



European
Research Area

EUROPEAN POLICY BRIEF



The Migration Mix: Europe's Multicultural Challenge

Policy implications of EMILIE, an EU-funded research project exploring migration-related diversity issues associated with multicultural education, the labour market and political participation.

Findings based on case studies and comparative analysis in Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Latvia, Poland, Spain and the UK.

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INTRODUCTION

Objectives of the research

Cultural diversity has long been considered one of Europe's most valuable assets. Recognising pluralism as an integral part of European identity, the European Union adopted "Unity in Diversity" as its official motto in the year 2000. Since then, however, the EU has become even more heterogeneous, and the challenges posed by migration-related diversity have become increasingly apparent.

The EU member states studied in this project have been selected because they face important if different challenges in integrating groups with migration backgrounds into their education systems, labour markets and the political process. The disadvantages these groups face in schools, in the labour market and in their participation in public life contravenes basic EU values and undermines efforts to promote prosperity and social cohesion.

Cultural and religious diversity in European classrooms remains a challenge, even if intercultural education is not a new issue in the European education policy agenda. Though EU directives on racial equality and employment have been in place for nearly a decade, discrimination against migrants and minorities in the labour market is still widespread. While some progress has been made toward multicultural citizenship, most migrant and minority groups remain politically voiceless.

In this Policy Brief we present the main common challenges identified in the nine countries studied and put forward key messages and recommendations for policymakers in the field of education, anti-discrimination and political participation.

SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE AND ANALYSIS

This policy brief expresses an awareness that multiculturalism challenges in Europe relate mainly to the successful integration of both migrants and naturalised citizens.

Reflecting the structure of case studies conducted in all nine countries, **the findings are divided into three policy areas:**

- I. **Multicultural evidence**
- II. **The labour market**
- III. **Political participation**

The conclusions presented here are based on research into migration-related diversity in the nine EU countries studied in the project.

I. Multicultural education

How do EU member states define and measure diversity in their school-age populations?

Education is at the core of forming the EU's future citizens. It defines the 'in group' and the 'out group' and determines socio-economic opportunities.

Education can be inclusive - promoting principles of social cohesion and equality - but it can also propagate stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination.

Quantifying diversity levels among school children in EU countries is complicated by a lack of uniform assessment methods.

Some countries use linguistic criteria:

- Greece, which reports that 18% of its pupils have a different mother tongue;
- Denmark, where the figure is 10%;
- Latvia, where the major distinction is between Latvian and Russian speaking pupils, the latter constituting 26% of the school population.

Other countries use the classification 'immigrant children':

- Spain, for instance, describes 13.5% of its school children as "immigrant";
- France applies the same term to 8% of its pupils, although it does not count children who are French citizens but whose parents are immigrants.

The UK, on the other hand, focuses on children belonging to an "ethnic minority" (representing 4% of the country's school-age population).

The integration philosophies of EU member states vary significantly. Much is made of an apparent dichotomy between '*intercultural*' education approaches (emphasising the individual) and '*multicultural*' approaches (emphasising the group). At the education policy level in

What is the main challenge of multicultural education?

Europe, however, it is more useful to understand how children of immigrant background are bearers of a cultural mix rather than representatives of their parents' culture and to recognise how power structures create cultural hierarchies that are reflected in education.

The challenge for today's heterogeneous societies is to develop educational policies that are **culturally sensitive** and **inclusive**, policies that enhance personal development for an increasingly diverse student population.

Culturally sensitive education policy accommodates cultural/religious diversity while detecting genuine sources of conflict. This approach helps deconstruct discourse on migrants (especially Muslims), identify the contested issues and articulate solution scenarios.

Migrant-related education dilemmas (particularly those surrounding faith-based education) cannot be tackled in a manner that is valid for all countries and all religions.

How is religious diversity being accommodated in schools?

Regarding religious diversity in the classroom, different countries utilize different policy measures with varying degrees of success:

- Belgium provides for different religion classes as well as classes on philosophy that recognize religious diversity within the school population;
- Spain, Greece, and Poland have no provisions other than exempting the child from religion classes if the parents ask for such exemption;
- In Germany, the options vary between different states (Länder).

Thus, in some states different Christian religions classes are provided, in others ethics classes are offered instead. Very few schools, though, provide for Islamic religion courses as an option:

- France defines schools as a-religious, 'laïque' institutions and hence avoids the question;
- Latvia does not specifically address religious diversity in public schools, but provides the option of attending Christian religious classes or classes on ethics for those who opt out.

Are Muslim-oriented schools allowed in any of the countries studied?

In all the above countries, a number of schools of Christian or Jewish orientation can be accorded state-aided status where the state provides financial or infrastructure support at varying degrees without this being conceived as a violation of religious freedom or an offense to the secular character of these states.

Denmark and UK are the only countries which have officially allowed for the creation of schools with a Muslim orientation. However, while in Denmark these schools are given support by the state in the same way that other Christian or atheist schools also receive support, in UK this is not yet the case and the question is hotly debated.

It is not clear whether a passive accommodation of individual difference (allowing the child to be exempted from class) is more beneficial to the pupil and to the school environment than an active accommodation of individual religious diversity (providing different types of classes).

Do faith-based schools perform as well as conventional schools?

The research proved, however, that faith schools – even if not well equipped in terms of infrastructure - obtain better educational results for minority/immigrant children than mainstream schools. They apparently provide for a more positive and welcoming environment where children can flourish without feeling that their religion or culture of origin is frowned upon.

The debate about faith-based schools and the type of diversity that can be accommodated in European societies is more about citizenship values than secularism. The character and needs of each particular community must be taken into account when formulating policy in this sensitive area.

It is important to recognize and accommodate the linguistic diversity and cultural capital that exists within the immigrant population (particularly with respect to the way the language of the receiving country is taught).

Why should migrants also be taught their language of origin?

Learning the language, culture and history of the country of origin assists the student's smooth integration into the society of settlement. It serves to recognize the pivotal position between the culture of origin and the culture and language of residence. Educationally speaking, especially for children who attain school age in the country of settlement, teaching the mother tongue provides the functional basis for successfully learning the second language too.

For children born into immigrant families in the country of settlement it is essential that exposure to the language of the country of residence take place at pre-school age, possibly for several hours every day, in small classes, with qualified and motivated teaching staff (preferably bilingual).

II. Fighting discrimination in the labour market

Discrimination in the labour market is a widespread reality in Europe. Migrants (including ethnic, national or racial minorities) are exposed to unequal treatment in their access to employment.

Migrants and minorities are concentrated in unstable and low skill jobs for which they are often over-qualified; they receive lower wages and have poorer career prospects in comparison with their native counterparts.

How important are the EU's equality directives?

The EU's Racial Equality directive (2000/43/EC of 29/06/2000) and Employment Equality directive (2000/78/EC of 27/11/2000) constituted turning points for equality policies and awareness of discrimination in Europe. The rhetoric and tools of these directives (RED), introduced in the year 2000, were novel for most EU countries (the UK being a prominent exception).

European countries lack a common terminology for describing the groups most vulnerable to discrimination. Though UK, Belgium and Denmark talk of ethnic or racial "minorities" or "citizens with a migrant background", Greece, Spain, Germany, and Poland discuss "migrants" in terms of their status as "foreigners" while in France they are referred to as 'French people of immigrant descent'.

Have the EU's equality directives been fully implemented?

Although the RED directives have been transposed into domestic legislation in all EU member states¹, their implementation remains incomplete. The development of a broader anti-discrimination strategy addressing different forms of cultural, religious and ethnic prejudice has been fully acknowledged only by UK and to a lesser extent by France. Most of the EU countries studied here - including Belgium, Germany, Greece, Spain, Poland and Latvia - are still lagging behind in this respect.

There is a widespread lack of awareness about anti-discrimination legislation among the general public, and also among politicians and employers.

According to a 2009 Eurobarometer poll¹, only about a third of the population in the EU know about their rights in connection with discrimination. While this generally applies to the countries studied here, awareness is higher in UK and France people and lower in Greece, Germany, Latvia, Poland and Spain.

Among both minority and majority members of society, discrimination practices leading to unequal opportunity for vulnerable groups on the labour market are often confused with more 'objective' factors creating disadvantage such as lack of skills, problems of integration or linguistic difficulties.

Why have so few discrimination cases been registered?

A very small number of discrimination complaints and cases in courts have been registered in most of the EU countries studied. This low frequency is mainly attributable to two factors:

1. Insufficient institutional support for non governmental organisations (Germany, Greece, Spain)
2. A lack of awareness of the new legal instruments available to victims (Belgium, Denmark, Greece, Germany, Spain, Poland)

The equality bodies created by the relevant laws have very limited, if any, binding powers, and their institutional set-up does not offer an adequate level of independence from the state authorities (particularly in Poland, Greece and Spain).

Data collection on migrants (ethnic, national and racial minorities) is a blind spot of anti-discrimination strategy in all countries, possibly with the exception of the UK. Without reliable data, most unfair treatment is perceived as merely a problem emanating from the shortcomings of the victims themselves: i.e. lack of language proficiency, lack of skills, or behavioural and adaptation difficulties. However, ethnic statistics remain a taboo in large EU countries with large immigrant populations such as France and Germany.

III. Political participation

The different integration philosophies of EU countries translate into different approaches to citizenship and varying degrees of political participation for migrants and minorities.

Migration-related diversity is encouraging debate about the need for a more civic understanding of citizenship across Europe.

¹ (http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_317_en.pdf, page 35)

Though migrants and minorities remain politically marginalised in the European Union, conditions have developed positively during the last two decades.

Over the last decade, the most significant change in terms of access to political rights has been the enfranchisement of EU citizens living in a country of which they do not possess the nationality (established in the Maastricht Treaty of the EU):

In what types of elections are EU citizens and non-EU citizens allowed to vote?

Table 1 – Voting Rights of non-Nationals according to type of election

First category: Voting Rights of EU citizens				
	Local	Regional	National	European
France	EU citizens	--	--	EU citizens
Germany	EU citizens	--	--	EU citizens
Greece	EU citizens	--	--	EU citizens
Latvia	EU citizens	--	--	EU citizens
Poland	EU citizens	--	--	EU citizens
Second category: Voting Rights of EU and non EU citizens				
Denmark	EU and non-EU citizens*	--	--	EU citizens
Belgium	EU and non-EU citizens	--	--	EU citizens
Third category: Voting Rights of EU and former colonies' citizens				
UK	EU and Commonwealth citizens (+ citizens of Cyprus, Malta and Ireland)	EU and Commonwealth citizens (+ citizens of Cyprus, Malta and Ireland)	Commonwealth citizens (+ citizens of Cyprus, Malta and Ireland)	EU and Commonwealth citizens (+ citizens of Cyprus, Malta and Ireland)
Fourth category: Voting Rights of EU citizens and bilateral reciprocal agreements				
Spain	EU and Norwegian citizens*	--	--	EU citizens

* Also voting in provincial elections.

Source: Table compiled by Hassan Boussetta and Ruby Gropas on the basis of the EMILIE project reports on immigrants' political participation in Europe. For more see: <http://emilie.eliamep.gr/european-policy-briefs/>

The introduction of voting rights for European citizens in local and European elections has encouraged debate on the political rights of non-European resident foreigners (i.e. third country nationals). At the European level, the traditional, restrictive linkage between citizenship and nationality has been challenged.

A political consensus is currently being constructed between centre and left wing political parties across Europe on the need to concede voting rights at the local level to third country nationals.

What kind of political parties do migrant populations in the EU support?

- In France, a representative panel of French citizens of North-African, African and Turkish descent showed that 63% among them associate themselves with the Left (compared to 37% among native French) and nearly 50% with the Socialist Party (33% among native French).
- An opinion poll in Germany among Turkish citizens (both enfranchised and disenfranchised) showed that 74% would vote for the Social Democratic Party SPD (36% among natives). A similar trend has been observed in favour of the British Labour Party.

- In Denmark in 2006, a poll referring to voting preferences in the then forthcoming 2007 general election showed that 47.6% of immigrants would vote for the Social Democrats against 25.8% among native voters.
- In new immigration countries such as Greece, Spain, or Poland, such data on party preferences of immigrant voters are not yet available.

Why are minorities less likely to vote?

Although information on migrant and minority voters is incomplete, available data show lower levels of electoral participation among them than among nationals. An important obstacle to immigrant/minority electoral participation is the fact that they need to register in order to vote, and they are often unaware of this requirement (in particular in Belgium, France and the UK).

Obstacles to political participation are high in countries where naturalisation legislation remains highly restrictive (e.g. Greece). In countries with a strong assimilationist tradition, such as France, Germany, Greece and Denmark, the national political culture makes it difficult to recognise the collective dimension of ethnic minority political interests.

Where large segments of migrant and minority populations remain disenfranchised, significant political mobilization occurs (by necessity) through voluntary associations. This is the case in France, Spain and Germany, for example. It is also observable in Denmark at the local level.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY MAKERS

I. Multicultural education

- Guarantee access to schooling, regardless of the legal status of the student and his or her parents (Article 28 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child).
- **Provide lifelong training in intercultural/ multicultural pedagogy for teachers. Train them to teach the language of the receiving country as a second language.**
- Offer incentives (fewer hours, additional pay, recognition of formal qualifications) for educators and teachers who are interested in teaching in schools with large minority groups.
- Appoint bilingual/bicultural teachers, reduce class sizes and, where necessary, employ a second teacher or cultural mediator in class.
- Prevent schools from developing an “all-foreigner” or “all-immigrant” demographic.
- **Ground multicultural education on a solid basis of citizenship education.** Develop school curricula that emphasise these three elements of citizenship education:
 - social and moral responsibility
 - community involvement
 - political literacy

II. Fighting discrimination in the labour market

- Require annual reporting on anti-discrimination compliance for public institutions and private companies. Establish specific procedures for monitoring and reporting.
- Launch information campaigns designed to:
 - explain how the discrimination-inequality relationship works, and
 - identify legal remedies available to those who have been discriminated against in the labour market.
- Review the institutional set-up, resources, working procedures and transparency of each country’s equality body. Seek to strengthen the capacity of these bodies, encouraging cooperation with civil society and experts.

III. Political participation

- Make naturalisation requirements realistically achievable and remove obstacles to multiple citizenship.
- Grant descendents of non-nationals who are permanent residents (so-called second generation migrants) preferential access to citizenship.
- Concede local voting rights to third-country nationals.

- **Recognize length of stay in the host society (rather than country of origin) as a criterion for determining political participation rights for long-term migrants.**
 - Intensify efforts to promote voter registration, removing material and symbolic obstacles.
 - Encourage political parties to reflect on the degree of their intercultural composition and implement more inclusive policies.
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RESEARCH PARAMETERS

EMILIE (A European Approach to Multicultural Citizenship: Legal Political and Educational Challenges) was an EU-funded interdisciplinary research project aimed at developing a common EU intellectual framework for addressing the challenges of multiculturalism.

Objectives

The main objectives of the project were to:

- investigate the challenges of multiculturalism and the ways in which different EU member states deal with them;
- compare national experiences, national policies and national value discourses associated with migration-related diversity;
- engage the policy community and civil society in reflecting on appropriate policy responses and the values underpinning these policies;
- provide national and EU-level policy recommendations on how to approach educational, legal and political challenges raised by immigration.

Methodology

Research for the EMILIE project was carried out in five phases:

1. Outlining migration experiences in Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Latvia, Poland, Spain and the UK.
2. Conducting a critical review of public debates on integration and multiculturalism in these nine countries.
3. Carrying out three empirical case studies in each country, focusing on:
 - (a) educational challenges posed by migration related diversity
 - (b) legal challenges, with special reference to anti discrimination provisions and
 - (c) political challenges with special reference to voting rights and/or civic participation.

These case studies were ethnographic, incorporating different types of qualitative and quantitative data. Previous studies, policy papers and media discourses were examined and qualitative interviews were conducted with key actors.

4. Critically reviewing the different types of challenges in each country and how they are accommodated. Each partner in the consortium considered to what extent their country offers a distinctive 'model' of immigrant incorporation.
5. Comparing the main value discourses and perceived value conflicts among the countries studied and identifying the European dimensions of diversity (value discourses, points of tensions, best practices). The comparisons were aimed at elaborating an empirically grounded theoretical model of multiculturalism appropriate to the European experience.

PROJECT IDENTITY

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Website	<p>http://emilie.eliamep.gr</p>

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Further reading

EMILIE Policy Briefs on Multicultural Education are available for each of the nine countries studied at:

<http://emilie.eliamep.gr/policy-briefs/>

EMILIE Policy Briefs on Anti Discrimination in the Labour Market are available for each of the nine countries studied at:

<http://emilie.eliamep.gr/policy-briefs-on-anti-discrimination/>

EMILIE Policy Briefs on Immigrants' Political Participation in Europe are available at:

<http://emilie.eliamep.gr/policy-briefs-on-political-participation/>

EMILIE Comparative Policy Briefs on: Multicultural Education, Anti Discrimination in the Labour Market and Immigrants' Political Participation in Europe are available at:

<http://emilie.eliamep.gr/european-policy-briefs/>

Comprehensive country reports covering legal issues, multicultural education and political challenges arising from cultural diversity within migration, can be found at:

<http://emilie.eliamep.gr/emilie-comprehensive-country-reports/>
