



European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

Case Study on Diversity Policy in Employment and Service Provision

Liège, Belgium



Author:

- Sonia Gsir

Centre for Ethnic and Migration Studies
Institute for Human and Social Sciences
University of Liège

•

- © 2008 European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions
Wyattville Road, Loughlinstown, Dublin 18, Ireland
Telephone: + 353 1 2043100, Fax: + 353 1 2826456

Table of Content

1	Belgium	5
1.1	Brief history of migration to Belgium and characteristics of migrants and people with a migration background.....	5
1.2	National policy context.....	5
1.2.1	Diversity policy at the federal level.....	5
1.2.2	Diversity policies in the Regions	7
2	Liège	9
2.1	Brief description of Liège	9
2.2	City’s migrant population, its history and characteristics.....	11
2.3	The city authority	11
3	Liège’s approach to diversity	12
3.1	Historical background.....	12
3.1.1	The Charter against racism (1995).....	12
3.1.2	European local authorities interactive network for ethnic minorities..... policies (1997)	12
3.1.3	Coalition of cities against racism and ten-point plan of action (2005).....	12
3.1.4	Intercity-cooperation: Liège-Gent (2007).....	13
3.1.5	Equality diversity label (2007).....	13
3.2	Objectives of the policy/approach	14
3.3	Responsibility	16
3.4	Collaboration with social partners and non governmental organisations	16
3.5	Policy and practice on monitoring progress.....	17
3.6	Key challenges faced in implementation and broad lessons learnt.....	17
3.7	Potential future policy development	17
4	Employment: policy, practice and outcomes.....	19
4.1	Profile of city employees	19
4.2	Employment diversity policy	20
4.3	Challenges and tensions in development and implementation of policy.....	20
4.4	Recruitment, training and promotion.....	20
4.4.1	Recruitment.....	20

4.4.2	Training.....	21
4.4.3	Promotion.....	21
4.5	Equal pay and working conditions.....	22
4.6	Harassment.....	22
4.7	Accommodation of cultural needs	22
4.8	Health and safety.....	22
4.9	Induction and language tuition.....	22
4.10	Recognition of qualifications	22
4.11	Complaints	23
4.12	Special initiatives	23
4.13	Monitoring	23
4.14	Impact of policy and lessons learnt.....	23
5	Diversity in service provision.....	24
5.1	Services provided and contracted out	24
5.2	Diversity policy in services.....	24
5.3	Employment profile of service providers	25
5.4	Access to services	25
5.5	Monitoring of access and outcomes identified	25
5.6	Cultural awareness of staff.....	25
5.7	Discrimination against service users.....	25
5.8	Special initiatives	26
5.9	Impact of policy on access to and quality of services and lessons learnt	26
6	Conclusion: Key challenges, lessons and learning for CLIP.....	26
6.1	Good practices and learning for CLIP	26
6.2	Key challenges	27
7	Bibliography	29

Foreword

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

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

The CLIP network is also cooperation between cities and research institutes. Five research institutes in Bamberg, Amsterdam, Vienna, Liege and Oxford are taking care of the publications of the CLIP project. The researchers of the Centre for Ethnic and Migration Studies (CEDEM) are responsible for this report on Liège. Together with the contact person of the municipal of Mrs. Dominique Celis an enormous effort has been undertaken to find all necessary data for this report. The report is mainly based on a questionnaire (common reporting scheme) filled out by the City of Liège and on city visits. The views expressed in this case-study are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the City.

I would like to thank Mrs. Dominique Celis, Policy Officer at the Mayor Cabinet and Mr. Paul Banack Biem from the Staff Management Service for their precious collaboration.

The author is completely responsible for the content of this report and the copyright of the report remains with Eurofound.

Sonia Gsir

August 2007, Liège

1 Belgium

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

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

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

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

1.2 National policy context

1.2.1 Diversity policy at the federal level

At the federal level, Belgium has developed progressively diversity policies and antidiscrimination policy. A specialized body has been created to develop different actions in this way. The **Centre for equal opportunities and opposition to racism** (CEOOR) (created in 1993) is an autonomous federal public service. It was at the beginning in charge of the following of the policy of integration of immigrants but its mandate has been progressively extended. Indeed, in 2003, a law has been adopted to fight all types of discrimination, the law of 25 February 2003 aiming at fighting discrimination (published on Belgian Monitor, 07/03/2003). According to this law, all types of direct or indirect discrimination are prohibited in access to work, selection, employment conditions, appointment and promotion.

Henceforth, the Centre aims at promoting “*the equality of opportunities and to oppose any and all forms of distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on: 1° so-called race, skin colour, heritage, background or nationality. 2° sexual orientation, marital status, birth, fortune, age, creed or philosophy of life, current and future state of health, disability or physical trait*” (<http://www.diversite.be>). Moreover, it is worth noting that the CEOOR website was named during several years www.antiracisme.be has been renamed www.diversite.be. Finally, the Commission of the Intercultural Dialogue, set up by the federal government in 2004 encouraged among others the set up of diversity plans at all levels of the public administration.

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

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

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

In 2005, the Minister of Employment and the Minister of Equal Opportunities have tried to promote diversity regarding employment in the society. The **Equality Diversity Label** for the companies has been created in collaboration with the Regions. Its main objective is to strengthen diversity in the working place and to fight against discrimination and stereotypes by creating and implementing a diversity policy inside the company. It targets any public and

private sector and association located in Belgium. Precisely, it means that the company has (1) to respect the law regarding equal opportunities and discrimination; (2) to develop a diversity policy including the creation of a company culture in favour of diversity and the set up of a human resources management pro-diversity; (3) followed an analysis, planning, monitoring and evaluation process of its diversity policy with the participation of the employees; and, (4) to be in a continual improvement process (<http://www.emploi.belgique.be>). Since 2006, 15 organisations (companies and cities) have committed in promoting diversity and equality within their organisation and in 2007, the Equality Diversity Label has been granted to some of them and particularly to three cities: Gent and Leuven in Flanders and Liège in Wallonia.

1.2.2 Diversity policies in the Regions

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

In Flanders, diversity policies have been developed since the 80s in particular through measures to help jobseekers with migration background and to raise their level of employment. Since 2004, Flanders has had a Minister of citinization or *inburgering* (Marino Keulen). He is the first Minister whose title bears this competence explicitly. Previously, minorities policy was more implicitly part of other competences. In his policy document 2004-2009 the minister drops the 'old' formulation 'minorities policy'. The focus has shifted from the minorities approach to living together, managing diversity and promoting common citizenship and equal opportunities. The policy also focuses on a more result-oriented and thus more quantitative approach to citinization: less of a target group approach, more living together in diversity, more emphasis on the (responsibilities of the) individual citizen. The priorities of the Flemish diversity policy are encouraging cooperation between the employment sectors, investing in social economy, promoting policies of equal opportunities and supporting the organisations in developing their diversity policies. The Flemish region supports initiatives and projects encouraging diversity management. For example, in 2002-2004, it has supported the Project *Building on Diversity - Persuading SMEs to Hire "Non-*

Native" and Older People (also supported by the European Social Fund in the programme EQUAL). This project aimed at facilitating the integration of foreigners and people of more than 45 years old in the labour market. It was the result of a partnership between the VDAB (Flemish Public Employment Service), Vitamine W (NGO with good contacts and experience with the target groups), a temporary employment agency Randstad and the think-tank IDEA Consult. It was implemented in Antwerp, another CLIP city.

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

Fight against discrimination and promotion of equal opportunities are among the priorities of the actions developed in the framework of the *Contract of Future for Wallonia*, a strategic plan of regional development existing since 2000 in Wallonia. Henceforth the Walloon government has developed specific measures for some target groups. Diversity management is also an issue. Some EQUAL projects such as the *jobcoaching* have been also developed in Wallonia (<http://www.acfi.be>). At the end of 2006, a general orientation policy document on diversity and fight against discrimination in employment has been presented. If until now, measures have been developed mainly in a perspective of targeting several disadvantaged groups (women, disabled, foreigners, youth and elderly), a shift of perspective is announced for 2007 and the further measures will also target the companies. In other words, diversity has been firstly approached as a stake of equal opportunities and from now it is also approached as a stake of economy. The diversity policy of the Walloon government and in particular of the Minister of Employment and Economy aims at fighting discriminations and promoting diversity management in the companies and the local public services (<http://www.wallonie.be>). Diversity policy target the disadvantaged groups mentioned above. Five tools are experimented in 2007. Firstly, the signature of the **Charter of Diversity for the equality in rights and treatment of employed and unemployed workers** by the Walloon Government and the social partners of the Social and Economic Council of the Walloon Region. Secondly, the signature of the **Charter of Diversity** by companies and organisations that commit in developing diversity management. Thirdly, the **Diversity and Human Resources Prize** in Wallonia which will be granted annually to relevant initiatives in diversity management in companies of the public or private sectors or NGOs (1 SME, 1 big company, 1 public service and 1 NGO). Fourthly, granting the **Equality and Diversity Label** in partnership with the federal level (see above). And, finally, granting **financial supports to diversity in human resources management** in Wallonia.

2 Liège

2.1 Brief description of Liège

Liège is the largest city of Wallonia and the third largest city of Belgium after Brussels and Antwerp. It is the capital city (chef-lieu) of the Province of Liège and it is an important crossroads between the Netherlands and Germany. Crossed by the river, Meuse, its river port is the second largest in Europe. With a port, an international airport, a European motorway network and, soon a TGV (High Speed Train) station, Liège is a dynamic trade and economic centre in the Euregio. This situation is reinforced by two international poles of excellence for transportation and logistics as well as for biotechnologies and space research. Liège is also an industrial city with iron and steel industry. The city offers a wide range of high-quality education with one university and several colleges of higher education and therefore attracts a important number of students from all Belgium, the neighbouring countries and from all over the world.

The city is a part of the agglomeration of Liège divided in three perimeters following the urban and circulation stakes. The first perimeter includes the city-centre (around 8 800 inhabitants). The second perimeter surrounds the city-centre and all the bordering sectors. It is commonly called the dense urban area. It is located in the lower section of the valley of the river. And, the third perimeter includes all the motorways' connexions and the main economic and residential poles of the agglomeration. The agglomeration has a head count of about 500 000 inhabitants. It is worth noting that the population is two times greater in the periphery than in the central urban area. Jobs are concentrated in the centre of the city, the second perimeter and in the third perimeter, there are job openings in the industrial furrow of the river and some industrial zones near the motorways and the airport. The city of Liège itself is made up of 23 neighbourhoods: the centre, Avroy, Guillemins, Sainte-Marguerite, Saint-Leonard, Outremeuse, Longdoz, Sainte-Walburge, Laveu, Thier-à-Liège, Vennes, Droixhe, Angleur, Bressoux, Chênée, Grivegnée, Jupille, Wandre, Glain, Rocourt and Sclessin. The most disadvantaged neighbourhoods are located in Sainte-Marguerite and Saint-Leonard and the social housing/council flats neighbourhoods (Droixhe). The less disadvantaged neighbourhoods are concentrated in the Liège south periphery.

Liège's population was 186 805 as of December 2005 (51.2% men and 48.8% women). Adding those who are registered in the so-called "waiting register" which includes the population primarily made up of asylum seekers, this figure rises to 190 822. According to the municipality, the population actually residing in Liège is around 200 000 inhabitants. On average, there are 2 699 inhabitants per square kilometre. The population dropped between 1989 and 2005 (-6.8%). Indeed, besides the official residents there are also a number of people residing in the city whose official residence is situated in another municipality.

The population of Liège is fairly old. The current ageing ratio is 110.9 whereas it is 92.1 for Belgium and 85.9 for Wallonia. This ratio represents the portion of the persons older than 60 relative to those who are between 0 and 19 years old. The city has 17.9 % foreigners (34 234 persons: 18 304 men and 15 930 women). This figure includes asylum seekers and foreigners whose asylum applications are still pending. Contrary to the balance in the Belgian population in the city, there are more men than women within the foreign population. There are 142 different nationalities in Liège. EU nationals represent 47.6% of all foreigners (17 916). The Italians are the most important foreign group followed by the Moroccans. The household structure is also changing. The single-parent households are increasing and

represent more than 50% of the city households. Households of two persons or more are decreasing especially those of three, four and five persons.

Even though tens of SME's have been created during the past years, the iron and steel industry still weighs a great deal on the city and region's economy. The industry sector (around 47 000 jobs) is dominated by the group of metal representing more than 40% of jobs. Nevertheless, the district has lost more than 100 000 jobs in its industries since the beginning of the 60's. The expected closure of the ARCELOR group in the near future will have other repercussions in the region. The secondary sector represents less than a quarter of the jobs. Liège is the main work pole of the region of Liège. It has 41% enterprises and 51% of jobs of the region. As opposed to the secondary sector, jobs increase in the tertiary sector; around 60 000 jobs were created between 1961 and 2002. In the city itself, the tertiary sector represents 90% of the 110 000 jobs and in the district around 77% of the 210 000 jobs. 17 000 jobs are located in the first perimeter of the agglomeration. All types of activities are represented in the city as in the district however the services sector prevails. Prominent services sectors include education (around 75 000 students of whom 33 000 in high education), health care (around 3 800 beds), social services and trade (more than 5 000 businesses in the city). Regarding office space, the city has only around 450 000 square meters shared between public and private sector, which is less than a tenth of the ratio of offices in Brussels. Nevertheless, according to the FOREM, the situation of the city is ambivalent. On the one hand, its activity ratio is good whereas on the other hand, its employment ratio is the lowest in the region of Liège and as a corollary, a high unemployment ratio.

According to the Walloon Region, employment figures for Liège fell from 1999-2000 while these figures increased at the regional level. The unemployment rate in Liège is around 21% in Liège, higher than elsewhere in Wallonia where the average is 16%. During the second semester of 2005, the percentages of unemployed persons based on their sex stood at 53.3%(male) and 46.7% (female). The job seekers have difficulties to find a job because many of them have low qualifications or none at all. The number of people on welfare (integration income, former minimex) is higher than the regional average. The socio-economic data on the population of Liège for 2005 reveals that 8 121 inhabitants depended on welfare: 5 987 received what is called 'integration income'; 2 077 received social help; 3 got exceptional help while the rest, 54 got assistance as homeless persons. The employment figures for 2003 are 107 392 jobs with 96 314 salaried workers and 11 078 self-employed workers.

The average income per inhabitant is 10 350 euro for 2004 and 22 345 euro for the average income declared. The average incomes are lower than those of the district of Liège. The evolution during the last 15 years shows that the city has lost a number of households. High and middle incomes have migrated to other municipalities whereas households on benefits have arrived in the city. The impoverishment of Liège is largely due to its central position within an industrial basin and the evolution of the ways of life and the residential aspirations of certain population groups. Average income/inhabitant in 1980 showed that the city of Liège ranked 6th out of 24 within the agglomeration. In 2002, the ranking dropped to 20th. It's clear that within this period high income earning households quit the centre for the periphery. During the period under consideration, unemployment rate was at 21% for Liège whereas the regional rate was 16%. The city has been confronted these past years with high unemployment, poverty, urban exodus but it seems that it experienced a reversal of fortunes since 2006.

2.2 City's migrant population, its history and characteristics

The city is characterized by different migrations as a result of migrations cycles in Belgium. First migrations were internal migration at the end of 19 century. Migrants arrived from the Ardennes and Flanders in order to work in the mines and the metallurgy sector. Before the First World War, migrants from the neighbouring countries but also from as far away as Poland, Italy and Russia arrived in Liège. They came for various reasons: asylum, studies and work.

After the war, individual migrations grew all over the province because of the job opportunities in the coal fields of Liège. As soon as the Belgian state organized immigration for work purposes through bilateral agreements, Liège received important migration flows from Italy mainly but also from Spain, Poland and later from Morocco and Turkey. After 1974, the Belgian government stopped economic migration. Nevertheless as elsewhere in the country, immigrants still arrived in Liège through the family reunification channel. At the end of 1980's, besides foreign students coming particularly from Africa, a new category of migrants arrived in Belgium and in Liège in particular. People from Eastern European countries, from Asia and sub-Saharan Africa seeking asylum in Belgium arrived in Liège. Because of the importance of the influx of asylum seekers, the City and its CPAS decided at the end of 1993 to not accept newcomers anymore. But this measure did not impede the arrival of migrants from Kosovo and other Eastern countries at the end of the 90's. It is important to underline that numbers of asylum-seekers decided to reside in Liège even when the source of their welfare payment depended on another CPAS. Furthermore, the city also comprises a number of irregular migrants (Kagné and Martiniello, 1999).

Of a total of 34 234 foreigners, Liège has 18 466 EU nationals (EU 27) among these, 17 916 are from EU (25) and 15 768 non EU nationals. The three main foreign nationalities present in Liège are Italians (10 517), Moroccans (3 718) and French (2 834). Other important nationalities are Spanish (2 255) Turkish (1 753), Congolese (1 672), Former-Yugoslavians (Serbia and Montenegro) (855), Russian (709), Algerian (576) and Greek (444). These ten major nationalities represent 73.9% of the foreign population with 31% Italians, the largest group. However these figures are not indicative of the real ethnic diversity of the city since a large number of inhabitants of foreign origin have taken up Belgian nationality in the past few decades. In 2005, 1 542 changes of nationalities were recorded. The distribution of unemployed persons according to their nationality shows that 77% of them are Belgians, 11% originated from the EU and 12% from outside of the EU.

2.3 The city authority

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

3 Liège's approach to diversity

3.1 Historical background

As mentioned above, the history of migration in this city is characterised by two features. Firstly, Liège is marked by migration during the entire 20th century and integration among the working classes has become an undeniable reality. Secondly, the number of nationalities (142) of origin of the migrants is relatively high. This represents 18% of the total population of the city. Difficult in this context to not recognize the de facto cultural diversity of the city inhabitants and to not taken it into account in the local policies. Policies of diversity and equal opportunities developed progressively. Different elements can be highlighted. In the one hand, there are institutional arrangements through the creation or the share of competences. In the other hand, some tools have been adopted or looked for.

3.1.1 *The Charter against racism (1995)*

Quite a number of measures were taken in the 90's. In 1995, the City Council adopted the Charter against racism. This constitutes certainly the preliminary to a diversity policy. Henceforth, the charter states: *"The City Council of Liège is opposed to any form of discrimination based on race, philosophy or religion and it commits to insure equal access for all to the whole city services. It is opposed in particular to any kind of racial discrimination observed, lived or committed by the communal staff in exercise of its duties. According to the Belgian Constitution, it encourages the participation of people of all origins to all levels of communal activities."* (<http://www.liege.be>) Other measures were taken in agreement with the charter such as a training to a diverse public in partnership with the Centre for equal opportunities and opposition to racism (see 1.2), with the university of Liège and with a specialised NGO (ITECO).

3.1.2 *European local authorities interactive network for ethnic minorities policies (1997)*

The city became a member of the network ELAINE. This network aimed at favourising exchanges of experiences regarding integration of migrants and ethnic minorities.

3.1.3 *Coalition of cities against racism and ten-point plan of action (2005)*

The first step of this policy is based on the plan of action in 10 points of the International Coalition of Cities against Racism (UNESCO, 2005). The initiative launched by UNESCO in March 2004 aims to establish a network of cities interested in sharing experiences in order to improve their policies to fight racism, discrimination, xenophobia and exclusion. In April 2005, ten years after the signature by the city of the Charter against Racism, the city decided to join the European Coalition of Cities against racism by signing a statement of intent conveying the strong interest of the municipality in membership of the Coalition and its Ten-Point Plan of Action – the latter formality can be entered into at the second stage. And less than one year later, in January 2006, Liège entered the second stage and signed an *"Act of Accession and Commitment by which the municipality fully adheres to the Coalition and its Ten-Point Plan of Action; the municipality thus agrees to implement this minimal Plan of Action by incorporating the Plan into its municipal policies and strategies (...)*The implementation of the Plan of Action implies on the part of the municipality, the allocation of the resources required to accomplish the actions foreseen." (UNESCO, 2005) This plan coming from outside and thus with the advantage of being more neutral politically was approved by the city considering that it was indeed a promising synthesis of

recommendations from the federal level. Indeed, on the one hand the Centre for equal opportunities and opposition to racism encouraged fight against discrimination and equal opportunities policies. And on the other hand, recommendations in favour of developing diversity plan in the public administration have been put forward by the Commission of the Intercultural Dialogue, set up by the federal government in 2004 (see 2.2).

3.1.4 Intercity-cooperation: Liège-Gent (2007)

In the dynamics of the European Coalition of Cities, UNESCO encouraged Liège and Gent another Belgian city which joined in May 2006 to associate and to become leadcities against racism for Belgium. This is a further step of the city to commit in the fight against discrimination but also to promote diversity policy. Indeed, in June 2007, Liège organized a press conference and invited for a national mobilization against racism and “*promoting a society that regards cultural diversity not only as a irreversible fact but as an asset for constructing the democracy of tomorrow*”.

3.1.5 Equality diversity label (2007)

After the municipal elections in October 2006, the city council in its statement of general policy for 2007-2012, defined 5 major and strategic objectives for the city the most prominent of which are:

- ensure the physical security and quality of life of all;
- contribute to the creation of jobs/activities;
- check poverty, inequalities and discriminations.

The last objective is particularly significant in the framework of this case-study. Furthermore, these objectives have to be reached through 15 policies of which a city providing public services of quality and an international and multicultural city where cultural diversity is a wealth (Ville de Liège, 2007).

It is within this context that in March 2007, the city applied to the Federal Ministry of Employment and Labour for the Equality Diversity Label. This label aims to reinforce diversity in the work place and to combat all sorts of stereotypes/discriminations and the institutionalisation of pro diversity policies within companies/organisations. The Equal Diversity Label has been granted to the city. Liège has three years to develop a diversity policy within the framework of this label.

Moreover, the city in collaboration with the University of Liège has submitted a project to the federal Ministry for Social Integration and Equal Opportunities in order to get a financial support from the national level. This project is twofold. In one hand, it aims at developing a diversity plan within the communal administration. In the other hand, it will allow the city to serve as a pilot city to test the UNESCO indicators for the fight against racism and the discrimination.

Media have been informed of different development concerning the city policy and until now prodiversity measures have met with a positive response from the media.

3.2 Objectives of the policy/approach

After several years of various practices in favour of equal opportunities and promoting diversity, the city of Liège has decided to develop a clear, coordinated and announced policy of diversity. Diversity has become a priority from the point of view of the local elected people. Contrary to the past, it seems that there is a real policy support in favour of diversity policy inside and outside the city.

Firstly, one of the objectives of the city of the new statement of general policy is to move back poverty, inequalities and discriminations. The city considered that women and persons from foreign origin are particularly vulnerable groups. Secondly, the city aims at providing a public service of quality for the whole population. Every citizen is targeted by this policy, with specific attention for disabled persons. According to the city experts, the target groups of the city diversity policy are the visible ethnic-minorities, women, elderly persons and disabled persons. Diversity is considered by the city as an added-value.

Secondly, as explained above, the city committed to ten-point plan of the European coalition of cities against racism. It means that the city will develop at least one action regarding each of the following commitments:

- “(1) To set up a monitoring, vigilance and solidarity network against racism at city level;*
- (2) To initiate, or develop further the collection of data on racism and discrimination, establish achievable objectives and set common indicators in order to assess the impact of municipal policies;*
- (3) To support victims and contribute to strengthening their capacity to defend themselves against racism and discrimination;*
- (4) To ensure better information for city dwellers on their rights and obligations, on protection and legal options and on the penalties for racist acts or behaviour, by using a participatory approach, notably through consultations with service users and service providers;*
- (5) To facilitate equal opportunities employment practices and support for diversity in the labour market through exercising the existing discretionary powers of the city authority;*
- (6) The city commits itself to be an equal opportunities employer and equitable service provider, and to engage in monitoring, training and development to achieve this objective;*
- (7) To take active steps to strengthen policies against housing discrimination within the city;*
- (8) To strengthen measures against discrimination in access to, and enjoyment of, all forms of education; and to promote the provision of education in mutual tolerance and understanding, and intercultural dialogue;*
- (9) To ensure fair representation and promotion for the diverse range of cultural expression and heritage of city dwellers in the cultural programmes, collective memory and public space of the city authority and promote interculturality in city life;*
- (10) To support or establish mechanisms for dealing with hate crimes and conflict management.”*

Thirdly, the city has applied and received the Equality Diversity Label. In order to obtain the label, 4 conditions must be met:

- obey the anti discrimination and equality law;
- develop and institutionalise a pro-diversity corporate culture and human resources management system;
- conduct, with the participation of employees, a full analysis, planning, implementation and evaluation of the prodiversity policy;
- maintain an on-going process of amelioration of the policy.

In order to develop the diversity policy, the label defines 11 areas of action divided into three major axes. The actions must be completed after 3 years (May 2007-May 2010). The city's plan of action will be audited.

axis 1 - corporate prodiversity culture: 3 areas of action

- (1) internal/external communication by the organisation of its commitment in favour of diversity and antidiscrimination;
- (2) inform workers on the diversity policy of the organisation;
- (3) put in place a sensitization programme for workers about diversity and non discrimination.

axis 2 - prodiversity human resources management: 6 areas of action

- (4) elaborate a diversity-friendly recruitment/selection procedure;
- (5) plan for a proper reception of newly recruited staff;
- (6) training: ensure equal access to training for all employees;
- (7) internal mobility: guarantee equal access to internal mobility predicated on their professional qualities/motivation; be mindful of/ sensitive to diversity during the selection of candidates for promotion;
- (8) adapt working conditions to suit different target groups in order to enable them to work under the best working conditions possible;
- (9) quantify/measure voluntary/involuntary departures from service/employment and analyse the causes.

axis 3 - Gender equality: 2 areas of action

- (10) ensure equality in salaries and job descriptions;
- (11) adapt working conditions in order to strike a balance between private and professional life.

The plan of action of the label is applicable to municipal/the city's employees only. Nevertheless, the leitmotiv of the authorities is for the city to serve as a role model to the private sector in prodiversity policies as well as in the fight against inequality and discrimination.

Finally, the city helps external agencies to implement their own diversity policies. The city has not a proactive role in this way but it answers positively for supporting the initiatives in diversity management emanating from external agencies. It is the case with the firm

DELHAIZE which implements since September 2005 a diversity plan. In Summer 2006, the firm could provide around 7 000 jobs for students. In the framework of its diversity plan, it decided to offer 1% of these jobs to people with migration background. To recruit them, DELHAIZE was supported by the city of Liège, the CRIPEL and the FOREM.

3.3 Responsibility

In 1995, intercultural relations became one of the competencies of the alderman in charge of youth and sport. For political reasons, in 2004, the Mayor decided to take interculturality under his own competence. Interculturality consists in promoting and showing cultural diversity. And, in the years 2005-2006, the city went further and decided to put a coherent and visible policy of management of diversity. A new competence is created and attributed to the Mayor because it is considered as a transversal one. It is equal opportunities. Thus the policy of Equality and Diversity of recent become the responsibility of the Mayor. However, policy decisions on this matter are collegially taken/made by the municipal College of eleven members. In 2006, the competence of interculturality is again attributed to an alderman, the one in charge of culture.

A working group Diversity has been set up to take in charge the application to the Equality Diversity Label. It was composed of experts from the city (cabinet of the Mayor, Personnel Department, and Communication Unit) and from external bodies (the CRIPEL, regional centre for the integration of foreigners or persons of foreign origin in Liège and the EGID (Institute on gender and diversity management)- University of Liège). Now, that the Label is been granted some people of this working group are in charge of its implementation. A policy officer at the Cabinet of the Mayor is in charge of coordinating the Equality Diversity Label. And the general inspector in charge of human resources is responsible for the coordination of the diversity management. The person in charge of the communication has to insure the communication task regarding the diversity policy.

The execution/implementation of the policy is the prerogative of the administration, precisely the department of Human resources in matters related to employment/recruitment.

According to the city experts, it is imperative that top management and the elected politicians be involved/sensitised for the policy to take hold. Short of this, there can be no progress nor mentality/attitudinal change. It is clear from the *statement of general policy 2007-2012* that the city is serious about its prodiversity stance.

3.4 Collaboration with social partners and non governmental organisations

Mindful of his new responsibilities with regards to diversity/equality, considering that 2007 is the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All, the Mayor invited stakeholders on 23 March 2007 to attend the **Liège platform for equal opportunities meeting** which aimed to create a knowledge exchange network between active stakeholders on this theme.

In the near future, the city could collaborate with NGOs and migrants organisations in developing and implementing its diversity policy. The Intercultural Unit of the city Youth Service is an important relay towards the field organizations. This Unit has already launched several actions promoting diversity in the city such as the multicultural days in Liège, the middays of intercultural relations, etc.

3.5 Policy and practice on monitoring progress

The monitoring system is actually being thought out by the city's Human Resources department. The city's plan of action on diversity for the Label Equality and Diversity will be audited after being implemented.

3.6 Key challenges faced in implementation and broad lessons learnt

Major challenges include information, sensitisation, and training of the public in general and, the city's employees in particular. This requires substantial human and financial resources.

3.7 Potential future policy development

As mentioned above, the city has received the Equal Diversity Label. It has planned to fulfil through 11 areas of actions during three years. The city has formulated its own 11 areas of actions according those prescribed by the Label. These areas of actions are defined as followed:

- Formalizing the commitment of the city and fighting against discrimination;
- Information of the staff on the diversity policy;
- Training to diversity;
- Non discriminatory recruiting process;
- Reception of new staff;
- Non discriminatory process for access to training;
- Non discriminatory process for the internal promotion;
- Adapting the working conditions to the specificities of the target groups;
- Analysing the walkouts;
- Equality of treatments between men and women;
- Balancing private and professional life.

The first areas aim at corporating prodiversity culture (see next paragraph). The actions regarding employment and services (3-9) will be progressively developed in the next sections. Whereas the two last areas concern more specifically the gender diversity. In the following, only the actions regarding diversity in general or precisely cultural diversity will be highlighted. The diversity actions focusing other target groups such as disabled and women are not mentioned.

Formalizing the commitment of the city and fighting against discrimination (1)

Regarding internal/external communication by the organisation of its commitment in favour of diversity and antidiscrimination, the city will undertake several actions. Firstly, the city will take some measures to include diversity and non discrimination policy in the work regulation. Precisely, the charter against racism and the charter equality men/women will be stick up inside the offices of the municipal administration and the cabinets. The city will adopt a circular on the principles of neutrality and of equal treatment of all and on the rights and duties of the staff regarding discrimination. All new staff member will receive

information about their rights and obligations regarding diversity inside their working environment and in relationship with the citizen. Secondly, the city will make a state of the situation regarding discrimination through a questionnaire addressed to the city staff. And, finally the city will associate the organisations concerned by the target groups such as regarding people with migration background, the Intercultural Department of the Youth Service. Diversity policy will be put at the agenda of the Consultation and Negotiation Committee in the framework of the social dialogue with in particular the creation of a diversity information point.

Other specific actions will be undertaken such as:

- Collecting data in order to identify discriminatory situations (action 2), a questionnaire will be spread out to the whole staff. This questionnaire will be constructed in collaboration with an expert on diversity management from the University of Liège.
- Associating organizations working the target groups to the development of the vision and the mission. An information point will be organized with the representative of each cabinet and with heads of the 13 Departments, with the Intercultural Department of the Youth Service and with the intercultural organizations subsidized by the city.
- Putting diversity policy on the agenda of the Consultation and Negotiation Committee in the framework of the social dialogue and, putting the questionnaire on the union agenda.
- Improving the complaints process (see 4.11.).
- Insuring that the diversity policy takes into account explicitly all kinds of discrimination.

Information of the staff on the diversity policy (2)

The involvement of the city for diversity policy and diversity management will be communicated internally. Several actions will be undertaken to realize this communication policy on diversity.

- The Charter against Racism will be promoted and newly diffused.
- The payroll of each staff member will contain an explicative memo on the diversity management.
- A bill signed by the Mayor and the Communal Secretary will be send to all directors and top managers in order to sensitize them to diversity.
- A diversity ‘ambassador’ will be designated in every service. He will take part to meeting with the working group diversity. He will be an interface between the working group and the staff. On the one hand, he will inform the working group on the diversity implementation and on the other hand, he will inform his colleagues about the recent initiatives regarding diversity.
- The display network (*réseau d’affichage*) will insure the visibility of the diversity campaign internally.
- Some events such as the personnel party will give a good opportunity to diffuse some video clips about the staff diversity.
- All the diversity project and documents such as the charter or reports will be available on the city intranet.

- The city newsletter and the city quarterly publication will be also used as information channels on diversity policy and diversity management.
- A new operation called ‘March of Diversity’ will be launched.

Finally, the city will collect internal data according the gender, the age and the ethnic origin.

4 Employment: policy, practice and outcomes

4.1 Profile of city employees

There were 3,198 municipal agents employed by the city at the end of 2006. Now they are 3,651. Before analysing the data, it is important to remind the method of collecting them. As shown in Table I, only the foreigners (no Belgian citizenship) are included in the category foreigners. Consequently, people with migration background who are Belgians are counted in the category of city staff (total). In the next future, an anonymous questionnaire will be sent to the whole city staff and will allow collecting data regarding the migration background. There are 3.5% foreigners working for the city in comparison, the foreign inhabitants represent 18.3% of the whole population. The available data do not allow knowing how this share is balanced between EU and non EU nationals. The table below shows that the jobs occupied in the city by foreigners are mainly unskilled jobs (level E) or jobs requiring few qualification (level D). No specific conditions are required to have access to these jobs. Very few foreigners have jobs with responsibilities (levels A, B, C and X). The staffs of the cabinets count three foreigners which represent 3.4%.

Table 1 Employees of the city, 2007

Employment levels*	E		D		C		B		A		X		TOTAL	
	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
Foreigners	53	43	14	12	0	0	1	3	0	2	3	0	71	60
Total (foreigners)	96		26		0		4		2		3		131	
Total (city staff)	1 219		1 611		182		261		219		87		3 651	
Percentage of foreigners	7.8%		1.6%		0%		1.5%		0.9%		3.4%		3.5%	

*Levels:

E: unskilled jobs;

D: skills required for the jobs, generally diploma of secondary school (inferior: 3 years education or superior: 6 years education);

C: jobs with responsibilities;

B: specific jobs for people with a ‘graduat’ diploma (technical degree inferior to the university degree;

A: jobs accessible to the people with a university degree or people from the lower levels who passed the required exams of promotion;

X: jobs inside the cabinets of the mayor and aldermen.

4.2 Employment diversity policy

The main objective of the employment diversity policy is to respect diversity within the municipal administration of the city. Especially, the city wants to strengthen actions for formalizing, informing and raising awareness regarding diversity. The city wants to inform and to train the top management and the hierarchy on diversity management. The Human resources Department has to integrate the diversity dimension in its various areas of action through firstly, the analysis and reflection on available data and actual practices and secondly, proposals to improve the situation.

The employment diversity policy is developed in the framework of the Equality Diversity Label. The objectives of the label whose action plan begins in May 2007 are manifold:

- ensure that diversity at the work place is recognised as a positive value;
- transform into a cardinal value and, base/predicate all our actions on the principle of equal opportunity;
- reflect the composition of the city's population in order to better serve the population;
- be a role model in matters concerning diversity, equal opportunity and non-discrimination;
- promote a corporate culture which considers/perceives diversity as a resource and not otherwise;
- integrate the "diversity" dimension into all political reflections and in Human resource management;
- inform the entire citizenry;
- develop a specific internal communications strategy;
- train top management and elected officials in matters concerning diversity;
- continuously and aggressively sensitise municipal employees on the theme given its complexity.

The diversity management will target all members of the staff, excepting the staff of the police and of the municipal schools and colleges.

4.3 Challenges and tensions in development and implementation of policy

Until now, no specific tensions have been noticed but the implementation of diversity plan is still at an early stage to draw a conclusion. Nevertheless, one major challenge seems to be on the one hand, the financial support to set up the actions and on the other hand, the human resources.

4.4 Recruitment, training and promotion

4.4.1 Recruitment

The employment process of the statutory staff is regulated by the administrative status adopted by the City Council on 25 November 1996 and its amendments. This relation does not contain any provision regarding the fight against discrimination in the employment process but the latter are organized in order to not allow discrimination.

Regarding the employment process of the contractual staff, regulations are still in progress and the discussion is based among others on the guide of good practices published by the organisation of cities and communes of Wallonia (UVCW). The guiding principle expressed in this guide is the respect of human dignity and this is achieved by, among others, “prohibiting discriminatory practices based on ethnic, religious, philosophical or political criteria or on the sex or the age of the persons” (Union des Villes et Communes de Wallonie, 2006).

The FOREM (Regional Employment Office) is the privileged partner for the diffusion of the vacancies in the city.

The city has experienced the recruitment and selection of young people from migration background in particular for summer jobs. In 2006, the city provided summer jobs to 200 youngsters residing in distressed neighbourhoods. The action did not target directly people with migration background but as it was taking aim at disadvantaged neighbourhoods, a lot of them were indirectly reached. The call was sent to priority areas (ZIP/QI) and the final selection of candidates was done by a draw. This initiative will be repeated in 2007 and will target all youngsters of the city and periphery.

In the framework of the Equality Diversity Label, the city will analyse whether the job offers for city vacancies are labelled neutrally and will improve them consequently. Moreover, the city wants to enlarge the channels of recruitment. This will be based on first an analysis of the applications received by the city regarding among others the criterion of the foreign origin. Secondly, the elements that could have caused the reject of the target group will be identified and further actions taken accordingly. Moreover, the selection tests will be analysed in order to determine whether or not they contain discriminatory elements. They will be adapted consequently. Finally, the city wants to organize exchanges with students from the technical fields. Henceforth, the city wants to set up a network to inform the technical fields in the schools about the job opportunities and vacancies in the city and to organize internships in the city for the students in the last year of studies.

4.4.2 Training

In 2005, the college and the city council approved a three-years training plan for the whole staff of the city. This plan targeted any kind of personnel (statutory or contractual) and any category of jobs. The objective was to give to each employee the opportunity to follow a training in a promotion perspective or just to update his knowledge. There was no target group among the city employees. Apparently, the trainings of 2006 were followed in various ways by men and women and by workmen and top managers.

In the framework of the Equality Diversity Label, the main objective will to improve the equal access to training. This objective will be realized by planning an array of trainings considering the staff diversity. In other words, the trainings will vary according the methods, the contents and the time. And elaborating the training, a specific attention will be paid to the target groups of the diversity policy for example by screening the trainings organized previously. The possibility of organizing specific training for the elimination of illiteracy will be examined. Finally, an instrument panel should allow monitoring the equal access to the training.

4.4.3 Promotion

The promotion in the city is regulated according the staff status (statutory or contractual). For instance, statutory staff has access to exams to raise rank in the city whereas the contractual

staff has no access to them. In the other hand, regarding the age pyramid of the staff, there will be a lot of retirement departure in the seven next years. Therefore the city wants to study the promotion process and taking into account the diversity dimension in order to achieve a non discriminatory promotion process.

In the framework of the Equality Diversity Label, the city will foresee the promotion process in order to supply the departures due to retirement. The city will anticipate the planned departures and project replacement with respect to equal opportunities.

4.5 Equal pay and working conditions

The administration has to respect and to apply the equal opportunity/pay and non discrimination act.

4.6 Harassment

Within the administration, there is an internal Department for prevention and protection at work (*Service Interne de Prévention et de protection du travail - SIPPT*). The role of the SIPPT is to control that the administration services including the schools work according to the work regulation (Ville de Liège, 2007). This department comprises an anti-harassment unit and three advisors in prevention matters.

Within the Department of social services, the administration has trustworthy contact persons (two social workers who deal with matters of this nature).

4.7 Accommodation of cultural needs

There are no such arrangements; at least not at this point in time. The city has not been confronted with any special needs/demands (wearing of scarf, prayer breaks for Muslims, special work schedules...).

4.8 Health and safety

The Social services have an agency which deals with the handicap. This agency reports to AWIPH, the Walloon agency for the integration of disabled persons.

4.9 Induction and language tuition

There is a partnership agreement between the city and CRIPEL, the regional centre for the integration of foreigners or persons of foreign origin in Liège. This centre runs a social translation and interpretation service (*Service de Traduction et d'Interprétariat Social - SeTIS*) which the city can use. The SeTIS offers interpretation and written translation of documents from the city. All the city services in contact with aliens and dealing with education, childcare, social, health and training can benefit of the SeTIS. The SeTIS provides services for the following languages: Albanian, Arabic, Armenian, Bulgarian, Croatian, Parsee, Kurdish, Polish, Russian, Romanian, Serbian, Chechnyan, Turkish and Ukrainian. The SeTIS guarantees neutrality independently of the place of performance and privacy (<http://www.cripel.be>).

4.10 Recognition of qualifications

The city is regularly confronted with the problem of recognition of qualification of people who have obtained their diploma abroad. It should be noted that this matter (equivalency of diplomas/degrees) is a prerogative/competence of the government of the French speaking

community of Belgium. The CRIPEL is a regional service helps people with migration background to complete the case for requesting the equivalence of diploma.

In the framework of the Equality Diversity Label, the city will provide on its website information about the Service of Equivalence of Diploma of the French Community. The information should be offered jointly with any job offers.

4.11 Complaints

The Centre for equal opportunities and opposition to racism (CEOOR), an autonomous federal public service, is open (bureau of complaints) twice per month at the offices of CRIPEL. This is well known by the municipal employees. Up to this point, there have been no complaints from within the administration. However, advisors on prevention (SIPPT) have received complaints about harassment at work.

In the framework of the Equality Diversity Label, the city aims at improving the complaints process. First, there will be a reminder on harassment and persons will be designated to receive the discriminations. Second, the complaints about violence acts, harassment and discriminations will be registered in a specific register. Third, there will be an information point for the city staff about their rights regarding equal opportunities and discrimination. Fourth, a partnership agreement should be negotiated with the Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism, as external body.

4.12 Special initiatives

In the framework of the Equality and Diversity Label, the city intends to formalize the reception of new staff. First, it will realize a reception folder for the new staff. The diversity and equal opportunities policy will be addressed in this folder such as rights and duties of the worker regarding discrimination and information about the trustworthy persons (mediator for discrimination matters). Second, reception sessions will be organized within the work team. And finally, each new employee will have a coach.

4.13 Monitoring

No up to now, there is no monitoring of the appointment and employment of people with migration background and of the policy procedures.

In the framework of the Equality Diversity Label, there will be an analysis of each action implemented after one year and a half implementation. New objectives could be defined for the second part of the implementation (following 18 months).

4.14 Impact of policy and lessons learnt

At this time, there is no evidence that the city's approach has had an impact on employment of people with migration background.

5 Diversity in service provision

5.1 Services provided and contracted out

Within the city there are 13 departments which cater to the needs of the entire population without exception:

- Personnel Department;
- Finance and budget department;
- Department of culture, museums and tourism;
- Department of general and economic affairs;
- Department of urban planning;
- Department of public works and the environment;
- Department of social services;
- Department of civil status and the population;
- Department of municipal education;
- Computer Department;
- Management and control support Department;
- Prevention, youth and sport, participation, neighbourhood and intercultural relations Department;
- Administrative Police and security Department.

There is within the municipal administration a counter for foreigners which handles matters relating to administrative documents.

The city, within the Social Welfare Service, has created a special integrated service for the reception of asylum seekers (SADA). This service is in charge of the reception of the asylum seekers regarding their administrative and social situation. It is also insuring the follow up of the cases of victims of trafficking.

Considering service provision in a wide sense, some not-for-profit associations (religious ones excepted) are subsidised by the city. The city regularly provides logistical support to associations, be they intercultural or not, in the form of chairs, class room space, for their activities.

5.2 Diversity policy in services

The diversity policy of the city in services aims at providing quality services to the whole population. According to the new statement of general policy, the city aims at providing a public service of quality for the whole population. Every citizen is targeted by this policy, with specific attention for disabled persons. All the services are covered by this policy which is an inclusive one.

5.3 Employment profile of service providers

In order to deal with the diversity of its population, the city has recruited intercultural mediators for the Police Department and designated a reference inspector for gypsy people. Moreover, it has recruited people with migration background for the communal services, the police and the Social Welfare Service.

5.4 Access to services

In order to improve the communication with people with migration background in need, the city use the services of the translators and interpreters from the CRIPEL (see 4.9.)

Moreover, cultural mediation is organized officially in the municipal schools and hospitals. The city has also supported the creation of an association that provides services of ethnopsychiatry.

The municipal swimming pool in Outremeuse has provisionally, as a result of special requests from several associations, agreed to open its facility at special hours every to meet the demands of persons of muslim background: there are two groups (men and women) of such persons.

5.5 Monitoring of access and outcomes identified

There is no monitoring system yet.

5.6 Cultural awareness of staff

The Department of civil status and population has offered to its employees a training organized by the CRIPEL. This training aimed to provide suggestions for managing stress, the crowd and the population in particular for the staff working at the city counters.

Within the Communal Consultative Council for the Prevention and Security (*Conseil Communal Consultatif de Prévention et Sécurité*), workshops on the fight against racism and on integration policies have been organized. These workshops give the opportunity to gather representatives from the public services and from the associations active on the field of intercultural relations and support of people with migration background. In the framework of the Equality Diversity Label, actions will be undertaken to train and sensitize the staff in charge of human resource management in particular those in charge of recruitment. The training will focus on diversity management and the legal framework on discrimination. Moreover, the two trustworthy persons (mediators) will follow two specific training: one on legislation against discrimination provided by the Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism and the second on intercultural mediation and conflict management, provided by the CRIPEL. A specific training on diversity management will be also organized for the top management (City council, heads of Departments). Another training about diversity in the work relationships will also be organized for the line managers (heads of administrative services, police sergeants and supervisors).

5.7 Discrimination against service users

There is no specific service within the city to address potential discriminations. Nevertheless, on the city website www.liege.be, there is an advertisement “REPORTING A DISCRIMINATION”. The citizens have two possibilities for reporting discrimination. Firstly, they can address to the Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism and

fill the online document. Secondly, they can directly address their complaint at the CRIPEL (see 4.11.).

5.8 Special initiatives

In the case of all initiatives concerning the promotion of interculturality. The aim is to facilitate encounters between the diverse people of Liège and to enhance coexistence. The focus is on three objectives: social cohesion, solidarity and openness to others and to the world.

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

Too soon to evaluate/tell. However, current empirical observations indicate that awareness of cultural diversity is in the increase as a result of better sensitisation about this matter.

6 Conclusion: Key challenges, lessons and learning for CLIP

Liège as a former industrial city had attracted migrants even before the official recruitment of migrant workers by the Belgian state. A large community of Italians is until now one of its demographic features. For decades onwards, different kinds of migrants have arrived and chosen to reside in the city: members of the families of the former guest workers, students, asylum seekers, and irregular migrants. Inhabitants with migration background are located in almost all of the neighbourhoods. The largest nationalities represented are respectively the Italian, the Moroccan and French and to a lesser extent, Spanish, Turkish, Congolese, Former-Yugoslavia, Russian, Algerian and Greek. Liège has around 142 different nationalities. On a total population of around 187 000 inhabitants, the percentage of foreigners is almost 18%. Moreover, the city attracts a large figure of persons who are not officially residing in the city like students or like, to a lesser extent, irregular migrants. In reality, the total population is closer to 200 000 persons. The city is de facto a multicultural city and is considered as such by the local authorities.

Integration of migrants is mainly a regional and community competence in Belgium. And Wallonia has opted for general anti-exclusion policies. Diversity policies and diversity management are developing in the different levels. At the national level, there is a strong commitment favouring diversity management in the federal public services. And at the regional level, each region has its own objectives and develops its own tools regarding diversity policy.

At the local level, Liège had above all developed a multicultural policy promoting intercultural activities and dialogue between the different cultural groups. But recently, the local authorities took decisions to develop also diversity measures. In the recent statement of general policy for 2007-2012, checking inequalities and discriminations is one of the five top priorities. Relying on international and national tools, respectively the European Coalition of Cities against racism and the Equality Diversity Label, the city tries to develop its own diversity plan. This plan is quite complete and could in the one hand, give the city employment policy a new impetus regarding diversity management and on the other hand, it could improve the respect of diversity in the services provided by the city.

6.1 Good practices and learning for CLIP

The diversity policy in Liège is based on international (UNESCO plan of action) and national tools (equality diversity label) and embedded in a European network (European coalition of

cities against racism) and an association with a Flemish city (Ghent). In other words, the city relies on multileveled external support (mainly technical and moral) to develop its diversity policy. And moreover, the city commits itself in international networks and national intercity cooperation to strengthen its diversity plan. This can be highlighted as a good practice which is easily transferable to other cities at least for the international or European level and for the principle of intercity cooperation. Indeed, the city relies on existing tools and moreover can benefit of other experiences to develop its own diversity policy.

The diversity measures already developed by the city are mainly due to a strong partnership with external partners for service provision, developing policy and also implementing policy. First, the city collaborates closely with the CRIPEL (regional centre for the integration of foreigners or persons of foreign origin in Liège). In order to improve the service provision, the city uses the social translation and interpretation service of the CRIPEL. All the city services in contact with aliens and dealing with education, childcare, social, health and training can benefit of this social translation and interpretation service. Around 14 foreign languages are for now available. Second, the city has worked with EGID (Institute on gender and diversity management) of the University of Liège in order to reflect and to design its diversity plan. And third, the city works also closely with the Centre for equal opportunities and opposition to racism CEOOR, an autonomous federal public service. This collaboration is organized above all through the CRIPEL, for implementing non discrimination measures with a bureau of complaints accessible for all city employees victims of discrimination. These partnerships should be continued, strengthened even extended and can be pinpointed as good practices. Other cities could also experience partnerships with external resources existing in their own countries and adapted to their situation.

Furthermore, the city of Liège aims at developing its diversity policy through a strong communication policy internally. Several actions will be developed in order to inform the staff about the diversity policy development and above all about the city commitments in favour of diversity. It is important to point that the city wants to communicate at all levels of the staff and it is thus aware of the importance to inform and involve the top manager.

Finally, the city is also aware that the diversity policy has to be based on a permanent participation of its staff. The policy will be anchored in the services through various resource persons such as mediators for the discrimination, diversity ambassador, coach for the new staff and a kind of diversity team. At this stage, it seems that the diversity policy will rely on some persons (in particular those of the working group Diversity who applied for the Equality Diversity Label) rather than on a specific diversity unit. The coherence of the policy could suffer at mid-term of this situation.

6.2 Key challenges

Lastly, key challenges remain and can be summarized as follows.

First, there is a time challenge. If the city has been granted recently the Equality Diversity Label for having developed a quite ambitious diversity plan. It has only three years to implement it. Would it be sufficient regarding the large array of measures that the city wants to develop? The implementation is maybe at a too early stage to give expression. Nevertheless, in the framework of the Label, the city has charted a precise planning board and at the moment of redaction of this report, it seems that very few tasks have been accomplished according to schedule.

The second challenge is financial support. the city does not receive financial support from the federal level to develop the diversity policy designed in the framework of the Equality Diversity Label. The city does not receive either any financial support in the framework of its commitments within the UNESCO plan. Moreover, Liège is now lead city in Wallonia for the cities against racism. It would need to look for a strong support from the region mostly because the other city is Gent and will be strongly supported by the Flemish government. It seems, until now, that Liège itself did not allot a budget for implement its diversity policy. Would it be feasible to rely only on the existing resources, without allocating a specific budget?

The third challenge is linked to the second and is a question of human support. Apart from the working group Diversity who elaborated the diversity plan and who was an informal group with members from the city but also external members, no diversity unit has been set up. In other words, the diversity plan has to be implemented and followed as an added task for some employees. How could the city implement its diversity plan without diversity experts and above all how this plan is going to be identified without a supporting structure inside the city?

Finally, the city of Liège has taken decisions in favour of the development of diversity policy and diversity management and has developed a very ambitious diversity plan. Up to now, one should recognize that this plan is hardly at the early stage of implementation. It would be a pity if it will remain a dead letter...

7 Bibliography

Ceulemans E. *et al.*, *Diversiteit in de federale overheid. Studie naar de tewerkstelling van vreemdelingen en personen met een vreemde afkomst binnen het federale administratieve openbare ambt*, Leuven / Brussel: K.U.Leuven, Centrum voor Sociologisch Onderzoek (CESO), Instituut voor de Overheid / ULB, Centre de Sociologie du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Formation (TEF), 2005.

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.

Gsir S., M. Martiniello and J. Wets, 'Belgium report' in Niessen J & Y. Schibel (eds.), *EU and US approaches to the management of immigration. Comparative perspectives*, Brussels, MPG, 2003.

Kagné, B. and M. Martiniello, 'L'immigration a aussi son histoire' in *Passé-Présent de la Province de Liège*. Bruxelles, Editions Alambic, 1999, pp. 280-296.

Martiniello M. and A. Rea, 'Belgium's Immigration Policy Brings Renewal and Challenges', Migration Information Source. October 2003.

Région de Bruxelles-Capitale, *L'emploi au Ministère de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale. La promotion de l'égalité des chances et de la diversité*. Bruxelles, Région de Bruxelles-Capitale, 2005). Available online:

http://www.brussels.irisnet.be/cmsmedia/fr/l_emploi_au_ministere_de_la_region_de_bruxelles_capitale_la_promotion_de_l_egalite_des_chances_et_de_la_diversite.pdf?uri=43742a9609e1e1f60109e3e7fef00047.

Service public fédéral Personnel et Organisation, *Plan d'action fédéral 2005-2007 pour Valoriser la diversité. L'administration fédérale: un employeur pluriel*. February 2005. Available on line: <http://www.p-o.be>.

UNESCO, *European Coalition of Cities against Racism*, 2005. Available on line: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001453/145364e.pdf>.

Union des Villes et Communes de Wallonie, *Bonnes pratiques de recrutement du personnel dans les pouvoirs locaux*. April 2006, Available online:

http://www.uvcw.be/no_index/guiderecruitment.pdf.

Van Brempt K., 'Les pouvoirs publics flamands investissent dans la diversité', in *La diversité dans tous ses états*, Cahiers de la Solidarité No 10, January 2007, pp. 127-130.

Ville de Liège, *Rapport administratif 2006*. Liège, Ville de Liège, 2007. Available online: <http://www.liege.be/rappannu/2006/rapportadministratif2006.pdf>.

Ville de Liège, *Déclaration de Politique Générale*. 29 January 2007. Available online: http://www.liege.be/projetdeville/liege_29012007_declaration_de_Politique_Generale.pdf.

VVSG, *Divers talent, een meerwaarde voor uw bestuur. 15 ervaringen en goede praktijken uit lokale besturen*. Bruxelles, VVSG, 2007. Available on line:

<http://www.vvsg.be/cmsmedia/Divers%20talent.%20een%20meerwaarde%20voor%20uw%20bestuur.pdf?uri=ff80808112b6e0c30112b93ed0040062&action=viewAttachement>.

<http://www.diversite.be>

<http://www.pourladiversite.be>

<http://www.belgium.be>

<http://www.cripel.be/>

<http://www.liege.be>



Liège

<http://www.uvcw.be>

<http://www.p-o.be>

<http://www.pactbru.irisnet.be>