



European network of legal experts in gender equality and non-discrimination

NEWS REPORT

Country:	Belgium
Title:	Publication of the Diversity Barometer on Education by UNIA
Date:	15 February 2018
Expert:	Bribosia, Emmanuelle
<u>Context</u>	
Issue at stake:	On 16 February, UNIA published its Diversity Barometer on Education
Ground of discrimination:	Ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability and other (social origin)
Source:	www.unia.be
Field:	Education
Applicable law:	/

Content

Policy development: On 6 February, UNIA published its Diversity Barometer on Education. It is based on a study made by three Belgian Universities whose objective was to identify the risks of discrimination of pupils on the ground of their social or ethnic origin, disability or sexual orientation at school. The study focuses on compulsory education (6-18 years). It was notably based on interviews with teachers and school directors, surveys and behaviour tests. It points out important systemic deficiencies in Belgian educational systems resulting in discrimination against some groups of pupils. These deficiencies are notably caused by the specific organisation of the educational system (public funding, freedom for parents to choose the school, and budget allowed according the number of students) which often result in a distribution of the pupils among the different schools according to their socio-economic background. Another factor explaining inequalities at school in Belgium consists in the existence of different educational programmes, some of which being moreover more valued than others. Early orientation to one of them often further enhances inequality.

UNIA recommends to take measures in favour of an inclusive education system such as:

- the adoption of measures able to increase the objectivity of methods aiming to examine the existence of discrimination at school;
- a registration procedure which contributes better to social diversity including the adoption of quotas for "priority" students (target groups victim of discrimination) in each school;
- providing additional clarity regarding the powers, role and capacity of the 'class councils', which are composed by professors, with regards to decisions related to reorientation;

- taking seriously the question of harassment at school;
- a longer common core at schools for pupils to avoid reorientation based on the social or ethnic origin;
- the introduction of measures combatting harassment of LGBT students;
- adopting general measures for more accessibility at school and a better adoption of reasonable accommodation measures for students with a disability by schools.

Key points of analysis: The Diversity Barometer project aims to elaborate a long-term measurement tool (based on surveys, behaviour tests and interviews) to scientifically draw up an inventory of the behaviours (level of discrimination) and attitudes (level of tolerance) towards the different target groups protected by antidiscrimination laws, as well as the actual participation (level of participation) of these target groups in society. The Diversity Barometer is published every two years and analyses three sectors - employment, housing and education - which are in turn the subject of a publication.

The Barometer of 2017 concerns the Belgian education system and shows the existence of an important degree of discrimination in this domain.

Internet link source:

<https://www.unia.be/fr/publications-et-statistiques/publications/barometre-de-la-diversite-enseignement>.