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AUTHOR'S NOTE

This article is the result of doctoral research carried out between 2009 and 2013, which received financial support from the Brussels Region (Innoviris) and Université libre de Bruxelles.

Introduction

- 1 For the first time, a study carried out at the end of the 1990s highlighted the systemic nature of employment discrimination in Belgium. Despite the same level of training and experience, applicants of foreign origin are recruited less often by employers in the private sector [Arriijn, Feld and Nayer, 1997]. In Brussels – a city-region characterised by a high level of unemployment and a large immigrant population – these results have a strong impact. In order to fight against ethnic discrimination in hiring, the regional

government and social partners took action to raise awareness among the economic sectors, employment agency staff and job applicants. A few years later, however, a second study pointed out the persistence of the problem [Martens and Ouali, 2005]. For the Brussels public authorities, these results conveyed the ineffectiveness of their action, and new instruments were created in order to intervene directly at company level (Diversity Charter, Plan and Label). This involved convincing companies of the benefits of the proper management of the diversity of their staff, in particular in terms of performance and image. At the same time, references to the problem of discrimination and the legal framework sanctioning these practices became more discreet.

- 2 In Brussels, as in other contexts, the professionals in these areas often present the fight against discrimination and the promotion of diversity as the two complementary dimensions of a single policy: the “two sides of the same coin”. The history and implications of these two approaches are different, however, and the link between them is not necessarily obvious. This article recounts the history of the Brussels policy in this area, by examining in particular the connections as well as the tensions between these two objectives. After presenting the context in which this policy emerged and the actions in its experimental beginnings (Section 1), we shall discuss its transformation in the mid 2000s. This policy was consolidated in particular with the inclusion of new measures in the regional law and the establishment of a Brussels unit of consultants in the area of diversity (Section 2). However, the promotion of diversity also constitutes a change in strategic direction, seen at two levels: the relationship to law and the targets of this public intervention (Section 3). As regards implementation, the impact of the main measure of this policy – the Diversity Plan – also reflects this evolution (Section 4).
- 3 In a social and historical perspective, a qualitative study was conducted to recount the progress of this public action over a period of fifteen years. The analysis is based on oral sources (semi-structured interviews conducted with stakeholders associated with the regional policy: political cabinet, regional administration, employer organisations and trade unions) and a corpus of documents. In this article, the subject is based in particular on the archives of the Territorial Employment Pact of the Brussels Region (minutes of meetings, activity reports, strategic notes, press articles). For their part, the data related to the implementation of Diversity Plans come from an evaluation mission carried out at the behest of the Territorial Pact [Tandé, Desmarez and Crosby, 2012], and whose methodology is specified at the beginning of Section 4.

1. The beginnings of the Brussels policy for the fight against employment discrimination (1997-2004)

1.1. The ILO study and the importance of its results in the Brussels context

- 4 In the 1990s, the International Labour Office (ILO) carried out a series of studies in Europe to measure the influence of ethnic origin on the recruitment processes of private companies. In Belgium, the study was financed by the Federal Science Policy office. It was conducted by researchers at *Université libre de Bruxelles* (ULB), *Université de Liège* (ULG) and *Katholieke Universiteit Leuven* (KUL). The approach was based on the

experimental method of situation testing: for each job offer tested, two young job seekers applied at the same time, each with a curriculum vitae which was equal in terms of experience and education level. The only deliberately different element was their national origin – Belgian for the first, Moroccan for the second. By making a systematic comparison of the way in which the recruiters reacted to each pair of applicants, the researchers established the structural character of the discrimination, in spite of the legal framework which prohibited these practices [Arriijn, Feld and Nayer 1997]. For the first time in Belgium, an academic study went beyond the observation of isolated discriminatory acts, by measuring their collective character: in Brussels, the probability that an applicant of Moroccan origin would be left out of the recruitment process due to his or her origins was 34,1 %, i.e. one out of three cases.

- 5 At the time, these results allowed a better understanding of the high level of unemployment among inhabitants of Brussels of foreign origin – a problem at the crossroads of two characteristics of the urban area. On the one hand, since the beginning of the deindustrialisation process in the 1960s, the regional economy has created few jobs for low-skilled workers. As a result of the dynamism and international attractiveness of Brussels, there was a significant level of unemployment and poverty among part of its population [Hermia and Vandermotten, 2015]. On the other hand, Brussels has a high population of people from non-European work-related immigration in the 1960s and 1970s, in particular from Morocco, Turkey and Congo. Today, these populations are still concentrated in the municipalities of the centre and west of Brussels, where the number of foreigners reaches 50 % and the proportion of people of foreign origin is even higher [Delwit, Rea and Swyngedouw, 2007]. While the cosmopolitan character of the urban area is also due to other factors (peri-urbanisation and departure of the Belgian middle class beginning in the 1950s, the migration of qualified Europeans who work for the European Union, arrival of migrants from around the world since the 1990s), unemployment and (non-European) foreign origin are two largely overlapping challenges in Brussels. The ILO study supplements past research, which had shown the stratification of the job market according to the national origin of workers [Martens and Denolf, 1993], and points out that discrimination is one of the causes of this situation.

1.2. The first actions in the framework of the Territorial Employment Pact

- 6 A federal body – the Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism (CECLR, today UNIA) – organised an information campaign to make these results known in the three regions of the country. The Brussels government took on the problem and decided to carry out a specific action, due to its authority in terms of employment and professional training [Adam, 2006]. The Brussels public authorities embarked on the creation of a Territorial Employment Pact – a discussion forum resulting from an initiative of the European Commission. It gathers political stakeholders, regional public organisations, employer organisations and trade unions. Aimed at developing economic dynamism and the level of employment in the region, the Brussels-Capital Territorial Employment Pact emerged in June 1998. During the press conference to present the new Pact, Minister-President Charles Picqué described employment discrimination as “a sensitive issue at the very least”, in which the public authorities wished to intervene “above all because it seem[ed] important [to them] from a human perspective, but also

because it [was] one of the components of the reality in Brussels”. After announcing several measures which were taken in the following months, the Minister-President specified that they had to allow the promotion of the “potential of the entire population of Brussels”. Unlike the official bodies overseeing social dialogue regarding employment – *Conseil Économique et Social de la Région bruxelloise* (CESRBC) and *Comité de gestion de l'Office bruxellois pour l'emploi* (ORBEm) – the Pact was designed as an informal opportunity for discussion. However, the first regional measures in this area were worked out during meetings of its plenary assembly and its working group devoted to discrimination.

- 7 The first initiative was the organisation of seminars intended for stakeholders of the Brussels economy. They gathered several hundred employers' representatives, trade union representatives and stakeholders in the area of social and professional integration, between October 1999 and June 2004. Certain seminars targeted specific sectors of activity (transport; metal production; old people's homes; hotels, restaurants and cafés; banks and insurance). During these meetings organised with CECLR, one of the researchers associated with the ILO study presented the results. At the beginning of the 2000s, a practical guide entitled “*Tous égaux face à l'embauche*” (Equality for All in the Search for Employment) was written for public and private employment intermediaries. Inspired by a Flemish initiative, the guide analysed the processes of discrimination, presented the Belgian legal framework in the area and offered concrete advice to counter possible discriminatory requests expressed by employers. The guide was distributed among staff at the *Office régional pour l'emploi* (ORBEm), and the members of the Pact undertook to promote it internally. In June 2003, an information point on employment discrimination was also created at ORBEm. The information point informs and advises people by directing them towards CECLR if they would like to lodge a complaint. Finally, the Territorial Pact ordered a new study to update and further the ILO study, this time by targeting the job market in Brussels specifically.

2. Structuring and reorientation of the regional intervention: the promotion of diversity (2004-2012)

2.1. The Martens-Ouali study and the changes in public action

- 8 The results of the new study [Martens and Ouali, 2005] were presented during the plenary assembly of the Territorial Pact on 14 December 2004. The methodology of the researchers at *Université libre de Bruxelles* (ULB) and *Katholieke Universiteit Leuven* (KUL) was partially different from that of the ILO study: rather than turning to stakeholders, they followed job seekers in their steps. The approach was more complete and combined situation testing, statistical analyses and interviews with job seekers. The results confirmed those established at the end of the 1990s: by comparing the paths of applicants of Belgian origin and those of applicants of foreign origin, the researchers observed discrimination towards the latter in 45 % of cases. The phenomenon affected women as well as men, both low-skilled and highly skilled applicants, even if they had acquired Belgian nationality. Within the Territorial Pact, these results pointed to failure: “If we continue to deal with the problem as we have done until now, we are going straight into the wall”¹. In March 2005, the study was presented during a public seminar, and the members of the Pact expressed the desire to transform regional

intervention in this area. A regional unit of consultants in diversity was formed in order to communicate more broadly regarding these challenges and to provide support to companies in implementing a diversity policy. The trade unions (CSC, CGSLB and FGTB) also received subsidies to hire advisers in diversity. Finally, new measures were created.

2.2. The new instruments of the Brussels diversity policy

- 9 In terms of communication and awareness raising, the sectoral seminars were replaced by meetings with a shorter and more informal format: the *Moments-spots*. Led by the regional consultants unit, often with the support of an external partner, they gathered companies around a specific theme (in-house mentoring, the diversification of recruitment channels, anonymous CVs). Priority was given to the exchange of practical information, and participants presented their questions and difficulties, the solutions they found and their accomplishments.
- 10 A Diversity Charter was proposed to companies in Brussels at the end of 2005. Signatories are asked to implement the management of non-discriminatory human resources, by trying to reflect the diversity in Brussels, in particular ethnic and cultural. The text, which is not legally binding, presents “pluralism” as a source of “increased economic and social value”: its promotion must benefit companies in terms of innovation and commercial outlets, and populations exposed to discrimination, through better access to employment. They are designated according to the criteria of foreign origin (with the Flemish term *allochtone*), disability, age and gender. Initially adopted by 50 companies, the Charter had 168 signatories in 2016.
- 11 Another measure appeared in 2010: the Brussels Diversity Label. Like the Charter, the Label is a communication tool indicating a company's commitment to diversity. But while the Charter is based on a company's unilateral support, the Label is awarded by the Brussels-Capital Region, with the main condition being the implementation of a Diversity Plan. Five companies received the Label in February 2010, and 15 others in December 2011. In 2016, there were 71 companies which had received the label.
- 12 Finally, beginning in 2006, the Diversity Plan became the main instrument of the Brussels policy in this area. In order to take part in the initiative, a private company must take action with respect to recruitment, staff support and communication. The objective must be to promote and increase staff diversity, bearing in mind the following criteria: foreign origin, gender, disability and age. The projects must be validated by company managers and representatives of the workers. They are then examined by the Territorial Pact Diversity Committee, the Actiris Management Committee, and the Regional Employment Minister. In the event of an agreement, the company receives support for two years from the Brussels diversity unit, and the planned action is co-financed by the Region for a maximum amount of 10 000 euros. The objectives and the modes of operation of the Diversity Plan were first stated in an informal working document, and were then enshrined in the law by a Brussels parliamentary order in September 2008, and a decree of the Government of the Brussels-Capital Region in May 2009. Between 2007 and 2012, approximately 50 companies joined the initiative. In 2016, there were 101 companies which had established a Brussels Diversity Plan.

3. A change in strategic direction at two levels

3.1. The relationship to the law

- 13 The notion of discrimination refers to the inequality of treatment experienced by individuals in access to a law, a good or a service, with respect to real or imagined characteristics which cannot be taken into account according to the law. The relationship to the law is essential here: in Belgium, the increased awareness of the notion of discrimination is linked to the development of European legislation. In the wake of directives in the 1970s which condemned unequal treatment related to sex, the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) allowed this principle to be applied to other categories. Directive 2000/43 of 29 June 2000 prohibiting discrimination based on ethnic origin and race, and directive 2000/78 of 27 November 2000 condemn these practices in the area of work and employment, by extending the list of prohibited criteria (disability, age, sexual orientation, religion and convictions). The legislative competences in this area are now divided between the federal state, the three communities and the three regions in the country [Bribosia and Rorive, 2008].
- 14 In Belgium as in other European countries, the references to the notion of diversity have multiplied since the beginning of the 2000s, first through charters, training sessions and action programmes in private and public organisations. These initiatives drew their inspiration from diversity management, conceived at the beginning of the 1980s in the United States, when human resources managers and management experts transformed the equal opportunities measures established in companies following the Civil Rights Acts (1964). According to this new approach, discrimination was deemed irrational from an economic point of view [Becker, 1957], and – motivated by ethical considerations – the legal constraints were also criticised: they would be incapable of reducing the injustice on the job market, and would be incompatible with the needs of private companies [Thomas, 1990]. In the United States as well as in Europe, the policies for the promotion and management of diversity were thus incentives most of the time: companies were free to commit themselves or not, and to choose the content of the actions they wished to carry out [Bereni, 2009; Dobbin, 2009].
- 15 In Brussels, the interventions in the first years always referred to the anti-discriminatory legal framework. By favouring information and awareness raising among job market stakeholders regarding these challenges (sectoral seminars, training of employment intermediaries), and by encouraging job seekers to react to discriminatory practices (complaints office), the Brussels public authorities acted as an intermediary with respect to legal action. Beginning in 2004, when public action included new measures and was becoming more substantial in operational terms, this dimension did not disappear – for example, the complaints office continues its activities to this day – but became less significant. The new instruments elaborated between 2004 and 2009 – the Diversity Charter and the Diversity Plan in particular – favour the spreading of operational advice and non-legal standards, included together as “good practices”. Furthermore, these instruments act only as incentives: the Territorial Pact prevents the possibility of forcing private companies in Brussels to commit themselves to a regional measure.

3.2. The targets of public intervention

- 16 Another difference between policies in the fight against discrimination and the promotion of diversity concerns the stakeholders (individuals, organisations) targeted by them. The notion of discrimination refers to acts (individual) and processes (collective) which treat certain populations as being inferior and put them at a disadvantage, preventing them from accessing scarce resources (employment, housing, rights and services). Based on prevention or sanction, anti-discriminatory policies are aimed at intervening in practices which are deemed unjust and unlawful, by distinguishing the guilty parties and the victims (potential or proven). For its part, the notion of diversity is characterised by a focus on the interests of organisations, in particular those of the management and shareholders. In spite of “win-win” arguments – it would also benefit the disadvantaged populations on the job market to maximise the collective interest – the priority is always to increase the performance of organisations. The prevention or sanction of unequal treatment is therefore a secondary objective, which could also simply disappear.
- 17 It may be observed that the instruments adopted in Brussels before and after 2004 do not target the same stakeholders [Tandé, 2015]. The first seminars were aimed at raising awareness among employers, union stakeholders and employment intermediaries in order to improve the situation for the inhabitants of Brussels of foreign origin on the job market. For its part, the information point on employment discrimination intervenes directly with these populations when they suspect that they have been the victims of a discriminatory practice. Beginning in 2004, these populations were no longer the only targets of regional public intervention, which had to benefit all components of companies. The text of the Diversity Charter thus considers that “pluralism” benefits managers, staff and populations exposed to discrimination, whether they are workers or job applicants. Furthermore, the inhabitants of Brussels of foreign origin are generally not associated with the implementation of measures. Thus, the Diversity Plan is above all part of a perspective of social dialogue: implementing a plan involves obtaining the agreement of the management and the staff representatives, as well as trade union representatives, as the case may be. A joint “support structure” must also be created to supervise the planned actions. But representatives of the groups targeted by the measure – defined according to foreign origin, gender, age or disability – are not always associated. This possibility is left to the discretion of the company, which, in practice, is rarely the case. Finally, the interest of private employers is reinforced directly by the fact that this Brussels policy imposes no restrictions on them, but offers them new resources which they are free to use at their own will (help from regional consultants, subsidies, communication tools). This approach can therefore be summed up in the phrase: “Diversity, a true asset for your company”².

4. The variable impact of the Diversity Plan in private companies in Brussels

- 18 A few years after the launch of the Diversity Plan, a first external evaluation questioned its modes of operation and its effects on the companies which commit themselves to it [Tandé, Desmarez and Crosby, 2012]. A key question involved identifying the possible

changes to the modes of company management and the situation of the target groups within these companies after two years. From a methodological point of view, several companies were selected according to the following criteria: they had to have completed their plan, be of different sizes (SMEs, large companies) and be involved in different sectors of activity. Based on internal evaluations carried out with the Regional Diversity Unit, the approach seemed to have had significant effects, or on the contrary, more limited effects. Interviews were conducted with representatives of the management and the staff (union representatives in certain cases). The analysis was also based on administrative documents (initial project, interim and final evaluation).

- 19 Generally speaking, the evaluation showed the capacity of the Brussels public authorities to convince private companies to commit themselves to this approach, and to carry out actions which they would not have carried out on their own initiative. This result is possible due to the incentive approach, based on the availability of resources (financial, support), and not due to the threat of legal sanctions. On a daily basis, the regional diversity consultants carry out intense lobbying with companies, in order to encourage them to commit themselves and to see projects through. Conversely, they try to separate themselves from labour inspection services. Another common point between the different plans is the compliance with the operational and legal procedure, from the signing of an agreement with the Region to the final evaluation after two years. The constitution of a joint structure which associates management and workers is often difficult, but is successful in most cases. However, major differences emerge during implementation. Certain actions in the initial programme are well implemented and become integrated into normal company operations. On the other hand, other actions are carried out only once, and the company returns to its former practices and procedures. Finally, for different reasons, certain companies do not carry out the planned actions, and the Brussels public authorities therefore have no choice but to take away the subsidies which were given to them.
- 20 For its part, the impact on the general operation of the company may be significant, in particular when practices and procedures are informal and/or debated internally. In this case, the implementation of a plan brings new practices, which tend to professionalise staff management modes. On the other hand, the plans produce less effects when these management modes are already very structured, in particular in big companies. Furthermore, the observed evolution is more significant concerning the general operation of the companies involved (selection and recruitment, staff management, internal and external communication) than the situation of those who work for them, with respect to the criteria used by the Brussels Region (nationality/foreign origin, gender, disability, young workers, skilled workers, low-skilled workers). While the problem of workers of foreign origin is examined with precision (analysis of staff composition, training of teams with respect to the challenges of discrimination and diversity), the plans contribute to putting an end to discriminatory practices when they have been identified in a company. But this problem can also be the object of more superficial attention, for example when the managers of a company maintain that diversity is an essential characteristic of their organisation, but refuse to investigate possible discriminatory practices which have taken place in the past. As regards unions, in the case of a social conflict in particular, the representatives may refuse to work on the issue of inequality linked to foreign origin, for fear of undermining the cohesion of workers with respect to management.

- 21 In the end, despite the aspects of the measure which are specific to Brussels – in particular the obligation for each plan to be in keeping with a perspective of social dialogue associating management and workers – the actions implemented in this framework greatly resemble those implemented in the private sector without the intervention of the public authorities: business case rhetoric on the benefits of diversity, the difficulty for discrimination to be a systematic object of investigation and intervention, the varying consideration of the situation and the interests of minority workers [Doytcheva and Caradec, 2008]. The comparison also applies to the effects obtained: the strictly incentive-based approach promoted by the public authorities and the room for manoeuvre which companies have in this framework, make the Diversity Plan a measure whose impact itself varies [Tandé, 2017].

Conclusion

- 22 This article focuses on the development of public action in Brussels in the fight against discrimination and the promotion of diversity on the private job market between 1997 and 2012. In recent years, several important changes have taken place, in particular the dissolution of the Territorial Employment Pact and the taking over of the management of this policy by the regional employment agency Actiris. Since July 2014, it has been defined by the *Conseil de la non-discrimination et de la diversité* (CNDD). This authority includes representatives of the Brussels Minister for Employment, Actiris, employer organisations and trade unions, and the Brussels Regional Public Service. What is the situation, therefore, with the challenges identified for the preceding period?
- 23 A first question would be about the objectives of non-discrimination and the promotion of diversity today. The assertion of this notion in the mid-2000s contributed to reducing the attention to the problem of discrimination. Likewise, by focusing on the interest of private companies, the regional government partly lost sight of the populations of foreign origin who were the initial targets of its intervention. The name of the authority in charge of supervising this policy today – *Conseil de la non-discrimination et de la diversité* – indicates the political will to link these two themes. It would be worthwhile to know what this translates into concretely, in particular in the implementation of Diversity Plans. In the first years of the measure, one of the biggest difficulties was precisely to work on the problem of discrimination in companies. Furthermore, the notion of diversity still does not seem to have received theoretical and operational content in public action in Brussels. This raises questions, as the Region also has a diversity policy within its own administration [Rea, 2015], and in 2017 it organised a series of public events on this theme.
- 24 A second question involves the impact of this policy and its measures on human resources management modes in private sector companies. The first evaluation of the measure indicated quite significant effects on staff management modes and, sometimes, an improvement in the situation of workers of foreign origin in the companies which had committed themselves. But significant variations between plans were also underlined, in terms of implementation as well as impact. The situation of companies was examined two years after the implementation of a Diversity Plan: it would be worthwhile to know if these companies have developed substantial diversity policies since, or if their commitment ended at the same time as the financial and human support offered by the region. The impact of this policy could also be

questioned for the Brussels Region as a whole, and not only within companies which are directly associated. On this point, a second evaluation mission concluded with limited effects at macro-economic level, and advocated in particular the realisation of a Diversity Plan as the condition for regional support for companies [IDEA-Consult, 2016]. At the end of 2016, the regional government seemed to favour increased support for companies which had committed themselves to this approach.³

- 25 A third challenge might also be questioned: that of the participation of populations exposed to discrimination in the elaboration and implementation of this policy. The absence of stakeholders who represent their interests directly in the Territorial Pact prompted a shift from the fight against discrimination to the promotion of diversity, and also contributes to the limited impact of the Diversity Plans. An evolution would surely take place if the processes for the elaboration and implementation of this policy were opened to populations officially designated as its “target public” (according to the criteria of foreign origin, gender, disability and age). But this would require to consider traditional modes of social dialogue in terms of employment, and more broadly, the universalist paradigm which directs most public policies in the Brussels-Capital Region [Rea, 2007].

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NOTES

1. Territorial Pact, 2004. *Réunion de l'Assemblée plénière du 14 décembre 2004*, minutes.
2. Territorial Pact, 2010. *Prêt pour plus de diversité dans votre entreprise !*, flyer.
3. Cabinet du Ministre Gosuin, 2016. *Lutte contre la discrimination. La Région bruxelloise va se doter de dispositifs totalement inédits*, press release. 08/12/2016. Available at: https://www.didiergosuin.brussels/sites/default/files/communiqués-de-presse/cab_gosuin_dp_discrimination_emploi_161208.pdf

ABSTRACTS

At the end of the 1990s, the Brussels-Capital Region launched actions to fight against employment discrimination with respect to people of foreign origin. In a social and historical perspective, using oral and documentary sources, this article presents the context in which this public policy emerged, the experimental actions in the first years, and its transformation in the mid 2000s. At the same time that it was consolidated (inclusion of new measures in the regional law, establishment of a Brussels unit of consultants in the area of diversity), this policy was also given a new objective: the promotion of diversity. While the fight against discrimination and the promotion of diversity are often presented as the "two sides of the same coin", these two objectives may also diverge or oppose each other. A review of the history of this Brussels policy, its evolution and impact, therefore allows the current responses to two major challenges for the urban area to be questioned: the inequality of access to employment and the recognition of sociocultural diversity.

A la fin des années 1990, la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale engage des actions pour lutter contre les discriminations liées à l'origine étrangère dans le domaine de l'emploi. Dans une perspective socio-historique, mobilisant sources orales et documentaires, cet article retrace les conditions de création de cette politique publique, les actions expérimentales des premières années, puis sa transformation au milieu des années 2000. En même temps qu'elle est consolidée (inscription dans le droit régional de nouveaux dispositifs, constitution d'une cellule bruxelloise de consultants en diversité), cette politique se voit aussi réorientée vers un nouvel objectif, la promotion de la diversité. Or si lutte contre les discriminations et promotion de la diversité sont souvent présentées comme les « deux faces d'une même pièce », ces deux objectifs peuvent aussi diverger ou s'opposer. Revenir sur l'histoire de cette politique bruxelloise, ses évolutions et son impact, permet alors d'interroger les réponses actuelles à deux défis majeurs de l'agglomération : les inégalités d'accès à l'emploi et la reconnaissance de la diversité socio-culturelle.

Eind jaren 1990 treft het Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest maatregelen in de strijd tegen discriminaties op de arbeidsmarkt op grond van etnische origine. In een sociohistorisch perspectief en op basis van mondelinge en geschreven bronnen schetst dit artikel de omstandigheden waarin dat overheidsbeleid tot stand komt, de experimentele acties van de eerste jaren en de wijziging van dat beleid in de jaren 2000. Tegelijk met zijn consolidatie (integratie van nieuwe maatregelen in het gewestelijk recht, oprichting van een Brusselse cel van diversiteitsconsultants) wordt het beleid tevens geheroriënteerd naar een nieuwe doelstelling: promotie van diversiteit. De strijd tegen discriminaties en de promotie van diversiteit worden weliswaar vaak voorgesteld als "de twee zijden van dezelfde medaille", maar die twee doelstellingen kunnen ook een andere richting uitgaan of zelfs tegenstrijdig zijn. Een overzicht van de totstandkoming van dat Brussels beleid, van de evoluties en de impact ervan verstrekt dan toelichtingen bij de huidige antwoorden op twee grote uitdagingen in de Brusselse agglomeratie: de ongelijke toegang tot de arbeidsmarkt en de erkenning van de socioculturele diversiteit.

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AUTHORS

ALEXANDRE TANDÉ

Alexandre Tandé has a doctorate in political and social science (ULB / Université Lille 2), and is currently an associate research fellow at Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity (Göttingen, Germany). His main areas of interest are migrations, sociocultural diversity and urban public policies (equality, employment, culture). He recently published an article on the implementation of Brussels diversity plans in *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*.
Tande[at]mmg.mpg.de