



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 30.6.2006  
SEC(2006) 892

**COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT**

**Second Annual Report on Migration and Integration**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In its Communication on Immigration, Integration and Employment<sup>1</sup>, the European Commission committed itself to *'report annually on progress made with the development of the common immigration policy'*. In June 2003, the Thessaloniki European Council invited the Commission *'to present an Annual Report on Migration and Integration in Europe, in order to map EU-wide migration data, immigration and integration policies and practices'*. The Commission issued its First Annual Report on Migration and Integration<sup>2</sup> in 2004. This Commission Staff Working Document continues that process.<sup>3</sup>

The Annual Reports aim to provide an overview of migration trends in the European Union, analysing the changes and describing actions taken regarding the admission and integration of immigrants at national and EU level. They, thus, serve as a tool to review the development of the common immigration policy. The Second Annual Report should be seen in the light of the recently adopted Hague Programme<sup>4</sup>, setting the agenda on Freedom, Security and Justice in the European Union for the next five years.

This Second Annual Report on Migration and Integration is an intermediate document. It covers developments that took place in the calendar year 2004. In the meantime, there have been major developments at national and EU level, including the publication of the Commission Communication on A Common Agenda for Integration<sup>5</sup> and the Policy Plan on Legal Migration<sup>6</sup>. Legal migration and integration of third-country nationals are part of an important debate across the enlarged EU. Some countries, including the new Member States, have only recently been faced with immigration and integration challenges. Others have dealt with those issues for decades, but are now revising their policies. Those developments will be discussed in more detail in a Commission Communication *'Third Annual Report on Migration and Integration'* which is going to cover the year 2005. A major part of this Commission Staff Working Document is a Summary Report on Integration Policies and Recent Developments in the EU-25 attached as an annex. This Summary Report has been prepared in co-operation with the National Contact Points on Integration.

## 2. MIGRATORY MOVEMENTS IN EU-25<sup>7</sup>

On 1 January 2003, the number of third-country nationals residing in the EU-25 was 15.2 million, i.e. 3.35% of the total population. In 2005, the population of the EU-25 increased by 2.0 million (an annual rate of 0.44%), mainly due to net migration of 1.7 million. Net migration in the EU-25 was +3.7 per 1000 inhabitants. Cyprus (+27.2%), Spain (+15.0%) and Ireland (+11.4%) registered the highest rates. Positive net migration was recorded in all Member States, except Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, the Netherlands and Estonia.<sup>8</sup> Migration continues to be the main element in the demographic growth of the EU. This is particularly

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<sup>1</sup> COM(2003) 336 final

<sup>2</sup> COM(2004) 508 final

<sup>3</sup> The information below is extracted mainly from Member States' replies to a questionnaire, studies carried out by or for the European Commission, and information provided by Member States in their national actions plans for employment and for social inclusion.

<sup>4</sup> Annex 1 to the Presidency Conclusions of the European Council of 4/5 November 2004.

<sup>5</sup> COM(2005) 389 final

<sup>6</sup> COM(2005) 669 final

<sup>7</sup> The figures in this section come from the most recent data collections available.

<sup>8</sup> Eurostat, Statistics in Focus, Population and social conditions, No. 1/2006.

true of Mediterranean countries and some new Member States, which experienced the highest migration growth in 2005 as a percentage of their population.

Family reunification is very important in many Member States, accounting for 75% of inflows in France and over 50% in Denmark and Sweden.<sup>9</sup> In addition, account must be taken of the number of foreign-born persons who have been naturalised, a trend that is particularly strong in Sweden, the Netherlands, the UK and France.<sup>10</sup> The large variations in migration flows in terms of size and origin between the Member States continue, reflecting traditional patterns of migration and cultural and geographical ties.

### **3. TRENDS IN MIGRATION AND ADMISSION POLICIES**

The diversity of admission policies and instruments across the EU is growing. Apart from arrangements for family reunification, the use of green card policies, quotas or similar programmes enabling specific groups of third-country labour migrants, particularly the highly qualified, to obtain work permits continues. Measures to facilitate the admission of seasonal workers are also developing. The establishment of annual contingents or quotas is normally preceded by the identification of shortages in the labour market, usually in co-operation with trade unions and employer organisations. The new Member States are also starting to develop schemes to admit labour migrants. Given the variety of existing arrangements, and the mutual influence they exert on each other, the need for a level-playing field is becoming more apparent.

Special migration schemes continue to be developed with countries that have signed bilateral co-operation agreements. Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Albania, Moldova, Romania and Bulgaria are often involved. Spain has bilateral agreements with several Latin American countries. Most of the new Member States have bilateral agreements dating from the mid-90s with the neighbouring non-EU countries, such as Ukraine, Belarus and the Russian Federation. While they serve to alleviate the needs of the labour market, bilateral agreements are also seen as helpful in developing relationships with third countries and engaging them actively in preventing illegal migration.

### **4. TRENDS IN NATIONAL INTEGRATION POLICIES**

Major changes in immigration and integration policies are occurring in several EU countries. For most of the new Member States, the integration of foreigners is a radically new challenge, as highlighted in their first national action plans for social inclusion (NAP/incl) submitted in June 2004<sup>11</sup>. The growing number of third-country nationals coming to these countries requires new approaches to integration, going beyond the integration of minorities and refugees, which has been the main focus until recently. This requires qualified personnel in sufficient numbers and adequate financial resources.

The growing political and social recognition of integration issues explains the fact that an increasing number of Member States have chosen to set up centralised bodies in charge of immigration and integration matters. This should further facilitate the mainstreaming of integration issues that is taking place to some extent in most countries, though it clearly needs

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<sup>9</sup> Trends in International Migration, SOPEMI 2004 edition, OECD 2005.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> See Report on social inclusion 2005. An analysis of the National Action Plans on Social Inclusion (2004-2006) submitted by the 10 new Member States. SEC (2005) 256.

to be strengthened. Development and implementation of integration policies is generally shared between different tiers of government, i.e. national, regional and local, although arrangements differ widely. There is increasing recognition of the importance of involving local actors, including immigrants themselves, in the planning and delivery of integration measures.

A certain number of Member States now require new immigrants to fulfil certain integration obligations.<sup>12</sup> There is a new emphasis on obligatory integration courses, containing both language instruction and civic orientation. In the case of the Netherlands, it is planned that immigrants coming for reasons of family formation or reunification, as well as refugees, will in the future need to meet certain pre-departure standards. Some other Member States are currently preparing legislation intended to introduce compulsory integration measures, or are reflecting on the need to do so. In several countries, there is an emphasis on possible sanctions in case of non-compliance with obligations arising from compulsory integration measures, rather than on incentives in case of compliance.<sup>13</sup> These sanctions comprise cuts in financial support or welfare aid, the issuing of fines or the refusal of compensation for the costs for integration courses. Usually the successful completion of compulsory integration courses is more or less directly linked to the granting or extension of residence permits or is intended to be so in the future. The exchange of information at EU level about the design and impact of these courses will provide useful information as to their success as integration measures. In any case, care must be taken to ensure that national integration measures and integration conditions fully comply with Community legislation. The integration measures, as well as integration conditions authorised under Directive 2003/86 on family reunification and Directive 2003/109 on the status of third-country nationals who are long-term residents, should be applied without any discrimination (see in particular recital 5 of the two Directives). The definition of integration conditions and integration measures should not undermine the efficiency (*'effet utile'*) of the Directives.

Integration in the labour market remains a priority.<sup>14</sup> The response in the 2004/2005 national action plans for employment (NAP/empl)<sup>15</sup> was rather disappointing. Despite the commitment to achieve *'a significant reduction in each Member State in the unemployment gaps between EU and non-EU nationals according to any national targets'*, only Denmark<sup>16</sup> and the Netherlands<sup>17</sup> have fixed measurable targets. Instruments presented in the NAPs tend to focus on integration measures targeted at the individual, including language training, literacy programmes or vocational guidance, but they usually remain isolated or disconnected. A coherent and planned strategy to combat discrimination and promote integration in the labour market seems to be missing. Member States having received specific recommendations on the

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<sup>12</sup> Details are provided in the Summary Report.

<sup>13</sup> Integration agreements and voluntary measures, Analysis of legislation, INTI project, ICMPD, 2004.

<sup>14</sup> For a detailed analysis of national strategies, see Blaschke and Vollmer (eds.), *Employment Strategies for Immigrants in the European Union*, Berlin, 2004 (study commissioned by the European Commission).

<sup>15</sup> For an assessment of the NAP/empl, see the draft Joint Employment Report 2004/2005 COM(2005)13 final.

<sup>16</sup> To increase the participation rate from 57% to 65% by 2010 and have a minimum of 3.5% of state sector employees being immigrants or descendants from countries outside Western Europe and North America.

<sup>17</sup> To halve the percentage differential in unemployment between ethnic minorities and nationals.

integration of migrants display a mixed degree of response. The situation of immigrants in the labour market is analysed in further detail in several Commission publications<sup>18</sup>.

On the other hand, more importance is being attached to the question of ethnic or migrant entrepreneurs whose number has been increasing constantly in most of the Member States. In Italy, for instance, the number of companies whose owners or partners were born in a third country has been growing at a rate of 25% per year.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, it has been confirmed that migrants are considerably more likely to be self-employed than the native populations, a growing number of these are women and they are diversifying into different sectors.

In order to successfully integrate and participate in all aspects of life, migrants must be provided with basic rights in terms of access to education, housing, healthcare and social services<sup>20</sup>. At present, the level of rights varies greatly among the Member States. Whereas in some countries, most rights are obtained immediately upon receiving a residence permit, in others the situation differs according to the target group. Most rights are given to refugees immediately upon receiving their residence permit. However, migrants acquire them only after a certain period of time and under certain conditions. In certain Member States, even after 5 years of legal residence, immigrants are not provided with full legal rights in some of the fields mentioned above. A basic condition to facilitate the access of third-country nationals to the labour market is the recognition of their academic and professional qualifications, *inter alia* with a view to the access to and the exercise of regulated professions. However, while there are procedures in most countries to enable third-country nationals to obtain recognition of their credentials acquired outside the EU, in the majority of the Member States the procedure is different from that for EU/EEA nationals.<sup>21</sup> In this context, it is important to note that Member States are obliged to transpose into their legal systems the Council Directive concerning the status of third-country nationals who are long-term residents<sup>22</sup>. Third-country nationals who acquire, in one of the Member States, a long-term resident status under the conditions prescribed in the Directive have to be guaranteed equal treatment in all the above-mentioned areas. Careful examination of national transposition measures and concrete practice will be necessary.

An increasing number of Member States attach growing importance to the participation of minority groups in the political decision-making process, although overall progress is slow. Most countries have further enhanced their anti-discrimination policies and measures. In addition, many Member States have taken initiatives with respect to increasing tolerance and improving inter- and intra- religious dialogue. Such measures are increasingly seen as essential to the success of integration policies.

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<sup>18</sup> See in particular *Employment in Europe 2004* and Münz and Fassmann, *Migrants in Europe and their Economic Position, 2004*.

<sup>19</sup> Details in the Summary Report.

<sup>20</sup> As part of the action programme to combat social exclusion, the Commission has commissioned a study on access to decent housing for migrants and ethnic minorities, which is currently being finalised. The second edition of the 'Handbook on Integration for policy-makers and practitioners' will also cover good practice with respect to access to housing, healthcare and social services.

<sup>21</sup> See the Summary Report.

<sup>22</sup> Council Directive 2003/109/EC of 25/11/03, with transposition deadline of 23 January 2006.

## **Annex: Summary Report on Integration Policies and Recent Developments in the EU-25**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In its Communication on Immigration, Integration and Employment of June 2003, the Commission announced that it would report annually on progress made with the development of the common immigration policy. At the Thessaloniki European Council, Heads of State and Government called for exchange of experiences and the strengthening of the co-ordination of relevant policies at national and EU level. In that respect the European Council invited the Commission to present an Annual Report on Migration and Integration. The annual report aims to give an overview of the migration trends in the European Union and to analyse and discuss in more detail the changes in immigration during the period under review, as well as actions taken as regards the admission and the integration of immigrants both at national and European level. It should help to develop and promote policy initiatives for more effective management of migration in the future. The First Annual Report on Migration and Integration was published in July 2004. In the meantime, the Hague Programme aimed at strengthening Freedom, Security and Justice in the years to come has been adopted, and the Common Basic Principles on Immigrant Integration established.

This summary report on integration policies and developments in the EU-25 has been prepared by the Commission in co-operation with the National Contact Points on Integration as a contribution to the Second Annual Report on Migration and Integration. It has been drafted on the basis of a questionnaire answered by almost all Member States.<sup>23</sup> The purpose of the questionnaire was to establish key developments or changes in integration policies and programmes that took place in 2004 in the Member States and to focus on a few specific policy fields relevant for immigrants' integration into society. It concerned third-country nationals who are legally resident in the Member States, both newly arrived or long-established migrants and refugees. Although the replies vary greatly as far as the amount of information and details provided are concerned, the aim is to identify new trends, developments and priorities in integration policy and practice over 2004.

### **1. NEW AND ANTICIPATED DEVELOPMENTS IN INTEGRATION POLICY AND PROGRAMMES**

This section is aimed at identifying new trends and developments in integration policy and practice over 2004.

#### **1.1 New challenges and barriers to integration**

Most of the new Member States are encountering new challenges in the field of integration. In **Poland**, the integration policy has until now focused almost exclusively on a selected group of people having refugee status. Given that the number of foreigners coming to the country has been growing every year, the debate on the need to expand the integration process for other groups of third-country nationals has emerged. Another hurdle is the lack of qualified personnel and financial means for extra efforts that are necessary for fostering integration. The **Czech** Government has contracted out the elaboration of an 'Analysis of Situation and Role of Foreigners who are long-term residents'. The goal is to identify the main problems that may obstruct integration and areas not covered by State policies. In **Slovakia**, the integration process is influenced by the fact that Slovakia still remains a transit country, and

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<sup>23</sup> Replies have been received from all the Member States except Latvia.

refugees and immigrants are not interested in staying. Given the low number of long-term immigrants and recognised refugees, the Republic of **Cyprus** has not yet adopted an integration policy. It will be addressed in the new bill on Aliens and Immigration currently under discussion among Government departments. In **Malta**, a growing number of asylum seekers and refugees present an increasing challenge.

**France** continued the implementation of the main lines of its integration policy as formulated in 2003. It focuses on newly-arrived immigrants to whom a reception and integration contract (*le contrat d'accueil et d'intégration*) is proposed. In 2004, it covered a quarter of all French regions and it is expanding over the entire territory. In addition, a national centre of history of immigration (*la Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration*) was created. In December 2004, the High Authority for fight against Discrimination and for Equality (HALDE) was established. The implementation of the new policy constitutes an increasing new challenge for public services responsible for the reception of newly-arrived migrants.

Over the past years, the position of ethnic minorities has been the subject of much debate in **the Netherlands**. A large part of the population believes that ethnic minorities face integration challenges and that too little progress has been made in order to bridge the existing gap in the fields of education and employment. The killing of film director Theo van Gogh by a Muslim fundamentalist has led to a tense situation. It is considered that not only the economic participation should be enhanced, but also the socio-cultural gap needs to narrow. In the beginning of 2005, the Ministry of Justice initiated a range of activities to stimulate this process.

In **Denmark**, a high drop-out rate among young second-generation immigrants from high school and from vocational education, and a low performance among immigrant children in primary schools have been identified as major challenges.

## 1.2 New priorities in national integration policies

In most of the new Member States priorities in national integration policy are changing. The **Slovak** Government has adopted a new 'Concept of Migration Policy' that includes legal migration and integration of newcomers into the society. It will cover not only refugees, as has been the policy until recently, but also other third-country nationals. The **Hungarian** Government is currently elaborating its integration policy as well. After having completed several pilot projects in the area of integration, the need to formulate a comprehensive integration policy, dealing with various target groups, has been generally felt. In connection with the increasing number of third-country nationals coming to **Poland**, two new legislative acts have been adopted that, amongst others, create a new category – 'holders of the permit for tolerated residence'. Currently there are no integration programmes towards this group, but the need for such programmes has become apparent. In **Estonia**, earlier concepts of integration as primarily a one-way language-based assimilation of the minorities into the Estonian society are now evolving towards understanding that the key to the successful integration is equal opportunities for all members of the multi-ethnic society and their participation in all aspects of life.

Major changes in **Spanish** immigration and integration policies have been introduced by the new Government, the main rationale being the idea that immigration is a structural phenomenon which, if managed adequately, can promote social and economic development and enrich society. If this phenomenon is not adequately dealt with, it can result in major social problems such as xenophobia and discrimination, social exclusion, radicalisation, etc.

Two decisions were taken. Firstly, to open an extraordinary and limited possibility of access to the status of legal residents for those third-country nationals who are working in the black economy, have a work contract and can substantiate that they have been continuously living in Spain since at least August 2004. Secondly, to put much more pressure on the black market through enhanced labour inspections and co-operation with the trade unions. Lastly, the building of social and political consensus on immigration and integration policies has been identified as a key element of any successful policy in this sensitive area, since otherwise too much room is left for demagogical or xenophobic statements and deliberate dissemination of false information. Therefore, the new Government envisages a State Pact on Immigration with all possible political and social stakeholders.

As regards legalisation, two processes have also been opened in **Portugal**: one legalising immigrants from Brazil who entered Portugal before July 2003, the other one aiming to legalise immigrants who could prove the existence of an employment relation before November 2003.

Also **Greece** is currently revising its legislative framework concerning immigration. The new law includes integration provisions based on the Common Basic Principles on Immigrant Integration. The new legislative frame takes account of the experiences and best practices coming from other Member States. It is supposed to, on the one hand, guarantee the right of participation of immigrants in the economic, social and cultural life, and on the other hand, emphasise their obligation to respect the customs and traditions of Greek society.

In **Germany**, the Immigration Act has been adopted. It regulates the issue of integration for the first time at the federal level. An integration course consisting of 630 hours of language instruction and civic orientation is offered. Its details are given in a separate regulation. Additionally, the new legislation foresees counselling adapted to individual needs of immigrants. Finally, the Act provides for the development of a federal integration programme. The debate concerning the Immigration Act has substantially increased public attention towards integration matters, contributing to a political and social recognition of their importance.

In **Belgium**, following a governmental declaration of 2003 announcing the objectives to be followed to install a 'Multicultural tolerant society', a new law providing third-country nationals, who have resided in Belgium for five years, with voting rights in local elections has been adopted. In the Walloon Region, the focus of integration efforts is placed on making the immigrant an actor of his/her own insertion into the society. In the Flemish Community, the dominant impression is that up till now the integration policy has not been a success. It is considered that this translates into an increasing success of the extreme right political party and a highly publicised discourse of intolerance and segregation. The new Flemish Government believes that newcomers must do everything possible to be self-reliant, while the Government in turn should assume its responsibility to provide the necessary start-up possibilities, i.e. social integration programme.

The awareness that, notwithstanding three decades of integration policy, large parts of the ethnic population are still not integrated into Dutch society has led to a fundamental rethinking of **Dutch** integration policy. The new policy focuses on narrowing the gap in social, economic and cultural terms. The concept of tolerance towards cultural differences has been replaced by a concept of 'shared citizenship' that places much more emphasis on the need of economic self-sufficiency, respect for the rule of law, the ability to speak basic Dutch

and understanding of the basic rules and values of the society. Also, greater attention is paid to the role of religion, in particular Islam, in the integration process.

The **UK** has recently issued a five-year strategy document, outlining the future direction of its migration and integration policies. The policy areas impacting on integration activities include introducing a transparent points system for those coming to the UK to work, language ability contributing to the points needed. A high level of fluency is required for those seeking entry in the top tier, for which it will no longer be necessary to have a work permit for a specific job. Refugees will be granted temporary permission to stay for five years, during which time the situation in their country is to be kept under review. Only skilled workers will be allowed to stay permanently in the UK, and an increase from four years to five in the qualifying period before they are allowed a permanent stay is going to be introduced. The introduction of tests of language and knowledge of life in the UK before a permanent stay is granted is envisaged.

### 1.3 Recent and forthcoming integration programmes

Most of the EU countries have conducted various integration programmes and projects. For instance, **Italy** has managed pilot projects on vocational training and Italian language in immigrants' countries of origin such as Tunisia, Sri Lanka and Moldova. The **Finnish** Government is preparing a new immigration policy programme. All immigrants would be covered by integration measures according to the time they stay, live or work in Finland. In **UK**, most of the new programmes, such as a handbook for new immigrants, focus on naturalisation as British citizens. In **France**, certain modifications to the recently established integration programme are envisaged. They may include the introduction of a monitoring system and organisational improvements (e.g. childcare arrangements for parents following introduction courses). Various new projects have been developed at regional level in several Member States. For example, in **Germany**, projects aimed at language teaching for children and their parents, integration advisory bodies providing advice to the local government, internet information platforms for integration projects, etc. have been organised in Hesse and other federal states. In **Lithuania**, integration programmes are focused on refugees and third-country nationals granted temporary protection, as well as Roma and national minorities, with less account taken of immigrants from other backgrounds.

### 1.4 Financial challenges

Some countries have drawn attention to the fact that certain existing integration programmes or policies had to be discontinued during the last year. **Finland** has observed that there are (and have been) many successful projects, but transferring the results of these projects to normal policy development has been hampered because of the lack of personnel and financial resources. This problem is in particular tangible in the new Member States. **Slovenia** has pointed out that, whereas professional help and counselling are possible most of the times, financial needs are far greater than possibilities. The **Czech Republic** has also identified the lack of personnel and resources as a major obstacle. **Slovakia** and **Poland** have considered that a key problem concerning integration is the lack of interest on the immigrants' side to stay.

### 1.5 Quantitative and qualitative results

Some countries have indicated proven quantitative and qualitative results obtained at the national level in terms of improvement of the integration of third-country nationals. For instance, a campaign launched in 2003 in **Luxembourg** with the aim of increasing the

participation of non-nationals in local elections has reached its goal. Indeed, the number of non-nationals on the electoral lists has doubled. **The Netherlands** has pointed out that, in general terms, it is often difficult to quantify the effective results of integration programmes, as mutual understanding or acceptance can hardly be measured. Clear data can nevertheless be gathered concerning numbers of persons attending introductory courses. About 50% of the newcomers that have attended the obligatory courses have passed a Dutch language test (which will become an obligatory examination in the future). As many as 80% of the participants have expressed satisfaction with what they have learned. In **Greece**, approximately 130,000 foreign pupils attend public schools, 24 inter-cultural schools operate, and over 100 books for immigrants have been published. In the **Czech Republic**, a project 'The Next Door Family' set up by a NGO 'Slovo' 21 has been evaluated as very innovative and successful. The outcome was a meeting day when 100 foreign families visited 100 native families in their homes and a typical Czech meal was served. Under this programme, widely-supported by a media campaign, the families were carefully selected to share and discuss the similar lifestyle, children, profession or hobbies. In **Italy**, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies is monitoring the implementation of Framework Agreements, signed between the Ministry and the Regions, with the aim of systematically evaluating the gap between agreed integration objectives and results. A set of various evaluation criteria and quantitative or qualitative indicators are being used. In **France**, the first results of the implementation of the reception and integration contract are considered encouraging by the authorities. Over 90% of newly-arrived migrants signed the contract and were directed to a civic orientation course. 35% of them needed a linguistic training. A qualitative evaluation is undergoing.

## 1.6 Inter- and intra-religious dialogue

Most countries have further enhanced their anti-discrimination policies and measures. Many Member States have taken initiatives at the national level with respect to increasing tolerance and improving inter- and intra-religious dialogue, as well as projects specifically aimed at preventing radicalisation. In **Ireland**, the National Action Plan against Racism has a very significant integration dimension and will provide for increased dialogue. In **Cyprus**, seminars on multicultural education are offered for teachers. In **Austria**, working dialogue with religious communities, e.g. Muslim ones, takes place on a constant basis. In **Spain**, a new Foundation called 'Pluralism and living together' has been created by the Ministry of Justice with the aim of providing administrative support to non-catholic religious entities and of enhancing the process of institutionalisation. In **Slovakia**, the new 'Concept of Migration Policy' foresees the creation of a new working group in charge of increasing tolerance. In **Finland**, the Ministry of Education has supported certain inter-religious dialogue projects aimed at increasing the mutual understanding of different religions (mainly Judaism-Islam-Christianity). In **Italy**, the Minister of Interior has issued a Directive on interfaith and religious dialogue, calling for the promotion of local initiatives meant to enhance a structural horizontal dialogue between the various religious communities and a vertical dialogue between those communities and the local authorities. The establishment of dialogue platforms (working groups, observatories and other permanent bodies), in which religious communities, central and local authorities, entrepreneurs, etc. should be represented, has been recommended. The aim is to improve mutual understanding and communication between the religious communities in the local realities by contributing to finding out solutions to daily problems of co-existence. In **Portugal**, a specific body for the 'Dialogue with Religions' has been created with the aim of fostering dialogue between the State and major religious communities and among these communities. One of the initiatives in this framework has been the publication of a multi-religious calendar. In **the Netherlands**, a special programme has

been developed aimed at making the Muslim community less vulnerable to extremist groups. The Minister for Immigration and Integration has recognised two Muslim organisations as official consultative partners. They represent two different wings of Muslim organisations and have been founded to establish an ongoing dialogue. They serve as an intermediate between the Government and the Muslim community to discuss matters such as honour related violence, imam training, emancipation and the role of women, etc. In **France**, in 2003, the French Council of Muslim Cult (CFCM) was created together with its 25 regional representations. It is meant to allow for dialogue with other religions and within Islam. In **Germany**, there is up to now still no structured dialogue with Muslim communities, though a number of initiatives exist. Advisory bodies function at regional level, for instance in North Rhine-Westphalia.

Most of the new Member States are encountering new challenges in the area of integration. The growing number of third-country nationals coming to these countries requires new approaches to integration, going beyond the integration of refugees, as has been practiced until recently. Other countries are faced with long-existing challenges. Major changes in immigration and integration policies are occurring in several countries. Some countries, including Spain and Portugal, have taken regularisation initiatives. Greece is set to develop its new immigration legislation in accordance with the Common Basic Principles on Immigrant Integration. Among the major challenges, faced particularly by the new Member States, is the lack of qualified personnel and financial resources. It is important to underline that some countries are starting to elaborate quantitative and qualitative integration indicators. Lastly, initiatives concerning inter- and intra-religious dialogue have been actively developed.

## **2. ACCESS TO HOUSING, HEALTHCARE, SOCIAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE AND EDUCATION**

This section is intended to give an indication of the level of rights provided to third-country nationals in the areas of housing, healthcare, social security assistance and education. It is also aimed at gathering information about any other special measures taken in these fields.

### **2.1 Legal rights of third-country nationals**

In terms of legislation, the access of third-country nationals to housing, healthcare and social security assistance varies greatly among the Member States. The access to education is generally guaranteed. In some countries, like **Sweden, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Belgium, Greece, Finland, Netherlands, France or Estonia**, most of these rights are obtained immediately upon receiving a residence permit. In others, for instance **Italy**, most rights are given to refugees immediately upon receiving a residence permit, whereas migrants acquire them only after a certain period of time. In **Lithuania**, migrants obtain rights to housing and social security assistance after five years of legal residence. They are entitled to education immediately upon receiving a residence permit and, if they are working, also to healthcare. In **Slovenia**, only migrant workers enjoy full healthcare and social assistance. All migrants have access to urgent healthcare. They do not have equal access to housing. In **Austria**, a valid health insurance is a condition for obtaining a residence permit. Access to housing and social security assistance depends on the length of residence and is governed by the laws of the respective federal states. Education is equally accessible to all. In **UK**, access to healthcare is dependent on a person's status. In **Ireland**, non-EU migrant workers have access to healthcare immediately upon arrival. They do not, however, have access to housing or social security. In **Cyprus**, employers are obliged to provide foreign workers with accommodation.

### **2.2 Non-legislative initiatives in the area of housing**

Some non-legislative initiatives, such as special projects, programmes or campaigns, in the sphere of third-country nationals' access to housing have taken place. The Housing Fund of **Finland** can allocate special subventions when apartments are built or provided for the use of immigrants, which is also available for municipalities. Some NGOs provide shelter for young immigrants in city-owned apartments with the aim of helping them to manage independently with the assistance of an advisor. In **Italy**, within the framework of the Community Action Programme for the fight against discrimination, the 'Project Promoting best practices for Immigrants' access to housing' has been co-financed. Housing policies implemented at the local level are analysed in order to identify best practices and to diffuse them also at the European level. In **Spain**, most immigration and integration regional plans include programmes of intermediation in the housing market, connected with the guaranteeing function of a public institution (i.e. the public institution provides a guarantee to the landlord that the rent will be paid and eventual damages repaired). An information service in co-operation with banks and financial institutions is offered. In **France**, due to serious housing shortages, the social cohesion plan defined by the Minister of Employment, Social Cohesion and Housing, foresees the creation of 500,000 social flats in the period 2005-2009. In **the Netherlands**, there is much debate on how to tackle major housing problems, i.e. the overall shortage of supply in the lower part of the market and the fact that immigrants tend to live close together, especially in the bigger cities. The concentration of lower income, illegal tenants or overcrowded houses tends to turn concentration areas into ethnic ghettos. Public involvement in the distribution of houses among specific groups is being discussed. In **Denmark**, the Government has adopted a strategy against *ghettoisation* designed to improve integration of immigrants living in areas with a high rate of social problems. Initiatives include establishing jobcentres, homework help for children, sport associations for the young, criminal preventive initiatives, etc. In some new Member States, where difficulties as regards housing availability are serious, certain efforts are being made as well. For instance in **Poland**, the Council of Warsaw has obliged the commune to reserve five apartments yearly to refugees. In **Slovakia**, the Migration Office may provide funds to municipalities for the reconstruction of housing infrastructure.

### 2.3 Non-legislative initiatives in the field of healthcare

Special projects, programmes and campaigns intended to facilitate third-country nationals' access to healthcare facilities have been organised in some Member States. In **Portugal**, campaigns regarding immigrants' rights of access to healthcare have been carried out in health centres and schools. In many countries, such as **Luxembourg**, guides and leaflets explaining healthcare facilities have been produced and distributed. In **UK**, the HARP website (Health for Asylum Seekers and Refugees Portal) provides information on health and offers a standard appointment card, now being used internationally, which translates appointment information into 32 languages. In **Spain**, in Catalonia the edition of 11 dictionaries in the most used foreign languages for the medical conversation with patients is planned, and in Andalusia a pro-active access to the health system campaign for immigrants has been launched. In **Finland**, under an EU-funded JOIN Project, staff members at busy health stations are assisted by healthcare link workers hired on a part-time basis to communicate with immigrants coming from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. In **Belgium**, the Government has established a programme of intercultural mediation through which it subsidises intercultural mediators or co-ordinators in approximately fifty Belgian hospitals. In **Slovenia**, in the City of Ljubljana, a dispensary for persons without health insurance operates. It employs a full-time nurse and a social worker, while doctors are volunteers. They provide health services for persons without health insurance, including third-country nationals. In the

**Czech Republic**, a textbook concerning specific attitudes towards foreigners seeking healthcare has been funded by the Ministry of Health. In **the Netherlands**, an action plan to *interculturalise* healthcare in a systemic way has been adopted by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports.

The level of rights provided to third-country nationals in the areas of housing, healthcare and social security assistance varies greatly among the Member States. The access to education is more generally guaranteed. Whereas in some countries legal rights in these fields are given to all third-country nationals immediately upon receiving residence permit, in most countries immigrants acquire their rights after some time or under certain conditions. In some Member States, even after 5 years of legal residence, immigrants are not provided with legal rights regarding housing, healthcare or social security assistance. Various non-legislative initiatives, including special projects, programmes or campaigns aimed at facilitating third-country nationals' access to housing and healthcare have taken place in several Member States. In the sphere of housing, concentration areas developing into ethnic ghettos are an important problem. In the area of healthcare, particular challenges have been encountered in terms of providing health services to immigrants coming from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

### 3. LEGAL MIGRATION, RECRUITMENT AND LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION

This section is aimed at gathering information about migration schemes and their links with integration issues. It is further intended to provide knowledge about labour market integration and the recognition of skills of economic migrants.

#### 3.1 Migration schemes, green card policies and quotas

Many countries apply migration schemes, green card policies, quotas or similar programmes enabling specific groups of third-country labour migrants to obtain work permits. The **UK**, for example, has a long-standing (though relatively small) quota-based migration scheme for agricultural workers known as the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme. The quota has been set at just above 16,000 for 2005. UK also has a scheme for food processing workers and catering/hospitality workers known as a Sectors Based Scheme for which the total 2005 quota is 15,000. The **Italian** legislation envisages a planned quota system. The quota is determined by one or more annual decrees. Preferential quotas are assigned to countries that have signed bilateral co-operation agreements with Italy and also to foreign workers of Italian origin. For 2005, a first decree foresees almost 80,000 non-EU citizens who can enter for dependent, seasonal and non-seasonal work. The **Spanish** legislation foresees the establishment of an annual contingent for the foreign workforce, following the identification of shortages in the labour market, in co-operation with the main trade unions and employer organisations. The main sectors for which this procedure has been used so far are: agriculture, construction, hotel and restaurant-business, and family home service. In **Austria**, a quota system exists in relation to the so-called key personnel. It includes particularly qualified persons who additionally must show a minimum monthly income of 2,100 euro. A quota system also exists for temporary employed persons. In **Denmark**, according to the Job Card Scheme, a foreigner, who has been offered work within one of the professional branches where there is a documented lack of specially-qualified manpower, will be immediately eligible for a residence and work permit. The requirements are that salary and employment conditions must correspond to Danish standards. The professional sectors for which these rules apply are regrouped on the so-called 'positive list', which is revised on a regular basis. It includes, for instance, engineers, scientists, doctors, nurses, IT specialists. Also the **Czech Republic**

applies the Pilot Project ‘Active Selection of Qualified Foreign Workforce’. The idea is to offer permanent residence after 2½ years to selected qualified employees. The pilot project is continuously evaluated. All applicants must be holders of a work permit for a position with a certain defined level of qualification. The number of successful applicants is limited. The first stage of the procedure is an evaluation system based on points, taking into account the duration of previous employment in the Czech Republic, education, work experience, family, age and language skills. The project is open to citizens of Bulgaria, Croatia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Moldova, and latest graduates of Czech universities coming from all states worldwide. In 2004, the Government of **Slovenia**, for the first time, adopted a quota of work permits for the employment of third-country nationals, involving 17,100 work permits. In **Hungary**, Minister of Employment and Labour may establish the maximum number of work permits to be issued to foreign nationals for work at any given time, separately for the entire country, for the regions and for Budapest, as well as for each profession. The total number in 2005 has been set at 87,000. **Portugal** has a quota system that establishes the numbers of immigrants who can be admitted for work in various sectors, adjustable according to labour market scenarios. In **Sweden**, the Government has appointed a parliamentary commission to review the rules governing the possibilities for labour migration, in order to extend labour migration from countries outside the EU/EEA. In **the Netherlands**, as of 2004, only so-called ‘knowledge migrants’ (migrants earning at least a gross yearly income of 45,000 euro) can relatively easily be admitted to the country to perform work in salaried employment.

### 3.2 Special bilateral agreements with third countries

Some Member States have special bilateral agreements with third countries allowing labour migrants from these countries to obtain work permits.<sup>24</sup> **Greece** has concluded an agreement on employment with Egypt, as well as agreements on seasonal employment with Bulgaria and Albania. **Italy** has signed a number of bilateral agreements on labour migration with countries of origin of the main inflows, such as Tunisia, Albania and Moldova, and is negotiating further agreements with Egypt, Morocco or Romania. These agreements cover the whole process of entry for work reasons: a pre-selection phase in co-operation with the local authorities, the exchange of information on labour availability and on professional profiles required, the development of direct contacts between employers and the local recruitment agencies indicated by the Government, etc. **Belgium** has signed agreements with Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro. The previously mentioned **Spanish** migration scheme is based on bilateral agreements with countries such as Ecuador, Columbia, Dominican Republic, Morocco or Bulgaria. A bilateral commission is responsible for the pre-selection of migrants for the jobs offered. **France** has concluded bilateral agreements with various countries, including Bulgaria, Romania, Morocco, Tunisia or Senegal, encouraging the exchange of young professionals. It is worth noting that most of the new Member States have special bilateral agreements with the neighbouring third countries dating from the mid-90s. **Poland** has signed such agreements with the Russian Federation, Belarus and Ukraine. **Lithuania** and **Slovakia** have concluded them with the Russian Federation and Ukraine. The **Czech Republic** has bilateral agreements with the Russian Federation, Bulgaria, Mongolia and Vietnam, but it does not apply them widely. **Hungary** has signed two bilateral agreements with Romania.

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<sup>24</sup> Such agreements differ substantially in terms of detail. The information provided in this section is only intended to offer a general overview.

### 3.3 Language tests and obligatory introduction programmes

Some countries require that immigrants fulfil certain integration obligations. For instance, in **Austria**, newly-arrived immigrants must follow certain integration measures. An amendment to immigration law is currently planned. This amendment foresees an extension of the integration agreement currently in place. German-language courses are already organised. In **Luxembourg**, long-established third-country nationals who remain dependent for a long time upon social security assistance are obliged to follow specific integration measures in order to acquire necessary job skills. In **Germany**, a third-country national who receives a residence permit for the first time for the purpose of gainful activity, is, in principle, obliged to participate in an integration course if s/he is not able to communicate in German. Highly-qualified persons do not fall under this provision. The Flemish Community in **Belgium** requires that newcomers who register in a municipality, in certain cases, follow a social integration programme, covering language instruction, civic orientation and labour market insertion. For newcomers registered in Brussels it is not mandatory. Elderly persons, persons with health problems, as well as with proven earlier-gained competence are exempted. In **the Netherlands**, immigrants coming for reasons of family formation or reunification, as well as refugees, will in the future need to meet certain standards concerning language, as well as knowledge of Dutch society and basic social skills necessary for participation in Dutch society. They will need to acquire a first level of this knowledge before entry. Some newcomers will be offered introductory programmes once they are resident, others will have to pay for their own integration programme. The examination will need to be successfully passed within five years in order for the person to be allowed to obtain a residence permit for an indefinite period. The same is true for labour migrants who entered the country for a non-permanent goal, but have stayed for over three years. Also **Greece** is planning to introduce certain integration criteria, such as the knowledge of Greek language, history and culture. In **Finland**, unemployed migrants who are planning to stay will have a possibility and, in some cases, an obligation to learn the language and sufficient knowledge of the Finnish society. Other countries, like **Spain**, do not impose obligations, but they do offer introductory courses either in the countries of origin or upon arrival. All foreign workers are told to follow them in their own interest. In the **Czech Republic**, it is considered necessary to set up transparent pre-conditions for integration. At the same time, immigrants' rights should be increased. In **France**, delivery of the first residence permit relies upon integration commitments described in the reception and integration contract. France is planning to make this sort of agreement obligatory in the future.

### 3.4 Special incentives to facilitate immigrants' insertion into the labour market

Few countries apply economic incentives, campaigns towards employers or other special measures to facilitate the insertion of long-established third-country nationals or their descendants into the labour market. In **UK**, no economic measures are in force but employers are provided with a helpline to deal with their enquiries about employing migrants. In **the Netherlands**, among various large projects set up by the Government in co-operation with big employer organisations, is an agreement between the Government and the SMEs to employ a certain number of persons from ethnic minority groups. Specific initiatives are developed, such as a Plan of Action to deal with the disadvantaged position of highly educated refugees, the Committee for Participation of Women from Ethnic Minority Groups, or a Plan of Action against Youth Unemployment. In **Denmark**, placement activities have been strengthened as an element of the labour market reform 'More people into employment'. They comprise individual contract/action plans, a job and CV bank 'Jobnet', etc. Furthermore, the Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration has launched a campaign 'We Need All Youngsters'

running from 2003 to 2006, with the aim of helping young immigrants and descendants of immigrants to complete a study or training so they can subsequently find employment. Lastly, labour market activation in Denmark may involve recruitment with a wage subsidy. In **Germany**, since 2003 a project aimed at reducing unemployment among third-country nationals has been carried out in selected employment offices. Moreover, immigrants benefit from job activation strategies adjusted to individual needs. Since 1998, **France** has been actively developing a programme of fight against racial discrimination in the labour market.

### 3.5 Recognition of academic and professional qualifications

Third-country nationals have access to recognition of academic and professional qualifications obtained outside the EU, *inter alia* with a view to the access to and the exercise of regulated professions, but usually the procedure is different than for EU/EEA nationals. In some countries, e.g. **Spain, UK, Greece, Belgium, Denmark, Malta, Cyprus, Estonia or Slovakia**, the same procedure applies for both third-country nationals and EU/EEA nationals. Some countries have special measures, programmes or initiatives promoting recognition of skills and educational attainments of migrants. The National Qualifications Authority of **Ireland** facilitates the recognition of international qualifications. In **Sweden**, the Government has recently introduced a new labour market programme called ‘skill assessment in the workplace’, designed to make a quick assessment of foreign credentials, individual skills and work experience. Immigrants with skills from abroad will be offered a three-week apprenticeship within their profession to demonstrate their skills on the job. At the end of the three weeks, the individual will receive a certificate from the workplace that can be used as skill verification for job applications. In **Italy**, a 1999 Decree foresees that third-country nationals residing in Italy or abroad are allowed to ask on the basis of the yearly fixed quotas for the recognition of their professional skills achieved in a third country. In **Finland**, the National Board of Education issues advisory statements on foreign qualifications that can be useful when seeking employment. In **the Netherlands**, the Government has – in addition to existing possibilities of recognition of international diplomas and degrees – set up a system of accreditation of prior learning to promote the application of recognition, assessment and accreditation of competences. This initiative is supported by the social partners and educational organisations. In **Germany**, the NARIC provides advice regarding recognition of foreign credentials for all purposes to all relevant German authorities. It assures that equal criteria are applied for the recognition of foreign academic and professional credentials across Germany. In **Denmark**, five Regional Knowledge Centres for clarification of the competences of refugees and immigrants have been established. In **Portugal**, a relevant support office has been created.

### 3.6 Ethnic and migrant entrepreneurs

Some Member States have been able to provide information on the number of ethnic or migrant entrepreneurs and on the national political importance attached to the performance of this particular group. In **Italy**, 168,000 individual companies of this kind have been recorded, and the number of companies whose owners or partners were born in a third country is growing at a rate of 25%. This phenomenon is taken into great consideration by the Government. In **UK**, no official immigration statistics are available on the absolute number of ethnic or migrant entrepreneurs. However, research has shown that migrants are nearly 20% more likely to be self-employed than the UK born population. This fact is an integral part of the Government’s rationale for having a managed migration system, which enables skilled entrepreneurs to enter and remain in the UK, and is reflected in the creation of the Innovators immigration category in 2000, for innovative entrepreneurs, and the Highly Skilled Migrant

Programme in 2002, for the highly skilled, to supplement the UK's established routes for business people. In **Belgium**, no systematic registration system of ethnic and migrant entrepreneurs has been set up. However, ad hoc academic research has confirmed that in the Brussels area alone there are 18,000 self-employed persons originating from ethnic minority communities. For the Flemish region, this number equals 10,000. In **Greece**, the exact number of migrant entrepreneurs is difficult to estimate for statistical reasons. Importance is, however, attached to migrant entrepreneurs' achievements contributing to the financial development, to the increase of employment and the reinforcement of competition of the Greek economy. In **Germany**, in 2003 there were 142,000 self-employed non-EU citizens. According to the latest available data, there were over 58,000 ethnic entrepreneurs in **the Netherlands** in 2004 (versus circa 21,000 in 1994), and a constant increase has been noticed. Most ethnic entrepreneurs can be found in the catering industry, services and retail trade. Furthermore, the fact that many ethnic entrepreneurs are diversifying their activities, adds importance to ethnic entrepreneurship which is believed to contribute gradually more to the economy. In **Portugal**, research has demonstrated that 14.3% of foreigners are self-employed (a much higher percentage than in the case of the native population). In **Denmark**, as part of the Action Plan on Promoting Entrepreneurship, the Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration is subsidising local projects and advice centres and incorporating ethnic entrepreneurship into the education of newcomers. Also in the **Czech Republic**, data show over 50,000 migrant entrepreneurs. In some countries either the legislative framework does not require singling out the nationality of the company owner, like in **Lithuania**, or appropriate data are not available for other reasons.

A considerable number of countries apply quotas or other migration schemes enabling specific groups of third-country labour migrants to obtain work permits. Such fields of activity as agriculture, catering/hospitality business or construction are usually concerned. It is worth noting that also some of the new Member States experiment with new schemes of this type.

In addition, some Member States have signed special bilateral agreements with third countries allowing immigrants from these countries to get work permits. Those agreements often involve Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Albania, Moldova, Bulgaria and Romania, and, in the Spanish case, also some Latin American countries. Most of the new Member States have concluded bilateral agreements with the Eastern neighbouring third countries, i.e. Ukraine, the Russian Federation or Belarus.

A growing number of Member States require that immigrants fulfil certain integration requirements, such as language tests or obligatory introduction programmes. Many other countries are reflecting on such a need.

At the same time, few countries apply economic incentives, campaigns towards employers or other special measures to facilitate immigrants' insertion into the labour market.

Third-country nationals have access to recognition of academic and professional qualifications obtained outside the EU, *inter alia* with a view to the access to and the exercise of regulated professions, but usually the procedure is different than for EU/EEA nationals. Some countries have special measures, programmes or initiatives promoting recognition of skills and educational attainments of immigrants.

Many countries have been able to provide information on the number of ethnic or migrant entrepreneurs. The number of self-employed immigrants is steadily increasing. Moreover,

immigrants are more inclined to be self-employed than the native populations. Consequently, the national political importance attached to the performance of this particular group has considerably grown.

#### 4. INTEGRATION INFRASTRUCTURES AND MAINSTREAMING

This section is intended to offer an overview of the stakeholders and their role in integration policies.

##### 4.1 National administration

Integration of third-country nationals is a responsibility shared among various ministries, respectively in charge of internal affairs, justice, labour, social affairs, family, education, culture, equal opportunities, health, youth, housing, etc. The co-ordinating role usually belongs to the Ministry of Interior, like in **Greece, Germany or Hungary**, or to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, e.g. in **Finland, Spain or the Czech Republic**. However, in a growing number of countries, immigration and integration issues are being centralised in a specialised office or body. For instance, in **the Netherlands**, the co-ordination of integration policies is centralised at the Ministry of Justice, where a special Minister for Immigration and Integration has been appointed. In **Portugal**, a function of High Commissioner for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities has been created. In **Spain**, a Secretary of State for Immigration and Emigration within the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has been set up. In **Ireland**, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Reception and Integration Agency) has responsibility for the development of integration policy for refugees and those with leave to remain. In **Denmark**, the Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration is responsible for integration policy. Also within the Flemish Government in **Belgium**, a Minister of Social Integration has been appointed for the first time. It is important to underline that more and more Member States attach importance to the participation of minority groups in the political decision-making process. A legal basis has been given in recent years to a national dialogue-structure with the largest ethnic minority groups in **the Netherlands**. In **Portugal**, decisions concerning legislative changes in the area of migration are compulsorily consulted with the Consultative Committee for Immigration Affairs, a body regrouping representatives of various immigrant communities and NGOs. In the **Czech Republic**, a Commission for Integration of Foreigners (within the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs), involving ministries, associations of foreigners, NGOs, trade unions, local and regional authorities, has been established.

##### 4.2 National, regional and local level

Development and implementation of integration policies is generally shared between different tiers of government, i.e. national, regional and local. In **France**, integration policy is a State competence and it is implemented at regional and local level. The activities of public services are co-ordinated through regional programmes for the integration of the immigrant population (PRIPI) and local plans for reception of migrants (PDA). In **Italy**, the central level has the task of promoting, monitoring and financing projects, while the local level (local administrations, associations and NGOs) is mainly responsible for the effective implementation. Major changes have occurred in the allocation of resources, as the 'Fund for Immigration Policies' has been included in a more general 'Fund for Social Policies' which is almost completely decentralised. It is now entirely up to the regions to decide whether to address immigrants' needs or focus on other social categories. In **Spain**, integration of third-country nationals is the task of the Directorate-General for the Integration of Immigrants,

within the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. However, education, employment, health, housing and social services lie with the regional and local governments. In **Finland**, at the regional level, Employment and Economic Development Centres are responsible for planning, guiding, monitoring and performing separately assigned functions with respect to the integration of immigrants in society and in working life. At the local level, employment offices are responsible for employment policy measures and services, and municipalities have general and harmonising responsibilities. In **Germany**, there is a division of competences with regard to various integration-related issues. Several federal states have developed their own specific integration policies and practice, for instance in the field of education. Also in **Belgium**, the development and implementation of integration policies is shared between the various levels, with the different regions pursuing diversified integration practices. In **the Netherlands**, the focus of integration policy has shifted very much to the sub-national level. It is considered that integration takes place primarily at local level (in the neighbourhood, at school, at the workplace). A website has been created where municipalities and the general public have access to all kinds of relevant information. A special ‘service centre for integration issues’ designed to support municipalities is being set up. The municipalities of the 30 largest cities are developing their own integration agendas tailored to their own problems and needs.

#### **4.3 Mainstreaming of integration issues**

Mainstreaming of integration issues (i.e. considering integration issues when developing and implementing policies in all fields) is being applied in most countries, though to a varying extent and in various manners. In **Sweden**, for instance, all policy development initiatives of the Government are a common responsibility for all ministries. Consequently, every ministry has to approve the proposal, and the Division for Immigrant Integration and Diversity in the Ministry of Justice has a co-ordinating role. Also in **Finland** the mainstreaming is a basic principle. In **Ireland**, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform is actively promoting a policy of mainstreaming with all Government Departments involved in the asylum/refugee process. In **France**, the Ministry of Employment, Social Cohesion and Housing is in charge of integration policy, but the overall responsibility belongs to the Prime Minister, supported by the High Council for Integration and an annual inter-ministerial committee for integration, which is meant to ensure that immigration issues are taken into consideration in all public policies. In some Member States, mainstreaming efforts are undertaken at regional level. For instance, in **Germany**, an inter-ministerial working group in charge of co-ordinating policies of various departments with regard to their relevance for immigration and integration processes exists in North Rhine-Westphalia. It submits a report on immigration and integration within each legislative period. Also some of the new Member States are putting into practice the mainstreaming of integration issues. In the **Czech Republic**, each ministry is updating its own Plan of Integration Policies and Proposal for Legislative and Practical Action. In **Poland**, an Intra-departmental Group of Social Integration of Foreigners, whose task will be, amongst others, the mainstreaming of integration considerations, is being established. By contrast, in **the Netherlands**, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment has recently shut down its department for special focus groups and has integrated these activities in the general approach, the rationale being that specific measures for ethnic minorities should be less necessary in the future, as the regular institutions perform services for the population as a whole. Given that this policy is considered ‘not without risks’, developments within ethnic groups are being monitored by the Ministry of Justice.

Integration of third-country nationals is a responsibility shared among different ministries, and it is usually co-ordinated by the Ministry of Interior or the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. What is more, the number of countries that have chosen to set up centralised bodies in charge of immigration and integration matters has grown considerably. Examples include: Minister for Immigration and Integration in the Netherlands, High Commissioner for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities in Portugal, or the Secretary of State for Immigration and Emigration in Spain. It is important to note that an increasing number of Member States attach growing importance to the participation of minority groups in the political decision-making process. Development and implementation of integration policies is, to a different extent, shared between different tiers of government, i.e. national, regional and local. Mainstreaming of integration issues is being applied in most countries, though to a varying degree and in various ways. While some countries have set up special co-ordinating departments, the approach of the Netherlands has been different, as it has decided to integrate its activities concerning special focus groups as far as possible in the general approach.