

Equal Rights In Practice

Issue 7 Spring 2007



The news review of the
Community Action Programme
to combat discrimination

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

1

EU PROGRAMME AND POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

2-5

Taking action:
a retrospective
of the Community Action
Programme

Looking forward
to seven years of PROGRESS

NEWS & EVENTS

6

CAMPAIGN ROUND-UP

7

SPECIAL FOCUS: THE EUROPEAN YEAR OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

8-11

National Implementing Bodies:
the Finnish approach

Working for the European Year:
a business perspective

NGOs and the European Year

A view from the Committee
of the Regions

PUBLICATIONS REVIEW

12

2007: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES TOPS THE AGENDA

Europe needs a society where all people have a fair chance to be actively involved and achieve their potential, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, age, disability, religion or sexual orientation. That society is not yet a reality, since the talents and skills of some people continue to be restricted or wasted because of stereotypes or discrimination. The cost is not only to the individuals who suffer discrimination but to society and the economy as a whole.

Recent years have seen the landmark Equality Directives of 2000 and the Community Action Programme to combat discrimination, which was launched in 2001 and concluded at the end of last year. Thanks to the efforts and cooperation of a wide range of actors, the Community Action Programme made vital steps forward in putting the principles of the Directives into practice (see page 2).

Building on this success, the 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All underlines the European Union's commitment to promoting diversity and combating discrimination. It is an opportunity to take our messages and actions to a wider audience, to make more people aware of their rights and of the benefits of a diverse society.

The Commission's hope is that the Year will also strengthen the existing partnerships between governments, authorities and organisations working in the field. The Year is an opportunity to galvanise the efforts of the many actors who play a vital role in each European country.

Since the Equality Summit in Berlin launched the Year in January, events and activities have been getting under way across Europe in the 30 participating countries. The European Commission recognises that a one-size-fits-all approach would be

inappropriate, as each Member State has its own priorities and needs. For this reason, the vast majority of activities are not dictated at European level but coordinated by National Implementing Bodies in each country.

The importance of the European Year lies in not only what it will achieve over 12 months in 2007, but the impetus it will give for the future. The Special Focus section of this newsletter (see pages 8–11) gives the perspectives of National Implementing Bodies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), business and regions.



Editorial by Belinda Pyke, Director of Equality Between Men and Women, Action Against Discrimination, Civil Society at DG is Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, European Commission.

TAKING ACTION: A RETROSPECTIVE OF THE COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAMME

The Community Action Programme to combat discrimination, which concluded at the end of 2006, was the first of its kind at European level. It was launched in 2001, a crucial time for European efforts to address the issue of promoting diversity and fighting discrimination in our societies.

The Racial Equality Directive and Employment Directive had laid down the legal framework in 2000 to cover discrimination on the grounds of race or ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation and religion or belief. However it was always clear that laws alone – no matter how comprehensive – could not be enough to effectively combat discrimination in our society. Concrete action was required to support the legislation and make an impact.

The Community Action Programme, with a budget of €100 million over a five-year period, set out three core objectives. Firstly, to improve the understanding of issues related to discrimination through analysis and evaluation. Secondly, to develop the capacity to combat and prevent discrimination through building and strengthening inter-cultural dialogue.

Finally, to promote values underlying the fight against discrimination through awareness-raising activities.

Building capacity and training

Capacity-building activities strengthened organisations' means of action. In particular, support was given to four umbrella networks of NGOs: the European Network Against Racism (ENAR), the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA), the European Older People's Forum (AGE) and the European Disability Forum (EDF).

Training activities played a vital role in developing the understanding and capacity of individuals and organisations. Seminars held at the Academy of European Law in Trier, Germany, helped legal profes-

Legal training participants at the Academy of European Law.



sionals who play a vital role in enforcing the directives get better acquainted with the letter of the laws.

In 2005, a project by Human European Consultancy and the Migration Policy Group assessed the needs of civil society in the 10 countries that had joined the European Union the previous year, in Romania and Bulgaria prior to their membership this year, and also in Turkey. This led to training sessions in each of the countries and to the production of a training manual for NGOs. The training manual is now available in all Community languages.

Sharing experiences and raising awareness

A key aspect of the Community Action Programme was to build partnerships and share expertise. A number of conferences and seminars held under the programme gave the floor to the programme's actors and also facilitated interaction and discussion.

Following anti-discrimination conferences held in conjunction with the rotating presidency of the European Union in 2001–2003, annual conferences for the Community Action Programme were held in Prague (2004), Lisbon (2005) and Warsaw (2006). These respectively focused on dialogue and communication between programme participants, access to justice, and anti-discrimination and diversity training. A further



conference will take place in Rome this April on the subject of positive action (see page 6).

The European Network of Legal Experts was funded under the programme to produce reviews and special reports on the transposition and implementation of anti-discrimination law

in the European Union. Its reports have highlighted national situations and reviewed developments in the European Court of Justice and European Court of Human Rights.

Two rounds of transnational projects supported international partnerships and collaboration between scores of organisations active in the field. The projects involved training and networking activities, developing data and monitoring tools, strengthening cooperation between public authorities and civil society, and specific actions to integrate Roma into education and employment.

It was vital to raise awareness not just among selected people active in the non-discrimination field, but also among the wider public. The 'For Diversity. Against Discrimination' information campaign, which is still active (see page 7), has focused on youth activities and discrimination in employment. Truck tours, runs for diversity and competitions for journalists and young people have contributed to promoting positive messages about diversity in society.



A stand at the 2006 annual conference in Warsaw, which focused on training issues.

Taking stock and moving forward

The Community Action Programme can be considered a success. The external evaluation of the programme found that the majority of activities were relevant and contributed to the objectives set out by the Council and the Parliament at the start of the programme. Those who had participated in the programme gave

positive feedback on what had been achieved at the closing conference in November 2006.

However, harassment and discrimination remain realities for the groups the Equality Directives sought to protect. Now that the Directives have – bar some gaps – been transposed into national legislation, it is essential to focus on enforcing them and defending the rights of citizens.

The achievement of the Community Action Programme has been to develop understanding, tools, partnerships and awareness. Work in all these areas must continue if real progress is to be made towards equality and

justice for all. The keys to continuing the momentum are the 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All and PROGRESS, which succeeded the Community Action Programme at the beginning of this year.

Further information on the Community Action Programme:
www.ec.europa.eu/employment_social/fundamental_rights/policy/prog_en.htm

Runners for diversity last year.



Community Action Programme 2001–06: some facts and figures

- 52 transnational projects involving 350 partner organisations
- Legal training seminars for 258 judges and prosecutors, and 198 lawyers
- Financial support for four umbrella networks representing over 1000 NGOs across Europe
- 92 reports by legal experts and 10 in-depth studies on specific non-discrimination issues
- Training for 96 anti-discrimination trainers and 519 NGO representatives across the 10 new Member States as well as Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey
- 23 EU Presidency and other European-level conferences
- 32 information leaflets, distributed in all 25 EU Member States
- Photo and poster competitions, and anti-discrimination and diversity awards for journalists and businesses

LOOKING FORWARD TO SEVEN YEARS OF PROGRESS

PROGRESS brings the work of the Community Action Programme and three other parallel programmes into one integrated initiative. It was launched at the beginning of the year and will run until the end of 2013. The aim is to support Member States in creating more and better jobs and offering equal opportunities for all.

The move will rationalise and streamline funding, which amounts to more than 700 million over the seven years. The focus is on analysis, networking and sharing information to improve policy and practice, and on campaigns to highlight key employment issues.

The European Social Fund (ESF) will continue to be the European Union's main financial tool for investing in people. The ESF invests in the implementation of employment policies in the Member States, whereas PROGRESS will focus on activities with a strong European dimension.

The five policy areas of PROGRESS

- Employment
- Social inclusion and protection
- Working conditions
- Gender equality
- Anti-discrimination and diversity

Further information on PROGRESS:
www.ec.europa.eu/employment_social/progress/index_en.html

DIARY DATES

MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION

'Realising integration' seminar, 1–2 March, Brussels, Belgium. This policy seminar, organised by the European Network Against Racism, will look at the themes of migration, integration, social inclusion and anti-discrimination.

For further information see: www.enar-eu.org/en/events/MIGRATION/index.shtml

POSITIVE ACTION

European Commission anti-discrimination conference on positive action, 23–24 April, Rome, Italy. The EU Equality Directives of 2000 make provision for positive action. This conference will look at the picture of how and where positive action has been taken up in EU Member States.

For further information see: www.ec.europa.eu/antidiscrimination

NEWS IN BRIEF

Closing Conference calls for data and partnership

On 27–28 November 2006, the Closing Conference of the Community Action Programme to combat discrimination reviewed five years of activities, sharing experiences and lessons learnt. Speakers also shared experiences from the parallel programmes for gender equality and social inclusion, which will be strands together with anti-discrimination in the new PROGRESS programme.

The need to develop data, statistical tools and indicators was a point raised by many speakers and participants, as was the importance of building on the partnerships between EU institutions, Member States, civil society and NGOs that had been formed during the Community Action Programme.

For further information: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/fundamental_rights/spot/dec06_en.htm

EUMC takes on fundamental rights mandate

The European Monitoring Centre on racism and xenophobia (EUMC) has been active since 1998 in collecting data at the European level to support the European Community and Member States in formulating courses of action.

The EUMC mandate has recently been expanded to enable it to become the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, and a centre of expertise to advise on how to better implement EU legislation on fundamental rights. The agency will collect relevant and reliable data and publish reports, and will work closely with civil society.

For further information: www.eumc.europa.eu

CAMPAIGN ROUND-UP

The 'For Diversity. Against Discrimination' pan-European information campaign enters its final year in 2007. Launched in 2003, a host of activities and events have taken anti-discrimination messages and debates all around Europe.



Aleksandra Woldańska and her design

Throughout the campaign, young people have not just been one of the key target groups, they have also been the ones delivering the messages to promote diversity. This has included a photo competition organised with MTV, and most recently the 'Breaking Stereotypes' poster competition.

'Breaking Stereotypes' was open to art and design students in all EU Member States, with the challenge to create a visual statement for diversity. Around 800 students responded with striking and imaginative designs that won the praise of the jury, a team of recognised artists and graphic designers.



Commissioner Špidla presents the poster competition trophy

Commissioner Vladimír Špidla presented the top prize to Aleksandra Woldańska, a student at the Academy of Fine Arts in Poznań, Poland. Her design, entitled 'Together', won €2500 in art materials for herself and a further €2500 for her academy.

She said: "I would like my poster to make everybody aware that only by accepting others as they are can we create dialogue among people." Her poster and a selection of the best designs were exhibited outside the European Commission's headquarters in Brussels and on the Truck Tour.

Winners of the third edition of the Journalist Awards will be announced shortly. The awards are designed to recognise the work of journalists who contribute to a better understanding of diversity issues in society. This year included a special award for young journalists.

The third European stop-discrimination Truck Tour took in 22 cities in 13 countries across Europe between 10 August and 21 November 2006.

For the Paris stop, the event was held in the suburb of Clichy-sous-Bois. It coincided with the first National Diversity Day in France on 4 November, a few days after the first anniversary of well-publicised riots that had taken place in the area. The visit of the truck was an opportunity to debate some of the issues, celebrate the diversity of the area, and give employers and local people the opportunity to meet each other face to face.



Politicians, employers, activists and local people gather at the Truck Tour stop in Clichy-sous-Bois, Paris



Young hip-hop dancers take the stage

Many people who spoke at the debate felt they had experienced discrimination not only the basis of their ethnic or religious background, but also for having an address with the 'wrong' postcode. Sciences-Po university and recruitment companies were among those who presented their diversity policies and met local participants in the event.

For further information: www.stop-discrimination.info

THE EUROPEAN YEAR OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

National Implementing Bodies: the Finnish approach

National Implementing Bodies are the motors of the European Year. A designated body in each of the 30 participating countries is responsible for developing the national priorities and strategies, and coordinating or supporting events at national, regional and local levels.



Finland's National Implementing Body is its Ministry of Labour. As with all other national coordinators, close consultation with partners was a key feature of the development of its strategy. NGOs, social partners, national, regional and local authorities, equality bodies and advisory boards were all involved. Self-governance bodies, notably the Advisory Board for Roma Affairs and the Sámi Parliament, also gave their input. All these partners are also key players in the implementation of the Year as they participate in a Steering Committee.

The Finns are taking a horizontal approach to the Year, using existing networks to bring together NGOs and actors focused on different grounds of discrimination. The activities will be focused around the four themes of the Year: rights, representation, recognition and respect.

European anti-discrimination legislation has been fully transposed into national law in Finland. A key objective of the Year will therefore be to focus on practical and real-life situations where the new laws can be used to defend the rights of citizens. There will also be a debate on which rights are not respected in the country.

Positive action will be one tool to promote equal participation and meet the 'representation' objective. Promoting diversity policies, strategies and management will be the focus for the 'recognition' theme. The theme of respect will be taken up by a wide campaign targeting employment, sport and the media, among other areas of life.

The launch event took place on 8 February and activities are already under way. An information desk is supporting all involved in the Year, in particular to share and disseminate results. A public campaign, supported by national broadcaster YLE, will peak between 17 and 23 September, designated 'Equal opportunities week'. 'Culture is meaningful' will highlight participation in the arts by minority groups, with a particular focus on ethnic minorities and people with disabilities. A host of other activities are also planned.

An eventful 2007 will be capped by Finland's first Annual Report on Discrimination and Equal Opportunities. It will cover all grounds of discrimination and multiple discrimination, especially concerning gender and age.

For further information: www.mol.fi, www.ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equality2007/index_en.htm

Working for the European Year: a business perspective

Employment is a focal point for anti-discrimination legislation in Europe. Promoting diversity in businesses has also risen up the agenda. Many larger companies now have a dedicated diversity officer, and smaller and medium-sized enterprises have also recognised the value of having a workforce that reflects the society in which they do business.



Year of Equal Opportunities for All. The added value of diversity is already recognised by many of its members. UEAPME hopes that many more companies around Europe will apply diversity policies in their recruitment and employment practices.

For further information: www.buinesseurope.eu, www.ueapme.com

BusinessEurope (formerly known as UNICE), hopes that the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All will support the goal of reviewing the practical implementation of new rights and concrete measures to promote equal opportunities. It hopes the Year will raise awareness in this area and highlight good practices.

BusinessEurope also intends to work closely with European trade unions on the issue of gender equality through the Year. This work started in 2005, and the Year is considered to be an ideal opportunity to promote priorities even further among union members and the wider public, and boost union actions at local level.

UEAPME, the representative of European crafts, small and medium-sized enterprises, welcomes 2007 as the

NGOs and the European Year

Non-governmental organisations play a vital role in the fight against discrimination. They are often the first point of contact for those who have suffered unfair treatment, and their expertise – often focused on specific grounds of discrimination – is invaluable in raising awareness of the key issues and defending the rights of victims. Umbrella groups of NGOs give their perspectives on the European Year.

The European Network Against Racism (ENAR) was an outcome of the European Year against Racism in 1997.

A key area of activity for its members in 2007 will be information: raising awareness about rights to victims, public justice authorities, in the media and to young people by working in partnership with schools. Special attention will be paid to the civil and political rights of migrants.

The European Disability Forum (EDF) also celebrates its 10th anniversary in 2007. It consists of national councils in 29 European countries, and represents an estimated 50 million people with disabilities. EDF members consider that it is vital to highlight multiple discrimination – for example women or ethnic minorities with disabilities.

EDF members also feel it is vital that governments give parity to the issue of disability and do not focus in an unbalanced way on other grounds for discrimination. The hope for the Year is to create a wide and public discussion on the issue of disability, and promote better understanding of the diverse types of disability.

The European Older People's Platform (AGE) recognises the need to focus on legal rights related to equal opportunities. It is particularly important to inform older people of their rights because they often do not perceive difference of treatment to be discrimination. AGE also calls for the Year to help to bring about a more positive image of older people. Public attitudes and challenging stereotypes should be essential ingredients in the Year.

The International Gay and Lesbian Association (ILGA) has called for the Year to help raise awareness about existing protection afforded to lesbian, gay and transgender people, and to contribute to legal protection on the issue of access to goods and services, in addition to employment. It highlights the value of working with employers, holding cultural events, tackling the issue of hate crime and promoting better understanding with religious groups.

The European Women's Lobby (EWL) calls for the European Year to link in to the Gender Roadmap plan for 2006–10. The EWL considers multiple discrimination to be a key topic for the Year, and calls for the information campaign to provide accessible facts and figures on discrimination.

For further information: www.enar-eu.org, www.edf-feph.org,
www.age-platform.org, www.ilga-europe.org, www.womenlobby.org



The European Older People's Platform



La plate-forme Européenne des Personnes Agées

ILGA
EUROPE

 European Women's Lobby
Lobby européen des femmes

A view from the Committee of the Regions

The Committee of the Regions (CoR) is the political assembly that provides local and regional authorities with a voice at the heart of the European Union.

The CoR welcomes the European Year of Equal Opportunities and supports the selected themes of rights, representation, recognition and respect. It welcomes the decentralised approach to the organisation of the Year, and calls for all regions and local authorities to get involved and use the Year's logo.

The CoR would like to see the Year include discussion on extending legislation to provide protection to access to goods and services for all grounds of discrimination.

For further information: www.cor.europa.eu

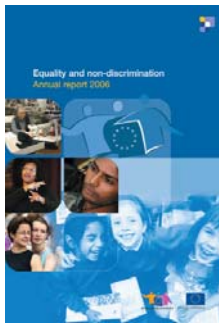
EUROPEAN YEARS SINCE 1997

1997	against Racism and Xenophobia
1998	of Local and Regional Democracy
1999	of Action to Combat Violence Against Women
2001	of Languages
2003	of People with Disabilities
2004	of Education through Sport
2005	of Citizenship through Education
2006	of Workers' Mobility
2007	of Equal Opportunities for All
2008	of Intercultural Dialogue



Sign up to receive the latest news on
the European Year - and all the European Commission's
other anti-discrimination activities - by email on:
www.nondiscrimination-eu.info

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION ANNUAL REPORT 2006



This is the fourth annual report on the Racial Equality and Employment Equality Directives and their implementation. The first part looks at progress made in implementing the Directives, and highlights changes in national legislation over the past year.

The second part of the report focuses on the 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All. It includes interviews with Vladimír Špidla, European Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs, and Ursula von Leyen, German Federal Minister for family affairs, senior citizens, women and youth.

HANDBOOK ON DATA COLLECTION



Most agree that further data related to discrimination is essential if the right policy and actions are to be developed in response to the issue. However collecting data in this area is complex from both practical and ethical perspectives.

The handbook on the collection of data collection related to discrimination is a detailed guide, offering good practice examples to aid the ethical collection of relevant and comparable data. It advises on developing statistical indicators and tackles key topics such as self-classification.

The handbook is an outcome of the project Making Equality a Reality through Appropriate data (MERA), which was led by the Finnish Ministry of Labour and supported by the EU Community Action Programme to combat discrimination. It is available in English, French and German.

See www.ec.europa.eu/antidiscrimination to download PDF versions of these publications or order printed copies.

This newsletter is produced under the European Community Action Programme to combat discrimination (2001–2006). This programme is run by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities to support the implementation of the two anti-discrimination Directives which were adopted in 2000.

The Action Programme has three main objectives.

- To improve the understanding of issues related to discrimination
- To develop the capacity to tackle discrimination effectively
- To promote the values underlying the fight against discrimination

For more information on the Programme and to sign up for free regular updates on programme activities please see www.ec.europa.eu/antidiscrimination

For more information on the five year awareness-raising campaign "For Diversity. Against Discrimination" which is being funded under the Programme see:

www.stop-discrimination.info

For further information on EU policies, legislation and activities on gender discrimination, please see: www.ec.europa.eu/employment_social/fundamental_rights/index_en.htm

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