

Minority representation in police organisations: transnational measures for the exchange of information and good practice

Co-funding: Community Action Programme to Combat Discrimination 2001-2006

The project's aim was to address the issue of the under-representation of ethnic and gay/lesbian minority groups within the police authorities of the three participating EU Member States, Sweden, the Netherlands and Greece. This was accomplished by studying their recruitment procedures in order to identify discriminatory elements and then training staff responsible for recruitment accordingly.

Duration

September 2002 - September 2004

Partners

Swedish National Institute for Working Life, Stockholm County Police, SIOS, EGA HRM Consult, Landelijk Expertise Centrum Diversiteit, ANTIGONE, Pan-Hellenic Federation of Greek Police Employees

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Background

The problem addressed by the project was the under-representation of ethnic and gay/lesbian minorities within the police authorities of the member states. Research indicated at least two reasons for this under-representation: selection during recruitment and high turn-over rates. The project's hypothesis was that it is mechanisms of direct/indirect discrimination at work inside the organisations themselves that are causing minorities either to not to be selected or to resign.

Aim

The project's aim was to address the issue of the under-representation of ethnic and gay/lesbian minority groups within the police authorities of the three participating countries, by studying the discriminatory elements in their recruitment and promotion procedures and then training human resources staff accordingly.

Rationale

The project's long-term objective was the creation of a police force reflecting in both its horizontal and vertical composition the composition of society at large. According to the project's rationale, the advantages of such a police force would be twofold: on the one hand a more balanced and diverse work force would lead to a better internal organisational culture, thus decreasing employee dissatisfaction and preventing high employee turnover; on the other hand it would lead to better relations between the police force and the society it aims to protect, by increasing its recognisability and acceptability.

Methods and Results

Introduction of tools for the regular review of recruitment, promotion and organisational culture in police organisations. This was accomplished through the use of the 'diversity audit' as an instrument to review the organisations' policies and practices. The 'diversity audit', which was designed by EGA, is an organisational audit focusing on discrimination in the following three areas: external recruitment, internal career opportunities and organisational culture.

In-depth and detailed study of the relevant legislation, followed by concrete recommendations for changes in policies with proven discriminatory effects on the three areas.

Awareness-raising and a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of discrimination/anti-discrimination operative in everyday routines. This was accomplished by skills training and awareness raising workshops.

Publication and distribution of the Handbook "Promoting diversity and combating discrimination in police forces", which contains information on EU anti-discrimination legislation, the results of the diversity audits in the three participating police forces and examples of solutions to discrimination issues derived from each of the three police forces examined.