

European Models of Anti-discrimination Policies in Companies

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Abstract

Recent research by the EU and the ILO has demonstrated that both direct and structural forms of discrimination are far more widespread across Europe than was previously acknowledged. In addition the issue of racial and ethnic discrimination has not been on the agenda of companies' policies and was seen as a national political 'problem' that does not occur in any context of organisational policies and practices. From this point of view it does not surprise, that organisational initiatives like equal opportunities policies or diversity policies were more regarded as voluntary.

Besides research findings that migrants and ethnic minorities face particular problems in the labour market - with higher levels of unemployment being identified most frequently, followed by lower pay and slower promotion - several developments caused a change in European legislation, employment strategies and the politics of business.

In this presentation, I will show some examples of the European Union's strategy to combat discrimination and inequality in the labour market. First, I will give a short overview of the European Union's strategy EQUAL, which is funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and tests new ways of tackling discrimination and inequality experienced by those in work and those looking for a job. Second, I will describe several forms of measures that can improve the employment opportunities for immigrants and ethnic minorities. And third, I will give a short introduction to one of the actually running EQUAL projects, by showing some 'good practices' of company-related measures against racial discrimination in selected European countries.