. The city is an important diamond centre and has the second largest European port. Both sectors provide thousands of jobs. The unemployment rate in the city (15.9%) is higher than the Flanders average. Almost a quarter of the unemployed have a non-EU migration background, namely from the Maghreb and Turkey. The number of persons on welfare benefit is higher among non-EU nationals.

The municipal housing policy aims at sustaining and even increasing the diversity within the city. This regards less ethnicity, but age, socio-economic status, family status, level of professional formation and other aspects of diversity. Priority target of Antwerp's housing policy are young families with two salaries and young children. It further aims at increasing the housing supply and at improving the present housing stock. The city approach applies the concept of liveability, referring to the physical aspects of the housing stock, as well as to social aspects such as neighbourhoods as a place of safe and peaceful coexistence. Finally, the city policy aims at decreasing social segregation by achieving a social mix in every neighbourhood. This refers primarily to social criteria, less to ethnic or migration related criteria.

Main Challenges

- ▶ There is a serious concern that inhabitants in some neighbourhoods cannot speak or understand Dutch sufficiently.
- ▶ Groups of migrant background are distributed unevenly in the city neighbourhoods. Residents from non European countries make up more than 40% of Antwerp North and most parts of Oud-Borgerhout and Kiel.
- ▶ To attract young "double income" families (with kids) in order to improve social diversity.

Main Policies and Measures

- ▶ City policy involves inhabitants of the neighbourhoods into projects and measures. This policy proved to be an important aspect for the success of measures both for improving the housing stock (renovations) as well as for social measures.
- ▶ To safeguard liveability of neighbourhoods, municipal policy will condition a social housing allocation to the willingness of learning Dutch in accordance with Flemish legislation.
- ▶ Coexistence and social cohesion are promoted by projects such as the City Neighbourhood Dialogue.
- ▶ There is a multitude of projects which aim at reaching several goals simultaneously: increasing the housing stock, facilitating access for vulnerable groups, attracting families, rehabilitating deprived neighbourhoods, creating links among the inhabitants and stimulating social cohesion.