

TERRITORIAL EMPLOYMENT PACT

Grupo Ágora

Abstract in English

Initiated in July 1996 and officially recognised in June 1998, the Territorial Employment Pact (TEP) of the Brussels-Capital region involves a set of original actions aimed at improving the management of labour markets at the regional level. The social partners, both employers and trade unions, are associated with the Pact as beneficiaries of a number of training measures and through a joint consultative body represented in the partnership that manages the TEP.

Abstract in italiano

Iniziato nel luglio 1996 e ufficialmente riconosciuto nel giugno 1998, il Patto Territoriale per l'Occupazione (Territorial Employment Pact) della regione di Bruxelles implica una serie di azioni finalizzate al miglioramento della gestione dei mercati del lavoro a livello regionale. Tutte le parti sociali, sia i datori di lavoro, sia i sindacati, partecipano al Patto in quanto beneficiari di un numero di misure di formazione e attraverso un comune organo di consulenza rappresentato nella partnership che gestisce il PTE.

Area: quality of life

Kind-category of project: Employment Pact

Kind-category of actor: Public Administration

Country: Belgium

Year: 1996-2006

5 key-words: employment, pact, discrimination, equal opportunities.

THE PROJECT

1.1. Description of the project

Territorial Employment Pacts (TEP s) are an initiative launched in 1996 by the European Commission in order to increase the impact of the Community Structural Funds on regional and local employment. The general aim of TEPs is to involve all parties concerned with labour around a common project that improves the coordination of job-creating actions in a territory. In Brussels-Capital region, the Territorial employment Pact aims at **improving the management of labour markets at the regional level.**

Objectives:

The intercultural component of the Territorial Employment Pact is seen in one of their general objectives: **“To fight discrimination on the employment market”**. The project of the pact is much wider (including the mobilisation of all the actors concerned by employment around a joint project which can permit better coordination of job-creating actions on this specific territory), but includes other specific objectives such as considering the international and intercultural character of Brussels as a

development factor of the region in order to build a strong regional identity based on openness and dynamism; reinforcing the resources of the Region of Bruxelles-Capitale within a worldwide context; organising a mixed management of job creation and development that reinforces the promotion of equal opportunities and the fight against any form of labour discrimination; and favouring the mobility of workers in Brussels.

Activities:

The Territorial Employment Pact in Brussels organizes seminars against racial discrimination and develops studies on discrimination which both the public powers and social interlocutors of the region use to determine the characteristics of their social pacts. The TEP also monitors the emergence of projects against discrimination of any kind in relation with the labour market within the framework of the Community initiative programme Equal.

This case study focuses on their: **Campaign for the battle against discrimination in hiring**

Since 1999, the project has been implementing the action to combat discrimination in labour on the basis of ethnic origin. In the framework of this new plan, an action directed at the intermediaries in the employment market (ORBEM employment advisors, consultants at the temporary employment agencies and consultants from the world of socio-professional insertion) has been undertaken. It includes producing an educational guide: *All equal in the hiring market – Fighting ethnic discrimination on the labour market*. This guide was presented on 18 September 2002 at a press conference. The objectives of this guide are:

- To provide the intermediaries in the employment market the tools necessary for a better identification of the components involved in discrimination.
- To help them to react appropriately to job offers which are discriminatory by virtue of ethnic origin. This guide is accompanied by a training course aimed at consultants on the labour market.

The guide *All equal in the hiring market – Fighting ethnic discrimination on the labour market* is available in a pdf version.

Communication actions:

- **Televised spots:** in 1999, a series of televised spots illustrating the Pact were broadcast over Télé-Bruxelles and TV-Brussel (repeated at the weekend). An agreement was signed in December 1999 with Télé-Bruxelles and TV-Brussel to set aside some air time for 2000 and 2001 to broadcast other information. Other advertorials are broadcast in 2001 and 2002.
For example :
ELanguages Space,
Madre, ébénisterie à vocation sociale
- **Information brochure for the general public:** an information brochure intended for the general public (four colours, three pages) has been printed in a run of 5500 copies and is available in English, French and Dutch.

1.2 Place and context

Created in 1989, the Région de Bruxelles-Capitale includes 19 villages and is characterised by an institutional plan for ten types of competences that appear in its bilingual statute. Socio-economic (labour) issues belong to regional competence and are therefore, bilingual. Issues concerning professional training, education, culture, and health are common in communitarian matters. Thus, the application of labour politics is granted by the Regional Labour Office of Brussels (ORBEM). During the late 1980's and early 1990's in the region of Brussels suffered a relatively important decrease of job opportunities, which led to a subsequent increase in the number of job seekers. In 1991 some measures were taken in the field of social and professional insertion in this area. ORBEM, together with the Regional Government, was in charge of regulating this plan.

In the Brussels-Capital region, over a 30% of the city's population is of foreign origin. This situation is the source of many prejudices and/or fears concerning the loss of local cultural identity by means of an imagined demographic outnumbering. This collective imaginary protects its cultural paradigm reacting against any difference that might challenge its characteristics. Labour discrimination is one of the many tools that it uses. Moreover, Brussels' economy is experiencing a radical transformation of its sectoral make-up, owing to its twin roles as the Belgian federal capital and "capital of Europe". Industrial sectors, which were once the engines of regional growth, are thus declining and being progressively replaced by service activities. However, this restructuring of the regional economic fabric is slow and needs to be stimulated by a series of aid and research measures that conciliates the local and international perspectives of the city.

1.3 Target

In 1999, the publication and dissemination of data relating to Belgium in an International Labour Organisation (ILO) survey on discrimination in recruitment produced a series of reactions. The data confirmed that, for the same qualifications and (other) demographic characteristics, employment applications by native Belgians are treated differently than those by Belgians of foreign origin. The ILO survey also led to a round of meetings between the social partners on this subject that had been ignored so far, and launched a campaign **targeted** at enterprises (see "Et si votre société était aussi riche que la société? Bruxelles au changement de siècle" [And if your company were as rich as society? Brussels at the turn of the century], in Solidarités urbaines, N. 58-59, June 1999). Thus, it could be argued that individuals from different ethnic origin are indeed direct **beneficiaries** of the TEP, but only its secondary (though ultimate) target.

1.4 Methodology

The experience of TEPs is an interesting example of the **emergence of new policies in labour management**. It shows the way to the new concerns for the social partners

in the future. The partners' involvement, however, requires that they adapt to the new situation. The social partners are often confronted with new issues, such as the fight for equal opportunities. They are also encouraged to examine the diversification their regional fabric considered in its social, educational and economic dimensions. These new issues often do not correspond to those that traditionally prevail in industrial relations systems.

The partners are led to change the perspective of their participation from an "interaction mode" focusing on negotiation to one that is much more characterised by discussion and deliberation. The purpose of TEPs is more oriented towards the "**project management**" of labour matters than to the "joint regulation" of such matters based on settling differences between employers' and trade unions' demands.

1.5 Authors, funding and network

General information:

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Collaborations, networks:

As is suggested by the Guide to Territorial Employment Pacts: ideally, all the partners concerned in the creation of jobs in the territory of Brussels Capital City contribute to the design and implementation of the Pact. This partnership thus involves representatives from businesses, unions and the other local socio-economic players. The participation may not be purely formal, it requires a concrete intervention in the work programme or its financing.

The partnership brings together a multitude of actors directly or indirectly concerned by the employment problematic within the zone.

The initiators:

- The Minister for Employment of the Government of the Brussels Capital Region
- The Minister for Economics of the Government of the Brussels Capital Region
- The Economic and Social Council in which the social partners are represented
- Bruxelles Formation
- The Flemish Department for Employment Mediation and Vocational Training (VDAB)
- The Training Institute for SME's (IFPME)
- The Flemish Institute for Independent Enterprises (VIZO)
- The Ministry of the Brussels Capital Region
- The Brussels Regional Employment Office (ORBEM)
- The Office for the Promotion of Tourism (OPT)
- The Regional Urban Development Secretariat (SRDU)
- The Port of Brussels
- The Brussels Regional Development Agency (SDRB)
- The Brussels Regional Investment Agency (SRIB)

- Téléport
- The Brussels Labour Market and Qualifications Observatory
- The Association of the City and the Municipalities of the Brussels Capital Region, CPAS (public social welfare centre) Section
- The Association of the City and the Municipalities of the Brussels Capital Region, Municipalities Section

The co-ordination is provided by the Director General of ORBEM

Other partners, who were not initially associated with the Territorial Employment Pact in the Brussels Capital Region, joined during the course of its implementation :

- The Federation of Employment Partners (FEDERGON)
- The Centre for Equal Opportunity and the Fight against Racism
- The two Community television networks : Télé-Brussels and TV-Brussel
- The Brussels Federations of Organisations for Socio-professional Integration : Febisp and OOTB

2. COMMENTS AND HINTS FOR AN EVALUATION

- The TEP prides upon its bilingual character in the Region of Brussels. Bilingualism is certainly a positive aspect concerning the intercultural integration of foreigners. However, the bilingual aspect of the project is more aimed at the specific historical and political conditions of Brussels than to the will to integrate foreign workers to the job market. Considering the large funding they receive from the EC, **the TEP could provide information and services in several languages**. This would certainly help the integration of socially discriminated sectors such as immigrants.
- An important issue of the Pact is the dialogical (joint construction) approach between partners (vs. a more traditional one based on negotiation). This might be a characteristic imposed by EU funding that is certainly positive in terms of diminishing discrimination and increasing equal opportunities for all citizens. However, **the implication of immigrants in this “joint negotiation”** is not as wide as would be desirable. Immigrants are one of the targets of the plan, and their consideration is restricted to the building of a non-discriminatory project.
- Such an ambitious action as the TEP, **involves too many parties and partners**, which is positive, since it can thus satisfy many interests and benefit from many different perspectives of the same situation. However, when too many differences separate the agents involved in a joint project, there is a large risk of disagreement and therefore the need of larger discussion and disposition to make certain concessions. If such time is not granted or the different organisations and institutions involved are unable to get to an agreement, the project is doomed to failure or, at least, to malfunction or distortion. The organisation of Brussels’s TEP is very positive about the agreements and results obtained, and focuses more on the positive aspects than on the negative ones. In fact, the continuation of the

project and the ongoing EC funding received could be considered a demonstration that the project is positive and productive according to its objectives.

- The TEP is **not a specifically intercultural project**, and thus its intercultural component is only a consequence of the high percentage of population of foreign origin living in Brussels. It is primarily aimed at the development of the region and not at the integration of immigrant workers. However, it considers racial, ethnic, and cultural issues a factor of labour discrimination and plans specific actions in order to balance the job opportunities of this sector of the population. A joint agreement to eradicate discrimination based on ethnic origin, religion, culture and language is a positive movement towards the creation of equal opportunities, but it should allow for the participation of the target community (groups from different ethnic origin in the region) in the design and development of the project.
- The TEP largely depends on public funding, which may condition its durability and orientation to possible future political changes. On the other hand, public funding can also be considered a guarantee of durability, since it can provide sound financial support. **Public involvement** in issues concerning ethnic, cultural or linguistic discrimination is always positive. It is both an indicator and guide of a popular view on the issue and its desire to improve the situation. Projects as wide as these really help to change discriminatory situations to a large extent, and should thus proliferate.
- Public funding is often linked to long bureaucratic processes that slow down the start of projects. Publicly funded projects often adapt to the conditions imposed or proposed by public initiative, which implies a series of formal aspects that limit their actions to a large extent. It is also subject to political interests and subsequent manipulation.

2.3. Conclusion: what is “exportable” in the project

- Although the project is not specifically intercultural, intercultural counts among its main objectives. The TEP is very active concerning **sensibilisation** of the general public (seminars, studies, guides, televised spots and brochures). In this sense, televised spots might be the most compelling one, since television reaches a wider audience with a more attractive format.
- The nature of the project itself is an exportable aspect. Intercultural issues concern the whole of society and should be approached from a perspective as wide as possible. The cooperation of several social partners and the creation of a **Pact** on non-discrimination in labour on which all of them agree strengthens both this objective and its results.
- **Public funding.** Although independent organisations enjoy a wider freedom of action, they usually suffer from some lacks of financial support. This explains why they make efforts to make their financial reports public, since this practice increases the confidence of possible donors. Public funding guarantees financial control of the projects it supports and it grants financial stability and continuation to projects. It also shows the compromise of the

whole of society with the sector of population that suffers from ethnic discrimination and guarantees everybody's contribution to this cause.

- It is a **documented practice** that might help develop similar projects in other regions.

3. OTHER COMMENTS

See files included in packet for related documents.

- R. Strauss, The Local Dimension of the European Employment Strategy. (EN)
- Communication from the Commission (Brussels, 07.04.2000), Acting locally for Employment. (EN)
- E. Courtheoux (ORBEM), L'Europe et l'emploi ... ça me regarde. (FR)
- ORBEM, Discriminations des étrangers et des personnes d'origine étrangère sur le marché du travail de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale. Recherche dans le cadre du Pacte social pour l'emploi des Bruxellois. (FR)
- EIRO, L'originalité des actions régionales en matière d'emploi. L'exemple du Pacte territorial de Bruxelles-Capitale. (FR)
- International Institute for Labour Studies, Partnerships for development: Studies on Territorial Employment Pacts in Italy. (EN)
- Pacte territorial pour l'emploi en Région de Bruxelles Capitale, Tous Égaux Face à l'Embauche. Combattre la Discrimination Éthnique sur le Marché du Travail.
- ECOTEC, Thematic Evaluation of the Territorial Employment Pacts. Final Report. ANNEX III : NATIONAL AND CASE STUDY REPORTS (EN)

4. LINKS

- Official site of Brussels Capital Region (composition of the government, administrations, para-regional bodies):
<http://www.bruxelles.irisnet.be>
- Brussels Parliament:
<http://www.parlbru.irisnet.be>
- Governor of the Brussels Capital Region:
<http://www.brugouverneur.be>
- Economic and Social Council:
<http://www.ces.irisnet.be>
- Portal to the capital of Europe:
<http://www.eurobru.com>
- Informatics Centre for the Brussels region:
<http://www.cirb.irisnet.be>

- Brussels Region Employment Office (ORBEM):
<http://www.orbem.be>
- Territorial Employment Pact:
<http://www.pactbru.irisnet.be>
- Brussels Training (vocational training):
<http://www.bruxellesformation.be>
- Brussels Association for Training in New Technologies and the Promotion of Employment
<http://www.brutec.be/>
- Teleport Brussels:
<http://www.teleport-brussels.be>
- [Job service and Engineers](#)
<http://www.indutec.be/emploi/>