

Antidiscrimination and Integration

ESN Social Inclusion Programme 2005-2007

ESN is a key European network in the fight against poverty and social exclusion and is funded by the European Commission in the framework of the EU Community Action Programme to Combat Social Exclusion 2002-2006.



The **European Social Network (ESN)** held a two-day seminar on antidiscrimination and integration on 20-21 July 2006 in Venice. The event was organised by ESN in cooperation with the **Regione del Veneto** and was attended by 40 delegates from 20 European Union (EU) member states as well as nearly 80 from the Veneto region. It was the second in a series of seminars organised by ESN in its Social Inclusion Programme as a key European network.

These recommendations, drawn from the seminar, should stimulate reflection among the key actors (European Commission, European networks, national governments, local and regional public social services) in the EU Social Inclusion Process. Ultimately, the recommendations are intended to lead to *action to combat discrimination against and promote the integration of people with disabilities and people from minority ethnic groups, including immigrants¹* paying special attention to the specific needs and situation of the Roma and other travelling people.

These recommendations are complemented by the ESN key recommendations on *access to quality services* which emerged from the first ESN inclusion seminar in Barcelona in April 2006.

POLICY AND PRACTICE

1. Social Services as Service Providers

- Social services must take action to **counter discrimination** against minority groups in the planning and delivery of services: here, the involvement of minority groups as service users should be strengthened in order that their needs be fully recognised and reflected. This will assist the move from a definition of need essentially based on the views of providers to one informed by the wishes and needs of users.
- Social services should consider the **development of an equality strategy** which would ensure **"equality proofing"** of all policies and practices to the benefit of the whole community.²

2. Social Services as Employers

- The work force in social services should **reflect the diversity of the community** it serves **at all levels** from frontline care staff to senior managers. Services should encourage applications from minority groups (e.g. job advertising targeted in specific media) and foster the promotion of employees from minority groups, e.g. mentoring/shadowing schemes.
- Social services should provide **antidiscrimination and diversity training** to all local authority staff and especially to frontline staff in order that they understand how to manage diversity among colleagues as well as among service users in the community.

¹ In the text, the phrase 'minority groups' is used for the three groups referred to here.

² For a model strategy, please refer to: <http://www.socialeurope.com/mandiv/en/checklist.html>

3. Social Services as Partners in the Community

- Local and regional authorities are often **major partners in community development**. Social services departments within these authorities should contribute to planning and management by providing expert advice on accessibility and the needs of minority groups within a corporate framework of local community development.

4. The Roma and Traveller Communities

- The Roma and traveller communities should be given special attention by social services and all levels of government in order to ensure that **services are inclusive of Roma and traveller communities** and respect their way of life.

GOVERNANCE

The review of the NAPs/Inclusion lead to a number of recommendations relating to the implementation of the NAPs 2006-2008 and to the preparation of the next round of NAPs.

5. National Action Plans on Social Inclusion 2006-2008

- National and regional associations of directors and elected representatives with responsibility for **social services should take an active part** in the implementation and monitoring of the NAPs and in the wider EU Social Inclusion Process.

6. Action by European and national policy-makers

- European and national policy-makers are urged to consider the **development of indicators** to monitor the implementation of antidiscrimination policies.
- National governments are urged to fully implement and to raise awareness among local and regional authorities of **European antidiscrimination legislation**, especially the recent employment equality and racial equality directives.³
- Local and regional authorities are major providers of social services across the European Union. Given their key relationship with service users and citizens, the European Commission and national governments should act to strengthen the **involvement of social services** in the European and national policy context.

The European Social Network, drawing on the experience and expertise of its membership, call on policy-makers and directors of social services across Europe to address the twin issues of antidiscrimination and integration in social policy-making and in the provision of services to diverse communities.

³ *Racial Equality Directive* (RED): Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin and *Employment Equality Directive* (EED): Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/fundamental_rights/legis/legln_en.htm