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Racial and ethnic minorities, immigration and the role of trade unions in combating discrimination and xenophobia, in encouraging participation and in securing social inclusion and citizenship

RITU

FINAL REPORT

EUR 23157

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Racial and ethnic minorities, immigration and the role of trade unions in combating discrimination and xenophobia, in encouraging participation and in securing social inclusion and citizenship

RITU

Final report

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Preface

Within the Fifth Community RTD Framework Programme of the European Union (1998–2002), the Key Action 'Improving the Socio-economic Knowledge Base' had broad and ambitious objectives, namely: to improve our understanding of the structural changes taking place in European society, to identify ways of managing these changes and to promote the active involvement of European citizens in shaping their own futures. A further important aim was to mobilise the research communities in the social sciences and humanities at the European level and to provide scientific support to policies at various levels, with particular attention to EU policy fields.

This Key Action had a total budget of EUR 155 million and was implemented through three Calls for proposals. As a result, 185 projects involving more than 1 600 research teams from 38 countries have been selected for funding and have started their research between 1999 and 2002.

Most of these projects are now finalised and results are systematically published in the form of a Final Report.

The calls have addressed different but interrelated research themes which have contributed to the objectives outlined above. These themes can be grouped under a certain number of areas of policy relevance, each of which are addressed by a significant number of projects from a variety of perspectives.

These areas are the following:

- ***Societal trends and structural change***

16 projects, total investment of EUR 14.6 million, 164 teams

- ***Quality of life of European citizens***

5 projects, total investment of EUR 6.4 million, 36 teams

- ***European socio-economic models and challenges***

9 projects, total investment of EUR 9.3 million, 91 teams

- ***Social cohesion, migration and welfare***

30 projects, total investment of EUR 28 million, 249 teams

- ***Employment and changes in work***

18 projects, total investment of EUR 17.5 million, 149 teams

- ***Gender, participation and quality of life***

13 projects, total investment of EUR 12.3 million, 97 teams

- ***Dynamics of knowledge, generation and use***

8 projects, total investment of EUR 6.1 million, 77 teams

- ***Education, training and new forms of learning***

14 projects, total investment of EUR 12.9 million, 105 teams

- ***Economic development and dynamics***

22 projects, total investment of EUR 15.3 million, 134 teams

- ***Governance, democracy and citizenship***

28 projects; total investment of EUR 25.5 million, 233 teams

- ***Challenges from European enlargement***

13 projects, total investment of EUR 12.8 million, 116 teams

- ***Infrastructures to build the European research area***

9 projects, total investment of EUR 15.4 million, 74 teams

This publication contains the final report of the project 'Racial and ethnic minorities, immigration and the role of trade unions in combating discrimination and xenophobia, in encouraging participation and in securing social inclusion and citizenship (RITU) 2003-2005', whose work has primarily contributed to the area 'Societal and individual well being: social trends, the implications of structural changes and of technological development'.

The report contains information about the main scientific findings of RITU and their policy implications. The research was carried out by six teams over a period of three years, starting in January 2003.

The abstract and executive summary presented in this edition offer the reader an overview of the main scientific and policy conclusions, before the main body of the research provided in the other chapters of this report.

As the results of the projects financed under the Key Action become available to the scientific and policy communities, Priority 7 'Citizens and Governance in a knowledge based society' of the Sixth Framework Programme is building on the progress already made and aims at making a further contribution to the development of a European Research Area in the social sciences and the humanities.

I hope readers find the information in this publication both interesting and useful as well as clear evidence of the importance attached by the European Union to fostering research in the field of social sciences and the humanities.

J.-M. BAER,

Director

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Acknowledgments

The project has achieved a huge amount. Coming from an island off the European continent readers will not be surprised if I go on record as saying that it would be wrong to describe the project as 'smooth sailing'. It was hugely ambitious, and had several storms. It brought together researchers from different traditions of academic enquiry and forced collaboration and partnership upon them. But the one thing on which we could all agree at all times was that the issues we confronted are really critical ones to all of us living within the European Union.

The research teams read a final draft of this report and have had an opportunity provided to add comments and to point out differences of interpretation. Where the comments have been incorporated and where differences are indicated they are acknowledged and referred to in footnotes. This report therefore represents this major innovative EU-funded comparative research endeavour but it is not a sum of all its parts. Anyone wishing to understand the detailed national nuances is recommended to look at the national reports and case studies. The authorship and interpretations (as well as any errors or misjudgements) are the sole responsibility of the principal UK team project coordinator.

To all the research teams and to all those who participated in our advisory boards (listed in Table 14) and who attended our conferences I offer my sincere thanks. This report reflects your energies and our synergies and hopefully our work will help change things for the better. Thanks are also due to our two DG Research Project Managers in Brussels, Aris Appolonatos and Myria Vassiliadou, who helped us get through the three years with both good humour and strong logic.

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	Roger Mckenzie	TUC Regional Secretary
	Claude Moraes	MEP
	Wilf Sullivan	TUC Race Equality Officer and formerly UNISON Black members officer

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Abstract

Against the background of 9/11, the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars and growing Islamaphobia, racism and xenophobia are speaking with a louder voice. The policy relevance of this project covers the role and responsibilities of trade unions in challenging racism. Unions remain the largest independent voluntary and democratic organisations directly representing the interests of Europe's working peoples. Research into how unions mediate racism in the workplace was carried out by teams in Belgium, Italy, France, UK and in Bulgaria between 2003 and 2005. In this period the ethnicisation of many low-paid and lesser-skilled jobs in Western Europe accelerated while the rising international mobility of labour began to impact on wage levels.

- Racism is defined by the researchers as occurring where, to the stereotyping prejudice of xenophobia, is added a power relationship that either aims to or achieves the subordination of the 'inferior other'.

- Racism occurs either 'directly', where minority workers are deliberately and consciously discriminated against, or 'indirectly', where market structure or the organisation's rules, procedures and practices disadvantage ethnic minorities.

The researchers conducted comparative studies of the public transport, retail and health sectors, and single country case studies in the light engineering and shipbuilding industries (Italy) and in the construction, textile and tobacco industries (Bulgaria). They found:

- Disadvantaging discriminatory practices occurred in all five countries against those described variously as 'foreigners', or 'immigrants', as 'black' workers or 'ethnic minority' workers, or as 'national minority' workers.

- Occasionally this discrimination involved physical rejection or direct abuse.

- More often it involved indirect racism and the toleration of a status quo that subordinated the minority workers.

The toleration of discrimination by employers and the low priority given by many trade unions to challenging it at workplace level combine to penalise the minority and to maintain 'white' or 'national' privileges.

- Unions are still sending out ambiguous messages, veering between inclusion and exclusion. They are particularly unclear as to how to define and challenge 'indirect racism'.

- Workplace level union responses range from forms of protectionism often involving denial, to assimilation or integration, and to positive action.

- Union ambiguities reflect the tension between market and societal trade union goals and between delegate and representative trade union organisational democracy.

- Union decline additionally exposes many workers to a sense of disempowerment, with legal remedies far from filling the gap caused by the retreat from collective responses. Minority workers in particular lack confidence that the unions wish to respond to their problems, while knowing that legal remedies to the discrimination they experience actually constitute a high risk strategy for the individual.

The researchers recommend:

1) Trade unions should be given additional resources to develop European, national and local 'working against racism' action programmes**.** These should include:

   - Training of national-level and local activists to identify and monitor indirect racism.

   - Supporting specific steps aimed at increasing minority worker involvement in the unions.

2) Trade unions try to find ways of placing minority workers' demands for greater equality on to the social dialogue collective bargaining agenda with the employers. This step is essential if the trade unions are to retain and win the support of minority workers in the defence of Europe's more egalitarian social model.

3) The EUMC should be funded to produce a European Discrimination Index to better enable national level monitoring of segmentation within the labour force.

4) The Commission should encourage Member States to take positive action and encourage social dialogue processes to challenge racism at work through the promotion of equality.

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1) This EU Framework Five Research Project investigated the role of the trade unions in mediating racism in the workplace in five European countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Italy and the UK during the period 2003-2005.

2) The **main research objective** was to understand why anti-racist policy statements adopted by national and international-level trade union confederations and unions are frequently not fully implemented by union activists at the regional and local levels.

3) The research would also assess any impact on the ground of the 2000 Equal Treatment (racial or ethnic origin) Directive.

4) The research is important for two main reasons:

- Potentially the workplace is a key space where socialisation between co-workers of different origins can take place.

- Trade unionists play a major role in shaping workplace cultures – the form and content of relations between owners or managers and workers and between workers (of different skills, but also of different ages, ethnicities and genders).

5) The research hypothesis was that the lack of full policy articulation between the top and the base of the trade unions resulted from a core ambiguity of Europe's trade unions between their exclusionary functions and their inclusionary goals.

6) The background to the research was a significant rise in the volume and intensity of xenophobia and racism within Europe and in the partner countries, as well as the 'shock' to EU labour markets delivered by enlargement from 178 to 212 million.

7) Europe's increasing social tension was reflected in growing votes for extreme right-wing nationalist parties in all the countries researched.

8) The research was designed to study workplaces in sectors where minority workers worked and where the trade unions were present.

9) In three countries the research took place in the same three sectors, public transport, retailing and health: UK, Belgium and France.

10) In Italy the health sector was one case study, but the two other sectors researched were shipbuilding and light engineering; in Bulgaria the research took place in the tobacco, textile and construction sectors.

11) The researchers interviewed 291 trade union activists (full-time and lay), 133 other workers who were not activists and 35 representatives of anti-racist organisations. Of the grand total of 459 interviews, 318 interviews were at workplace level and of these 134 were with white workers and 183 with workers from a 'minority' ethnic group.

12) The country research results were published as five national reviews of existing work on trade unions and racism, and as an international comparative state of the art; the sector research was published as 15 national sector case studies and in three cross country comparative reports; the recommendations to trade unions were or are being published as five national guides.

13) The research found widespread evidence of direct and indirect racism in trade unionised workplaces in all five countries.

14) It confirmed the hypothesis that trade union anti-racist ambiguities result from a tension between union market goals and their societal objectives. It also identified a second contributory tension. This was between a trade union legitimacy that stems from direct delegate democracy, where the worker base determines policy, and a legitimacy that emerges from activists' representative responsibility to offer leadership in the best interests of all, including minority workers.

1. European context

1) The European context in which the research took place was changing. From the perspective of our research concerns we identified three main areas of change:

- **Work** in many of Europe's major cities and lower-skilled occupations is becoming increasingly ethnicised while employment security weakened and work itself is increasingly pressurised.

- The membership and/or influence of **trade unions** at best remains stable (in Belgium) and in the four other partner countries (Bulgaria, France, Italy, UK) continued long-term declines.

- As globalisation, food shortages, wars and attacks on human rights encouraged migration from the less well off and/or more conflict-affected areas of the world towards wealthier and more stable societies, **racism** and/or national xenophobia in Europe is becoming significantly more visible.

2) We define **racism** as a social construction – made by people's words and actions. Like the social relationships of class and gender it embodies the power relations of both domination and subordination. But what is specific about it is that it simultaneously constructs an 'inferior other'. Racism is thus both a form of exploitation embracing material as well as symbolic domination and an ideological construction derived from pseudo-scientific assumptions that emphasise biological, social and cultural difference.

3) Xenophobia is a prejudice against and dislike of foreigners. The difference between racism and xenophobia is that while the former implies power relations – the economic, social or political ability to subordinate and harm the constructed 'other' – the latter may be kept hidden. But as soon as the intentional or unintentional consequences of such a prejudice are to harm the 'other', then it becomes racism and racial discrimination.

1.1. Work

4) At work the principal forms racism takes are as direct and indirect racism:

- Direct racism occurs where a member of the dominating ethnic group speaks or acts in such a way as to symbolically or directly subordinate or disadvantage an individual ethnic minority worker or groups of minority workers.

- Indirect racism is where the implementation of supposedly 'neutral' laws, rules, regulations, procedures and customs and practice that occur in recruitment, promotion, the allocation of work, hours, pay and pensions, have the effect of disadvantaging individuals and groups of individuals because of their belonging to an ethnic minority.

5) We identified high levels of European unemployment as one source feeding racism and xenophobia, but its rise within countries like the UK with half the official unemployment of France and Bulgaria, make it clear this is not a sufficient explanation.

6) Rising levels of job flexibility (part-time working and higher turnover rates), the privatisation of some public sector services, and the decline in job autonomy

made possible by new technologies, also add to the overall sense of declining employment security.

7) We found that many lesser-skilled or more arduous and lower status occupations are becoming ethnicised. This is particularly true in major urban areas where white workers can more easily find better paid or higher status jobs, and where industries are more exposed to global competition.

1.2 Trade unionism

8) Western Europe's trade unions have continued to lose members over the past fifteen years or so. One estimate is that the decline has been nearly 8% between 1990 and 2003. In Central and Eastern Europe the decline has been much more rapid.

9) In the countries researched estimates of the decline in trade union density since 1990 are 58% in Bulgaria, 10% in the UK, 5% in Italy, 2% in France and an increase of just one percent in Belgium (where the trade unions manage the unemployment insurance system).

10) Through the ETUC the trade unions continue to have an important input into EU policy and directives. They thus played an important role in pressing for and securing the quite radical 2000 Equal Treatment (racial or ethnic origin) Directive. Its principal innovations were to target indirect discrimination, to call for social dialogue on anti-racism, and to enable Member States to develop positive action to counter discrimination.

11) At national level, however, the trade unions were not very effective in ensuring rapid and full transposition of the most positive elements of the Directive.

12) We found little evidence outside Belgium and the UK of the unions raising anti-discrimination issues in national level bargaining.

13) The finding that the trade unions at national level fail to place a high priority on anti-racism in their dealings with the government and employers is all the more serious because of the still clearer evidence that racism is on the rise.

1.3. Rise of racism

14) In the wake of the 2001 'September 11' attack on the US, the 2002 war on Afghanistan and the 2003 American-British invasion of Iraq, the July 2005 London bombings, the November 2005 French suburban car burnings and in the context of deteriorating Israeli-Palestinian relations, differences between broad masses of people according to their ethnic origins and cultural, particularly religious, affiliations, have become the subject of huge global media attention and debate in a way they were not in the much more secular 1970s and 1980s.

15) In France an annual opinion survey undertaken in the wake of the Interior Minister's description of young minority people in the suburbs as 'scum' and the car burnings that provoked found one third of the French interviewed describing themselves as 'racist' – up from one quarter in 2004.

16) Even before the July 2005 bombings, in Britain, the numbers of 'racially-motivated crimes' recorded by the police in England and Wales had risen 12% to 59,257 over the previous year.

17) Between 1999 and 2004 the share of the vote for right-wing extremist parties progressed in all five countries and in the case of Belgium and the UK reached unprecedented levels in the proportions of votes for explicitly xenophobic or racist parties.

2. Racism at work

1) We found widespread evidence of racism within the workplace, and identified two main forms:

- Direct racist acts and comments, mainly from the 'public' but also from fellow workers and some managers, creating a background racist 'noise', that included 'joking' or 'politically' racist references in inter-ethnic dialogue and a more openly racist discourse between white workers; and

- Indirect racism, where engrained structural and institutional racism saw job stereotyping and segregation, with very few black workers being promoted to higher or company management grades, but also with very considerable under-representation of black workers in senior positions in the trade unions.

2) Our research located three different sources of workplace racism: from customers (UK, France and Belgium); from work colleagues or fellow trade

unionists (everywhere except Bulgaria); and from the employers or the state (everywhere).

2.1. Direct racism

3) Direct racism appeared at the level of the state in Italy through citizen restrictions on employment eligibility in the public, but it was also driven by the employers.

4) In France direct racism surfaced in four different ways:

- Via nationality distinction and simple prejudice.
- Through discriminatory rules at work.
- As background racist noise.
- Through racism from the customers

5) In the UK direct racism was experienced most frequently from customers; but there was also racist bullying from line managers or fellow workers.

6) In Belgium direct racist comments were reported from senior managers as well as fellow workers; customers were also a significant source.

7) In Bulgaria third-hand reports were given of 'Bulgarian' employers not recruiting Roma.

2.2. Indirect racism

8) **Indirect racism** at work is the predominant form of racism at the workplace uncovered in our research in all five countries.

9) In France indirect racism is revealed in the employment pyramid, with ethnic minorities systematically allocated to the lower status and less secure manual and clerical jobs; in companies and unions it appears where, in spite of the presence over time of significant numbers of minority workers, very few black workers are in promoted or responsible positions.

10) In Italy immigration laws force migrants into short-term contracts that are almost always disadvantageous.

11) In Belgium indirect racism derives from qualification regulations and recruitment networks that disadvantage minorities.

12) In the UK privatisation of many public services has exposed minority workers in less-skilled and more 'disposable' jobs to some of the greatest pressures in terms of cuts and flexibility; the ethnicisation of many lower status occupations is rampant; promotion to management grades remains rare.

13) In Bulgaria the lack of educational qualifications is commonly used to justify the segregation of the Roma into the lowest-skilled and worst-paid jobs.

3. National union responses to racism

1) Our research points to the problems Europe's trade unions are facing. As a whole they are experiencing declining membership and influence while simultaneously facing, among other challenges, that of significant levels of racism in the workplace and rising levels of xenophobia within wider civil society.

2) We conducted our research in 11 of Europe's major trade union confederations and in 33 unions affiliated to those confederations.

3) We found that almost all were committed to 'formal equality' for minority workers, although there were examples of a 'control' approach, trying to protect the 'national' labour market by limiting access altogether or by limiting the rights of minorities, and also examples of a 'real equality' approach that promoted positive action.

4) Policy commitments to formal equality, however, could be motivated either by a genuine inclusionary approach, offering a positive welcome to the 'new' workers within the trade union, or by an exclusionary perspective, going through the motions with little or no real intent to change things. We found evidence of both.

5) In Bulgaria we found that CITUB was adopting special recruitment strategies to build membership in mixed ethnic areas; but in 2004 Podkrepa's leader made a populist attack on the Roma 'problem'.

6) In Italy the three Confederations call for full rights for migrants, and at least one union is beginning to discuss how migrant workers can be represented on its governing bodies.

7) In France there is a long history of the trade unions opposing racism and fascism, but simultaneously demanding state action for more effective

immigration control. Recently the CGT has begun to question the small numbers of minorities within its own apparatus, and the CFDT has begun to insist on anti-racist training for their activists. The FO, in contrast, still adheres totally to the 'republican' denial that there is any problem.

8) In Belgium there has been considerable anti-racist activity undertaken by the main confederations. They have had a policy in place for the last ten years whereby they each agree not recruit any member expelled by the other confederations for racism or membership of a racist political party. In Flanders, where multiculturalism is more accepted, the confederations have also gone furthest in proposing the use of non-discrimination charters and the negotiation of non-discrimination agreements with the employers.

9) In the UK the last six years has seen a renewed flurry of anti-racist active – and in particular a focus on the need for the unions to become more representative of their diverse memberships. UNISON has gone the furthest towards supporting black self-organisation, the TGWU has also recently begun to more positive in this area. The TGWU launched a *Negotiator's guide on Race Equality* to provide a tool for activists to use to advance the collective bargaining agenda in this area. USDAW has not gone as far as the other two unions, and has still not reported how many black staff it has; but it has been active in local election campaigning against the extreme right.

10) We found that the same core policy dilemmas were faced in all five countries: should they preach exclusion or inclusion, and, if the latter, should they implement real equality measures or just 'say the politically correct words'. The range of responses as to whether to just preach or to preach and practice was quite wide.

11) This breadth of national level policy was one major source of ambiguity at the workplace level. But there were even more sources of ambiguity at the workplace level.

4. Workplace union responses to racism

1) Our research covered about 100 workplaces in the five countries and they took place at different moments between 2003 and 2005. What we found was that even between two workplaces in the same country there were often big differences. Workplaces with different histories and with different minority compositions were invariably distinct from each other, but there were also huge

variations in responses between quite similar workplaces. Local responses to racism rarely seemed to be automatically in step, either with each other or with their national unions.

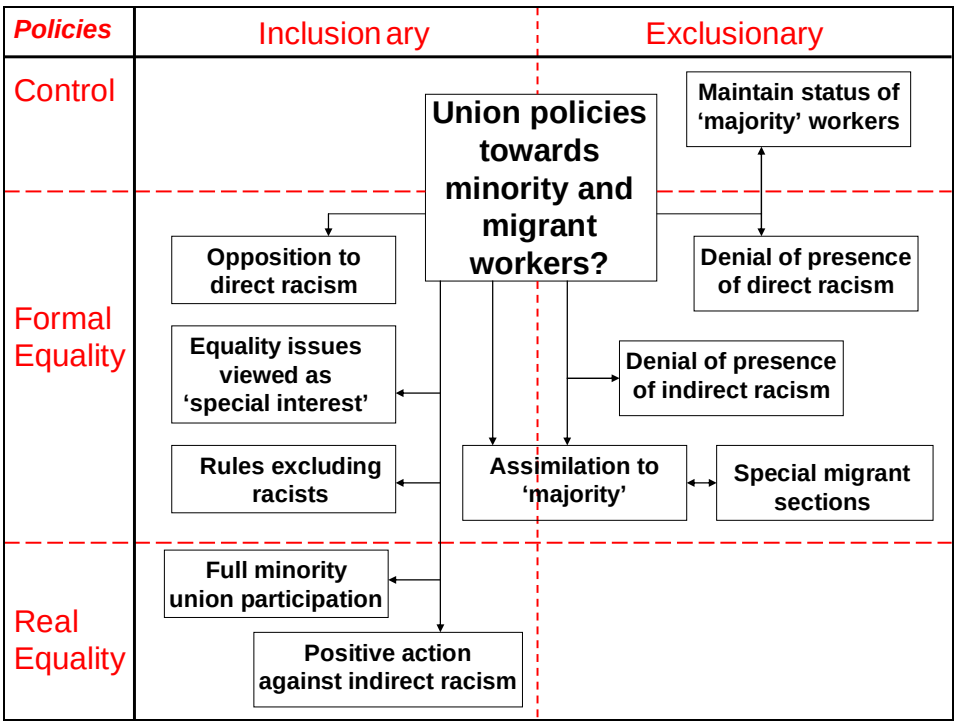
2) The variety of responses to racism we found across the five countries allows us to analyse them thematically, rather than in terms of different national characteristics.

3) The range of workplace-level trade union responses to racism ran from trying to maintain the domination of the white workforce over the 'others' to challenging racism and attempting to build support for positive action to overcome indirect racism.

4) It is helpful to analyse these responses as being either more or less protectionist of the white majority (more or less exclusionary) or as being more or less positive in the advocacy of special measures to secure equality (more or less inclusionary).

5) This broad analysis is summarised graphically in Figure 1, where it is seen that the responses classed under 'assimilation' or 'integration' are shown as being capable of two different interpretations, either as exclusionary or inclusionary:

Figure 1. Trade union policy responses to minority workers



4.1. Protectionism – exclusion

6) The right hand area of Figure 1, under the heading 'Exclusionary' policies, brings together those union responses to minority workers, or to the problems they face, which can be described as open or latent protectionism of the white majority.

7) The strongest examples of protection/exclusion we found were when a union official reported negotiating over promotions and winning them only for the 'national' ethnic candidates, and when another indicated his opposition to the promotion of 'black and Asian' workers.

8) Another form of protection was the blanket denial of the possibility of racial discrimination. Some union officials told us that because it was against the law it couldn't happen.

9) A more common denial was to define 'racism' as outright, open bigotry, or segregation, and then to argue that since that was not present, 'racism' was not either. More prevalent in the French interviews where racism commonly means just 'bigotry', this denial is also present in Britain.

10) Equally frequent was the denial of the racism present within discrimination. This response denies the victim a collective view of the experience and ends up assuming it is just an individual failing or sensitivity on their part. We found two groups of protagonists of this denial:

- There were white union activists who argued that since both whites and non-whites received regular abuse from white customers, then even if the white customer used racist language in abusing a black worker, the incident being complained about was not really about race.

- There were experienced (and generally older) black workers who had learned to co-exist with and survive the racist 'noise' from customers and work colleagues. They argued that young black workers used the 'race card' as an excuse for their own under performance.

11) Denial was sometimes a matter of giving other issues a higher priority.

12) We were also told how union activists would not raise the issue out of fear of the consequences of doing so. This fear had three main sources:

● Racism can be seen as a 'difficult' issue, involving personal attitudes or preferences, rather than as a straightforward trade union social justice issue.

● Challenging racist discrimination could lead to more racial conflict in the workplace.

● Where the majority of workers are white the activist or trade union seen to defend minority workers may be 'punished' in subsequent workplace elections.

4.2. Assimilation-integration

13) The assimilation or integration response to minority workers is itself full of potential ambiguity. Its premise is that simply because of the fact that 'new' workers are coming into 'their' workplace, then the newcomers should assimilate to the existing trade union structure, its way of working and its programme of demands. Its basic tenet is the 'colour-blind' or 'republican' requirement that 'everyone' has to pass the same test.

14) An element of this insistence on 'integration' is motivated by a desire to maintain the pre-existing formal and informal workplace culture that traditionally has privileged the existing white workforce.

15) Assimilation can thus take on an exclusionary aspect when, for example, a union official opposes an employer who is trying to recruit a workforce in proportion to the ethnic mix of the neighbourhood in which they are established.

16) The assimilation argument can also lead union activists to oppose making any concessions to Muslim workers' requests for facilities to pray, or to have pork taken off the canteen menu, or for special arrangements to cover fasting, or for extended leave to take holidays with their families in other countries.

17) In some instances the exclusionary assimilation argument takes another step and actually supports the creation of 'separate' functions or organisations to service migrant and minority workers' evident needs. For those who support this response the solution has the real advantage that the 'union' can remain detached from minority workers' concerns. If any of them do wish to become active, then all they have to do is to adopt the existing definition of the union and the majority of workers' interests.

18) However, part of the union activists' insistence on 'full integration' has a less clearly protectionist colouring. This 'positive' assimilation response can be

motivated by the strategic concern that if the dominant workplace and trade union culture is not maintained, then the employer will be able to use any division among the workers to worsen working conditions and lower wages.

19) More positively still, many trade unionists who support assimilation do so because they are convinced that is in the interests of ethnic minority workers to identify as closely as possible with the 'majority' of trade unionists. Only through a shared agenda can unity be created to take the whole movement forward.

20) This assimilation response can thus be interpreted as having inclusionary motivations.

4.3. Inclusion – positive action

21) We found some very positive workplace responses to minority workers. Some white trade union activists would systematically challenge racist remarks and discriminatory policies, and devote time and energy into working with minority workers to help build their capacity to represent themselves, and to insert their grievances into the bargaining agenda of the whole workforce.

22) Other white trade unionists agreed to give evidence in court against white managers accused of racist discrimination.

23) Quite frequently white or white and minority workers were given the responsibility by a sympathetic local union to create special committees on anti-racism and issues directly affecting black workers. In these examples, far from being a mechanism for side-lining anti-racism, it was a way of ensuring that they were brought up as mainstream trade union business.

24) We also found evidence of different forms of positive action taken at workplace level by trade unions and activists that challenge both direct and indirect racism:

- Support was given to black workers taking discrimination cases to court.

- Various forms of self-organisation and active participation by minority workers within the union was encouraged.

- Action against indirect racism was put on the collective bargaining table with the employer.

5. Theorising trade union ambiguities

1) The common experiences from the five countries force us to go beyond national path-dependent explanations to explain why trade union workplace level responses to racism are so full of ambiguity.

2) To find a satisfactory explanation it is necessary to address the dual purposes of trade unions, to consider the dual sources of legitimacy of the trade union activist and to consider the intersection of these dualisms in the presence of racism and xenophobia.

3) Unions are complex democratic and voluntary organisations. What purposes do they fulfil? Trade unionism should be understood as:

   ● as an organisational relationship between workers involving both the defence and improvement of working conditions; and

   ● as a dynamic collective process involving the creation of unity between all workers with a view to a wider restructuring of workplace relations; this involves the posing of alternatives to the arbitrariness of a capitalism or a political system where workers' labour power is reduced to a market commodity to be bought and sold.

4) Unions therefore have both narrower 'market' objectives and broader 'societal' goals. Arguably, it has been the part that trade unions have played in mobilising for 'societal' gains that have made the largest contributions to advancing the working conditions of Europe's working peoples.

5) Trade unionism's search for alternatives to the subordination of workers to capitalism means it attracts many of those who see those alternatives in terms of worker internationalism and opposition to discrimination of all sorts.

6) But trade unionism is also an organisational relationship with two strong internal imperatives to look beyond the narrow ranks of 'insiders'.

   ● If the employers cannot be prevented from bringing in 'new' labour, the only way of ensuring that social dumping does not take place is to organise the migrants and raise their terms and conditions.

   ● If 'outsiders' and 'insiders' are divided, successful mobilisation, whether in developing common demands or in acting on them, becomes much more difficult.

7) These internal organisational growth and mobilisation imperatives have dovetailed with broader union societal goals in a context in which the European Union's own development has required the creation of a citizenship model based around social cohesion. There has thus been a quite significant general shift towards more trade union national level inclusionary policies over the last two decades.

8) However, faced with the continuing dichotomy between its exclusionary, protectionist and narrow market unionism perspective and this inclusionary, internationalist and societal unionism role, it is not surprising that trade unions still give out ambiguous messages, and that below national level, where unions are less exposed to EU pressure, these ambiguities appear to thrive.

9) In the workplace there is another source of ambiguity. This concerns the legitimacy of the union activist or worker representative, the person to whom others turn when they want to know 'what the union says'.

10) What is important here is the democratic legitimacy of those activists who see themselves as 'representatives' and those who see themselves as 'delegates':

- 'Delegate democracy' involves the selection of a person who is expected to carry out the wishes of the electors.

- 'Representative democracy' is the selection of a person who then follows their own consciences in 'representing' their constituents.

11) There is no absolute separation between these two forms of legitimacy. The 'representative' will, at times, directly promote the views of their fellow workers – at least when they coincide with their own but possibly on other occasions too. The 'delegate' will, at times, seek to have their personal views adopted by their fellow workers in order to air them more widely.

12) Bringing together the analysis of the dualisms behind both union purpose and workplace union activist legitimacy, allows us to understand much more clearly the ambiguities of trade union workplace responses to racism. The different ways in which we have seen racism in the workplace mediated by majority local activists arises from the intersection of their different understandings of union purpose and their own democratic role.

13) We found union activists who see themselves as possessing mainly delegate legitimacy:

● Some stick close to market issues such as wages and working hours, and never voluntarily raise any broader 'political' issues in the workplace. They will tolerate racism through denial responses.

● Others may take on broader societal unionism issues if their fellow workers press them to do so. However, they are not totally in denial of racism, and might pass on problems to 'specialists'.

14) We also found union activists who saw themselves as having been nominated or elected to represent the best interests of their fellow workers and at times were ready to express minority views within the group:

● Where these activists' values are rooted in 'market' trade unionism, they will not challenge discrimination and may articulate short-term protectionism.

● Where these 'leader' activists' values emphasise societal goals, they will, according to their national context, support positive assimilation or black self-organisation within the workplace.

15) We found that different national trade union traditions in terms of market-societal purpose and delegate-representative legitimacy did help predict the nature of the trade union responses to racism:

● In France the strength of the representative political tradition in a context where the unions are addressing the needs of *all* workers in society, made it difficult for them to understand minority workers' self-organisation in ways other than as harmful to workers' unity. This in turn often leads French activists towards denial responses.

● In Britain's much more fragmented, market-focused trade unionism, delegate legitimacy that reflects the different interests of local groups of workers has always had a high priority. Where significant numbers of black workers are present their interests are much more likely to be taken up by the union than when there are only small numbers.

● In Belgium and Italy, delegate democracy and market unionism have both had more influence than in France, but less than in the UK.

● In Bulgaria the earlier state-sponsored trade unionism has not yet created delegate democracy, while the movement is still unsure about its wider purposes.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

1) The research went beyond an institutional focus on trade union policy and a culturalist focus on the victim, to investigate in detail what actually happened to the experience of racism in the workplace as a result of trade union intervention or non-intervention.

2) We brought together and applied theoretical frameworks derived from industrial relations with understandings from race and ethnic relations theory to explicate trade union ambiguities across a range of different European societies.

3) Our grounded theoretical approach led to an analysis and conclusions that are broadly applicable across the European Union, despite national historical and political differences.

4) We were able to draw up European-wide recommendations to trade unions and policy-makers pointing to an enhanced role for the trade unions in combating racism and xenophobia.

6.1. Recommendations to the unions

5) Three areas of recommendation are proposed concerning Europe's **unions**:

● To raise a discussion of trade union purpose, so that the agendas of local level trade unionists and trade union officials can be broadened.

● To review their anti-racist strategies, so they can:

- develop the principles, policies and strategies necessary to combat both direct and indirect racism implemented and understood better;

- reflect more the concerns of minority workers; and

- improve participation amongst minority workers at all levels of the union.

● To develop programmes to encourage activists to see their role as representing workers' *interests* and not merely workers' *current views*.

6.2. Recommendations to the employers

6) We recommend to European **employers** that they negotiate with the unions on:

- The introduction of annual equality surveys to see the proportions of minority workers (or overseas nationals and of the descendants of overseas nationals) within the organisation, their distribution by grade and occupation, and their average salaries and hours of work.

- The drafting of an organisational charter or code of best anti-discrimination practice.

- Policies to offer real equality to migrant workers.

- A strong commitment to prosecuting members of the public who racially abuse their staff.

- Proper training of company managers and supervisors in the best anti-racist practices.

6.3. Recommendations to national governments

7) Four recommendations are made to **national governments**:

- To conduct reviews of their own transposition of the 2000 Equal Treatment Directive and take action to redress those areas of weakness identified.

- To undertake equality audits of their own workforces to identify any areas of weakness and to demonstrate best practice to other national organisations.

- To develop strategies aimed at raising awareness of indirect discrimination and of the equality legislation among the national social partners.

- To open a social dialogue on what forms of positive action to end indirect disadvantage could be negotiated or legislated in respect of the work environment.

6.4. Recommendations to the EUMC

8) Our finding that the 2000 Directive is still making little difference on the ground to the presence of workplace racism in the five countries researched is disappointing.

9) In this context we recommend that the EUMC:

- Develop a European Discrimination Index to better enable national level monitoring of segmentation within the labour force.

- Produce biennial studies in alternate years on EU employer and trade union anti-discrimination practices

6.5. Recommendations to the EU

10) We also recommend the EU Commission consider a number of important steps to ensure:

- Proper, full and continuous monitoring of the 2000 Directive with a view to strengthening it and ensuring compliance.

- The Directive's critique of indirect discrimination is made the centre piece of the '2007 Year of Equal Opportunities for All'.

- The EU shows a lead through undertaking its own equality audit, with the dual aims of identifying areas of indirect discrimination and of demonstrating best practice to other organisations.

- A range of other specific actions take place to encourage Member States to do more to promote equality through positive action to overcome indirect racism.

- Social dialogue processes at European level are encouraged to consider how to better challenge indirect racism at work**.**

II. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

1. Rationale

The European Union's success or failure in establishing a vibrant association of democratic open societies based on the shared belief in equality and the valuing of and respect for difference will hinge largely around the ways its economic and social infrastructures assimilate both historic and recent migrant workers and their families. Failure could be catastrophic. The memories of all too recent European descents into barbarism provide ample testimony as to the ways in which nationalism, racism and xenophobia can all smooth a slippery downward path. The risks of failure also provide the incentive to seek more informed ways of building on the best of European values to create a union of truly encompassing societies. Thus on June 29 2000 the EU Council of Ministers adopted the Equal Treatment (racial or ethnic origin) Directive 'implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origins'[1] to take effect from July 2003, the starting year of this research project.

The rationale for this project was that since the principal place of encounter between the different peoples who now live in Europe is the workplace, and since trade unions are the largest independent voluntary organisations representing Europe's working peoples, they have a key role to play in helping achieve such an encompassing society.[2] .Over the last twenty years at European and national levels almost all of Europe's trade union confederations have more or less fully embraced anti-racist policies. Yet there is a considerable body of both quantitative and qualitative evidence suggesting that the impact of such top level policies has been limited. We therefore proposed to investigate the ways in which the unions at workplace level deal with racism and how far they are open to and encourage participation by minority workers.

2. Objectives

The six main objectives set out in our application submitted early in 2002 were:

1) To evaluate participation mechanisms for collective action at all levels of governance in a key area of civic society through a focus on the role of trade union policies and actions in encouraging European citizens to participate more actively in shaping a future of social inclusion at work, in relation to local,

[1] COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 2000/43/EC, Official Journal of the European Communities, L 180/22, July 19 2000.
[2] Trade unions are a major site of integration. In the UK, for example, one in fifteen union members in 2005 were of non-white ethnicity. Did it exist data would be similar in Belgium and France. Grainger (2006: 8).

regional and national government, within the local community and within civil society.

2) To examine the processes by which unions succeed or fail in the inclusion of the voice and interests of racial and ethnic minorities and immigrants.

3) To ascertain the effectiveness of the union impact on discrimination in labour market policies and practices.

4) To help increase the understanding of the causes and effects of racism in Europe and contribute to the EU priorities of combating social exclusion, of modernising the European social model and of improving the quality of life of all its citizens

5) To report and encourage best practice in combating racism by governments, the social partners and civil society.

6) To extend the European Research Area to include Candidate country researchers.

3. Re-orientation

The last five of our objectives continued to guide our project throughout. However, the budget cuts we had to accept after having been chosen for the Fifth Framework programme meant we had to reduce the extent and scope of the study, and in particular had to pull back from evaluating the relationship between the unions, the local state and the local civil society (Objective 1). All the other objectives, however, remained intact, even if our capacity to research them as fully as we would have wished was also reduced.

III. SCIENTIFIC DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT RESULTS AND METHODOLOGY

This part of the report is in three chapters. It present the scientific conclusions of a three-year research project undertaken by five international teams funded by the EU's Fifth Framework research programme. This extensive study provides a unique, in-depth investigation of the ways in which trade unions mediate racism at workplace level in five different European societies.

The first chapter (1) describes the problem, the research design, methodology and research experience. The second chapter (2) examines the research context of changes in work, trade unions and racism across Europe and in the target five partner countries. The third chapter (3) analyses the trade union response and presents our theoretical findings.

1. Researching racism in a changing world

> **'And then right there, he (*the HR manager*) answered me like this: "If they're not happy they can go back to… they can just go back to Algeria"'** (Moroccan 32-year-old CCSP Brussels bus administrative worker)

Europe is on the move. Not only did the European Union grow from 15 to 25 member states during the course of this research, but if the global estimates made by the International Organization for Migration are correct, and under-documented migrants do account for between one-third and one-half of new entrants into developed countries, some 1.5 million under-documented migrants entered the EU in the three years of this project's lifetime. More non-EU citizens can travel to and wish to work in Europe. These, of course, are very small numbers when set against the growth in the EU labour force with the accession of ten new member states. In 2004 the EU15 labour force (employed and unemployed) grew from 178 million to some 212 million, of whom some 20 million are unemployed, half for less than a year and half for more than a year.[3] Set against the declining birth-rate in most of Europe this migration-driven population growth can be interpreted as very good longer-term news.

Yet in the context of a Europe where the rate of change in work is accelerating, where trade unions, arguably, are slowly losing their capacity to maintain and develop fairer and better working conditions for all workers, and where several European countries are

[3] A. Franco and S. Jouhette (2004), European Labour Force Survey Principal results 2003, Eurostat:

experiencing a rise in racist and xenophobia directed against both 'older' and more recent migrants, the issue of 'illegal' migrants has become a political hot potato. And racism and xenophobia rarely makes distinctions between 'older' and 'newer' migrants. Racist murders of second and third generation visible minorities remain a sadly too frequent occurrence in Belgium, France and the UK. While in Bulgaria Roma are frequently attacked in the streets, and in Italy an employer burned a Romanian labourer to death in 2002 after he asked to be legally hired rather than work illegally. The heat, literally and tragically, has not only been felt in Europe's parliaments and ballot boxes, but also in the workplace.

Why this should be the case is highlighted graphically in the Bank of England's Inflation Report of February 2006 (Bank of England, 2006: 21). It points out that it is precisely in those sectors (agriculture, hotels and restaurants and distribution) that employ the highest proportions of migrants that either overtime earnings (agriculture and distribution) or both overtime *and* basic earnings (hotels and restaurants) fell significantly in 2005 below 2004 levels. The addition of considerable flows of documented and under-documented migrant workers to the significant numbers of unemployed or under-employed older migrant workers or their descendants is having marked effects on labour markets. The Bank of England concludes:

> *The assessment of labour market conditions in the United Kingdom has been complicated by inflows of migrant workers. In recent years, non-UK nationals have played an increasingly important role in the jobs market, and this rise in labour supply has probably helped to hold down the rate of wage growth.*[4]

In its own understated way the Bank of England is suggesting that the evolving globalisation of labour supply is 'probably' having the same effects as 'social dumping': wages are falling or staying lower than they would otherwise have done without migration. If true of wages, then working conditions are likely to be experiencing similar pressures.

This substitution of national and ethnic majority worker employment by migrant and ethnic minority workers – what can be described as the 'ethnicisation' of several lesser-skilled occupations and sectors across contemporary Europe - has been taking place slowly in certain countries since the immigration of the post-war boom. Yet during the

[4] Bank of England (2006: 34).

first five years of the 21st century it accelerated, and combined with other related changes we can note:[5]

- **Work** in many of Europe's major cities and lower-skilled occupations has become increasingly ethnicised while employment security weakened and working lives became increasingly pressurised.

- The membership and/or influence of **trade unions** continued to decline (Bulgaria, France, Italy, UK) or at best remained stable (in Belgium).

- As globalisation, food shortages, wars and attacks on human rights encouraged migration from the less well off and/or more conflict-affected areas of the world towards wealthier and more stable societies, **racism** and/or national xenophobia in Europe became significantly more visible.

The importance of our research focus on work, the unions and racism for the development of the EU and the encouragement of participative citizenship cannot be underestimated. This is because the workplace is potentially one of the places where socialisation between co-workers of different origins is most likely to take place, and because in many workplaces in Europe trade unionists play a major role in shaping workplace culture. Workplace cultures –the form and content of relations between owners or managers and workers as well as between workers (of different skills, but also of different ages, ethnicities and genders) vary hugely between sectors and the products or services delivered, between professions and the mix of manual and white collar workers and between individual employers.

Within this variety of workplace cultures Europe's trade unions can play a key role in generalising openness, democratic values and fairness and tolerance. Trade unions are mass voluntary organisations of citizens who bond together at the place of work or on the basis of some skills acquired through common training. Membership of specific unions may also follow political or religious affiliations (Belgium, Bulgaria, France) or reflect social security considerations (Belgium) or include significant numbers of retired members (Italy). Unions are nearly everywhere committed in varying degrees to securing social justice both for their own members and within society as a whole. Addressing these dual audiences of their own members and wider society creates a significant potential for tensions between union policy-making at different levels, and this is particularly true in relation to 'new' workers entering local labour markets.

[5] Section 2 of this report amplifies these three developments.

National trade unions and union confederations now generally see the advantages of (and at least pay lip service to) integrating 'new' workers into membership. They wish to benefit from their membership subscriptions and activities and to prevent employers using 'minority' workers to undercut existing wages and working conditions. At workplace level, however, trade union activists may be much more ambiguous about demanding full equality of treatment from the employer for those they see as 'outsiders', or they may not actively seek their full participation in the union. Workplace-level day-to-day responses to the challenges posed by labour market changes often reflect compromises struck between the generally anti-racist and anti-discriminatory policies of the national-level organisations, and what can sometimes be local-level resistance to change or even adaptation to racism or xenophobia. At local level there are often tensions flowing from the perception held by the existing ethnic majority workers that the 'new' workers will in some, generally unspecified way, threaten their 'historic' entitlements (to the better, perhaps more interesting, jobs, to higher rates of pay or overtime opportunities, to ruling the roost in the local trade union, etc).

This research has probed the processes and outcomes of these compromises. Its findings are summarised in the report's title: 'Ambiguous messages'. The unions often have very good anti-racist policies on paper. There is some evidence of workplace-based trade unionists leading the struggle against racist discrimination and xenophobia and involving ethnic minority workers fully in the trade union. But we have also found evidence of many local trade unionists preferring to deny the presence of such discrimination and through their inaction helping to sustain it, often with the consequence that ethnic minority workers feel little or no affinity with the union.

1.1 Research partner selection

The 32 researchers in the RITU project came from five European countries. They were based in the Working Lives Research Institute, London Metropolitan University (UK), in the *l'Unité de Recherche Migrations et Sociétés* at Nice University and Paris 7 University (France), in the *Centre de Sociologie du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Formation* in the Université Libre de Bruxelles (Belgium), in the *Laboratorio di Formazione e Ricerca sull'Immigrazione* at the Università Ca' Foscari Venezia (Italy), who also worked with the Rome-based IRES research institute, and in IMIR, the International Center for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations in Sofia (Bulgaria).[6]

[6] The researchers who participated in the project are as follows: *Belgium*: Nouria Ouali, Lorenzo Munar Suard, Mateo Alaluf, Andrea Rea ; Bulgaria: Antonina Zhelyazkova, Violeta Angelova, Zhelyu Vladimirov, Dotcho Mihailov; *France*: Véronique De Rudder, Christian Poiret, Philippe Poutignat, Christian Rinaudo, Jocelyne Streiff-Fénart, Simona Tersigni, avec les collaborations de Hervé Andrès et Mireille Eberhard;; Italy: Pietro

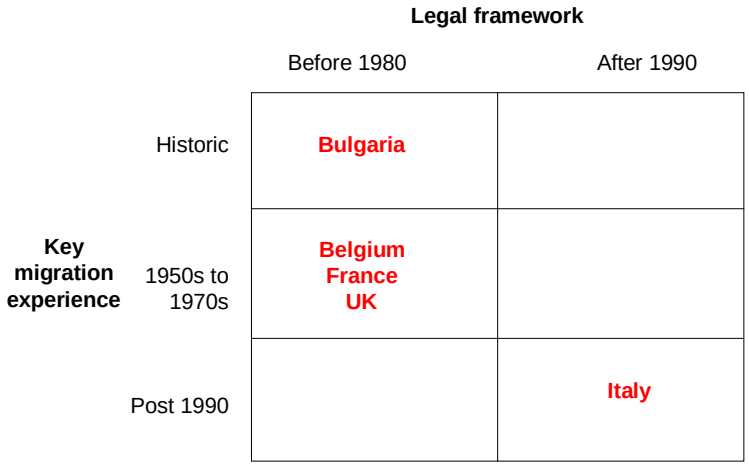
One issue concerning this mix of countries is about their representativity within a contemporary European Union of 25 member states and two accession countries. Can the results from these particular national and comparative research studies be generalised out to the overall European context?

We selected the partner countries on a deliberate basis. We wanted to cover nearly the full range of migration and nationality experiences available in Europe: from a centuries-old minority, to two or three generation minorities, with or without automatic rights to national citizenship, as well as experiences where very recent migrant minorities have few or no citizenship rights. But concerned with the problems of spreading the research too thinly in what could then become too superficial, we decided to research just five countries, three 'large' and two 'small', in which there were enough common elements with the other EU members and accession countries, for some of the research findings to be equally applicable. Thus our partners included Bulgaria, a candidate country with significant Roma and Turkish minorities. Its large Roma minority undoubtedly offers considerable similarity with Romania, Hungary and the Czech Republic while its former Communist history provides a not totally dissimilar political and legal background with these and other Eastern European EU accession members. Italy, like Spain and Portugal, had been a country of net emigration until the 1990s. While it possesses a long history of discrimination against internal migrants from the Italian South, it is a country that has had to deal with the presence of visible ethnic minorities without a prior set of laws, regulations and custom and practice established before 1980. France, Belgium and the UK, in contrast, are all countries that are experiencing the new global migration movements against a background of roughly 40-50 years of measures aimed at facilitating the entry of first migrant workers and then their families and children into national labour markets. While each of these three countries has enacted 2000 European Equal Treatment (racial or ethnic origin) Directive, often using the opportunity to revisit their own earlier national legislation, their basic approaches to new migrants and to the racism and xenophobia they are met with, remains rooted within their earlier experiences. Thus the UK's approach put multi-culturalism to the fore, France's stressed integration and Belgium was somewhere between the two.

The countries in which the teams worked thus illustrate a wide range of the migration experiences and legal frameworks within Europe. The combination is shown in Figure 2.

Basso, Fabio Perocco, Adriana Bernadotti, Elisa Banfi, Lucia Bignucolo, Silvia Cavallin, Rossana Cillo, Andrea De Bonis, Luigi Di Noia, Filippo Perazza; UK : Steve Jefferys, Mary Davis, Umut Erel, Sukhwant Dhaliwal, Ashika Thanki, Rebecca Gumbrell-McCormick.

Figure 2. Partner legal frameworks and migration experiences



Practice and policy in relation to gender equality may also have a bearing on the issue of equal treatment of minorities. It is helpful to note that in relation to the different degrees of equality experienced by women in our five research countries, there was also quite a range of different positions on the OECD GID (Gender, Institutions and Development) Data Base (2006). Its indices are based on analysing and scoring 50 different indicators of equality. Two European but non-EU countries head the two rankings (Iceland for 'gender empowerment' and Norway for 'gender related development' out of 162 countries), but there remain variations within Europe, as the rankings and absolute index estimates for the five target countries show in Table 1:

Table 1. Gender empowerment and development in five countries, 2005

	Gender Empowerment Measure		Gender-related Development Index	
	Rank	Measure	Rank	Measure
Belgium	15	0.695	7	0.938
UK	17	0.675	9	0.934
France	n/a	n/a	15	0.929
Italy	32	0.561	21	0.914
Bulgaria	n/a	n/a	48	0.795

Source: OECD (2006), Gender, Institutions and Development Database (GID), OECD Development Centre: Paris.

While we cannot claim our analysis should be automatically read across to other European countries, governments and trade union movements, our conviction is that the sample of countries chosen for detailed research reflect well the diversity of historic contexts available in Europe. The research findings for this range of countries should thus at the very least be considered as possibly having implications for those European countries not directly researched.

1.2. Research design

The national contexts of the trade union movements and of migration and legislative history are quite different between the five countries researched. So too were the research team backgrounds, some having more experience of trade unions and collaborative European research than others, and only two of the partners (the Belgians and the British) had actually worked together before. While all the partners were experienced in their own specialist areas, the different extent of links and knowledge of the trade union movement was one reason we insisted (with some success) that each team work with a broader group of advisors who could contribute some of the expertise that each team lacked.

1.3. Racism defined

We began our research by developing joint definitions and understandings of what each of the teams meant by racism and xenophobia, and of the differences between the trade union movements' perceptions of the challenge in the different countries.[7] Agreeing that it was a social construction – made by people's words and actions – we observed that it is one of the forms inter-ethnic relations may take. It is a social relationship like those of class and gender, and like them, it embodies the power relations of both domination and subordination. But what is specific about it is that it simultaneously constructs an 'inferior other' (Rudder, Poiret et al. 2000). Racism was socially and politically developed in the modern era in the interaction of capitalist expansion with colonialism and nationalism. It is thus both a form of exploitation embracing material as well as symbolic domination and an ideological construction derived from pseudo-scientific assumptions emphasising biological, social and cultural difference. Racism appears not only within the political and social system (expressed in laws, or in institutions and power relations), but also in

[7] In the first RITU comparative research report we explored the common imperialist pasts of Belgium, France and the UK, their legacy of racism and their different trajectories. See S. Jefferys (2004) *Racism and Trade Unions in the EU: National Perspectives on a Common Challenge*, London: Working Lives Research Institute. An historical overview of the evolving discourses on immigration and racism was produced as Table 3.5, and is reproduced here as VII. 6.4. The whole report is available on the RITU website, WorkingAgainstRacism.

individual practice and in ways of understanding or describing the world that justify or tolerate racial inequalities.[8]

Xenophobia is defined as a prejudice against and dislike of foreigners. The difference between racism and xenophobia, is that while the former implies power relations – the economic, social or political ability to subordinate and harm the constructed 'other' – the latter may be kept hidden. But as soon as the intentional or unintentional consequences of such a prejudice are to harm the 'other', then it becomes racism and racial discrimination.

Racialised social relationships clearly vary over time and between countries. Yet we able to agree that it was helpful to distinguish between two principal forms of that relationship. On the one hand there is 'direct' or 'open' racism, where the harm done to the subordinated 'other' is clear for all to see. A black[9] driver is deliberately allocated by their white supervisor to a bus route through a strongly white neighbourhood in order to create an 'incident' that would lead to the black driver's dismissal; a supermarket customer moves to another checkout rather than agreeing to be served by a black checkout person. On the other hand there is 'indirect' or 'institutional' racism where, even if there is no deliberate intention to discriminate, the outcome is that people from ethnic minority backgrounds are systematically disadvantaged by the ways that rules, regulations, procedures and custom and practices operate. A language test is used on recruitment or in promotion procedures that favours candidates who come from the white 'majority'; a trade union appoints candidates to full-time official positions on the basis of political favours they have rendered to the grouping that constitutes the dominant 'majority' union leadership.

This early work informed the establishment and launch in January 2004 at the ETUC in Brussels of a three language website called 'Working against Racism'.[10] Its intention was to draw the attention of the European trade union movement to the necessity of improving its internal awareness of the dangers of racism and of the need to combat it. It

[8] Jefferys (2004: par 1.9).
[9] The term 'black' is used here as a general description. In the UK the terms Black, Black and Minority Ethnic (BME), Black and Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) and Ethnic Minorities are often used interchangeably. Many dark skinned people do not like to be referred to as 'black' since they assume that such a term applies only to Africans and Afro-Caribbeans and believe it does not validate their own sense of self, culture, origin and belonging. But the term black does not have to be a detailed description. In the UK it is also used in much the same way as the very general term 'worker' for everyone whether they are a teacher, a nurse, an electrician or a street cleaner, regardless of the huge differences between what they do and how they regard themselves. See M. Davis, R. McKenzie and W. Sullivan (2006), *Working against racism in the trade unions*' TUC/WLRI: London.
[10] Workingagainstracism.org.

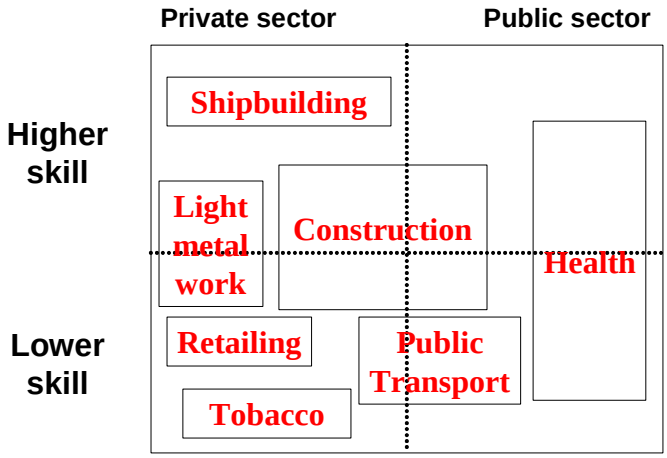
was also intended to allow trade unionists to exchange information on anti-racist activities.

1.4. Case study choice

To try and develop a comparative analysis of the role of trade unions in mediating racism in the workplace and of the different experiences of ethnic minority workers of the trade unions, we attempted to hold some basic labour market variables constant. We selected three case study industries in each country according to similar criteria and, where possible, sought to cover the same sectors and occupations. Since this was an enquiry primarily concerned with the role of trade unions, the first criterion was that there should be a trade union presence within the sector and preferably well implanted across several workplaces within the sector. The second criterion was that there should also be recent or long-term migrant workers present in the sector labour market. A third criterion was used selectively. If there were a choice of sectors then we would prefer to study service sectors where they added the issue of the proximity of the ethnic minority workers to the industry's customers and the interrelationship of customers and workers. We specifically wanted also to research both private as well as public sector employers, because we did not want to focus exclusively on the public sector where trade unionism is generally stronger. Finally, where we still had a choice, we sought to ensure a spread of national case studies between sectors that could be classified as employing on average 'higher' skilled labour and those that on average made use of a less skilled labour force. Figure 3 illustrates the mix of sectors selected by dominant occupational skill composition and by public and private ownership.[11]

[11] Despite the possible domination of an industry by highly-skilled labour, the location of most ethnic minority or migrant workers within each of these industries tends, as we shall demonstrate later, to be in the lower skilled half of the diagram.

Figure 3. Sector choice by skill and ownership



The industries and occupations chosen for the case studies reflected the 'best choice' we could make, given these criteria. In Bulgaria the sectors chosen all involved the very long-established Turkish minority, in Italy they largely involved quite recent migrants, and in Belgium, France and the UK the workforce in the chosen sectors represented a mix of recent with second and third generation ethnic minority migrants. The spread of case study sectors and countries is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Industrial sectors chosen for in-depth study

Phase	Belgium	France	UK	Italy	Bulgaria
1	Public Transport	Public Transport	Public Transport	Light metal work	Construction
2	Retailing	Retailing	Retailing	Shipbuilding	Textiles
3	Health	Health	Health	Health	Tobacco

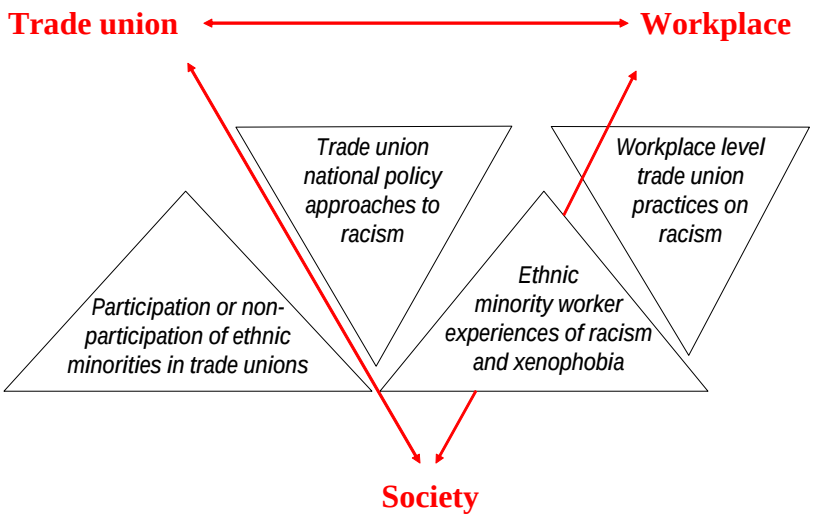
The development of joint, agreed interview schedules and the fieldwork for Phase 1 took place mainly in the second half of 2003 and in 2004. The fieldwork for Phases 2 and 3 took place mainly in 2005. The four key areas on which we wished to uncover a range of information were:

- trade union policy approaches to race discriminations;

- what actually happens to such policies in the workplace;
- what are the actual experiences of discrimination and xenophobia at work today, both from the employer, from colleagues and from the customer; and
- how far do people of black and minority ethnic origins participate in the trade unions?

These four cross-cutting research issues are presented graphically in Figure 4 against the background of the interaction of societal factors with the trade unions and the individual workplaces.

Figure 4. Research design and context



In each of these four key areas we sought to find out a wealth of analytic detail: how far were the policies or practices formal or real; were they simply reactive; how clear were they; how inclusive; what did they cover; what were their substantive content; what were their strengths; why were they in place; and what terms did trade unionists and ethnic minority workers use to describe their experiences?

Three research methods were used:

- Summarising available statistical data (and in Bulgaria conducting a survey in the absence of other existing data) on the extent of discrimination present in each society;

- Undertaking literature reviews on the issues of industrial relations and racism; and
- Conducting qualitative interviews with a range of respondents covering both national and local level trade union officials or activists, ethnic minority and indigenous workers, and some representatives of anti-racist organisations.

The range and numbers of interviews conducted by the national research teams are shown in Table 3:

Table 3. Project interviewees, 2003-2005

Interviewees:	***Belgium***	***Bulgaria***	***France***	***Italy***	***UK***	***RITU Total***
National trade union officers	2	5	12	7	11	37
Regional or local trade union officers	15	6	9	22	18	70
Workplace trade union activists & representatives from 'majority' backgrounds	13	38	11	20	17	99
Non-activist 'majority' workers	1	11	13	5	5	35
Workplace trade union activists & representatives from 'minority' backgrounds	9	20	28	10	18	85
Non-activist 'minority' workers	43	14	12	13	16	98
National and local campaigning anti-racist organisations	5	2	8	13	7	35
National Totals	88	96	93	90	92	459

We achieved our objectiveof interviewing trade unionists from the top of the trade union (100 full-time national or regional officials) down to the workplace (184 workplace activists) and we also interviewed 133 non-activist workers, some of whom were inactive trade union members but most of whom did not belong to any trade union. Among the 318 workplace-level interviews, 134 were with activists from the national 'majority' group, while 183 were from a 'minority' ethnic group.

All the interviews were transcribed and made accessible in English, French or Italian to all the partners on the research teams' intranet system. This meant that all the research teams could share the primary data made available by the other researchers. The fieldwork was conducted in three phases. Meetings followed each phase of the research and findings and issues were discussed among all the partners before three comparative reports were drawn up.[12]

This final research report draws specifically on the sectoral comparative analyses that were made on each of the three different case study phases of the research process to answer the central research question: how effectively are Europe's trade unions combating racism in the workplace?[13] The summary reports of the three comparative studies are provided in VII. 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3. The current report, however, also builds upon the totality of the 28 different reports completed by the research teams and made public over the lifetime of the three-year project: these comprise three comparative sector reports, one comparative national report, five separate national research reports, 15 national fieldwork reports and four best practice guides. The full list of these reports is provided in VII. 1.[14]

The next chapter (section 2.) now addresses the changing context of workplace racism and xenophobia in the countries where we conducted our research and brings in some wider European background. The following chapter (Section 3.) focuses on understanding and theorising the trade union responses to workplace racism that our research uncovered.

2. Work, trade unions and racism in Europe

> **'When I entered the company I realised that the well-paid jobs are less accessible. You don't have to wonder why'** (North African 28-year-old CFDT male Paris bus driver)

This chapter outlines the European context of trends in unemployment and work as they impact on ethnic minority and migrant workers. It then considers the trade union

[12] The first comparative analysis of the national reports was written up by Steve Jefferys from the UK team, as was the comparative analysis of the first phase case studies. The comparative analyses of the second phase case studies was written up by Nouria Ouali of the Belgian team, and the third phase case studies were written up by Fabio Perocco and Rossana Cillo from the Italian team.

[13] Unless otherwise indicated all the quotations are taken from interviews cited in one or other of the three comparative reports.

[14] Most of these reports were made available to the participants at the project's concluding Conference, 'Trade Unions against Racism', held in Paris on October 20 and 21st 2005. They may also be seen on the project's website, WorkingAgainstRacism. The Belgian and Italian 'Guides to best trade union practice' are being prepared with trade unionists while this report is being written.

situation of slowing declining workplace influence but of a still major institutional and continuing presence. Finally it describes the growing public manifestations of racism and xenophobia and reports our findings of the presence of direct and indirect racism at the workplace across the five countries.

2.1. Unemployment and work

What has our fieldwork told us about continuing evolution of work in the early 21st century? We encountered, first of all, a high sense of job insecurity, reinforced in some countries by high unemployment rates, particularly among younger workers, and in others by a greater regulatory toleration of 'job churn'. In the UK, Belgium and France there are proportionality higher numbers of non-white workers among the under 25s, meaning this phenomena of youth unemployment disadvantages them more than workers from the 'majority'. Eurostat estimated that in November 2005 there were 18.4 million unemployed in the EU25 area.[15] Unemployment for all workers and for younger workers in the research partner countries compared with the EU averages over the three years 2003-2005 is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Unemployment in five countries and EU15 (%), 2003-5

	Total			**Under 25s**		
	2003	2004	2005	2003	2004	2005
UK	5.0	4.6	4.8	11.5	10.9	n/a
Italy	8.4	8.0	7.5	26.3	23.5	29.7
Belgium	7.9	7.8	8.4	19	17.5	22.3
EU-15	*7.9*	*8.0*	*8.5**	*15.3*	*15.6*	*18.4**
France	9.5	9.7	9.2	19	21.3	21.4
Bulgaria	12.7	12.0	9.9	22.8	25.8	22.8

*EU25 November data, seasonally adjusted.

Sources: 2003-2004 – OECD, Employment Outlook 2005, OECD: Paris, 237.

Eurostat (2006) for 2005 data; Bulgarian data: National Statistical Institute, Sofia

We also encountered continuing shifts in work organisation that commonly involved either some shrinkage of the public sector or the introduction within it of more private

[15] Eurostat, *Euro-indicators*, News release, 4/2006 – 6 January 2006.

sector or market-focused ways of behaving: a continuing shift from the notion of providing collective (often but not exclusively) public services to that of responding to orders from individual 'customers'. Where the public sector had formally operated with permanent full-time staff, the increasing flexibility evoked by these changes had been accompanied by greater recourse to part-time and temporary or agency workers, who generally lacked the same statutory rights or status as their full-time colleagues. Often, where such changes had taken place, ethnic minority or migrant workers were found to be over-represented in these lower status or more 'flexible' positions. Across our target countries we can therefore see that the incidence of part-time working rose slowly amongst both men and women, as indicated in Table 5.

Table 5. Part-time working in five countries and EU15 (%), 2003-4

	Men		**Women**	
	2003	2004	2003	2004
France	4.7	4.8	22.7	23.6
Italy	4.9	5.9	23.6	28.8
Belgium	5.9	6.3	33.4	34.1
EU-15	*6.3*	*6.6*	*30.1*	*30.2*
UK	9.6	10.0	40.1	40.4

Source: 2003-2004 – OECD, Employment Outlook 2005, OECD: Paris, 253.

A third development that has a bearing on workplace cultures is the view that if the impact of new technology has reduced the physical effort involved in some forms of work, it has also helped generate greater stress. There is a genuine sense that while improvements in technology have physically 'lightened' parts of some jobs – for example in physically driving a bus or pushing a patient around a hospital – they have also intensified the work experience. Thus the bus driver whose progress is electronically monitored by their controller and the hospital ward assistant who now deals with a much higher turnover of patients both sense an increase in stress at work. In the contexts of a decline in trade union influence and of growing xenophobia – which in combination weakens the collectivism inherent in most work experiences – the result frequently makes the individual feel more isolated when coping with that stress. We found this was particularly the case when these stressed individuals come from an ethnic minority.

There were thus general, contextual changes occurring to the working lives of all workers, those from the national ethnic 'majority' as well as those from particular ethnic

'minority' groups. Yet, mainly in the major cities that offer more job opportunities to minority and 'foreign' workers, but also in some more remote rural areas where employers often have greater difficulties in recruiting qualified 'majority' workers to low status jobs, we also observed the process of the ethnicisation of several largely lower-skilled, lower-paid and less secure occupations. This development needs exploring in a little more detail, since it has a considerable bearing on the issue of how trade unions effectively represent those in such occupations.

2.1.1. Ethnicisation of labour markets

The ethnicisation (or racialisation) of a labour market tends to be a two stage process. In a first period, a few employers start to offer work to ethnic minority nationals or to migrant workers of various ethnicities at rates of pay and under working conditions, hours or degrees of hardship or of job security at which they find it difficult to attract or retain equivalently-skilled or experienced national ethnic 'majority' workers. The greater their access to this 'additional' labour supply, the more the employer can play on one or more of the three elements in the pay-effort bargain – lowering pay, demanding more effort, or reducing the degree of security. In a second period, these new pay-effort bargains spread out to become a set of new local sectoral labour market entry rates. The greater the exposure to competitive pressures the more rapid is this generalisation of these new bargains, and the more minority labour is substituted for white majority nationals.

This substitution trend is appearing in several industries particularly exposed to globalisation. In Northern Italy, world competition has imposed lower prices on shipbuilding companies that then, in turn, have reduced their core 'national majority' labour force and resorted instead to employing migrant workers from Southern Italy, Eastern Europe and from the 'global South'.[16] A not dissimilar evolution occurred in Italian light engineering, where a 2003 survey found that some 17% of new hires across the whole of Italy were migrant workers, who were particularly likely to be found in foundries and in the higher risk areas such as painting or making chrome parts. In one multinational-owned white goods factory in the Treviso region a quarter of the manual workforce comes from the 'global South'.[17] In Bulgaria's textile industry the same process of intensified global competition (in particular from Chinese producers) has effectively transformed employment security in the industry. It is now viewed as being too risky or

[16] Including Bangladesh and India.
[17] Mainly Senegal, Ghana and Nigeria, with some Chinese and most recently Bengalis working for employment agencies.

too low paid for most 'national majority' workers, and so has become an 'opportunity' for some Bulgarian Roma to get work in basic production jobs.

But the ethnicisation of low status jobs is also affecting large internal-facing industries. In Belgium, without considering the 500,000 foreign-born naturalised Belgians who work in the high labour-turnover retail industry, as many six per cent of the labour force of the three biggest retail chains are non-Belgian citizens. In November 2005 a Bank of England survey estimated that four out of ten employers in distribution employed more than 10% non-UK nationals (this figure was as high as nine out of ten employers in agriculture).[18] Even more precise ethnic data is available covering trends in UK retailing: between 1993 and 2000 in London there was a 118% increase in the numbers of ethnic minority workers (UK and non-UK nationals), and an 11% decline in white workers.[19]

One French example helps illustrate how this development can occur at a micro level. A large supermarket employs some young minority men as security staff in an attempt to dissuade other, generally other younger, local minority males from thieving from the store and rapidly the security area becomes an area where minority males are accepted. In another example, according to one Belgian North African woman union official, management treated its darker-skinned sub-Saharan African minority workers differently:

> *If there was not choice but to hire them, they had to be kept out of sight in the kitchens. Didn't want to put people off. Yes, that's what I said - put people off. You didn't have to put the customers off. That's what a woman who was the boss at the time said –'didn't want to put people off'. She was talking about a man, a mixed-race Zairean French teacher. He had to work to get his papers. Us North Africans, it's just about OK, because they have no choice. We're out front. But him, you couldn't put him out front.*[20]

So while in one case skin colour is displayed and in the other it is kept hidden, in both the allocation of particular staff to particular jobs by virtue of their visible ethnicity is a conscious employer decision. In the UK, too, over the last ten years, skin colour has become a more conscious part of business: a growing use has been made of the 'business case for diversity', also referred to as the 'brown pound'. This aims to use

[18] Bank of England (2006: 21).
[19] Office of National Statistics, Labour Force Survey, 1993 and 2000.
[20] All the interview extracts in this report are taken from the three comparative fieldwork reports unless otherwise indicated.

visible ethnicity as a device to improve profitability. Thus black television presenters are put before the cameras to encourage black viewers, or black models are used in advertising that is targeting products into UK black communities; other examples are where black staff are employed in retail outlets or banks in areas with a high ethnic minority populations to make attract minority customers by making them feel 'more comfortable'.

The particularly onerous working conditions that include nearly continuous exposure to an increasingly critical public in public transport and in health care have made many of the lowest paid and most physically fatiguing jobs in these sectors increasingly dependent upon minority and migrant labour. Workers from former colonies initially began to be recruited into these jobs in Belgium, France and the UK in the 1950s and 1960s. Belgium's Brussels Public Transport Company began to recruit foreign drivers in 1964 and employed 12% non-Belgians by 1972, most of whom were Moroccan, who still make up the largest non-Belgian nationality today. London Transport began recruiting significant numbers of black workers in the 1950s and by 2003 on the London buses more than 60% of the bus drivers were black or came from other ethnic minorities as did 48% of the 11 bus companies' total staff. In Paris, while some French Overseas Department employment took place in the 1950s and early 1960s, it has only been since legal changes in 2002 that non-EU nationals have been able to take up jobs in the RATP, and many of those who have, have been given assignments to the least prestigious and most difficult services to the poorer and strongly ethnic minority areas of suburban Paris.

In the health sector, paradoxically, the combination of onerous working conditions that are being shunned by white workers, with the possibility of achieving a respected occupational status, creates another dynamic leading to ethnicisation. Nursing, for example, is still being actively sought after by many ethnic minority workers, and in most of Western Europe there are considerable labour shortages among health care professionals. Under these circumstances discrimination at the point of recruitment becomes less likely. A Belgian human resource manager thus told the press in January 2004:

> *It's as if young immigrant-origin workers aren't as blasé as young Belgians. They still appear to be attracted by a professional career who not only the supply of jobs stays high, but also allows a chance of getting on socially.*

By 2001 around 14% of the 1.3 million workers in the UK's health sector had been born outside the UK, but shortages of nursing staff still meant that in 2003-2004 a total of

30,000 nurses and midwives were recruited from Eastern Europe and the Global South.[21] A large proportion of them entered to work in lower status jobs alongside the children of an earlier generation of migrants. One black woman from a hospital where the vast majority of health care assistants are black argued:

> *I think all the health care assistants in my general experience are treated differently to the rest of the nursing staff, they're treated like more or less skivvies, talked down to a lot.*[22]

In Belgium, social security data worked on by Martens and Ouali (2005) confirms the same picture of a massive recourse to ethnic minority workers, particularly women, in the health sector. Their calculations show that in the Brussels region one in five Moroccan women and one third of women from elsewhere in Africa work as hospital or personal care assistants. An analysis of the names of the 2,127 staff in four Brussels hospitals suggests that 27% come from ethnic minority roots. In France, although organised recruitment from its Overseas Departments into the health sector (which only employed 'French' citizens) finally ended in the 1980s, French West Indians continue to migrate to find work in the sector, ending up in the lowest category jobs. In France, out of the total 18,000 French hospital workers who were born overseas, 12,000 work for the single employer, the AP-HP (Paris Public Hospitals Service). These workers tend to be in the lowest classifications (82% in category C, manual and clerical workers, 17% in category B, intermediate professionals), and are concentrated in a few occupations (55% of health-care assistants, 15% of maintenance personnel, 14% of nurses). But in addition to these black French, as many as 7.6% of the nearly 700,000 strong national public medical labour force comes from outside the EU, making up 15% of staff being trained, and 10% of 'assistants'.[23] In Italy the health sector reforms of the 1990s that permitted the contracting out of some services, the employment of sub-contractors and agency workers, and encouraged private health provision, have also assisted a similar shift to growing labour dependency upon Eastern Europe and the Global South.[24]

The data available on the ethnicisation process in Europe varies considerably in scope and reliability. Although there is data available on the numbers of 'foreigners' from other EU and from non-EU countries working in Belgium, France and Italy, there is nothing comparable to the UK data on their ethnic origins. This only makes it possible to note the

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[21] Including South Africa, the Philippines and India.
[22] S. Dhaliwal (2005), *UK Health Sector Report*, WLRI: London, p. 40.
[23] Proportions de ressortissants étrangers parmi les personnels médicaux des établissements publics de santé en 2002, Ministère des solidarités, de la santé et de la famille, Synthèse annuelle des données sociales hospitalières. Cited in Poiret *et al* (2005), *French Health Sector Report*, URMIS: Paris, p15.
[24] Including South America and the Philippines.

considerable proportions of 'foreigners' within the total population, as shown in Table 6, and to see the significant volumes of requests for political asylum alongside the totals of foreigners.

Table 6. Total populations, 'foreigners' or minorities in five countries, 2004-5

	Total Pop. (m)	Minorities or Foreigners			Asylum applications 1994-2003 (000s)
		(000s)	%	% of which	
Belgium	10.2	897 (FC)	9.7	15.0 (EU15)	240.2
Bulgaria	7.9	747 (Turks) 371 (Roma)	9.5 4.5		0.9*
France	58.5	3,263 (FC) 4,310 (Imm)	4.9 7.4	37.1 (EU15)	382.6
Italy	57.6	2,800 (FC)	4.8	5.1 (EU)	83.4*
UK	60.2**	2,810(FC) 4,000 (EM)	4.1 7.1	12.8 (AC) 34.9 (EU15)	680.1

*1992-2001 data; **2005 estimate including 360,000 accession country migrants since 2004.

FC = Foreign citizens; EU15 = pre-accession European Union citizens; Imm = Immigrant; AC = Accession Country EU citizens; EM = Ethnic Minority.

Sources: Government Actuarys Department Projections Database http://www.gad.gov.uk/Population/, Table 3.4 in the First Public Report (Jefferys 2004). Jandle et al, 2003, Caritas, 2005; Istu, 2005: Table A1 for columns 2-4; Asylum statistics column: - Italy (Perocco and Basso, 2003: 37); - UK (Heath et al, 2003); - Bulgaria (NIS, 2001; UNHCR statistics, 2006)(Statistics 2003) (Heath, Jeffries et al. 2003)

What jobs do these 'foreigners' or 'minorities' occupy? An analysis of the Belgian Labour Force Survey (2004) finds that one quarter of national-born citizens are manual workers compared with one third of 'naturalised' Belgians and three-quarters of Turkish and Moroccans. Most ethnic minority workers who are national citizens or who remain foreign citizens find employment in some of the lower paying, harder or simply less prestigious occupations. Yet despite their growing presence in the jobs at the bottom end of the labour market, in every country researched these same groups are also found to be significantly and persistently over-represented among the unemployed. In Belgium, again, unemployment rises clearly with an individual's distance from the ethnic majority. Data from the same Labour Force Survey found that nationally-born Belgians experienced 7% unemployment, other EU citizens had 12% unemployment, naturalised

Belgians had 16% unemployment and Turkish and Moroccan citizens had 38% unemployment.[25] In France a 1999 study found that while male unemployment among native French aged between 18 and 40 was 10.1%, it was 24.9% among Turkish immigrants and 29.6% among Algerian immigrants, and still 21.2% and 23.2% among second generation immigrants.[26]

A highly telling finding from Meurs *et al* (2005) for France's demographic institute, INED, is that the higher unemployment risks for 'visible' minorities are passed down families to the next generation. French education and knowledge of the French labour market barely moderates the exposure to high risks of unemployment experienced by second generation non-whites. In stark contrast, the additional unemployment risks faced by the second generation of Southern European 'invisible' migrants virtually disappear.[27] This evidence that discrimination based on racist stereotyping continues for African-origin and visibly Middle Eastern migrants and their children, while it is moderated effectively for the children of 'white' foreigners, is of real concern. Some of the 'visible minority' workers we interviewed indicated some resentment among the longer-term resident 'non-white' migrants against the immigration of 'newer' and 'whiter' migrants.

This discriminatory unemployment experience affects some minority workers more than others. Paradoxically, the substitution effect by which majority workers are moving out of lower status jobs means that non-white workers looking for manual work in those jobs are often more likely to find it than clerical or higher skilled who are competing more directly with national majority workers. Data from France showed unemployment among 'foreign' and 'naturalised' clerical workers to be significantly higher than for manual workers with the same ethnic origins. In 1992, for example, when French-born unemployment was 12.9% for clerical workers and 12.5% for manual workers, the proportions for 'naturalised' French were 16% and 13.7%, and for non-French African clerical workers 36.4% compared to 24%: the manual unemployment rate for Africans was twice that of French-born manual workers, while the clerical unemployment rate was three times higher.

We have suggested some ways in which unemployment and increased flexibility and stress at work are tending to encourage ethnicised labour markets in which recruitment opportunities are increasingly available to minority workers in the lowest grades or in the

[25] A Netherlands study of 50 communes in 2005 by the SCP found the same experience. Among Dutch nationals unemployment was 9%, but among non-nationals this rose to 21% for West Indians, 22% for Turks and 27% for Moroccans. *Le Monde*, 19.1.06.
[26] Cited in Dominique Meurs, Ariane Pailhé, Patrick Simon, 'Mobilité intergénérationnelle et persistence des inégalités, *Documents de Travail*, INED, 130: 26 - INSEE, Enquête Etude de l'Histoire Familiale, 1999.
[27] *Ibid:* 13.

physically hardest or lowest status jobs and industries. Traditionally, one of the main roles for trade unions was to challenge the arbitrariness of employer discrimination and favouritism in the workplace. Their new problem is how to effectively continue to represent the interests of their traditional membership while also involving and representing minority workers whom we demonstrate are experiencing systematic discrimination both at the recruitment stage of getting jobs, but also within work.

This issue confronts a European trade union movement that in many ways appears past its prime. It is to a solid but weakening movement that we turn in the following section.

2.2. Trade unions in a slow decline

> **'Since Margaret Thatcher took over I don't think they (the unions) have got much powers, you know. We all – anybody's - impression of the union** (is that it is a) waste of time' (Black male 42-year-old British bus worker)

Trade unions are Europe's largest voluntary organisations with around 40 million working and subscription-paying members in the EU25. Their membership, however, is on the decline. Jelle Visser's (2006) latest study covers the period leading up to our three years' study. For the whole of the EU15, he estimates that union membership declined by 7.6% between 1990 and 2002.[28] Visser's adjusted data, taking into account those members who have retired, or who pay no union subscriptions, who are unemployed or who are students, show considerable changes over the 1990s and into the 21st century, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Union members (000s) in five countries and EU15, 1990-2003[29]

Year	Belgium	France	*EU15*	Italy	UK	Bulgaria**
1990	1,646	1,968	*39,262*	5,872	8,952	2,192
2000	1,806	1,780	*36,641*	5,212	6,636	778
2003	1,850*	1,830	*36,261**	5,328	6,524	515
Percent change						
1980-1990	-3	-40	*-10.1*	-18.3	-23.2	
1990-2003	12.4*	-7	*-7.6**	-9.3	-27.1	-76.5

[28] Jelle Visser (2006), 'Union membership statistics in 24 countries', *Monthly Labor Review*, January 2006: 43.
[29] Table source: *ibid:* 43-4.

* 2002 rather than 2003.

**Bulgarian data years: 1993 (trade union sources[30]), 1998 and 2003 (Official census of trade unions and employers' organisations).[31]

Absolute membership numbers are crucial in placing union activists in workplaces where they may have an opportunity to recruit minority workers and represent them. On this measure, the spectrum of experiences in terms of dues-paying union members in the research partner countries is very broad. At one end, Belgian unions actually achieved real growth up to 2002 – largely as a result of the Belgian trade unions' role in managing unemployment funds. Showing most decline among the four EU countries researched here are the British unions, who lost more than a quarter of their members in the fourteen years between 1990 and 2003. Almost all this decline (25.8%) occurred during the hostile Conservative years, but a continuing trickle (1.8%) has taken place in the seven years after Tony Blair and New Labour came to office.[32] Then, there is the still more devastating experience of the accession countries. Visser estimates a 65% trade union membership decline in Hungary, while in Bulgaria, a research partner country, the unions lost an even higher proportion: three quarters of their membership between 1993 and 2003. The reality in an enlarged Europe is an even more negative recent experience than it has been for the EU15. If we recall that trade union members are usually concentrated in very large firms and in the public sector, it is now clear that much of Europe is now a trade union desert.

However, union influence may perhaps be better estimated using measures of union density. These show how many trade unionists there are for every employee in the workforce. In the context of labour forces that have been increasing in size, the density data confirms at best a maintenance of density levels (in Belgium) and elsewhere, although variable, a continuing loss of influence. Table 8 shows that the decline in the density of EU15 trade unionism within the workforce continued unabated through the 1990s at the same rate of decline as in the 1980s:

[30] "The Bulgarian challenge: Reforming labour market and social policy". International Labour Organisation. Central and Eastern European Team, Budapest, 1994.
[31] Trade Union Membership 1993-2003. Comparative study. European Industrial Relations Observatory www.eiro.eurofound.eu.int
[32] In Autumn 2005 an estimated 6.39m employees in the UK were members of a trade union, a loss of 119,000 over the previous year. see Grainger (2006: 1).

Table 8. Union density (%) in five countries and EU15, 1990-2003[33]

Year	Belgium	France	Italy	*EU15*	UK	Bulgaria**
1990	53.9	10.1	38.8	*33.1*	39.3	82.5
2000	55.6	8.2	34.9	*27.3*	29.7	37.3
2003	55.4*	8.3	33.7	*26.3**	29.3	24.8
Percent change						
1980-1990	-2	-8.1	-10.8	*-6.7*	-11.4	
1990-2003	1.4*	-1.9	-5.1	*-6.7*	-10	-57.7

* 2002 rather than 2003.

**Bulgarian base data years as in Table 7. Data for the total number of employees for the calculation of density from the National Statistical Yearbook for 1993, 1998 and 2003. Unofficially, union sources suggest that trade union density in 2005 may be as low as 10%.

Within the EU15, trade union density is still around about a quarter of all employees, having fallen from a third since 1990 but if the accession countries are included it is unlikely that this proportion would be more than one in five.[34] For example, in Bulgaria between 1993 and 2003 trade union density plummeted as the 1990s regime change took effect, with major doubts now being raised about its very survival as an independent organisation rooted in the workplace.[35]

Despite this membership and density decline, however, the trade unions are still a unique democratic force, ready, if necessary, to try to exercise influence in negotiations with both the employers and the government.[36]

[33] Table source: *ibid:* 43-4.
[34] In the UK the growth in women trade union density in 2004-5 led to a stabilisation of the long-term decline in that year. Women's trade union density rose by 0.9% to 29.9% of women employees, while male trade union density fell by 0.2% to 28.2% in Autumn 2005. As a result overall UK trade union density in 2005 rose by 0.2% over 2004, see Grainger (2006:1).
[35] The largest Bulgarian trade union formation, CITUB, the inheritor of the pre-1990 statist trade union mantle, recently debated following the Polish Solidarnosc experience, and converting itself into a political party.
[36] The initially united trade union confederation mobilisations against pension reform and in defence of the French social model in 1995, 2003 and 2006 in France, indicates the potential capacity of trade unions to impact on government policy.

2.2. Trade union political influence on Europe

Unions have long been seen as having both political and collective bargaining agendas, in addition to the individual service role of providing collective insurance.[37] Despite the context of overall declining membership and density, trade union influence over the wider political and legal issues within the European Union has remained in the public eye. The trade union movement's role is shown in the part the ETUC has played since the 1992 (Maastricht) Treaty on European Union in negotiations with the European employers in UNICE and CEEP in drafting three framework directives and two framework agreements. While three EU directives (parental leave[38], part-time work[39] and fixed-term contracts[40]) have resulted from agreements between the social partners at EU level, there have also been two framework agreements, on stress at work[41] and on tele-working[42], to be implemented by member organisations in their own countries. In at least another 12 directives since 1992, European trade union political input occurred through direct representations, through lobbying the European Parliament, through contributions to opinions from the EU Social and Economic Committee, and through lobbying national policy-makers. The directives covered included: Protection of young workers,[43] Working time[44], Posted workers[45], European Works Councils[46], Collective redundancies,[47] Race Equality[48], Equal Treatment[49], Acquired rights,[50] Work Equipment,[51] Noise,[52] Insolvency[53] and Information and Consultation[54].

We would not wish, however, to exaggerate the importance of European trade union influence.[55] A detailed analysis of the discourse used by the ETUC, as well as interviews

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[37] See Beatrice and Sidney Webb (1920). *The History of Trade Unions*.: Longmans Green: London. This discussion of trade union purpose is continued in Section 3.3.
[38] Directive 96/46/EC Parental Leave Directive
[39] Directive 97/81/EC Part-time Workers
[40] Directive 99/70/EC on fixed-term work
[41] Signed by ETUC, UNICE, UEAPME and CEEP, 8 October 2004.
[42] Signed by ETUC, UNICE, UEAPME and CEEP, 16 July 2002.
[43] Directive 94/33/EC.
[44] Directive 93/104/EC Working time Directive; now amended by Directive 2003/88/EC
[45] Directive 96/71/EC on posted workers
[46] Directive 94/45/EC on European Works Councils Directive; also Directive 97/74/EC on European Works Councils Directive
[47] Directive 98/59/EC.
[48] Directive 2000/34/EC Race Equality Directive; also Directive 2000/43/EC Racial Equality Directive.
[49] Directive 2000/78/EC Employment Equality Directive; also Directive 2002/73/EC modernising the Equal Treatment Directive and Directive 2002/78/EC Equal Treatment Amendment Directive
[50] Directive 2001/23/EC
[51] Amending Directive 95/63/EC.
[52] Directive 2003/10/EC.
[53] Directive 2002/74/EC
[54] Directive 2002/14/EC European Information and Consultation Directive
[55] See Wagner A.-C. (2005), Vers une Europe syndicale, Ed. Du Croquant: Bellecombe-en-Bauges.

conducted with ETUC and European Industry Federation trade union officers suggests another reading of the situation. This work tends to suggest that the increased time and energy and focus of European trade union officers taken up with the EU agenda is diminishing in important ways their real potential for independence of thought and action.[56] What is taking place with what has been called the 'Europeanisation of industrial relations', far from being the strengthening of independent trade unionism and the more effective representation of Europe's citizens, can perhaps be better seen as the tying down of limited trade union resources within a very deep bureaucracy, and as the partial emasculation of the trade union movement's independent voice.[57]

Nonetheless, in the area of race discrimination the ETUC played a part in shaping policy: the Economic and Social Committee of the EU comprising the social partners gave an opinion on the 2000 Equal Treatment (racial or ethnic origin) Directive,[58] and Article 11 of that directive explicitly refers to the Social Dialogue. In that article member states were enjoined to

> *take adequate measures to promote the social dialogue between the two sides of industry with a view to fostering equal treatment, including through the monitoring of workplace practices, collective agreements, codes of conduct, research or exchange of experiences and good practices.*[59]

Further, Article 5 of the Directive explicitly endorsed the possibility of 'positive action' being taken to remedy the consequences of discrimination:

> With a view to ensuring full equality in practice, the principle of equal treatment shall not prevent any Member State from maintaining or adopting specific measures to prevent or compensate for disadvantages linked to racial or ethnic origin.[60]

Significantly, from the focus of this research, the Directive also defines indirect discrimination in encompassing terms and as having a potentially immediate impact:

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[56] Gobin C. (2001), 'Union européenne et relations socio-professionnelles : de la négation du conflit redistributif à la privatisation du pouvoir politique ? ", in *Rémunération et protection sociale : qui paie?/Social protection and employees' resources : who pays*?' pp 98-101 in (ed.) Bernard Friot, Commission européenne: Bruxelles.

[57] Gobin C. (2005), 'La démocratie, le syndicalisme et la gouvernance de l'Union européenne: la mémoire du conflit démocratique en péril?', pp. 41-70 in *L'Europe et la mémoire. Une liaison dangereuse?* , M. Aligisakis, Ed. Euryopa: Genève.

[58] Known in the UK as the Race Equality Directive,

[59] Directive 2000/43/EC, L180/25.

[60] Directive 2000/43/EC, L180/24.

> *Indirect discrimination shall be taken to occur where an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice would put persons of a racial or ethnic origin at a particular disadvantage compared with other persons…*[61]

The Equal Treatment (racial or ethnic origin) Directive took effect from July 2003 and Member States were supposed to communicate to the Commission the information necessary to draw up a report on its application by July 2005. It was a major motivation and potentially a significant contextual background to our research. It also provided national trade union movements with an opportunity to influence the legislation transposing it.

Unfortunately, this opportunity was largely missed in the countries we researched. Overall, transposition occurred in a somewhat desultory fashion in all of the research partner countries.[62] Several delayed for years. And others ignored large parts of it.

In Italy, the Legislative Decree no. 215 of September 7 2004 eventually enacted the Directive. It was strongly criticised for its lack of precision, while the Directive's promotion of national observatories on discrimination was met instead by the creation of a 'Department for the promotion of the equality of treatment and the removal of discriminations based on race and ethnic origin' within the Cabinet of the Prime Minister.[63] More recently this Department organised with the unions some joint workshops in December 2005 to raise awareness of racism in the Italian workplace, its causes and remedies.[64]

In Bulgaria the Employment Protection Act (2002) contained an anti-discrimination clause that outlawed both 'direct' and 'indirect' discrimination within work and (going further than the 2001 Labour Code) also made discrimination on 'gender, age, nationality, ethnic affiliation and health status' grounds illegal in recruitment. However,

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[61] Ibid.

[62] The EUMC Annual Report 2005 commented critically on the process of transposition of the Racial Equality Directive in these words: 'By the end of 2004, whilst most Member States had transposed the Racial Equality Directive, four Member States had been referred to the European Court of Justice over their failure to satisfy the requirements of the Directive, and several Member States had still not established a specialised body to provide assistance to victims of discrimination and promote equal treatment.
Other mixed messages emerge from developments during 2004. Whilst most Member States have strengthened their anti-discrimination legislation in response to the Directive, and some have introduced stronger measures against extremist and racist crime, some have also introduced legislation which restricts certain rights and opportunities of migrants and minorities, covering issues such as access to citizenship or rights to wear clothing signifying religious faith.'

[63] A. De Bonis, F. Perazza and F. Perocco (2004), *The Labor Dimension of Racial Discrimination in Italy*', Università di Venezia, Laboratorio di Formazione e Ricerca sull'Immigrazione, September, p 7.

[64] Adnkronosinternational, 'Italy: trade unionists to get anti-racism training', 29 November 2005.

the Act did not refer to 'ethnic minorities', and instead used the euphemisms 'groups in disadvantaged positions', 'groups at risk' or 'individuals living in or endangered to find themselves in social isolation and poverty'.

In France the law of 16 November 2001 was added to the existing French Labour Code article combating discrimination. It was named the law 'concerning the struggle against discrimination'.[65] Trade unions were given the right to take legal proceedings without having to prove they have a mandate from an employee, and in future all sector-level collective agreements should contain an anti-discrimination clause if they are to be extended by the Ministry of Labour. The government also committed itself to establishing a free victim telephone support line. However, although the law introduced the concept of 'indirect discrimination', not only was no definition given, but in the pre-report on the law the definition that was given had much greater ambiguity than in the Directive. It described 'indirect discrimination' only as long-term disadvantage affecting workers collectively:

> *neutral steps whose repetition and accumulation in practice lead over several years to deep differences between whole groups of workers.*[66]

At worst this definition deliberately seeks to deprive individual workers from any protection against indirect discrimination, and at best it reflects the absence of any serious reflection on what was an entirely new concept in France.

The Directive's concept of 'indirect discrimination' clearly challenged the traditional French 'blindness' to the societal structures of racist discrimination, to what has become known in the UK as 'structural' or 'institutional' racism.[67] This ambiguity was accompanied by a very long delay in establishing any form of body for the specific promotion of equal treatment. It was only in February 2004 that the French President announced the setting up of an Equality Authority (the High Authority against Discrimination and For Equality, *Halde*) required under the Directive's Article 13, and the law establishing it was only passed December 30 2004 with the decree and the nominations of its leading committee taking place in March 2005. Its responsibility was to 'struggle against all discriminations: skin colour, geographical or social origin, age,

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[65] LOI no 2001-1066 du 16 novembre 2001 relative à la lutte contre les discriminations.

[66] «mesures anodines dont la répétition et l'accumulation conduisent au terme de plusieurs années de pratiques à des différences profondes entre des groupes entiers de salariés» in VUILQUE P., *Rapport fait au nom de la Commission des Affaires culturelles, familiales et sociales sur la proposition de loi relative à la lutte contre les discriminations.* 10/10/2000. Cf http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/

[67] François Vourc'h and Véronique De Rudder (2003), 'Discriminations ethnistes et racistes: nommer, compter, corriger', p 63.

gender, sexual orientation, disability, political and religious opinions'[68] and its nominated president was Louis Schweitzer, the former chief executive of Renault. Two of its other 10 members are Cathy Kopp, the head of Human Resources at Accor and Nicole Notat, the former General Secretary of the CFDT. Two trade unionists, Odile Bellouin (CFDT) and Michèle Monrique (FO), were also nominated to the 18-strong consultative committee that was set up in September 2005. Finally, it was only in March 2006, in the wake of the November 2004 events that put the discrimination against French-born ethnic minorities back on the agenda, that a new and highly controversial[69] 'Equal Opportunities' law was put on the statute book. This gives *Halde* the power to levy small fines on individuals or organisations responsible for acts of discrimination and also requires all companies with more than 50 workers to introduce anonymous CVs.

In Belgium, the Equal Treatment Directive was transposed within a new general anti-discrimination law in February 2003. It outlawed both 'direct' and 'indirect' discrimination on the grounds of various 'protected characteristics', including claimed race, colour, national origin, national or ethnic descent, religion or belief', and allowed the trade unions and the Centre for Equal Opportunities and the Fight against Racism to bring cases to the courts. However, at the same time it added a degree of uncertainty through defining legally 'permissible' discrimination on grounds of 'reasonableness' if there is 'an essential and decisive occupational requirement'. This is particularly relevant for ethnic minority workers, who could be indirectly but 'reasonably' discriminated against through the imposition of requirements related to language, dress codes, flexible working patterns or qualifications.

In the UK, the Race Relations Act 1976 had been already been amended substantially in 2000 to take into account the McPherson Inquiry report into the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence and the need to outlaw racial discrimination in all public functions.[70] The government also issued two consultation documents (December 2001 and November 2002) on the Directive that enabled considerable trade union political lobbying on the issues of racist discrimination to take place. Eventually the 1976 Act was again amended, this time to outlaw discrimination on the grounds of race or ethnic or national origins in

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[68] Catherine Vautrin, Secretary of State for Integration and Equality, October 4 2004, http://www.premier-ministre.gouv.fr/information/actualites_20/.

[69] The controversy was due to the government adding a (first job) clause to the law that suspends those parts of the Labour Code relative to dismissal procedures during the first two years of employment for all young workers below the age of 26.

[70] See Davis *et al* (2003), UK national report. Macpherson defined institutional racism as:
the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture of ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people.

private homes and charities. The June 2003 changes also removed some parts of the Act that previously had allowed some people to be treated differently, and for the first time allowed 'indirect discrimination' to be established without the need for statistical evidence. In December 2003 the Employment Equality (Religion and Belief) Regulations 2003 took effect. However, the government ignored the Race Equality Directive's invitation to member states to take 'positive action' and, also effectively ignored Article 11, which specifically prescribed the extension of social dialogue over the area of race and discrimination. UK unions were given no role at all in the implementation of the directive and the TUC proposal that the government should set up a high level overarching equality advisory and monitoring group with social partner representation was rejected.[71]

2.2.2. Trade union influence on bargaining at national level

Trade union influence is undoubtedly much more significant at national level. This occurs through varying degrees of bipartite and tripartite consultation and negotiation between the trade unions, national-level and/or sectoral level employer organisations and national and regional or local government. Throughout Europe, except for the UK and in all but a few of the accession countries where if it takes place it is often at firm level, this dialogue is fed by nationally coordinated or pattern wage bargaining. In our five countries we covered a broad gambit of these experiences: trade union bargaining influence was much greater in France and Belgium than elsewhere, but it remained very important within Italy, although it was very much weaker within the UK and in Bulgaria. At national level the trade unions certainly do still have a real voice, but it is quieter than in the past. Outside the public sector, manufacturing and particularly large firms, it is sometimes not heard at all. Visser observes that 'a rather universal research finding is the decline of union density among the young'.[72] The effectiveness and scope of trade union voice is, of course, a key contextual factor in understanding the role of the trade unions in mediating the presence of racism and xenophobia in the workplace. Assuming the national unions do wish to challenge racism at work,[73] do they have the bargaining muscle or negotiating power necessary to raise anti-racist demands at national level with the government and the employers and to get something done?

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[71] Subsequently, against the views of the TUC, the government has decided to reform the public equality machinery. It is now going to bring all the discrimination commissions within the realm of one much larger Commission for Equality and Human Rights, which the trade unions see as weakening the specific campaigning thrust of organisations dedicated to gender, race and disability equalities.

[72] Visser (2006: 47). French sector and company-level collective bargaining activity declined in 2003 and 2004 following the comparatively high bargaining volume reached between 1998 and 2002 as a result of the laws requiring larger firms to implement the 35-hour week through negotiations.

[73] The ambiguities of the trade unions in relation to this are discussed at greater length in Section 3.3 below.

In France, a very low level of trade union density is still accompanied by a very high level of employees who were formally covered by sector collective bargaining agreements, estimated at 95% in 2003.[74] Yet for historical and political reasons the commitment to a process of bipartite or tripartite national-level negotiations on virtually every major socio-economic issue is still strong.[75] While it is not the case that all five recognised representative trade union confederations[76] sign all the framework agreements such negotiations may lead to, even the fact of not signing often helps legitimate the consensus reached. The national agenda is usually set by the employers or by the government, but it is important to see that the unions still have the bargaining power to put issues that concern them up for 'social dialogue'. Thus in February 2005 the unions requested the opening of a social dialogue on the promotion of employment for older workers, a process that ended with an agreement reached in October 2005, whose main proposal for a minimum three year fixed term contract for workers aged 50 and over, will be introduced into law in 2006. In contrast, our research did not uncover any similar attempt by the French unions to open up discussions on an anti-discrimination agenda, although it did reveal the presence of a high level of trade union sensitivity to the 'interference' by 'outside' anti-racist organisations when they sought to raise either the general or individual issues of workplace discrimination.

The Belgian trade unions also have very regular access to the employers and the government. Thus, for example, 'Group of 10' negotiations between the Belgian Federation of Employers and the three main trade unions[77] began in January 2006 about the competitiveness of the Belgian economy, and the government pledged its support for the process of 'concertation'. Industry-wide or sector negotiations are also commonplace, reaching agreements on not just wages but also redundancy arrangements. The unions have also traditionally lobbied hard on the issue of migrant workers. In 1974, for example, they first played a major part in demanding the government give an amnesty to undocumented workers and then campaigned to abolish penalties on such workers but to increase them on the employers who employed them. Later, the unions campaigned in favour of the even stronger measures against employers imposed in 1993 and in the

[74] Visser (2006: 46).
[75] See, S. Jefferys (2003), *Liberté, Egalité and Fraternité at Work: Changing French Employment Relations and Management*, Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke.
[76] La CGT (Confédération générale du travail), FO (Force ouvrière-CGT), la CFDT (Confédération française démocratique du travail, la CFTC (Confédération des travailleurs chrétiens), et la CGC (Confédération générale des cadres).
[77] La Confédération des syndicats chrétiens (CSC), la Fédération générale du travail de Belgique (FGTB) – who together represent 95% of trade unionists - et la Centrale Générale des Syndicats Libéraux de Belgique (CGSLB).

1999 parliamentary elections they worked with the Centre for Equality and Anti-Racism[78] to warn against the extreme right. Some of the national level trade union discourse concerning the rights of migrant workers in Belgium, however, is driven by a protectionist approach. Thus in 2005 the building sector social partners set up an 'unfair competition' working party to address labour migration from Central and Eastern Europe and possible abuses related to it. Although the awareness of the need to promote anti-racism more actively in social dialogue with the employers is rising, the unions have not yet put that as high up the agenda as they might.

In Italy, in contrast with Belgium and France, the trade unions have had relatively little influence over central government policies since the Berlusconi government took office in 2001. Indeed general strikes have been called by the three trade union confederations[79] against government policy in each of 2003, 2004 and 2005, to protest at 'the unavailability and unwillingness of the government to deal with the positions expressed by the labour movement'.[80] In addition, in 2002 the CGIL confederation supported a national demonstration against the tightening-up of the laws against migrant workers. Paradoxically, the presence of a government that has sought to undermine the tripartite social dialogue, has actually created closer cooperation between the unions. Although national-level bargaining with the employers has become more drawn-out and more conflictual, it has continued at sector level, most notably throughout 2005 in the key engineering sector. There an agreement on pay was finally reached in January 2006. In the food and drink sector another pay agreement was reached in September 2005, but only after an overtime ban was organised throughout the summer. On the other hand the social partners and Southern Italian regional organisations also signed up together in December 2005 to a Manifesto calling for action to develop South Italy. It is clear that the bargaining influence of the Italian trade unions at national level is less than in France and Belgium. Yet our research did not find evidence that the unions have given any priority to fighting racism and xenophobia at national level within the limited bargaining windows that were available to them.

In Bulgaria, national level social dialogue in the period 2003-2005 was generally ineffective and purely formal with little or no follow up. Four employers' organisations

[78] The government-funded organisation, the Centre pour l'égalité des chances et la lutte contre le racisme, established 1992.
[79] General Confederation of Italian Workers (Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro, Cgil), the Italian Confederation of Workers' Unions (Confederazione Italiana Sindacato Lavoratori, Cisl) and the Union of Italian Workers (Unione Italiana del Lavoro, Uil).
[80] EIRO on-line, http://www.eiro.eurofound.eu.int/2004/12/inbrief/it0412103n.html.

and two trade union confederations[81] were recognised as representative at national level, but despite a draft national framework agreement on sector and branch-level collective bargaining being drawn up in 2003, many employers refused to sign up to it. The regular forum for tripartite meetings was the National Council for Tripartite Cooperation. The government also declined to implement the provisions of the Labour Code allowing it to extend the provisions of collective agreements to all companies in a sector. Union representatives took part in the development of the annual Employment Plan as part of the European Employment Strategy, which did encourage measures to combat discrimination and social exclusion. After a further initiative by the new 2005 coalition government, however, talks took place aiming at concluding a tripartite Economic and Social Development Pact that would respond instrumentally to the requirements for Bulgaria's accession to the EU in 2007. In the absence of any robust institutions, even were the unions to consider discrimination as a high priority, it is unlikely they would make much headway either with the government or the employers.

In the UK, largely but not solely as a result of employer hostility and despite the election of a Labour Government in 1997, there is not only no formal national level tripartite social dialogue machinery, but there is also barely any national-level bargaining at sector level. Public policy debates between employers and unions and government still take place, but they do so outside a social dialogue context. The different partners separately issue research findings and policy statements, and separately lobby government to adopt their viewpoint. Ahead of the 2005 general election, for example, the two main employers' federations stressed the need for migrant labour and that 'labour flexibility needs to get better not worse', while the Trade Union Congress endorsed the proposal to shift from an employer-controlled work permit system to an individual-based points system. It also called on the government to do more to counter the myths about migration and asylum and to take increased action against exploitative employers. One of the few parts of the labour force that is still covered by sector agreements is the public sector, where the government is the direct employer. Thus an agreement maintaining pension levels for existing workers was finally reached in October 2005. This covered the National Health Service, education and the civil service, but it excluded the other largest group of public sector workers with a high proportion of minority workers, those in local government. The agreement was also criticised by the national employers' organisation as representing a 'capitulation to the threat of public sector strikes'. Outside the public sector trade union bargaining influence in the UK is only felt at company level. So, except

[81] The Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria (CITUB); and the Confederation of Labour Support (Podkrepa).

in the very largest firms or those with very high proportions of black and Asian workers, their very local focus makes prioritising issues of discrimination problematic.

The overall picture of trade union influence in the five countries studied here over national social dialogue or bargaining agendas, and particularly over race discrimination issues, is not bright. At European level the ETUC does have an input into certain EU directives, but we have seen that the Equal Treatment (Race Equality) Directive largely failed to provide an organising tool or focus for any of the national trade union movements. During the lifetime of this research these movements generally had different priorities and preoccupations than that of consistently addressing the need to combat racial or ethnic discrimination. The following section suggests that such a need is perhaps more pressing than is generally admitted.

2.3. Racism on the rise

In the wake of the 2001 'September 11' attack on the US, the 2002 war on Afghanistan and the 2003 American-British invasion of Iraq, the July 2005 London bombings, the November 2005 French suburban car burnings[82] and in the context of deteriorating Israeli-Palestinian relations, differences between broad masses of people according to their ethnic origins and cultural, particularly religious, affiliations, have become the subject of huge global media attention and debate in a way they were not in the much more secular 1970s and 1980s. In France an annual opinion survey undertaken in the wake of the Interior Minister's description of young minority people in the suburbs as 'scum' and the car burnings that provoked found one third of the French interviewed describing themselves as 'racist' – up from one quarter in 2004.[83] Even before the July 2005 bombings, in Britain, the numbers of 'racially-motivated crimes' recorded by the police in England and Wales had risen 12% to 59,257 over the previous year.[84]

A 28-year-old Belgian Moroccan electronics technician experienced the rising tension at work as similar to that in an old Western film:

> *It's cold. Everyone is cautious. Everyone is watching out. The eye that follows, and judges at the same time…Changes in attitudes. I'd say especially that. Changes in attitudes. In relation to what happens, in*

[82] And the international February 2006 protests against the Danish-French Prophet Mohammed cartoon publication provocation
[83] CSA survey of representative sample of 1,011 people interviewed face to face between 17 and 22 November 2005. *Le Monde*, 22 Mars 2006: 12.
[84] Home Office, March 30 2006.

relation to… It's, I'd say it's this. Every time there is a problem on the TV, well, you have to, you've got to prepare for going into work, what.

In January 2004 one of our French interviewees, a 26-year-old Algerian-origin bus driver, made the same link between what is shown on the media and the climate at work:

Everything that happens on the TV. I'm going to tell you the truth. It's making people crazy: Israel, Iraq, all that… People have had enough. Secularism, everyone's talking about it everywhere. The drivers, they're talking about it. The whole world's talking about it. You can't get away from it. We're right in the middle of it. We don't give a damn but whatever, we're in the debate, so… I feel that's what affects people, what's on the TV… These things happen thousands of kilometers from here but apparently if I stole something my father would cut off my hand, perhaps, what.[85]

Their analysis of a recent deterioration in attitudes towards Muslims were echoed by a Moroccan-origin Belgian woman shop worker:

Terrorism has been going on for thirty years, but it has got worse since 2001. I feel it more in the workplace. We're murderers. Sharia and all that. They don't know what Sharia is, but they never ask, "What is that exactly?". It could have been explained to them, but they don't know. They don't distinguish between Sunni and Shia Muslims. They don't know about all the different elements of the Muslim religion. It's just Muslim, full stop. They're murderers, savages: end of story.

Stereotyping, xenophobia and racism have been important ideological and practical props of most Western Europe capitalisms since the late 19th century reconstruction of Western nationalism within a predominantly imperialist framework.[86] But few doubt that elements of each have now re-emerged in the early 21st century as a major political and social factor in a context where mobility of labour has been enormously facilitated by the greater ease of travel made possible by advances in transport and communication technologies.

It is important to be clear about both the extent and limits of racism and xenophobia in order to be able to understand how to respond to it. Already, in the 1990s European

[85] Interview 2013AM, Aix-en-Provence, January 2004.
[86] See Jefferys (2004) for a summary of the arguments presented in the three national reports from the UK, Belgium and France.

'public opinion' as measured by Eurobarometer survey gave rise for considerable concern. We reproduce here Thalhammer *et al*'s (2001) fourfold categorisation of people made in terms of their responses to six questions as being actively tolerant, passively tolerant, ambivalent or intolerant.[87] This 'intolerant' category captured people who

> *feel disturbed by people from different minority groups and see minorities as having no positive effects on the enrichment of society. They have a strong wish for assimilation. Furthermore, the intolerant support repatriation of immigrants and the very restrictive acceptance of immigrants. Intolerant people tend to be less educated and less optimistic (according to their personal situation) than the average.*

Table 9 shows the results based on roughly 1,000 interviews carried out in each of the four countries, and compares them with the EU15 average. Between 32% and 53% of the Europeans in our four EU members could be categorised then as being either 'ambivalent' or 'intolerant' towards immigrants:

Table 9. Attitudes towards minority groups (ranked by % intolerant), 2000

	Intolerant	Ambivalent	Passively tolerant	Actively tolerant
Belgium	25	28	26	22
France	19	26	31	25
UK	15	27	36	22
EU15	*14*	*25*	*39*	*21*
Italy	11	21	54	15

Note: Differences of 6% and more are statistically significant

Source: Thalhammer et al (2001: 25)(Thalhammer, Zucha et al. 2001)

Since 2001, however, in each of the countries researched there has been an increase in the readiness on the part of members of the white national majority population to vote for right-wing extremist political parties whose message is xenophobic and/or racist. Traditionally the elections for the European Parliament have been seen as less critical than national elections, allowing voters to express protest votes more readily. In Table 10 we compare the results over the period 1999 to 2004:

[87] See *ibid*, par 3.40 for a more complete summary and Thalhammer *et al*, 2001:24 for the original.

Table 10. EU election results (%) of xenophobic/racist parties, 1994-2004

	Belgium	France	Italy	UK
1994	7.8	10.5	12.5	
1999	9.2	5.7	10.3	1.1
2004	14.3	9.8	11.5	4.9

Parties shown: 2004 Belgium: Vlaams Blok[88]; France: Front National; Italy: MSI-AN/Alleanza Nazional,; UK: British National Party

Every single one of the extremist parties listed progressed since 1999 and in the case of Belgium and the UK to unprecedented levels in the proportions of votes for explicitly xenophobic or racist parties. In Italy the *Alleanza Nazionale* has been trying to leave its earlier fascist history behind, but if the votes of the regionally xenophobic Northern League and Tricolour Flame parties are added in the total far right vote share rises to 17.2%. Equally in France the 8.8% share of the right-wing Catholic *Mouvement pour la France* could be added to the *Front National* total. This core French xenophobic vote was also witnessed in the 16.9% performance of the *Front National* candidate Le Pen in the first round of the April 2002 presidential election, where his 17.8% performance in the second round underlined it.

A description by a Belgian Christian union official captures the same dynamic behind what he saw as distinct increase in xenophobia among his white members over the last ten years:

> *You see, I'm not convinced that ten years ago we had the same phenomena. Since, while it is something irrational, you have to recognise that the Belgian thinks of himself more and more as under attack in his own home. So he has, I think, a strong and stronger view that he is… that there is a sort of underhand invasion taking place like that of a, of a population that is taking over, huh, our culture, our religion, everything that… everything that you want, what. And that therefore what is… what ten years ago had been a banal matter, is*

[88] As a result of the Belgian Supreme Court ruling on November 9 2004 fining Vlaams Blok for 'permanent incitement of segregation and racism', the Vlaams Block dissolved itself and formed a new party, the Vlaams Belang. As Vlaams Blok the party attracted 24.1% of the vote in the regional elections of 2004, held at the same time as the European elections.

taking a, huh… has become a phenomena that, you have to say, is also really amplified by the media, I think.

Not only did his reply confirm that his own members had fears, it also confirmed that he shared them.

In Eastern Europe the political context of the early 2000s is no better. In the June 2005 Bulgarian parliamentary elections there was a sharp swing to the populist right (as has also occurred in Poland), with a huge vote being given to the brand new racist ultra nationalist and anti-Turkish party ATAKA (Coalition Union Attack) whose principal object was to attack the policies of the likely winners of the elections, the socialist-led, pro-EU Coalition for Bulgaria. With 8.75% of the vote it won 21 seats and was ranked fourth.[89] The three other hard or extreme right parties actually secured 19.6% and 47 seats out of the 240. The National Movement Simeon II (the liberal centrist party) won 53 seats. These election results confirm the results of the IMIR 2003 survey that identified the presence of a significant racist minority undercurrent in Bulgaria.[90] The party largely representing the Turkish, Pomaks and Roma minorities, the Movement for Rights and Freedoms, which won 14.2% of the vote and 34 seats, came third after the Socialists (Coalition for Bulgaria) and the National Movement Simeon II. This party then rejoined the new coalition government headed by the leader of the socialists.[91] A report for the Conflict Studies Research Centre puts this election result into the broader world geo-political context discussed above:

The popularity and revival of anti-Turkish racism is linked to underprivileged groups' fears about an open border with Turkey and population movement, and the sense of Bulgaria as an Orthodox Christian society on the frontier of south east Europe with the Muslim world that is about to have its current stable border with Turkey disrupted. The rise of ATAKA is mostly a response to this aspect of globalisation and the prospect of increasing population movement and border openings tied to the onset of EU membership.[92]

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[89] By March 2006 this party only had 14 seats as 7 MPs from this parliamentary group left it and became independents as they did not agree with some of the nationalistic ideas of its leaders.

[90] IMIR, 'Bulgaria Fieldwork Report, Construction', IMIR: Sofia. Table 13 shows that among the Bulgarians questioned 35% would not work for a Roma employer, nor 33% for an African or a Vietnamese or Arab, while 22% would not work for a Jewish or Turkish employer.

[91] Since 2001 the Movement for Rights and Freedoms had also been in the coalition with the government of King Simeon II.

[92] Pettifer, James (2005), 'Bulgarian Elections 2005: a difficult result for EU accession', UK Defence Academy: Conflict Studies Research Centre.

World and regional events do have local repercussions on racism and xenophobia, and by and large these have been negative over the course of the last five years.

The hypothesis that the early 2000s in Europe have witnessed a certain hardening of the attitudes of the white majority towards 'immigrants' and 'asylum seekers', is supported by the secondary data analysis carried out by a team from Nijmegen University on the Eurobarometer studies for 1997-2000-2003 and on the European Social Survey 2002-2003.[93] In terms of European-wide trends their work concludes that:

- More Europeans believe that the limits to multicultural society have been reached.
- There is growing support for the repatriation of legal migrants, reaching about 20% by 2003.
- There is a rapidly growing insistence that migrants must conform to the law.
- Those individuals who support the exclusion of ethnic minorities tend to:

  -Have lower levels of education.

  -Be manual workers and self-employed.

  - Depend upon social security.

  - Believe their personal safety is increasingly threatened.

  - Distrust other people and their political leaders.

  - Consider themselves to be politically on the right.

  - See ethnic minorities as a collective threat.

- Those countries where 'ethnic exclusionism' is most prevalent are also likely to:

  - Have more non-national migrants and net migration flows.

  - Have a lower GDP per capita.[94]

Their conclusion that people with lower levels of education are more likely to feel intolerant is not new. It is also not particularly surprising. Low levels of education are

[93] Coenders, Lubbers and Scheepers (2003), *Majority populations' attitudes towards migrants and minorities*, Four reports for the EUMC: Vienna.
[94] *Ibid:* Report 1, pp viii-x.

linked to a context of low wages and a high risk or incidence of family poverty. If, as we began this report, the inflow of migrant workers into Western Europe and/or the creation of labour markets stratified along ethnic lines combine to depress wages, then intolerance of this situation is to be expected. It is, of course, a finding that is particularly important for the trade unions.

However, there is a distinction to be drawn between passively feeling intolerant or ambivalent towards ethnic minorities, and expressing that intolerance towards your neighbours or fellow workers with the intention of directly harming them in some way, or of tolerating institutional rules, regulations and customs and practices that disadvantage them indirectly. The public presence of racism in the four EU member countries we researched is well documented.[95] Our research focus was on its manifestations at work.

2.3.1. Racism at work

It is important in comparative research both to be aware of such country specific differences and to attempt to go beyond what is path-dependent and contextual to highlight and understand what these diverse experiences have in common. Thus there were many important differences between the national experiences of imperialism and of being colonised that we discussed in the five country reviews of racism and the trade unions and our first comparative report.[96] Perhaps one of the most significant of these differences that appeared from our fieldwork was the much greater readiness in the UK to define, identify and talk directly about racism. Thus one black interviewee laughed ironically, but responded straightaway to his white interviewer asking them to define racism by defining the experience he faced of *indirect* racism:

> *HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE, HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE, RACISM?*
>
> *[respondent laughs] I would define it, err, not being allowed easy, err, or the same amount of, err, what is the word I am looking for? – Yeah, not been able to err, being given the same opportunity as a white colleague with the same ability. And your being overlooked….I am not speaking (just for myself). I am thinking as a black man working in err, a company, and what I see and what I've gone through… I am just speaking as blacks in general.*

[95] See Jefferys (2004) *State of the* Art, WLRI, and the national reports De Rudder *et al* (2003), Davis, Erel and Gumbrell-McCormick (2003), Basso and Perocco (2003).
[96] See the reports referred to above.

Clearly our nationally-based researchers had to use language that was understandable to the interviewees. In Belgium, the researchers also asked questions about racism and its nature without apparent embarrassment. In Italy, although the researchers frequently employed the terms '*razzismo*' or '*xenofobia*', they were often grouped with '*discriminazioni*' in the same phrase, or the word '*razzismo*' was only used where the question assumed a common understanding of what it meant without probing. In France it is largely politically unacceptable to talk about 'race', whose meaning is close to 'species', or 'ethnicity', whose meaning is close to 'separatist cultural group'. But this political resistance this language is not exclusively the preserve of France. A British full-time health union official also argued that to even use the term 'race' means accepting its scientific justification:

> *I actually would argue that there is no such thing as racism in the sense that you can't define racism amongst people. DNA proves that there is no such thing as a race gene. I think what we've got to deal with is attitudes and thinking… The only people who would define society based on race, I would argue, are Nazis. There is no scientific evidence to actually prove there is such a thing as race.*[97]

In France this linguistic problem meant our researchers often felt unable to ask their interviewees to define '*racisme*' and sometimes whole interviews went by without their referring to it – even if their interviewees did.[98] Instead, some of the French interviewers asked other questions trying to probe the self-definitions of ethnicity. In Bulgaria few of the interviewees could even define 'racism'. It was viewed as something to do with 'foreigners' or 'what happened in the United States'. Hence the term 'discrimination' was more understandable there, even if it too was rarely defined.[99]

Notwithstanding these linguistic and cultural differences, our qualitative fieldwork, however, uncovered the presence of what we can describe as both direct and indirect racism in workplaces in all the five countries examined.[100] Some illustrations are given

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[97] Dhaliwal (2005), *UK Health Sector report*, WLRI. Interviewee 1015BM.

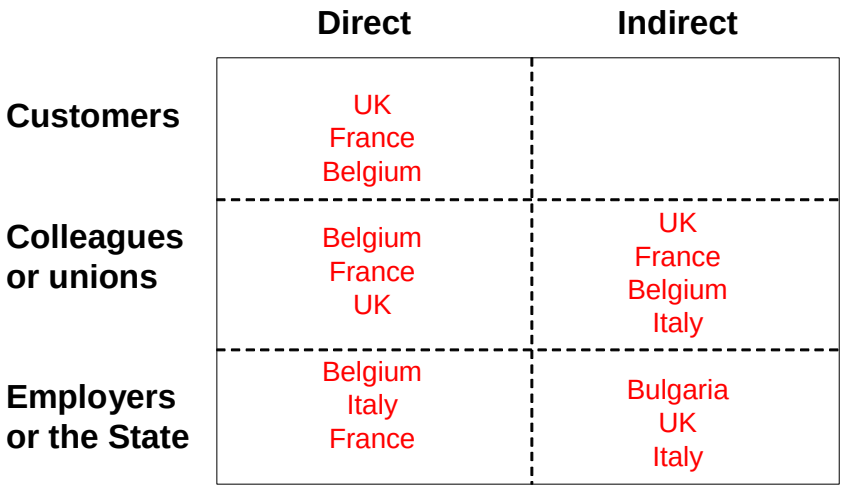
[98] Indeed, in one interview with a 26-year-old Algerian-origin French man, in the very first exchange the interviewee turned the tables on our researchers by asking the question, 'What do you mean by discrimination and racism at work?' Transcript 2013AM.

[99] Perhaps the ethnicity of the national research teams may also have played some role in posing certain questions more directly and in eliciting different responses from the interviewees? In the UK two of the interviewers and in Belgium one had ethnic minority origins; the other interviewers came entirely from ethnic majority backgrounds.

[100] This does not mean we found both forms of racism in all 15 case studies. Particularly in Bulgaria, but also in France, the lack of a common understanding of indirect racism and the high degree of linguistic political impoliteness in referring to 'race' at all, tended to conceal its presence. For example, in the French retail workplace studied none of the minority interviewees reported experiences of direct racism to their white

below. We cannot claim statistical support for these results, nor can interviews conducted with workers in around 100 different workplaces across the five countries in 2004 and 2005 tell us whether the workplace racism we identify is more visible than it has been in the recent past. Figure 5 brings the results from the 15 case studies together in an attempt to read from the views of our nearly 500 interviewees their interpretations of which were the most significant forms of racism present at work and from what direction they came:

Figure 5. Types and sources of direct and indirect workplace racism



2.3.2. Direct racism at work

Direct racism at work, where the discriminated situation or moments of an individual minority worker or groups of minority workers are deliberately constructed and are intended to harm symbolically or in practice, is experienced differently in the five different countries and contexts. We briefly illustrate these differences for each of them.

interviewers and only two, and this was when they were on their own, went so far as to suggest that 'French society' should be held responsible for the absence of any significant numbers of minority workers in local management or senior trade union positions. See De Rudder *et al* (2005).

In Italy

Italian direct racism appears at the level of the state. This is in part because of its very recent change from being a country of net emigration to one of net immigration, and in part from the earlier failure of its imperial aspirations to deliver a more heterogeneous labour force during the economic book years of the 1950s to the 1970s. Missing out on the experience of significant levels of ethnic diversity over the last fifty years in Belgium, the UK and France and of hundreds of years of diversity in Bulgaria, Italy has been perhaps the most challenged by the new context. Thus it still gives special immigration treatment to migrants from the Argentine who can claim direct descent from Italian migrants from as far back as the early 1900s, and still sends out recruiters to bring in these 'true blood' Italians, whether or not they actually speak Italian.[101] Italy has also been slow in removing the requirement that its public sector jobs are reserved for Italian citizens.[102]

Many private employers take a lead from the State. Thus some of the Catholic Church hospitals and hospices in Italy refuse to employ Muslim workers even in jobs such as cleaning or maintenance that have nothing to do with any religious purpose. Equally, a union official told us of an incident at the Fincantieri shipyard where some workers from Bangladesh were forced to go down on their knees in front of the owner of the firm to receive their pay packet. Another example of the continued impact of direct racism was reported by a Bengali engineering worker at the Swedish-owned Zanussi factory:

> *I applied to another factory for a specialised job, I had all my documents in order. They told me: 'Where will we put you? If we give you a position of responsibility, they'll all pick up and leave.' The same thing happens at Zanussi.*

Zanussi also, in a project funded and promoted by the Veneto Region, deliberately targeted Argentine nationals of Italian descent. One hundred were trained in Argentina and then brought to Italy and given permanent jobs as skilled workers with housing guaranteed for six months and without having to go through the promotion procedures required for more 'visible' migrants. Corroborative evidence of 'illegal discrimination' against migrant workers in Italy 'on the grounds of their actual or perceived nationality,

[101] The grandchildren of Italians abroad may hold dual nationality and vote in Italian general elections. In the UK, Commonwealth Citizens with enough funds to support themselves who have a British born grandparent (by blood or adoption) are also permitted to enter the UK to work or seek work for a four-year period.

[102] Italian citizenship may be obtained through marriage or after ten years' continuous residence in the country - but, in either case, after a long and difficult procedure. Only a few thousand immigrants obtain it each year.

colour, religion, "race" or ethnic origin comes from the 2004 ILO study which undertook a major study of discrimination in access to employment.[103]

In France

Direct racism at work surfaces in four different ways. As in Italy the restrictions barring non-French and non-EU citizens having permanent posts in the public sector directly disadvantage the many migrant workers who have spent a lifetime working in the French public sector in short-term posts, and whose careers were blocked and pension entitlements reduced. But the presence of many French citizens from the Overseas Departments means that this 'nationality' restriction is not quite as directly racist as it is in Italy. But having been born in the Overseas Departments can also work against the migrant. This is because French citizens born overseas and employed in the public sector have rights to special paid return holidays that mean they cost more than their French-born children or other black workers not born in the Overseas Departments. Sometimes the question is directly posed of the worker in their recruitment interview. A black woman health care assistant told us:

> *When I got to Saint-Louis for a recruitment interview, they asked me: 'Were you born here or there?' 'I was born here'. 'Oh good'. Right, that was positive. You see, if I'd told them that I was born there, no thank you. They clean up like that now at the base.*

Direct discrimination was being openly used here against West Indies born black workers who were French citizens.

Racist discrimination against all ethnic minorities in recruitment, however, is still common. One hospital clerical worker described how in her office the new boss had moved out the three 'coloured' staff, and never converted the temporary North African origin worker replacements into permanent posts:

> *If it's ever 'Magrehbins', it is only for short-term contracts, As far as permanent jobs are concerned, you'd think those people never applied.*[104]

An African-origin male hospital worker could even confirm this experience through 'discrimination testing' for a medical secretary post:

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[103] E. Allasino, E. Reyneri, A. Venturini and G. Zincone, *Labour market discrimination against migrant workers in Italy*, International Migration Papers 67, ILO Geneva 2004.
[104] Poiret *et al* (2005). *French Health Sector Report*, URMIS: Paris, p 42.

One of my mates whose surname is 'Ben X' sent her application here. Well, no, there was no job. It's a girl, see. She's married, and her maiden name is Martin. She then sent in the application under her maiden name and then she was taken up right away…

After, as soon as they have her on the telephone, they will hear her accent… There are several stages in recruitment. Your name, something as simple as the fact of having an immigrant name. Today that can be a handicap to getting a job. I know it. I've already seen it lots of times.[105]

A second way in which direct racism surfaced in France was in the imposition of discriminatory rules at work. Headscarves are prohibited, for example, by Carrefour's works rules against 'ostentatious' religious or political dress, and endorsed by the trade unions. But there was also an initial ban on ethnic minority staff talking to customers in their own language. This was seen both as a direct form of discrimination and as making no sense, since these language skills were a positive resource:

To start off with… what they told us was that we weren't allowed to speak our own language. But I didn't take any notice, because when you got these old gents coming in who really couldn't speak French, but came to ask us something.

Talking in their mother tongue heightens management's suspicion of collusion between staff and customers, while workers perceive the ban as an additional sign of being discredited and even criminalised (as potential conspirators).

A third area of direct discrimination was also present in UK and Belgium, the two other countries where ethnic minority workers had been the longest a significant part of the labour force. This was a general background sense of being constantly bullied by some fellow workers or being exposed to particularly critical attention by supervisors and managers. In one French hospital a survey even picked this up, with one in ten workers indicating it was for racist reasons. A health trade union full-time official confirmed:

How people behave, it's spoken… some words… how to say it… racist... what, it happens…. And then, the fact that… when you sort out work… you're going to give the lousiest jobs to… to those groups there rather than to the Whites, what. You can see that. It's clear, it's in the way work is distributed…

[105] Ibid.

> *It's the Blacks. They're sent directly to the hardest sections… the long stays, with very old, bedridden, heavily treated patients.*[106]

A SUD Health Federation told another story of this background racism, where hospital staff make racist comments about a young North African patient who had fallen from his scooter:

> *And well, in the preparation room behind his back, what was said, was: 'Didn't he fall because he wanted to get away from the police?' The second thing was: 'Hadn't he stolen the scooter?'. All that because he was a North African (maghrébin). If it had been a White there wouldn't have been these reactions. We are living in a very strong dose of latent racism that comes from a few, but which often poisons us all.*

The same background climate of racist joking was reported by a white CFDT official at the giant Carrefour hypermarket:

> *Me, I can tell you, from my own sensitivity, I really feel that even among the trade union activists, while Mr Le Pen hasn't necessarily got his look-alikes with their membership cards, there is still an atmosphere.*[107]

Finally, several of the French interviewees highlighted direct racism from the customers. This was the most common form of racism reported. Examples were given of patients who said 'I don't want a Black to touch me'. An interviewee in retailing indicated that non-white check out staff were more likely to be on the receiving end of aggression. A French 22-year-old North African bus driver in France gave the most common illustration:

> *At the beginning, when you are a driver, during the first months… the little granny you pick up at C. over there (name of a middle-class area of the town). When she gets on and when she sees the driver… it isn't even worth it for her to talk, it's on her face, eh, it's written, it's printed…*[108]

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[106] *Ibid*, p. 48.
[107] De Rudder *et al* (2005), *French Retail Sector Report*, URMIS.
[108] C. Poiret *et al* (2004), *French Public Transport Sector Report*, URMIS.

The visibility of non-white workers dealing with the 'public' creates a background racial tension for many of them as they detect non-verbal hostility even in the customer's body language. Survival means simply getting used to it.

In the UK

While most forms of direct racism have been illegal since 1976, the UK interviewees also reported this aggression coming most frequently from the customers. Hostility from white customers is commonplace. A black woman bus driver described:

> *They wouldn't look at you and they would just slam the money down, you know, and sometimes it falls off the shelf - the counter there - and sometimes they rip the ticket and they walk aggressively, looking at you, like oh you shouldn't be there.*

But then it often gets much worse. Another black driver reported:

> *There are two reasons for abuse, one is a passenger gets on, he flashes his pass like that, and we are supposed to see that. We call them back and they may stick it right under your face… if I cannot see the date on there and I call them back they start the abuse and they say 'You f...ing Paki, you this and that. You shouldn't be driving - you are blind and all this'*

A non-union black woman nurse saw racial abuse from white patients or their families as nearly a normal occurrence:

> *I mean you get a lot of abuse from patients, like patients come in and they do shout because of the area the hospital is based… you get a lot of racial abuse and stuff from patients… every week, every other day.*[109]

However, not all direct discrimination reported in the UK was from customers. One Asian woman shop worker told us of the racist abuse she had had from her line manager:

> *I had a department manager, really big white lady, who was running the counter - the meat, fish, deli. She said 'I want this reduced'. I said 'Yeah, there's the paperwork.' So I pulled out the paperwork, gave it to her and I said 'Can you get X to fill this in, the store manager, bring it back and I'll do it?' 'You Pakis never have any ways of learning how to*

[109] S. Dhaliwal (2005), *UK Health Sector Report*, WLRI: London, p 47.

speak!' (She) said 'You're nothing but a bitch. You should have gone back home. When we ruled India, we should have killed the fucking lot of you'… (She) called me every expletive under the sun! With blackie Paki and everything else, thrown in.

There were also many descriptions that tied in closely to the background bullying experience described above in France. Another Asian woman retail worker was in tears as she told us how when she began work with an overwhelmingly white workforce she and the other Asians had been given more work than the white women, and were then mocked by the white women for smelling of sweat. She did not take this up with the local trade union representative at that time because she was also white and had social connections with many of the other white women. Later on, when that warehouse merged with another that had a predominantly Asian female workforce, those same white women complained about the smell of Asians and their food and attempted to ban them from eating Asian food in the locker rooms. The strength of numbers was vital in this instance. It was only when the number of Asian women increased that they feel strong enough to challenge their colleagues and face down the bullying.[110]

Favouritism towards whites or white networking was held to be responsible for some of the disadvantage experienced. One of the black men health care assistants we interviewed, for example, believed the discretion left to certain white managers let them discriminate against non-whites:

We have some black nurses who are supposed to be graded to F or E, but because they are not in the book of the white manager… so they retain D grade, and for some of the health care assistants (who are trying) to go to nursing, they will tell you there's no funds. But you see some of the white people that come in tomorrow, they push them up - so that's it.

And in another department at the same hospital a black woman confirmed a more general attitudinal hostility from the white clique in charge:

They make your life miserable. The people can't stand it, they leave the job. So they can say 'Well we did have, we did take on four or five blacks here.' Where are they? 'Oh they've gone, well that's up to them, they didn't stay.' But they can't stay and get promoted because nobody

[110] *Ibid*, p. 37.

is going to make them stay. They're gonna make their life so miserable that they're gonna leave the next minute.

In the retail sector several black interviewees signalled a similar pattern of racist attitudes held by line and general managers: harsher treatment, more prescriptive work instructions, more frequent supervision and control than their white counterparts. Faults committed by minority workers seem more serious, especially in terms of customer relations. One ethnic minority woman shop steward told us:

I've been looking back to all the years that I've been working in retail, and that's over twenty odd years now. I've faced racism one way or another… it's just the fact that when I've tried to go further and better myself, it's like 'no, your hours don't fit'. Or 'you've got young children' There's always been something… We also find with managers' attitudes that if you come from an ethnic background it's not so much of a request, it's a demand. So what you're getting told is 'do this, do that, why isn't this done, why hasn't that been done'… A white worker in my workplace will actually get a 'hello' and 'goodbye' from a manager. An ethnic person won't even get a look.

Managers are generally less sympathetic, give less encouragement or are more indifferent. These attitudes are influenced and even encouraged by white manual workers' regular complaints about their ethnic minority workmates to store and corporate management. This latent racism often comes out when the whites are on their own. One white London bus TGWU member explained:

White London Transport drivers, when you get them on their own, are more overtly racist…there is an assumption that you can say things between whites… Fairly solid covert discrimination…people will make racist remarks among white men.

In Belgium

In Belgium, where crude insults about skin colour, ethnic origin or culture, are also becoming rarer in public, with most workers aware that public expressions are illegal, they nonetheless do still occur. One subtle example was an exchange between a Moroccan origin woman who is a health and safety delegate from the CCSP union in Brussels Transport, and a senior human resource manager. The woman was trying to explain to the manager the additional problems many STIB workers faced at the time of

Ramadan after he had started explaining there were lots of problems trying to integration North Africans into the company.

> *And then right there, he answered me like this: 'If they're not happy they can go back to… they can just go back to Algeria', he said. Me, I looked at him. I said, 'Excuse me'. He said: 'Well yes, if they aren't happy, well, all they have to do it go back and do it (Ramadan) in Algeria then.'*

A public sector union official in Brussels told us of direct racist insults being made in the changing room, and of one recent case of an actual dismissal of a local government worker for going round his work insulting black workers:[111]

> *It's what you can hear at the counter in a bar. It's not like it was, because in my opinion, it is being done more discretely. I'm not convinced that that means it's disappeared, but the risk of being viewed badly, or even penalised means that it's said less. It's pretty light-weight to say they're scared of the police, but…*

Many of our ethnic minority interviewees detailed a similar background bullying of black workers as in the UK and France. They felt discriminated against in terms of the jobs they got, where they worked and in terms of promotion. They had experienced unequal treatment by comparison with white workers over lateness and sick leave. They, too, received verbal insults and physical attacks from customers in greater measure than did white workers, and were also often not allowed to speak their own language while at work. They also received 'snide' remarks from fellow workers that they found difficult to pin down, leaving doubt as to the intent that is only resolved when the incident is repeated. And it often is. Towards young black workers the comments are generally aimed at associating them with negative aspects of world politics. A young Moroccan-origin Belgian electrician remembered one series of deliberately humiliating comparisons from his white colleagues:

> *They were talking politics between them. Ok, me, I didn't get involved in that because it's not something that interests me. Well, then after a bit they say: 'Ah Mohammed, is it true that all the Arabs are hypocrites, what?', And me, I look at them, and say: 'Listen: I don't know'… and then he says to me: 'You see, he's the same as them what'. And he talks to his mate like that, you see. He insinuates. And I can still*

[111] N. Ouali (2006), *Belgium Health Sector Report*, ULB: Bruxelles, p.42.

remember this sentence. He was talking about Saddam. He was talking. Well, we'd already had a year and a half of that. And he was talking. Two years. He was talking of Saddam and everything. And then: 'Yes, but all the same they are hypocrites, and they've got the petrol, and this and that'. Then he looked at me and said: 'Ah'. And then he turned to his colleague and said: 'You see, what, even he is with them'.

At lunch or coffee breaks a Moroccan-origin woman union representative reported a constant stream of criticism coming from white retail workers directed at their fellow non-white colleagues:

There's this constant harping on, running down their work all the time: 'it's rubbish, he doesn't understand and he doesn't do his job properly'. It's that above all, the harping on. The harping on about not dong their job properly. And then it's –'immigrants have no business getting social security or welfare benefits'.

The hostility to non-white workers first entering work is considerable. When the Flemish Colruyt supermarket chain responded to labour shortages and government incentives by beginning to recruit non-white workers at the end of the 1990s it met with some resistance from its white workforce. A male manager there recalled:

The boss introduces the new colleague to other colleagues and he also introduces himself. And at the beginning, we also know that our Belgian colleagues reacted by saying: 'But what's that? A Congolese!' Even the union reps came to tell us: 'Eh, don't go so fast!' We told our reps: 'You have to respect our policy.' 'Yes, but not so fast, so fast.'

In another incident from the retail industry Flemish workers had attempted to get the non-white workers to take their meal breaks separately, so they did not have to eat with them, smell their food or hear them talking in their native languages. A male black sales assistant reported constant racist harassment by his department manager:

There's the one in charge, too, the one who has been put in charge now. It's day in, day out with him, and I don't like it. He does it as if it's a joke, but it's always about race, criticising Blacks; fine, but I can't stomach that, and I've already had enough. It's like a constant drip, drip, drip... For example, he'll say 'Do you have mobile phones in Africa? No!'. So, if I'm selling a mobile, it's 'Yes, but you don't know anything about it - they don't have mobiles in Africa.'

In some cases the individual's isolation is such that the racist abuse becomes overpowering. A Belgian-Moroccan worker described his last nine years at a majority Flemish garage as living in hell:

> *There are racists there. They are in groups, four or five groups, err, err, Every time you finish with one of them another group comes up. And every time I go to report them to the bosses to get them, er, so that they leave me alone a little, it's nothing doing. He says: 'Yes, he's joking with you'. And I say, 'Sir, me, I don't joke here. I come here to work, not to joke'*

Customer racist abuse was possibly reported slightly more often in Belgium than in France or the UK, perhaps aggravated by a deep national divide between Flemish and Walloon Belgians, and certainly a reflection of the strong racist party presence in Flanders. One young Moroccan-origin woman ended up being suspended for a day for 'unacceptable behaviour' after she responded to an abusive customer:

> *The tone she took with me, it really got to me, you know? I don't see that we have to be punch bags. I told her I wasn't her servant and that she should be more polite. So she turns round to her husband and says, 'Who on earth does she think she is?'. All muttered, like. And I clearly hear her say, 'another piece of scum'. Well, that was it. I point blank refused to scan her articles. So this 'piece of scum' took all their articles that were on the conveyor and chucked them into their trolley. Alright, maybe I went a bit over the top and walked straight into it. But I was fuming, I hit the roof, but I eventually agreed to be replaced. But it was the first time that it was as bad as that.*[112]

The 2001 introduction of a Customers' Charter on Brussels Transport provided another opportunity to some customers to articulate their racism in complaints directed against black drivers, leading to two letters being referred to the police by one of the trade unions.

In Bulgaria

In Bulgaria it is notable that while our researchers were told by Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma interviewees of many incidents of xenophobia and discrimination against Roma by owners and managers of bars, cafes, restaurants or swimming pools and in housing,

[112] N.Ouali (2005), *Belgium Retail Sector Report*, ULB: Bruxelles.

there were relatively few reports of direct discrimination at work. One Bulgarian woman textile worker believed that in certain factories,

> *the owners prefer to appoint Turkish and not Roma because they are more industrious.*[113]

One male building worker quoted a firm where Roma would not be recruited, even when work was available, and another reported that some employers selected only Bulgarians and Turks using the pretext that the candidates had to have a high school education. Only one Turkish woman tobacco worker reported being aware of discrimination against Roma workers when they looked for work, an experience confirmed by a Roma woman textile worker. A Roma woman tobacco worker also mentioned a case when a friend of hers who had just learned to work on a machine, was moved to work as a cleaner without any explanations and a Bulgarian woman was put in her place. Another Roma woman reported having had particular troubles re-registering at the Employment Office after a short absence. These witnesses were joined by another Roma woman who reported having some problems with a colleague over which she was supported by all their fellow workers at a general meeting. No examples of direct racist discrimination at work against Turkish workers were given to us, though, either by our Turkish minority or by our Bulgarian 'majority' interviewees. Indeed, one Turkish woman reported how after she had been dismissed her Bulgarian colleagues interceded to reinstate her in her job. A male Turkish tobacco worker remembered how their Bulgarian colleagues had continued to address them with their Turkish names during the 'renaming' period in the mid-1980s. Both 'minority' and the 'majority' interviewees shared a common, ideologically rooted discourse:

> *What is decisive is the social status and poverty, not the ethnic grouping. All are poor – both Bulgarian and Roma'.*

In one tobacco factory where we interviewed four Roma workers together, they were certain:

> *There is no discrimination in our factory.*

Two factors appear to help explain the relative absence of a direct racist discourse and practice in Bulgarian workplaces.[114] First, tolerance of others working in overlapping

[113] The interview extracts quoted in this paragraph are taken directly from the Bulgarian fieldwork studies.
[114] The mere precarious political-economic context and history in Bulgaria may also make it more difficult to talk about the sensitive issue of 'politically incorrect' experiences in interviews with 'outsiders' to the Turkish and Roma communities.

labour markets and occupations was strengthened by the hundreds of years during which the three communities have lived together and shared schools and military service. Second, the more recent political history from the 1950s to the 1980s reinforced the values of cooperation and solidarity between peoples. Some of the older workers recalled that cooperation, support and reciprocal respect were the norm in factories 30 years ago, and in the tobacco factories today many of those we interviewed spoke of still socialising across ethnic boundaries during breaks. This does not mean, of course, that indirect discrimination is absent from Bulgaria as we shall see below.

2.3.3. Indirect racism at work

Indirect racism at work is the predominant form of racism at the workplace uncovered in our research in all five countries. This is where the implementation of supposedly 'neutral' laws, rules, regulations, procedures and customs and practice that occur in recruitment, promotion, the allocation of work, hours, pay and pensions, have the effect of disadvantaging individuals and groups of individuals because of their belonging to an ethnic minority. The disadvantaged minority worker is not told directly that it is their ethnic origin or skin colour that is being used against them. Instead they are left uncertain whether it is just the way the system works or some personal failing.

In France

A clear example of double institutional racism is revealed in the ethnic hierarchy operating within the French hospital system. There is a marked concentration through recruitment processes of first, second and third generation French citizens with overseas origins in manual and clerical jobs. But these then are precisely the jobs – as health care assistants and administrative and maintenance personnel that are the main targets of hospital cuts, contracting out or casualisation. Hence the norms of the 'racially neutral' evolution of the health care labour market actually lead to still greater disadvantage being heaped on ethnic minority workers. Those who are already near to the bottom of the occupational pyramid are then the most exposed to restructuring and often arbitrary management. The simple fact that these are largely ethnic minority workers effectively reinforces indirect racism. At the same time, the very strong tradition in France of moving between classifications through the mechanism of sitting internal exams, often in maths and French, tends to reinforce the stratification of the labour market. One senior hospital-level trade unionist illustrated how even getting workers up to the right level could pose problems:

> *One worry in our hospital is that it's the head of personnel who helps get people up to scratch. Courses of French and maths, and most of the*

staff don't want to go because it's her... So the people don't do the revision, they go straight to the test and fail it because they're not ready. Lots of our West Indian colleagues are in that boat… There it's free, because she does it in her working time. But if you bring in a teacher, you've to pay them.[115]

Still other Overseas Department-origin interviewees reported that their managers either didn't tell them about the exams or put the notices up at the very last moment, not giving them time to prepare properly.

The suggestion that what is taking place is indirect, structural racism is confirmed at the Carrefour-Grand Littoral supermarket at Marseille. There, although it has had a locally-focused recruitment policy of ethnic minority junior staff ever since it opened ten years earlier, there are still no minorities in senior company or trade union positions. One male *North African trade unionist had an explanation:*

I don't know whether that comes from the company or the union or what, whatever it is that prevents people from foreign origins from getting on. My view is that it rather comes from French society that isn't perhaps yet… Me, I make the comparison with other countries, Great Britain or the USA, where you can meet high-placed people coming from foreigner backgrounds. There isn't any … a priori about it, what… It's true that in France there isn't… It's French society that isn't ready to accept this type of… development.[116]

One 28-year-old French North African trade unionist working for the Paris RATP was clear about his prospects:

When I entered the company I realised that the well-paid jobs are less accessible, You don't have to wonder why.

Another 25-year-old North African bus driver told us why you don't have to wonder why more blacks have disciplinary problems than whites. The simple fact is, he told the white interviewer:

There is you and there is me. You are going to fail, but it's ok, we are going to make it be fine. But if I fail, they're gonna make a fuss...

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[115] C. Poiret (2005: 56).
[116] De Rudder *et al* (2005), *French retail Sector Report*, Paris: URMIS.

The same rules apply universally, only they tend to get applied to black workers more stringently than to others. This is clearly institutional racism.

In Italy

The direct denial of public sector jobs to non-Italians and non-EU citizens amounts to structural discrimination with special rules that increase these workers' dependence upon their individual employer or the employment agency that brought them into the country. One interviewee argued:

> *The real - the deeper - reason for recruiting immigrant nurses is to reduce costs because every two years there is the automatic pay increase, particular benefits, etc. So this constant two-year turnover costs less (...) The same is true of the public sector when there are temporary contracts for the same reason: no automatic pay increases and no rights. Making new contracts saves money.*

It is thus the short-term contract system rather than direct racism that indirectly pressures migrant nurses to work more flexibly and at a lower cost than national workers. Workers who enter Italy with student-nurse permits or who are waiting recognition of their educational qualifications (which may take years) often have to take up work in private nursing homes where they actually do professional nursing work although registered as simple assistants. The source of this indirect discriminatory treatment lies in the different contractual arrangements that are permitted between Italians and non-EU workers. One non-Italian health sector worker for one of the cooperative agencies that have increasingly been taking on contracted out work from the public sector explained the results:

> *Each one has a certain treatment, but with the foreigners the treatment is different. We are paid by the hour, we don't have vacations, we don't have sick leave or holidays off, all the hours are paid equally. There is no difference (...)*
>
> *We have one-year contracts where it's written that if I miss one day's work then they can send me a letter with fifteen days' notice and I don't work for a month. You go away with nothing, because you have nothing. They are contracts limited to a single project - but not for the Italians… the cooperative hires them (to permanent posts).*

The contractural context also makes a major difference to the two groups of shipyard workers working within the Finacantieri shipyards of Northern Italy. There the

segmentation of the workforce divides them into two worlds. The disadvantages experienced by the migrant workers relative to the national white 'southern' migrant workers and their disadvantages relative to the national white 'northern' workers flows from the structure of contemporary global shipbuilding and its growing reliance upon cost-cutting sub-contracting.

In Belgium

Indirect racism is systemic in Belgium. At Brussels Transport the STIB, for example, until very recently non-EU university graduates who applied were told they could only gain employment at a manual grade, and the company still refuses to recognise the equivalence of existing employees' qualifications. The indirect racism involved in a rule that subordinates and harms a whole group of people because of their common external characteristics is symptomatic of a lack of reflection within the company. While no formal rules are broken, the company's HR function is currently dominated by Flemish Belgians, and virtually all the non-white workers are allocated the most demanding jobs working directly in contact with the public, while the generally Flemish new white recruits are found posts within the administrative and management structure. One young Moroccan-origin electronics technician with five years' service who was the only black Belgian in his depot saw another problem. This is the discretion given to local managers:

> *My problem it's at the level of the managers. There, it's more, it's more targeted, it's more difficult to control, it's more difficult to explain, what. Anyway, they tried to.. to discourage me, they tried to break my spirit. It's sure that… Somewhere they've know, they have… They've done it.*

Unlike the Flemish technicians who started at the same time, he was under continuous monthly evaluation, and never appeared to make any progress in the eyes of his white manager. While they moved to permanent contracts after six months, in his case it took three years. Several other of our black Belgian interviewees also referred to the additional obstacles in getting promoted if you were not part of the ethnic 'majority'.

In the UK

> Structural and institutional racism is also pervasive in the UK. These forms of indirect racism disadvantage both the black 'older' migrants who entered Britain between the 1940s and the 1970s and their children and grandchildren, and the 'new' migrants who entered the UK during the 1990s and 2000s. In health care, as in Italy, structural racism has been assisted by the recourse to privatisation. Contracting out 'non-

essential' services actually increased labour force stratification, where black workers are concentrated in private sub-contracting firms undertaking cleaning and catering for the National Health Service (NHS) or in private care homes and in the home personal care sector. They are employed on 'normal' labour market terms, but these terms are below those that operate or operated within the NHS, and in many parts of the UK have been deserted by majority ethnic workers who can more easily access better paying employment. It is thus the 'market' that structurally disadvantages these workers. One black woman health care assistant when asked to define racism did so in precisely these terms:

> *I know what racism is but I can't put it into words. I see racism, for instance I'm coming to work in the morning at whatever seven, I used to look at myself coming to work and I looked at the people that are coming to work at 6.30 and I look on the buses, I take the bus and 95% of us are from black or Asian or Chinese or Filipino and I'm going home late at night and see the same thing… I look in the kitchen and I look at the cleaners here and if one of them speaks English… and things like that, and I think we're doing the lowest job and the most unsocial hours and it's the same thing.*[117]

The same experience was shared by many of the black retail workers we interviewed. They were concentrated on the lower rungs of the job ladder as check-out operators, shelf-stackers, packers and cleaners, and found promotion a real problem. One young Asian woman shop worker observed rhetorically:

> *Everyone talks about the 'glass ceiling' for women. No one talks about the glass ceiling for ethnic minorities and it's still there, isn't it?*

The same was said by an ambitious black 42-year-old London bus controller who saw the dividing line at his grade:

> *But then… that next step from inspectors to managers. I think that is very, very difficult, if you like. How many black managers? Well, certainly not in (his large company). I think there is one or two in one or two in South London. But nothing in the North I think. If, if there is, I am not aware of them… Is there a ceiling, err? Controllers, as far as I'm concerned, is the ceiling.*

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[117] Dhaliwal (2005), *UK Health Sector report)*, WLRI: London, p 35.

Institutional racism is present even within the publicly-owned NHS. It operates through the intersection of the traditional custom and practice habits of 'like selecting like' with the structural educational disadvantage experienced by many black workers. Thus even within the NHS, despite making up an average of around 13% of total employment and a large majority of the staff in the two hospitals we researched in depth, black nurses within the health service can still, on average, expect to wait five years longer than their white counterparts to be promoted. Furthermore, they hold practically none of the more prestigious positions (such as specialist nurses, Sisters, Matrons, and managers). One black nurse whose hospital employs 70% black nurses with and in her department, 100% black 'health care assistants', pointed out the dress colour-coding of ethnic stratification:

> *I do notice that very few people are in navy blue, very few black nurses are in navy blue uniforms whereas the rest, we're all at staff nurse level, very few Sisters are black... Very few black Sisters. I could think of one black Matron in the whole hospital. I could only think of one black Matron. Yeah! Only one black Matron, the rest of them are white.*

The major form of indirect racism thus presented by our interviewees was in terms of the lack of access to promotion and training. One Filipino male nurse explained how this could happen because of his accent and who he socialised with:

> *I'm sure that the management could never say 'Yes, because you're a Filipino, different accent, you might not be up to the position or something like that'… I felt it, yes, because when there's a position they said 'it's a difficult decision between you and her'. And when it comes to skills and knowledge the majority of people you know were below me… But probably when it comes to communication, I've got an accent, and also I'm not, I don't spend my time in going to the office all the time and talking to the management because I'm a shop floor person.*[118]

A black woman nurse added that her union, UNISON, was not doing enough to tackle indirect racism in promotion:

> *There are people that are in the Health Service, black members, and they are not getting promoted in other trusts and they're (UNISON's health sector) not leading on that. We don't really see a motion coming through about that.*

[118] *Ibid*: p41.

Among more recently arrived migrant health sector workers in the UK another pattern of indirect racism, similar to that in Italy, appeared. This is the non-recognition of educational qualifications acquired overseas. A white union activist explained the problems facing the Filipino nurses recruited in one hospital:

> *They faced early difficulties and some of the early difficulties they faced was actually getting higher positions... these are very highly skilled, very well trained nurses and so we needed to look at the skills that they had previously and sort of match those against skills that British nurses have.*

These institutional obstacles to getting the recognition they deserved was compounded by their insecure employment status. A union official commented:

> *they're far more insecure, they face language difficulties living in another country... and the fact that they are here under restricted conditions that means that they don't get the full protection of the law, of employment law.*

In Bulgaria

Following the liberalisation of the economy since 1993 accelerated unemployment and in the context of the long-standing ethnicisation of certain labour markets, there are now substantial differences in unemployment rates between Turkish, Roma and 'national' Bulgarians. The 2,000-respondent survey the IMIR researchers carried out in 2003 clearly underlines the common perception among large numbers of Bulgarians that there are substantial levels of indirect or institutional racism (or discrimination, as many Bulgarians still prefer to call it) in the workplace. Thus some 80% of the Roma and 40% of the Bulgarian respondents considered that, all other things being equal, Bulgaria's 'ethnic minorities' have a lower chance of getting a particular job than do Bulgarians.[119] The presence of rules, regulations, procedures and customs and practice that disadvantage non 'Bulgarian' Bulgarians in the labour market was confirmed in a handful of interviews. Thus one Turkish tobacco factory woman believed there were some national preferences when hiring and firing, allocating the higher and lower paid jobs, and when people got leave and breaks. A woman Turkish textile worker explained:

[119] IMIR (2005), *Bulgarian fieldwork report on textiles*, International Centre for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations: Sofia. p 11.

> *Discrimination is often hidden. For example, the Roma receive jobs which require lower qualification and on its turn that leads to lower remuneration. Otherwise there are no displays of racism and xenophobia*[120]*.*

Job segregation along ethnic lines in the textile industry was identified by another *Turkish woman textile worker:*

> *To be kept to perform poorly paid jobs with high production quotas amounts to discrimination… There is separation. Bulgarians receive better jobs, while we receive those which are less paid. The Gypsies do not even sew but just clean.*

The explanation was put down by a Bulgarian male textile worker to the fact that 'in general, the Roma have the lowest qualifications', a view endorsed by another Turkish woman textile worker. She put the responsibility for any job segregation that does exist down to,

> *The lower qualification of the Roma - otherwise we all are equal with regard to rest, coffee and tea.*

Thus the responsibility for the discrimination faced by each individual member of a disadvantaged minority is displaced away from the employer or the work group to the individual Roma woman, who lacks certain unspecified 'qualifications' to access better paid work in sewing.

Mixed messages

The overall picture, then, given by the ethnic minority workers the research teams interviewed across the five countries is of a strong presence of indirect racism in the workplaces we examined. It is impossible for us to indicate whether this form of racism is getting stronger or weaker. Our interviews occurred in 2004 and 2005, and were not primarily used to enquire about changes over time. Unlike direct racism by white employers and workers, whose partial shift even if only underground, was positively commented upon by several of our interviewees, indirect racism is much more invasive. Since its disadvantaging effects are experienced by individuals but are never formally declared as such by its authors, they are often internalised by the minority workers. For this reason, as we make clear in our recommendations, it needs to be defined and

[120] The interview extracts in this paragraph are taken directly from the Bulgarian fieldwork reports.

explained much more clearly and the priority of combat against it raised among policy-makers, employers and trade unions. This is still more crucial because of the ambiguous political messages now being given out by many governments in relation to the respect and welcome due to migrant workers and their families.

However, between 2003 and 2005 the socio-political background against which we were researching trade union responses to workplace racism was changing. The hardening of a criminalisation discourse directed against 'other' workers, using a language that saw asylum seekers as 'illegal' or as 'potential terrorists', and which we noted in our first report,[121] was perceptible. In England and Wales, police data showed that between 2003-4 and 2004-5 the numbers of 'stop and searches' of people had increased by 14% to 838,726 and that black people were six times more likely to be stopped and searched than white people, and Asian people were twice as likely. In addition there were 9% more stop and searches than in the previous year under the Terrorism Act 2000, a further 32,086.[122] The Director and Chairperson of the European Union Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia wrote in their joint foreword to the Centre's 2005 Annual Report of the 'recurring theme' of 'mixed messages'. In particular,

> *some Member States have been giving out messages in new legislation that new immigrants are not welcome, for political rather than economic reasons. This sits uneasily with the increasing need for labour in many sectors that cannot be met internally. Furthermore the accompanying anti-immigrant political discourse makes things harder for those fighting for diversity and against discrimination in Europe.*[123]

In an international political context in which the British, Italian and Bulgarian governments actively used intolerance and fear to justify war and occupation, and where the 'other' ethnic group, or nationality or religion, was being portrayed as at best 'neutral' and at worst 'an enemy', it became more acceptable to give voice to this intolerance. The 'ethnic exclusionism' identified as being widespread among people living in Eastern and Western European societies by the Nijmegen studies[124] attracted more votes for racist parties.

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[121] See Jefferys (2004) and VII.6.5.
[122] Home Office data, *BBC News*, 30 March 2006.
[123] EUMC (2005: 4).
[124] Coenders et al (2003) Overview of theories, hypotheses and results on attitudes of majorities towards minorities, Report 1, p viii, found: 'resistance to immigrants is shared by half of the populations; resistance to asylum seekers is supported… by almost a third of the general public; resistance to multicultural society is shared by an over time rather stable minority of about a quarter of the Europeans…; ethnic distance is present among one fifth in Western and Eastern societies trying to avoid social interaction with migrants both in the

This greater acceptance of a public cultural intolerance – of people of different beliefs, colour skin and nationality - is not an abstract matter. 'Mixed messages' or ambiguities concerning equal treatment have a huge significance for the trade union movement. Traditionally unions have had their highest levels of support among average wage earners. They generally bridged the divide between higher-skilled and lower or unskilled manual workers through sharing an intolerance of the inequalities of capitalism and jointly striving to do something about them. Today, trade union survival as mass participatory democratic organisations probably depends on how effectively they can build new bridges to the often ethnically stratified workers being inserted into the bottom of the jobs pyramid while still maintaining old ones. And this means facing up to the reality that they have no real option but to act to identify and then build a collective challenge to racism at work. The core of our research aimed at understanding to what extent and how the unions were trying to do this. Our analysis of trade union responses is the subject of the next chapter.

3. Trade union responses to racism

> **'I still believe that there is this, this thing with white supremacy going on in every respect'** (Black 40-year-old woman TGWU London bus driver)

The European trade union movement is between a rock and a hard place. As a whole it is experiencing declining membership and influence while simultaneously facing, among other challenges, that of significant levels of racism in the workplace and rising levels of xenophobia within wider civil society.

Our research points to the problems Europe's trade unions are facing. Writing in the 1990s in the last major study published on European trade union responses to racism, Penninx and Roosblad (2000) concluded:

> *although trade unions may ideologically have an internationalist orientation, their actual effectiveness has to be struggled for within national contexts.*[125]

Our findings raise doubts as to how effective the national struggles actually are. Between the top-level union policy, where there had been undoubted progress in the 1990s and

public and private domain; opposition to civil rights for legal migrants is supported by an over time rather stable minority of about four our of ten Europeans.

[125] Penninx and Roosblad (2000: 206).

2000s, and workplace implementation of these policies there is often a huge divergence. In this chapter we describe the union responses at national and workplace levels, and set out to explain why unions give out ambiguous messages.

The decisive factor in our selection of the three case studies in each of the five countries was that there were both minority workers within the sector and a trade union presence – either at workplace or sector level but preferably at both. We realised that exercising both these criteria would exclude from our study some sectors which employ significant proportions of ethnic minority staff but where trade unions are largely absent. But because our research focus was on trying to find out how *trade unions* mediate workplace racism – challenging it, tolerating it or even supporting it –a union presence was essential. Since we are also aware that a union presence tends to be associated with a whole range of better working conditions and procedures than where unions don't exist, we can be fairly sure that our case studies reflect those industries and sectors more likely to have 'better' practice in general than those where the unions are not present at all. For this reason and because in each case study the unions we studied were affiliated to nationally dominant confederations we believe the unions we chose to research can be seen as reasonably representative of other national unions that we did not. The unions we researched in the course of our fieldwork, and the confederations they belong to, are listed in Table 11:

Table 11. List of trade unions researched in five countries

Trade Union	2003-4 union members	Affiliated to which confederation	2003 Confederation membership [126]	Last anti-racist policy statement found
Belgium				
Centrale Nationale des Employés, CNE-LBC	380,000	CSC-ACV	1,637,000	
Centrale chrétienne des services publics, CCSP	127,000	CSC-ACV	1,637,000	
Public transport sector	15,000	CSC-ACV	1,637,000	
Health sector	n/a		1,637,000	
Syndicat des Employés, Techniciens et Cadres, SETCa	324,979	FGTB-ABVV	1,343,810	March 2005
Centrale générale des	285,234	FGTB-ABVV	1,343,810	

[126] EIRO (2004), 'Trade union membership, 1993-2003', European industrial relations observatory on-line: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Table 1).

services publics, GCSP				
Public transport sector		FGTB-ABVV	1,343,810	
Health sector		FGTB-ABVV	1,343,810	
Bulgaria				
Federation of Independent Construction Unions	12,156	CITUB	390,000	Feb 2003
Independent Trade Union of Tobacco Workers	4,806	CITUB	390,000	
Federation of Independent TUs in Light Industry	24,362	CITUB	390,000	
Light Industry Federation	N/A	Podkrepa	109,000	Feb 2003
TU in Tobacco Industry	N/A	Podkrepa	109,000	
Construction, Industry and Water Supply Federation	N/A	Podkrepa	109,000	
France				
Health,Commerce,Transport		CGT	420,000	
Health,Commerce,Transport		CFDT	500,000	
Health,Commerce,Transport		FO	300,000	
Health		SUD	80,000	
Italy*				
Fim Fps-Health sector	190.306*** 84.649**	CISL	2,076,500	2001
Fiom Fp-Health sector	363.326*** 80.972**	CGIL	2,730,500	2001
Uilm Fpl-Health sector	91.775 44.906**	UIL	826,000	2001
UK				
USDAW	320,000	TUC	6,500,000	2004
TGWU	817,000	TUC	6,500,000	2004
UNISON	1,300,000	TUC	6,500,000	2004

*The Italian data from EIRO is the total membership including 48% retired members and 3.1% who pay no membership fee.[127] The figures here have therefore been reduced to take this effect into account ** = 2002 data; *** = 2005 data.

This chapter first sketches the national positions on the racist challenge of these trade unions we researched. Then it puts the rather different reality at the workplace level into an analytical framework. Finally it develops a theoretical understanding as to why the trade union movement gives out ambiguous messages.

3.1. National union policies against racism

None of the 11 national confederations and 33 national unions we researched discriminated against members joining according to their ethnic, racial or national origins. They all had policies or rules opposing direct racism and extreme right political parties. In doing so they had opted formally for 'cooperation' rather than 'resistance' to migrants in response to a key policy question identified by Penninx and Roosblad (2000):

> *Should trade unions cooperate with employers and authorities in the employment of foreign workers or should they resist?*

In this sense they are formally committed to the 'equal treatment' phase of Martens' (1999) analysis. His argument is that European trade union policies have evolved through several key overlapping phases in relation to migrant labour, the most important of which we would propose to rename: *control*, *formal equality* and *real equality*.[128] We found that the 'formal equality' phase of opposition to racism still dominated national level responses, and examples from the other phases were much less in evidence.[129]

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[127] Visser (2006: 42).

[128] Jefferys (2004: 12) lists Martens' four phases as: *Controlling numbers*. From the 1850s some unions sought to limit the labour supply by supporting immigration controls and police action against migrants; *Equal treatment*. From the 1930s unions began to demand and impose equal (standard) conditions, rule and wages, so that immigrant workers would not undercut 'domestic' rates. This became the dominant strategy after the failure of attempts to impose restrictions during the economic boom years of the 1950s and 1960s; *Equal opportunities*. To the extent that minority workers became a permanent component of the labour force from the 1970s some unions started to advocate encompassing special policies to guarantee access, advancement, training and pay to all, without restrictions or limitations; and *International social clauses*. In the 1990s some unions began to respond to globalisation by attempting to spread the 'equal treatment' imposition of rules internationally, to countries importing goods into domestic markets. Our own research sees the distinction in terms of kinds of policies, but believes the terms 'equal treatment' and 'equal opportunities' do not quite capture the real differences that exist.

[129] In some ways an anti-Roma outburst from the leader of the Bulgarian Podkrepa Confederation could be seen as a reversal to a control phase. Three other unions, two British and one French, had evolved national policies that proposed 'special' measures to secure real equality (positive structures to encourage minority participation and the sponsorship of asylum seekers).

For a national trade union, however, the meaning of 'opposition to racism' is often strongly nuanced. It can mean passing moralistic statements in favour of equality; or it can mean organising to undermine it. Thus union conference resolutions in favour of 'formal equality' can be motivated either by a genuine inclusionary approach, offering a positive welcome to the 'new' workers within the trade union, or by an exclusionary perspective, going through the motions with little or no real intent to change things. It is therefore helpful to frame these national union responses in terms of their significance for different kinds of policy and new forms of trade union action.[130] Unions, like all institutions within civil society, may adopt a policy on paper, implement it in a rule book, give it publicity and lobby politically to see it adopted by the rest of the trade union movement or in law. However, even if these policies are implemented, it does not necessarily mean that they are transformed into any changed behaviours. There are three main ways in which the outcomes of union policy can reasonably be measured: has the union changed its structures to reflect the new policy; has it changed the education and training it provides its officers, activists and members; and has the union raised the new policy systematically and in a serious way in collective bargaining or social dialogue with the employers?

3.1.1. Bulgarian union policies

In Bulgaria when the pre-existing unions transformed themselves into the independent CITUB Confederation in 1990, its Statutes specifically insisted on the right of all ethnic minorities to join, declaring: 'CITUB shall allow no discrimination or privileges for its members on grounds of political and religious affiliations, sex, race, ethnicity or any other reason'.[131] There are no special structures for minorities or ethnic monitoring, but in February 2003 CITUB adopted an organising strategy with special reference to organising in ethnically mixed regions. Equally, the 1989 Podkrepa (Support) Labour Confederation claimed in its constitution to protect 'the rights, dignity, processional and social interests of the members of the organisations within the Confederation' and to offer 'protection against national, ethnic or religious discrimination on the basis of racial belonging'.[132] However, the credibility of this policy was thrown into question in August 2004, when Podkrepa's founder, Konstantin Trenchev, declared demagogically that Bulgaria's trade unions and working people were highly concerned about 'criminality' among the Roma. He argued it was an organized business and that the Ministry of Interior lacked the necessary capacity, courage and motivation to cope with this problem.

[130] This approach builds upon the analytical framework sketched in Contrepois and Jefferys (2005: 563).
[131] IMIR (2004), *Bulgarian National Report.* IMIR: Sofia, p. 50
[132] *ibid.* p 48.

He went on to call for a national guard and voluntary detachments 'to protect the Bulgarians from Gypsy raids'. At the end of this populist racist outburst he reproached society 'for closing its eyes just because it did not want to deal with this issue, as well as the politicians and leaders who did not dare say things loudly, not to be accused of racism or xenophobia and all other sins that democracy could lay on them'.

3.1.2. Italian union policies

In Italy the three Confederations issued a common policy statement in 1982 calling for the regularisation of migrant workers and for the equal treatment of all 'foreign' workers with Italian nationals. But it was twenty years later before they started to give concerted support to the migrant-led strikes against the Bossi-Fini law. In 1989 the CISL set up a bridge organisation between CISL and migrant workers, encouraging significant self-organisation. In contrast, in 1996 the CGIL's 13th Congress adopted a position arguing strongly that the achievement of full rights for migrant workers was inevitably founded upon the solidarity created in the world of work. It concluded that this meant there should not be any separation of migrant members within the union as whole. Adapting this policy to present realities, in August 2004 the CGIL's engineering union FIOM agreed the principle that there should be proportional quotas of migrant workers on all its governing bodies.

3.1.3. French union policies

In France the five major union confederations have long-standing anti-racist policies, standing for equal rights for all, but at the same time have often called for strong state controls on immigration, especially in times of recession.[133] Presented as defending the interests of the working class as well as of the nation, this dualism gives rise to considerable ambiguities, even if the unions are favourable to the 'integration' or assimilation of minority workers into the movement. The official anti-racist policies at the top thus have major problems in translation at the base. This was clearly reflected in the significant proportions of sympathisers of the main confederations who voted for the two extreme right candidates in the first round of the presidential elections of 2002.[134]

In November 2004 the confederations demonstrated together around the call 'Racism threatens workers' solidarity', and in January 2005, the CGT, CFDT, CFTC and UNSA signed a trade union charter *For Equal Treatment, Non-discrimination and Diversity*. This

[133] Thanks to Véronique De Rudder for the first draft of this overview of French national trade union anti-racist policies.
[134] Liasons Sociales, 29 April 2002, Briefing: CFTC: 25%; FO: 18%; CGC: 14%; CGT: 13%; CFDT: 12%; SUD: 3%. Liasons Sociales/CSA nationally representative survey of 5,352 voters.

referred to the ETUC's anti-racism programme and committed the signatory confederations to promote 'diversity' in the world of work as well as within their own organisations. This charter, however, also specifically rejects the idea of a 'quota' as likely to create new forms of discrimination. This is evidence that, relatively recently, a growing public debate has been taking place in France about how to deal with discrimination, and not only racial discrimination, and whether voluntary positive discrimination is a legitimate response. The trade unions insist on the importance of a strict equal treatment. A CFDT minority official described the policy as follows:

> *It's not a matter of treating Mohammed more favourably, but of making sure that neither Mohamed, nor Remi, nor Françoise, nor Sarah, nor Fatima, are excluded from the recruitment process because of their supposed or real origins.*[135]

In reality, despite the common policy position in support of 'diversity', the national confederations' positions are quite different.

The CGT's 2004-6 Executive Committee only has three ethnic minority members out of 50, but actually counts them and is actively canvassing to improve this proportion in April 2006. The CGT, which has the most support of all the French unions in works committee and industrial tribunal elections, insists that anti-racism is a part of the general trade union struggle. Thus, for example, in a leaflet aimed at recruiting minority workers it calls for non-discrimination in recruitment and promotion as a contribution to the creation of a proper life-long employment status for all workers. Racism is seen by the CGT as a weapon used by employers to divide workers, so only a mobilisation that can shift the balance of forces between employers and unions can effectively counter it. The CGT tends to draw a distinction between racism, which is conceived of symbolically or ideologically, and discrimination, which implies the power to create disadvantage.

The UNSA[136] grouping, which is a collection of centre-right autonomous trade unions largely based in the public sector, has just given itself the objective of 'reflecting the reality of our society', and has asked its component federations to 'check on their diversity'. Since 1998 it has run two-day discrimination training programmes.

The CFDT, France's current largest confederation, claims that its activities in training, meetings and surveys are making its activists more sensitive about the need to elect minority representatives. Over the past five years it has trained 500 leading trade

[135] Omar Benfaïd, CFDT Secretary, DARES Colloque, 9.12.2004.
[136] *Union nationale des syndicats autonomes.*

unionists, and within an ESF-funded Equal project between 2002 and 2005 worked in six regions to improve its anti-discrimination practice. Its position is that there is nothing inherent in capitalism that leads it to practise racial discrimination, so it is very open to work with the employers to reach agreement on non-discrimination measures.

More conservatively still, the FO confederation replied to a review of its anti-discrimination practices that since it is 'naturally' representative of French society it doesn't have to take any action to improve the representation of minorities. This was virtually the same answer as given by the CFTC, which also considers it already has 'considerable ethnic diversity within its internal structures'.[137]

3.1.4. Belgian union policies

In Belgium there has been a very strong French linguistic and cultural influence on French-speaking trade unionists in terms of the integration and assimilation of 'immigrants'. Although there is nothing like the French republican tradition of insistence upon equality within Belgian society as a whole, nor France's secular and centralised traditions, it means that migrants and ethnic minority workers in the Walloon area and Brussels are viewed formally as if they were a part of a collective working class. In Flanders, by contrast, the historic memory of the suppression of the Flemish identity encouraged an openness to the recognition of ethnic difference.[138] The unions have therefore adopted assimilation strategies with different nuances in different parts of Belgium. Their overall ideological context could be described as formally inclusionary, and they are clearly committed at a national level to campaigning against racism and the extreme right.

Initially the lack of visible difference with the largely Italian migrants of the post-war period made this relatively easy. Trade unionists in first the Christian (CSC) and then the Socialist (FGTB) confederations[139] set great store by recruiting them. They moved quickly to develop equal treatment policies. Originally, when the CSC established a separate section for migrants, the FGTB initially opposed that strategy. However, as the new migration from Morocco and Turkey gathered force in the 1960s, the unions began to exercise an exclusionary, protectionist reflex, expressing concern about the ease of entry into Belgium. After the 1974 halt to new immigration the unions turned back towards a more inclusionary approach. They then called for stiff penalties against employers for

[137] The positions were reported by Novethic, 14.3.06
[138] See Ouali et al (2003), Belgian National RITU Report, ULB Brussels.
[139] CSC: *Confédération des syndicats chrétiens*; FGTB: *Fédération générale du travail de Belgique*. These two confederations represent roughly 93% of all Belgian trade unionists. See Ouali *et al*: *ibid.*

exploiting undocumented migrants and the removal of penalties against the migrants themselves. In 1982 the FGTB decided to establish special groups of youth, migrant workers and pensioners and give them the right to intervene in congress and other union meetings. More recently in 1994 after the initial success of the Vlaams Blok party in Flanders and a growing targeting of Moroccan and Turkish migrants for racist attacks, the two major confederations and the smaller liberal (CGSLB) confederation[140] signed an agreement that each one of them would exclude members of extreme right political parties from membership. This positive step at national level has not in reality been followed by many exclusions, but it remains in place.

At national level the two main Belgian confederations have both formally taken up anti-racist positions but have also pressured the employers to do likewise. In 1995 the confederations signed up to the Florence declaration of European social partners opposing racial discrimination in the workplace. This recognised that racism and xenophobia were 'a grave threat, not only for the stability of European society, but also to the effective functioning of the economy'. Union posters such as 'Get rid of racist graffiti' and leaflets have been produced regularly. In 2000 the Flemish FGTB (ABVV) published two guides to the philosophy of positive action and to a multicultural human resource policy and with the Christian Flemish union began to demand the inclusion of codes of non-discrimination in all collective agreements. In 2003 the unions signed a national agreement with the employers suggesting a mechanism to encourage the recruitment of young minority workers.[141] By the time of the 2004 workplace elections, the FGTB was confident enough of its inclusionary stance to devote a significant part of its Brussels election campaign to the testimonies of its Moroccan-born candidates.

3.1.5. UK union policies

In the UK the first national unions to designate an officer responsible for race equality issues were the National Union of Public Employees (NUPE) in 1986, and the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU) in 1989 (Wrench 2003). A survey of the leading unions in 1988 showed that half had set up structures to tackle the problems of racial discrimination and black participation in the union; by 1993, a similar survey indicated that this figure had gone up to two-thirds (Wrench 2000: 139; Wrench 2003). In the 1990s, though, despite more unions adopting and even starting to implement serious anti-racist policies, with the exception of the black General Secretary of the TGUW, they

[140] CGSLB: Centrale Générale des Syndicats Libéraux de Belgique.
[141] This positive action recruitment plan, ironically baptised, 'Two Fatima for one Rosetta' was greeted with hostility by many trade unionists. S See Ouali *et al*: *ibid.*

generally remained more or less silent as the anti-migrant discourse switched to attacking 'asylum seekers'.

Wider recognition of the need to change really only followed the TUC's Stephen Lawrence Task Group, set up in response to the 1999 Macpherson Inquiry report.[142] This had identified 'institutional racism' as being largely responsible for the poor police investigation of the teenager's racist murder and suggested it was present within much of the British public sector. The TUC's Task Group's purpose was defined as 'tackling institutional racism in the workplace'. This group of 25 leading trade unionists published twelve reports and guides to action in 1999 and 2000.[143] In 2000 the TUC launched an 'action plan' to challenge workplace racism, and then in 2001 persuaded the TUC to initiate its own equality audit of UK trade unions.[144]

From its formation out of the merger of NALGO, NUPE, and the Confederation of Health Sector Employees in 1990, UNISON, the public sector union, adopted an innovative programme of 'self organisation' of black and ethnic minority members, along with women, gay and lesbian, and disabled members. Acknowledging the institutional barriers to minorities, special structures targeted ethnic minority workers, with special reserved seats, a special formal committee, a conference and a dedicated national union officer. The purpose of Self-Organised Groups is outlined in the union's 2004 Rule Book as creating an opportunity for particular members to

> *share concerns and aspirations, and establish their own priorities; elect their own representatives to other levels of self-organisation and to other appropriate levels of the Union's organisation…(and) to build confidence and encourage participation and provide opportunities for the fuller involvement of disadvantaged members.*

Where self-organised groups exist at branch level they have the opportunity to elect a representative on to the branch committee, put forward motions and gain funding for their activities. By 2003, when the first trade union internal equalities audit was carried out by the TUC, UNISON responded that it had a total of 91 black staff including 11 black negotiating officers.[145] In its audit return of 2005 it reported having 718 overall equality

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[142] In 2000 the largest public sector trade union, UNISON, also established its own Task Group to examine institutional racism within the union and the public sector and reported quite critically in 2001 in Unison, 'Facing the Challenges'.
[143] Stephen Lawrence Task Group *Newsletter*, March 2000.
[144] The first two took place in 2003 and 2005.
[145] With a 72% women membership, UNISON reported that 48% of its national full-time officers were women and 36% of its regional full-time officers. TUC (2003) Equal Opportunities Audit 2003 London: TUC.

reps, 368 women's equality reps and 163 race equality reps at branch level.[146] That same year Gloria Mills, UNISON's national equality officer, became the first black woman president of the TUC.

The Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU) did not initially go down the same road of support for black self-organisation. Paradoxically, this was partly because in 1991 it had elected Bill Morris, the first and only black trade union leader of a major British union, and then re-elected him in 1995 until his retirement in 2003. With this and its national affiliations to various anti-racist organisations and its agreement that branches and region could do the same, and with Morris' effective personal opposition to giving vouchers to asylum seekers, it felt its stance against direct racism was clear. But the TUC's Stephen Lawrence Task Force and a growing realisation that indirect racism was an even greater challenge propelled it into doing more. In 2000 it changed its rules to require members to

> *actively oppose all forms of prejudice and discrimination on grounds of sex, race, ethnic or national origin, religion, colour, creed, class, caring responsibilities, marital status, sexuality, physical ability, age or mental health.*[147]

The union then formed a new Women, Race and Equalities Sector alongside its four industrial sectors. Formally this has equivalent standing to the industrial sectors, and the National Race Equality Officer position set up in the early 1990s was attached to it. In all eight regions a Regional Race Equality Committee was established and regional officers were given responsibilities for race equality. A 1998 rule change that became operational from September 2003 instituted a system of minimum proportionality for black members on all the committees of the union. It created new seats on the union's General Executive Council for regions with the highest proportions of black and minority ethnic members. In 2002 the TGWU held its first black members' conference. In 2003 it reported that 6% of its total staff and 4% of its paid negotiating officers were black. It also produced a *Negotiator's Guide on Race Equality* with a model agreement on tackling indirect racist discrimination in the workplace.[148]

USDAW, the Union of shop, Distributive and Allied Workers, and the UK's fifth biggest union with an estimated 6% black members, has also adopted a clear national level anti-racist stance. It established a National Race Relations Committee as an informal advisory

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[146] TUC, *TUC Equality Audit 2005*, London: Trades Union Congress.
[147] Rule 2d, TGWU Rule Book, 2000.
[148] TGWU (2003), Negotiators Guide on Race Equality, London: TGWU.

committee in the early 1990s and, responding to the Stephen Lawrence Task Group and membership pressure, in 2004 amended its rules to include an anti-racist clause committing it to:

> *promote equal opportunities and equal treatment for all its members and oppose discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, ethnic origin, disability, sexual orientation or religion.*[149]

The union's National Race Relations Committee has also produced a race awareness video called *Racism is No Joke* and it has negotiated agreements covering racial harassment at work with the major employers where it is unionised like Tesco and the Co-operative. The union mounted an effective campaign against direct racism through mobilising in the 2005 General Election against the extreme right British National Party. It also produces occasional information briefings.[150] However, with the exception of a briefing paper on taking a discrimination case to an industrial tribunal, many of these policies and actions do not really tackle indirect racism. Ethnic monitoring is still not carried out and a discussion was taking place within the union in 2005 as to the advisability of doing this; nor is there a black members' conference or race relations committees at divisional level. USDAW also did not report on the ethnic breakdown of its staff or officers to the TUC, and one recent study found only one black Area Organiser out of 91. A black woman member pointed sharply at what she felt was a gap between the union's policies and practices when she attended union conference:

> *I think the union use them (special structures to encourage black participation). I just don't see it when I look on the podium and don't see no black people, you know. Where does that leave you because you just look and you think oh, there's not even one face, you know, not Indian, not black, nothing?*

There have been national black members' weekend schools organised by the National Race Relations Committee since at least 1997 and in the run-up to the 2005 General Election it organised a meeting of about 30 black members in the Northern mill towns.[151] Yet the union culture indicated by several of the officials we interviewed suggests continuing doubts (or fears) about the value of black self-organisation.

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[149] USDAW Rule Book as amended at the 2004 ADM, pg 3.
[150] See for instance USDAW's Race Relations Committee Briefing Paper 1: Racial Harassment in Britain and Race Relations Committee Briefing Paper 2: Taking a Race Discrimination Case to Industrial Tribunal
[151] Holgate (2004) and Dhaliwal (2005).

3.1.6. Union policy overview

Table 12 provides a summary sketch of the main confederation or (for the UK) union positions we have outlined above.

Table 12. National level union anti-racist policies and actions*

	Policies			Actions		
	Anti-racist statutes or policy	**Rules against racists**	**Anti-racist publicity**	**Ethnic monitoring or special provisions**	**Anti-racist education or training**	**Anti racist discrimination raised in negotiations**
Belgium						
CSC-ACV	yes	yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
FGTB-ABW	yes	yes	yes	No	Yes	No
Bulgaria						
CITUB	yes	no	no	no	no	No
Podkrepa	yes	no	NO	no	no	No
France						
CGT	yes	no	yes	no	no	yes
CFDT	yes	no	yes	no	yes	yes
FO	no	no	no	no	no	no
UNSA	yes	no	no	no	yes	yes
SUD		no	no	no	no	no
Italy						
CISL	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	No
CGIL	yes	no	YES	no	yes	Yes
UIL	yes	no	no	no	yes	No
UK						
USDAW	yes	no	yes	no	Yes	Yes
TGWU	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	No
UNISON	yes	yes	YES	YES	yes	Yes

*The responses are scaled from a token policy (yes/no), to a more significant policy (Yes/No) and a very definite policy (YES/NO). If this is a policy that has national recognition we have put it in bold (**YES/NO).**

The same core policy dilemmas faced in all countries between exclusionary and inclusionary policies, and between formal and real equality measures, thus met with a wide variety of formal anti-racist policy positions and actions at national level. But national union anti-racist policies are just the start. The real issue is how far these weak (Bulgaria, Italy), formal (France) and stronger (Belgium, UK) national level commitments to anti-racism impact at the level of the workplace. It was on this question that our fieldwork was largely focused.

3.2. Analysing workplace level union responses to racism

> **'You know, we found that, whereas we do have our (anti-racist) policies, particularly in the public sector, they are not being implemented'** (Black woman UK national full-time union official)

Our interviews, covering 100 workplaces in five countries, took place between 2003 and 2005. What we found was that even between two workplaces in the same country there were often big differences in trade union culture. Workplaces with different histories and with different minority compositions were invariably distinct from each other, but there were also huge variations in responses between quite similar workplaces. Local responses to racism rarely seemed to be in step, either with each other or with their national unions. What this boiled down to was that even if the national union policy was quite clear, union activists' understandings of racism and resistance to racism varied everywhere.

The range of workplace-level trade union responses to racism ran from trying to maintain the domination of the white workforce over the 'others' to challenging racism and attempting to build support for positive action to overcome indirect racism. We find it helpful to analyse these responses as being either more or less protectionist of the white majority, or as being more or less inclusive in advocating special measures to secure equality for the non-white minority. Some sat somewhat uneasily in between, advocating equality through integration or assimilation, but using the 'equality' discourse sometimes with an exclusionary and sometimes with an inclusionary intent.

3.2.1. Protectionist responses

Protectionist reflexes were very common. In the most extreme case they were tantamount to an endorsement of direct racism, with the trade unionist openly or covertly protecting the privilege of the historical white 'national' majority. This is particularly in maintaining the status quo that white workers should get first chance at promoted posts. Thus one FIM-CISL union official honestly admitted that he recently and

with an awareness that he was party to a process of discrimination, negotiated the promotions of 'Italians' rather than 'non-Italians':

> *In the unionised firms we do manage to get something done, but this 'something', to be perfectly honest, also reflects some unconscious or conscious discrimination. In my experience, on occasion - even quite recently - I've had to deal with the fact that I was asking for ten promotions, I obtain five of them in negotiations with the firm and as it so happens the five are all given to 'Italians'.*

The other side of this direct racism protectionism was a criticism of the promotion of minority workers. This was expressed by a white British TGWU shop steward (and local Labour Party councillor) who had started driving at the bus garage in 1971. He felt:

> *Some of the black and Asians who they promoted are not capable of doing the job and I believe they have just been promoted because they are black and Asians.*
>
> *DO THEY GET ANY TRAINING, THEN, ONCE THEY GET THE NEW POST?*
>
> *I think they are supposed to but I am not sure if they get much at all. It's all down to costs. This is all money, money, money, that is all that matters.*
>
> *ARE THERE PROBLEMS WITH WHITE PEOPLE GETTING PROMOTED AND NOT ABLE TO HANDLE IT?*
>
> *Yes yes yes. There is problems with them as well, but the ones with the problems that can't handle the work, I believe, are far more black and Asian than whites.*

All three managers in this garage and all senior managers in the bus company are white, and although the workforce is now made up of a quarter minority workers, none of them are on the union Branch committee or ever attend the monthly union meetings. This is not surprising. The same TGWU union representative explained his response to minority workers speaking in their own languages:

> *I personlly pick on them and I tell the Asians: 'Heh, this is X, not Southall. You speak that language in Southall. In X you speak English… No, they are not from Southall, but Southall is the main Asian*

community. You know a lot of them go, most… most Asians go there to do their shopping[152]

The local union in this, admittedly rare, case is certainly making its hostility to minority workers fairly explicit.

Total denial

One of the more common protectionist impulses we found was a blanket denial. Most of the Bulgarian workers we interviewed were insistent that there was no tension between majority and minority workers. A tobacco worker was emphatic:

There is no racism, xenophobia or discrimination in Bulgaria. Racism may exist in countries like the USA, for example.

An Italian CISL union official was equally clear:

Discrimination in Italy is not possible since the law guarantees equality of treatment between Italian and immigrant workers.

Asked about discrimination within the union, a white French CFDT health federation official explained there had never been any discussion over how to integrate minority workers in the union because it was not a problem:

To my knowledge, to my knowledge, at federal level, the question did come up once. Over the 14 years that I've been here, I've been alerted once to a problem, and that was settled by a telephone call. Political questions may come up, but the problem of someone's origin never does.

This response illustrates the linguistic and contextual difficulty of definitions. While the question was posed in terms of the lack of minority officers within the union, the answer given was in terms of a 'problem of someone's origins'.

Indeed a much more common form of total denial was definitional denial. This involves defining 'racism' as outright, open bigotry, or segregation, and then saying that since that isn't present, racism can't be either. While this is more prevalent in several French interviews where the public expression of racial prejudice is the commonsense meaning of the term, it is also present in Britain. A white British TGWU official who had until very

[152] Interview 1008AM conducted by Rebecca Gumbrell-McCormick.

recently been a senior lay activist covering several London bus garages defined the 'big issue of racism' as:

> *Where there was, if you like, some sort of segregation or pure discrimination. It's never been an issue in 30 years in my working environment. I had lots of issues you know… ten years as a convenor there were lots of issues. But I can't ever remember dealing with one that was racially led. I can't think of one.*[153]

In France a CGT woman health union official, in describing how 'that kind of thing' was less likely she thought because it was a largely feminised workforce made it clear that her definition of racism as was 'direct', in-your-face hostility. She'd seen the racist looks her black son-in-law got on one occasion in the street:

> *Those looks, those… that yes! But… inside a hospital, including those with militants who could be black, walking around at Henri Mondor or in other places, that never.*[154]

Similarly, a French ethnic majority retail worker reported:

> *I've worked for two years at the bay, I've been around the drivers every day, and frankly I haven't heard any of that, you don't hear that kind of thing.*

If racism is only viewed as being 'that kind of thing', meaning open racist abuse or hostility, then its presence can easily pass unnoticed.

Victim denial

Another category of denial was equally common. This was where minority workers would report the discrimination they had experienced but the union officials or activists then questioned the reliability of the minority workers' statements or its specific racist character. Talking about verbal racist abuse from passengers, one white London union representative argued:

> *It's part of the job. You are always being called, you are a bus driver what else do you expect? You know you are a bus driver: you have got to have thick skin to take that.*

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[153] The respondent continued.: I mean occasionally one of the members would say he would be upset with a boss - 'Oh he is only treating me like that because I am black' - but invariably that wasn't true.
[154] Poiret et al (2005), French Health sector report, URMIS, p.20.

For him, there was no difference between being sworn at by a customer and being sworn at and racially abused as well. The same position was illustrated by a white French driver who was a CGT regional union representative:

> *A black man had been attacked, but for me it wasn't about race...I think it could have happened to anyone.*

Of course these incidents could happen to anyone, in the same way that capable candidates can fail to get promoted, or fail to find work and be paid commensurate with their skills. A white Italian woman CGIL-FIM activist at Zanussi described a disagreement she had had recently with a migrant co-worker:

> *The other day, speaking with a [migrant] co-worker, he told me: 'We'll never have a chance of getting ahead because our skin is different.' I tried to convince him it [skin colour] didn't matter, that it's up to them [the migrants] to show they really want to get ahead, because it's clear that anyone who wants to move up from simple assembly-line worker has got to show greater commitment.*

But the reality that this genuine response escapes is that the lack of promotion and 'incidents' do occur more regularly to minority workers.

Indeed, in the relatively exceptional circumstances of the French Overseas Department workers with a right to a paid trip home every two years, a white SUD hospital activist sought to mitigate the indirect racist discrimination involved when managers wouldn't take these workers:

> *I know certain trade unions, particularly the CGT, would say that some of the managers are racist because they don't want to take… because they pull back when they know that one of them (a French West Indian) is going to start with them. But I'm going to give the manager's point of view: if I take this person, me, every two years I've to pay for a special holiday. It's true that it's an act…*

This activist was creating a category of 'justifiable' discrimination, and was immediate criticised by a woman SUD activist from the same hospital, who argued that the same logic could be used to discriminate against pregnant women.

Some activists saw black workers being 'too' sensitive to the rough and tumble of workplace life. A white British health union official reported that some of his workplace reps saw black workers as being too ready to see racism everywhere:

> *I think there is an issue - that some of our representatives see that some black members, and I don't necessarily agree with them, but they see some black members who use in their terms, the issue of the 'race card' when they raise issues.*[155]

This form of victim denial, however, is not exclusively the prerogative of white trade unionists. One French 38-year-old North African CFDT member working on the Paris transport believed:

> *The young generation of immigrants often victimise themselves. They see a lot of racism, everything is racism to them… Right away it's…'Oh, they're racist', 'If he did that, it's because…' when most of the time the reason is not racism.*

This analysis reflected a quite common generational gap where older minority workers believed that younger second- or third-generation workers were more likely to see racism as an obstacle than they were, and so were effectively failing themselves before they had given the task in hand a proper effort. It confirms that many activists from both the majority and the minority lack a real understanding of what indirect racism actually is.

Covert denial

Yet denial also occurs where the trade unionists know there is a real problem. Thus a French CFDT retail sector official at Carrefour tacitly recognised there probably are some 'racism-related' problems:

> *No racism-related problems get back to me. Either activists avoid tackling them, or things are covered up, and out of sight.*

A CGT transport union leader acknowledged that local activists might see things differently than the national leadership:

> *During debates within the union, we don't have any problem with principles. But if the others, in depots, considered they're not important, they are not going to apply them.*[156]

[155] Dhaliwal (2005), *UK Health Sector report*, WLRI, Interview 1017BM.
[156] Poiret et al (2005), *French Transport sector report*, URMIS. Interviewee 2027AM.

Like most of the full-time officials we interviewed, neither of these two French officials quoted here assumed the responsibility for probing these lacunae further.

The reasons for this lack of follow-up into racist disadvantage in the workplace are sometimes pressure of work. Racism does not feature high on the local officials' or activists' list of priorities. One senior Italian FIOM engineering union official commented that his officials resisted encouragement to get involved in anti-racist campaigns:

> *Because... because it's not a question that our members, militants-members, consider a priority. One does so many different things.*

A Belgian public sector union official made this clear:

> *I tell myself everyday that I would like to be able to do a heap of things on a heap of issues. In the end, I'm going to say, we've enough things today on which we've got to focus. Well, there is globalisation, there are racist phenomena, there are, the – how shall I put it? - the ruining of the public services, at least of the service we give the public… the problem is that we are always the prisoner of priorities, what?*

A black TGWU bus company convenor in London believed many union officials spend too much time prioritising other matters:

> *They spend more time in representing people for other things, in terms of being dismissed, having better wages and conditions, etc. They do not seem to spend a great deal of time looking into where people [are] at a disadvantage.*

It is usually easier for union activists and officers to do little or nothing about disadvantage, and hence help perpetuate the status quo. But sometimes, too, behind the lack of probing is a fear of what might happen if the union did raise some of the issues.

Fear denial

Fear-denial stems partly from the presentation of racism as a 'difficult' issue, involving personal attitudes or preferences, rather than as a straightforward trade union social justice issue. One Belgian public sector union official believed it could be seen as 'indecent' to raise racist discrimination with workplace trade union delegates:

> *I think it (the issue of racism and discrimination) does frighten people… I think it is as difficult to discuss that question there with the delegates, as it is difficult to raise issues of loving and sexual relations with children*

at school. Because people have a sort of sense of decency, of what is decent, like that.

The fear also comes from a concern that raising racist discrimination could lead to a conflict with the white majority. An Italian FIOM-CGIL regional secretary was afraid of what might happen if he tackled racism among his members head on:

For myself, I speak for myself without judging others, there's a level of opportunism. The fear of having to come into conflict with one's own members who may well be in the majority prevailed over favouring the concept of equity and justice. And this, this is opportunism.

This fear-denial response is in terms of the possible repercussions of raising racist discrimination in public discussion. One Belgian retail union organiser also saw a relative 'peace' in the workplace that should be left untouched:

We've reached a certain harmony and it works. So we aren't trying to push it where it's not necessary. Because if you run campaigns that are too aggressive today on things that don't exist… there's a risk of rousing something that doesn't need rousing, if it exists, that is…Let sleeping dogs lie.

Opportunism and caution thus often combine to effectively deny the existence of a problem.

Another reason for denial can arise from the tactical recognition that to do so may lose the particular union or union activist wider worker support. In Belgium and France, for example, the proportions of votes received in workplace elections directly determine how many representatives each trade union is allowed to have, and how many delegation hours they get. In the UK and Italy the workplace level activist is more often dependent on direct sectional elections for their credentials with management and the wider union. Thus the presence of voters, particularly if the ethnic 'majority' workers make up the local majority, can create tactical denial. Two white workers on the Paris RATP commented:

A: It's true that when a trade union represents more than 40% of the employees, there are a lot of issues at stake, because it keeps hold of the work's council, and many things we don't want to lose. It threatens the means of support of trade union.

B: There are strategic interests that make him shut up. This is the feeling I get sometimes, this is what I feel. Some of us prefer to keep our mouths shut because the interests at stake are important for them. Most of the time, there are electoral interests and it gets on my nerves.

We return to the issue of democratic legitimacy underlying this tactical denial response in the theoretical discussion of trade union responses in the following chapter, section 3.3.

3.2.2. Assimilation and specialisation responses

Many union activists are, however, conscious and concerned at the presence of discrimination against ethnic minority workers but for various reasons oppose positive action. These trade unionists realise racism is a union issue that something should be done about, but responded with strategies aimed at assimilating migrants and minorities into the mainstream movement, or at making their concerns the subject of specialisation. Both of these approaches worked within formal equality policies, but they aimed to achieve equality without openly challenging any existing 'majority' privileges. In the first case they would advance by uniting all workers around common demands; in the second they would seek to ensure equality for the minority workers by servicing them when they articulated particular grievances. Consequently, while these two responses are a marked improvement on denial, and are often associated with real opposition to direct racism in the workplace, they did very little to challenge indirect racism, and often were highly ambiguous.

Assimilation responses

One common workplace trade union response to 'new' migrants or ethnic minorities is that they should assimilate to the existing trade union structure and programme of demands. The basic tenet is the 'colour-blind' requirement that 'everyone' has to pass the same test. One source of this approach can be an exclusionary protectionist instinct: consciously or unconsciously its proponents are seeking to make it as difficult as possible for those who are already disadvantaged to fully participate.

Yet there is also another, genuinely inclusionary, instinct behind assimilation or integrationist responses to racism. Many trade unions and trade union activists who take an assimilation approach denounce the inequality that racism perpetuated in terms of its damaging consequences for trade union unity. Personally and politically opposed to any prejudice, xenophobia or direct racism themselves they believe strongly that it is in the interests of ethnic minority workers to identify as closely as possible with the 'majority' of

trade unionists. Only through a shared agenda and demands would the unity be created that could take the whole movement forward.

One British UNISON full-time official distanced himself from his own trade union's support for black self-organisation, arguing:

> *I'm not saying that there isn't prejudice or there isn't ignorance, but I think we've got to find a way of actually taking the society we've got now forward… I mean historically trade unions worked to a … basis of unity and that unity would be extended across the world. If we divide our own ranks on colour of skin, gender, cultural origin or whatever it's gonna be, then all we do is create more problems… We've got to make the equalities agenda everybody's agenda so that we look at whatever differences or levels of understanding or misunderstanding are but draw people together.*[157]

In France several of the union officials we interviewed opposed employers taking 'positive' recruitment measures such as targeting recruitment from the deprived area around the hypermarket. An FO retail federation official explained:

> *Personally, I've always been against it, because I don't think it does immigrants any favours. There are no two ways about it in my book - you hire the one with the skills. If you start saying, "OK, we'll go for such-and-such an area... where you've got gangs"... (then you're) negotiating with gangs to hire gangsters.*

This insistence on universalism is particularly strong in France, where the 'Republican' ethos that starts from the normative assumption of equality, largely imposes total assimilation on minority groups. In Bulgaria, where the prevailing culture is strongly assimilationist, the emphasis is on educating the minorities so they can more quickly adapt to the norm. A woman union leader there, for example, believed:

> *It is necessary that more programmes for their (minority) inclusion into union activities should be developed. This could also be achieved through union training.*

In Italy this is happening. The Italian CGIL's health sector union has started to raise the demand at workplace level that migrant workers should be allowed to be included in

[157] Dhaliwal (2005), *UK Health sector report*, WLRI. Interviewee 1015BM.

time-off for training trade union representatives. This is clearly a positive development. Yet if a handful of minority workers do rise through the trade union structure and adapt to its organisation structures and programming priorities, in both France and Belgium we found a residue of closed attitudes towards them: white activists still often presumed 'minority' representatives were only really capable of representing other minority workers.

The integration ethos could be more rhetorical than real. One migrant woman worker in Italy was in favour of unity, but believed the trade unions would only do more if minority workers pushed them:

> *I am bitter because there are so many immigrants in the unions and they have been the protagonists of magnificent struggles. In Vicenza, for example, there are immigrants who put pressure on the unions to come out, to resist and struggle. Because otherwise the unions don't care at all about the struggle - against the Bossi-Fini [law], against casual labor, or illegal jobs.*

Union activists who adopt an assimilation response are often strongly opposed to any attempt to raise specific general demands related to indirect racism and overall discrimination. These are viewed as attempts to fragment the movement. So small accommodations may be made to the Muslim workforce, but larger ones will not. Thus one French CFDT retail federation official argued:

> *A little stupid thing… We ask the restaurants never to serve pork. We don't even ask whether the comrades are practising or not. We think it's a way of respecting people… it's a way of integrating*[158]

Yet when it came to a Belgian retail sector union official responding to arguments for a prayer room at work for women workers, there are no concessions to be made:

> *With demands for a prayer room the answer will be 'Niet', as for Catholics and Communists. If a Communist asks me for a place with a hammer and sickle, it will also be 'No'. It's the same thing.*

The logic is that any general demand to adapt the working environment to the needs of non-majority workers should be opposed. It is a logic that is particularly unsuitable for dealing with the need to oppose indirect racism, which by its very nature, resides in a

[158] De Rudder et al (2005), French retail sector report, URMIS.

patchwork of custom and practice and institutional rules and regulations. And clearly, since the same logic is not used to oppose the provision of crèche facilities at work, or separate toilets for men and women or rights to maternity leave, this unequally applied universalistic logic allows lots of room for ambiguity as to its real intent: inclusion or exclusion?

Specialisation responses

Some trade union organisations, but also many workplace level trade unionists, recognise that waiting for the rhetorical unity required by the assimilation strategy might take some time. So they respond to the need to promote equality by establishing 'specialist' organisations or allocating one person to deal with the equality issues that migrant and ethnic minority workers were raising. In Belgium and Italy these support organisations were initially run by trade unionists nominated by the union to offer support but also to exercise some kind of control. In 1991 the Italian CISL union created an assistance association known as ANOLF, comprising both immigrants and Italians, whose specific task was to help immigrants work out their legal and administrative problems. In Belgium the Christian CCSP union appointed a Brussels-based full-time official responsible for 'migrant workers'. In both cases the result was that other union officials clearly felt that they had been left 'off the hook' of responsibility for properly representing migrant workers themselves.

The allocation of responsibility for racism and discrimination issues at work to ethnic minority activists constitutes another form of delegation that locks them into minority issues – as if they were exclusively their responsibility - and avoids white union activists having to address this kind of issue. One minority retail sector SETCA rep in Belgium complained that full-time officials systematically referred issues involving Moroccans to her:

> *They shove it onto me because they think it's your kind, your kith and kin, and that's it. That's how I see it, your kith and kin, so that's it. So, you have to help them.*

A similar process where race equality issues are delegated to a handful of 'experts' has become quite common in the UK, where it has almost become fashionable for unions to appoint black officers to take the responsibility for 'race equality committees' and 'anti-racism'. Where such developments are a strategic decision by the union's white leaderships, rather than the outcome of the positive self-organisation response discussed below, they tend to create distinct and separate bodies reserved for minority activists and genuine white anti-racists. Often the real function of these specialist bodies becomes

being able to demonstrate that a part of the union is 'doing something' rather than to actually ensure that the whole union actually changes its practice and tackles its own institutional racism.

Specialisation does have some advantages. It shows that the 'majority' union has a place for 'minority' workers. But where that 'place' relies on the 'majority', and where the 'majority' are still not prepared to take up discrimination issues as union issues affecting all workers, then there remains unease. In particular, the 'segregation' or delegation of responsibility for these concerns to a minority of interested activists (whether black or white), can reinforce a sense of exclusion: the idea that minority workers' rights are about special pleading rather than about all workers' rights.

3.3.3. Positive action responses

Our research also found evidence of different forms of positive action being taken at workplace level by trade unions and activists to challenge both direct and indirect racism. They ranged from trying to ensure the identification by minority workers with the union to supporting black workers taking discrimination cases to court; and from encouraging various forms of self-organisation and active participation by minority workers within the union, to directly putting proposals against indirect racism on the collective bargaining table with the employer. Often all these forms of positive actions were intermingled.

In the Paris RATP, where the unions largely operate between denial and assimilation, a few anti-racist activists (from both majority and minority backgrounds) got together in 2003 to start campaigning to address the systemic racism that exists. One way of doing this they proposed was through an anti-discrimination charter. A North African activist argued it was important to involve the drivers and passengers and not to have such a charter simply be dictated by the company:

> *The idea we had, here at the MRAP, and which I proposed in the union, is a charter of good practice concerning both the employees and the passengers. In the same way we have a public transport charter we need an anti-discrimination one… Sometimes you need laws. And I think that a charter would be a kind of marker and would give people a feeling of involvement. It's an interesting tool, but the charter should be established with the drivers. It shouldn't be set down just like that. It should be created by a working group including people from management and from the shop floor. Same thing with passengers. It*

should be developed in cooperation with the drivers and the passengers. We should manage to have a charter of good behaviour towards people.

In another illustration of positive action, one SUD hospital branch 'adopted' two undocumented workers (*sans papiers*). This action, at one level purely political (and perhaps rhetorical), is a clear attempt by those involved to express their solidarity with a weak and much-maligned ground of migrant workers, and to give a lead on societal goals to the wider workforce.

In the UK we learned of several positive organising responses to attract black workers to the trade union. In one UK hospital, a white UNISON branch secretary was credited with having been highly proactive organising with and on behalf of the Filipino nurses who had been recruited to fill labour shortages.[159] On the London buses the small but important increase in the numbers of black local officers has even allowed some minority workers' concerns to get on to the bargaining agenda. There has been some progress made in accommodating the requests of different faith communities in respect of prayer rooms and toilet facilities. One local union officer reported:

We have just built our garage at P and we have put a toilet there. I think they call it a Moslem toilet where they need to stand. Yes, we have got one there and I think they are looking at it over here as well when they do some redevelopment…We have got a prayer room over at our P garage, again which is recently built, and I should imagine we will be looking to put one over here as well.[160]

For these trade unionists the union's readiness to respond to minority workers' specific concerns about their working conditions, is a condition for those workers' responding to the general concerns of all.

A black woman union organiser described how she first attracted some black workers to a Black History Month event, and how that emphasis on black identity can help lead to more union involvement:

So little things like that sort of helps them to get more, more actively involved. And then, once they do that, then they start saying 'Right well, I'm in the union, I'm gonna sit on the Black Workers' Committee and I want to know what the union's actually doing. I work in 'x' department

[159] But not without undergoing criticism from some black members for not doing enough about the lack of promotions for black staff.
[160] Jefferys (2004), *UK Transport sector report*, WLRI.

> *and there's only two black people in here out of 25. Why is that?' And then they start asking questions and putting pressure on the union, if you like, to sort of answer those questions.*

Certain unions organised their own events aimed at attracting minority workers who might be interested in becoming union activists. A black USDAW woman shop worker at Sainsburys reported positively about attending union black members' weekends:

> *Yes, there is within the union black members' weekends, yeah, I go to. I've been to that. Yeah, it's quite good actually, because you pass on different things that have happened or you can get advice about something from somebody else who's had the same problem.*

Bringing black members together would appear to create support networks that enable their members to be more effective union activists.

In none of the British workplaces we researched, however, was there on-going *local-level* black self-organisation present, so we cannot comment fully upon the effectiveness or otherwise of this as a response to workplace racism. But what our interviewees did report was a sense of need for a collective response. In some of the London bus garages we were told of minority workers grouping together to form electoral slates to challenge the white incumbents. One experienced black national UNISON official argued that the bargaining around race equality in the workplace that had taken before the 1990s had dissipated. Perhaps reflecting the decline in union influence we traced in chapter 3.2. above, he considered it regrettable that what remained today was only the very individualised, uncertain and personally risky strategy of legal action:

> *One of the things that has happened is that the issue of race has become individualised and so people's expression of their dissatisfaction is often that unions haven't pursued their tribunal cases… What has happened is that one of the consequences of the battles to get self-organisation was that a lot of bargaining around race started getting done in the workplace... (but) this has completely dropped off. So people feel their only solution is the law which can't address their problems really.*[161]

Other black interviewees commented on the risks of individually using the law to fight discrimination. A black woman London bus driver asked herself rhetorically:

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[161] Dhaliwal (2005), *UK Health sector report*, WLRI. Interviewee 1011BM.

Sorry, what can I do about it? It's always a case for any individual - what can you do about it? If you, if you, if you make up to much noise and you are seen as a troublemaker, and it is the same thing, you know, you get stereotyped. So if I make up too much noise, where am I gonna get for myself?

The risks of taking legal action tended to outweigh the potential benefits in all three countries where unions had gone to court against racist discrimination. This was most brutally shown in the eight-year long case in the Brussels STIB transport company. Finally, in 2004, the senior security manager accused by one union and six workers of direct and indirect racism was finally acquitted.[162] In this case, while the workers were given positive support by one union, the manager was given support by another. Despite the positive action taken, the overall position of the trade unions was revealed as highly ambiguous. The following chapter seeks to explain the sources of trade union ambiguity over struggling against workplace racism.

3.3. Explaining trade union ambiguities

'I think the union's hands are tied to a certain degree. I mean they can bring it to the management attention… You know, I don't actually know what the union is doing to address the problem. To be honest I have no idea. It certainly is an issue. It is a problem. And it really need to be addressed. Sooner rather than later…Well, to be honest, I am not quite sure what is the role of the union' (Black male London TGWU bus worker)

Why are trade union workplace level responses to racism so ambiguous? The common experiences from such a variety of countries force us to go beyond nationally-bound explanations. Answering this question fully will allow us to move beyond moral indignation to proposing specific policies to remove the ambiguities. To do so we must revisit debates concerning the nature of trade unions, trade union purpose and trade union activism. Here we first address the argument about the dual purpose of trade unions; then we examine the dual sources of legitimacy of the trade union activist. Finally we consider the intersection of these dualisms in the presence of racism and xenophobia.

[162] Jefferys (2004), *UK Transport sector report*, WLRI.

Trade unions cannot be pigeon-holed into simple categories. The reality about the formation of the consciousness of groups, as well as of individuals, is that it is both a process and a generally 'mixed' reality. While some of the most ideologically distinct may occupy one or other polar positions, in most cases trade union cultures and activists' individual psyches have elements of all mixed up together. Which ideological and political element dominates, and how it comes to the fore, is shaped by the interaction of a whole host of historical, political, economic and social factors, and by individual actors' responses to these.

3.3.1. Market and societal purposes of unions

In our first public report (Jefferys, 2004) we referred to a core contradictory dichotomy within 'trade' unions: classically they represent the union of workers of one trade (industry, occupation or company) against 'others'. Usually the different groups of workers merge at local, regional or national level to form a union of workers of many or all trades. The 'others' against whom workers believe it necessary to pay their subscriptions or to show their support are external to the unionising workers. Most commonly the 'others' are the workers' immediate employer or employers, but very frequently they are also the government. Commonly in the past, but not only in the past as Podkrepa's 2004 denunciation of the Roma shows, the 'others' are 'external' minorities who are considered a threat to the wages, or working or living conditions of the majority. Arguments about the wage differential between groups of workers, or who exactly does which job, or about work being relocated overseas are rooted in this core trade union purpose: to raise the price of labour power, to protect and advance the interests of the 'insiders', those who are 'included' against the interests of 'others', those who are excluded from the 'us' or 'we' of trade union identity. In a very general way this purpose or set of trade union values could be described as 'market' union ideology (Hyman 1996; Hyman 2001).[163]

Yet trade union purpose has never been exclusively about the defence of the 'insider'. Trade unionism is both an organisational relationship between workers and a dynamic collective process involving mobilisation and the creation of unity between workers and the restructuring of workplace relations. This process involves both the defence and improvement of working conditions and the posing of alternatives to the arbitrariness of a capitalism or a political system where workers' labour power is reduced to a market

[163] Hyman (http://www.antenna.nl/~waterman/hyman.html) describes this model *as the self-conscious pursuit of economism. Its central theme is the priority of collective bargaining. Trade unions are primarily organisations for the representation of occupational interests, a function which is subverted if their operation is subordinated to broader sociopolitical projects: hence they must eschew political entanglements.*

commodity to be bought and sold.[164] Divisions have always existed within and between different groups of workers, and one of the functions of wider and generalisable objectives is precisely to be able to overcome those divisions.

Trade unions emerged from within the struggle for *political* democracy demanding not just that workers be given the right to vote but they should also have the right to *social* democracy. The forms of social democracy demanded in different countries and at different times vary. They range from seeking social integration, where social justice could be achieved if trade unions and workers were only allowed to play a full role within capitalist society, to struggling for working class power.[165] Originally coming from the same traditions they can be described as an emphasis on 'societal unionism'.[166] Arguably, it has been the part that trade unions have played in mobilising for 'societal' gains that have made the largest contributions to advancing the working conditions of Europe's working peoples.

In Western Europe, Hyman has described how the different strands in market and societal unionism wove themselves together into a whole he describes as 'political economism' that is now breaking up into its component parts again as globalisation drives employers and governments to increasingly prioritise competitive advantage over either the economic or political needs of their workers.[167] Trade unionism is thus in part a process that is constantly renewing itself in the search for alternatives to the subordination of workers to capitalism. This means that it attracts many of those who see those alternatives in terms of worker internationalism and opposition to discrimination of all sorts.[168] They may never be a numerical majority of union members, but these activists ensure that a significant part of trade union ideology is organically concerned

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[164] Contrepois and Jefferys (2005: 550).

[165] These are the other two of Hyman's (1996; 2001) three contrasting ideological models within European trade unionism. Hyman later summarised these like this: *Despite substantial differences of emphasis - and often bitter internecine conflicts - the common theme of all variants of this model was a priority for militancy and sociopolitical mobilisation. The mission of trade unionism, in this configuration, was to advance class interests. A second model evolved in part as a rival to the first, in part as a mutation from it: trade unionism as a vehicle for social integration. Its first systematic articulation was at the end of the nineteenth century as an expression of social catholicism, which counterposed a functionalist and organicist vision of society to the socialist conception of class antagonism. On this ideological basis emerged in many countries a division between socialist-oriented unions and anti-socialist confessional rivals…Despite their organisational confrontation… social-democratic and christian-democratic unionisms came to share significant common ideological attributes: a priority for the gradual improvement in social welfare and social cohesion, and hence a self-image as representatives of social interests.*

[166] Among those who have identified one of the purposes of trade unions as challenging existing society include Marx ('schools of war'), the Webbs ('legal enactment'), Luxemburg ('the mass strike'), Perlman ('revolutionary unionism')

[167] Hyman (*op cit*).

[168] Penninx and Roosblad (2000: 206) describe this as an ideological 'internationalist orientation'.

with the 'workers of the world', and identifies with the 'outsider' and the 'excluded', all those who experience oppression and exploitation.

There is thus a strong ideological dimension turning trade unionism towards supporting the interests of the low paid, the migrants, and the excluded generally. But trade unionism is also an organisational relationship. And here too there is a strong internal imperative pressing unions to look beyond the narrow ranks of 'insiders'. This organisational imperative works at two levels. First at the pragmatic level of recognising that, if the employers cannot be prevented from bringing in 'new' labour, the only way of ensuring that social dumping does not take place is to organise the migrants and raise their terms and conditions. Market logic suggests unions can only effectively respond to the ethnicisation of whole swathes of the labour market by organising them. Second, through an understanding of the significance of the mobilisation process in defending terms and conditions and in improving on them: if 'outsiders' and 'insiders' are divided successful mobilisation, whether in developing common demands or in acting on them, becomes much more difficult.

Faced with this dichotomy between a market unionism role which is exclusionary and protectionist and a societal unionism role that is inclusionary and international, it is not surprising that trade unions at the national level have given out ambiguous messages. However, as we have documented above, and as we show in our overview of trade union internal and externally-directed policies in VII 6.5,[169] there has been a significant general shift at national level towards more inclusionary policies in the 1990s and 2000s. While there are still a few silences, most national level confederations and unions within Europe now formally oppose *direct* racism. While few unions are yet putting anti-racism onto the bargaining agenda with employers or are expelling members for a directly racist comment or for their membership of an overtly racist party, the list of positive action being taken is getting longer.

Where the silences shown by our research are of greatest concern is in relation to the omnipresent indirect 'background noise' racism. This indirect racism, whose presence leads to disadvantage being experienced in recruitment, job allocation, supervisory pressure, training and promotion, occurs at workplace level, where other dichotomies come in alongside the core one about union purpose described above.

[169] From Jefferys, *State of the Art*, (2004: 43).

3.3.2. Delegate and representative union legitimacy

Within the workplace there is another source of ambiguity. This concerns the legitimacy of the union activist or worker representative, the person to whom others turn when they want to know 'what the union says'.

The dichotomy here relates to basic issues of the nature of democracy that go beyond the technicalities of how a person is or came to be a 'union representative'. The person who is viewed as 'a' or 'the' union spokesperson in a particular workplace may have been elected or re-elected by their peers. They may have been elected on a three-way split vote that allowed them to win with minority support.[170] They may have been elected several years earlier by a workforce that has now changed significantly but have not been challenged to stand for election again. They may have been appointed to the position of representative by a local union branch, or even by an area union committee or full-time official.[171] Equally, they may have no 'official' representative position that is recognised in law or by the management, but still be the person to whom their colleagues turn.

Whether or not there is an association between the election of union officials and 'true' democracy has long been a debate in the trade union and socialist movements. But this is not the issue we wish to raise now.

What is important here is the distinction made by Batstone *et al* (1977)[172] between those activists who see themselves as 'representatives' and those who see themselves as 'delegates'. 'Representative democracy' in political studies means the election of a representative as the 'best' or 'most popular' candidate for a post, and who is subsequently supposed to follow their own consciences in 'representing' their constituents. 'Delegate democracy' functions differently. It involves the selection of a person who is expressly expected to carry out the wishes of the electors. Batstone *et al*'s analysis suggested that 'representative leaders' identified more closely with union principles and that they were often more effective in delivery, having stronger bargaining relationships with management. Delegates or 'populists', in contrast, were less fully

[170] This was why one white shop steward in a predominantly black London bus garage where we conducted our interviews was still in office at the time of our interviews. He won against two black candidates.
[171] In much of the French public sector, for example, there is no system for a bottom-up election of local workplace representatives so these are all nominated by external union structures.
[172] This year-long observation of shop steward organisation in a UK factory distinguishes between 'leaders' (who play a proactive representative role) and 'populists' (whose delegate role allowed them to make more use of industrial action). Batstone, E, Boraston, I and Frenkel, S (1977), *Shop Stewards in Action: the Organisation of Work Place Conflict and Accommodation*, Oxford:Basil Blackwell.

committed to union principles but were also more likely to encourage and channel protest.

The higher up the trade union hierarchy and the further from continuous contact with the workers, the more acceptance there is of representative democracy. In one UK trade union annual conference out of 54 voting representatives, 30 had the absolute right to vote according to their consciences and of the 24 who had been mandated to vote in certain ways 20 felt they could listen to the debate and change their minds. Only four saw themselves as purely 'delegates' morally obligated to cast their votes as they had been instructed.[173] At the workplace level the contest between the two approaches to democracy is much more vigorous. The dichotomy in the workplace is between the legitimacy attached to a trade union activist being seen as a leader of a group, bringing their own consciences or the values of the wider trade union into their local representative role, and the legitimacy carried by an activist who largely acts as a mouthpiece for the views of their peers.

In the workplace, as in much of life, there is no completely clear separation between these two forms of legitimacy. The 'representative' will, at times, directly promote the views of their fellow workers – at least when they coincide with their own but possibly on other occasions too. The 'delegate' will, at times, seek to have their personal views adopted by their fellow workers in order to air them more widely. Nonetheless, the counter-position of these two sources of trade union legitimacy provides a helpful analytical tool to apply to our research question as to why national level trade union anti-racist policies either become much more ambiguous or are simply not applied at workplace level.

3.3.3. Union purpose and workplace legitimacy

Bringing together these two analyses, of the dualities behind both union purpose and workplace union activist legitimacy, allows us to understand much more clearly the outcomes we described above in terms of trade union workplace responses to racism. It is neither right nor helpful to treat the widespread cross-country union toleration we have found of some direct and much more indirect racism as being the result of the racism and xenophobia of those we interviewed.

The different ways in which we have seen racism in the workplace mediated by ethnic majority local activists should instead be understood as arising from the intersection of

[173] This was the 2002 Unifi (bank workers' union) conference. See Jefferys, S. (2003), *UNIFI Conferences 1999-2002: Activist issues*, WLRI: London.

their different understandings of union purpose and their own democratic role. While there is undoubtedly constant movement between the different positions described above – trade unionism is, as we argue, a dynamic process not a fixed end-state - we can distinguish four fairly clear behavioural typologies:

- There are union activists who see themselves as possessing only delegate legitimacy and who stick close to market issues such as wages, working hours, etc and never voluntarily raise any broader 'political' issues in the workplace. They may deny racism is a problem.

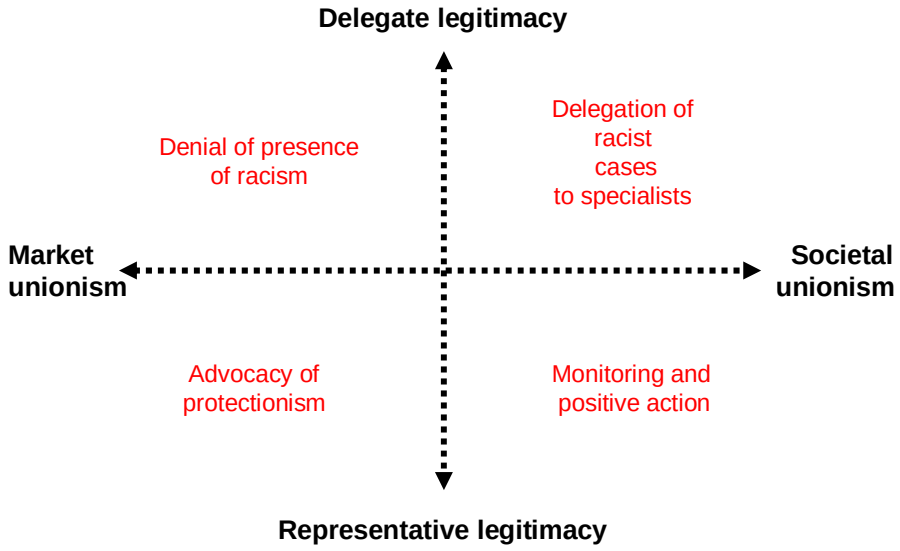
- Other activists also see themselves as having delegate legitimacy but they are also ready to raise broader societal unionism issues if their fellow workers press them to do so. This happens very rarely over racist discrimination since even if some members are calling for action, these activists are afraid of the consequences for their legitimacy within the whole group. However, they are not totally in denial and could well delegate the problem to a 'specialist', often a black activist, to deal with.

- Then there are union activists who see themselves as having been nominated or elected to represent their fellow workers and who are ready at times to express minority views within the group. They are acting in this way as 'leaders', but because their view of trade union purpose extends only to more limited 'market' unionism issues, they are not only not prepared to challenge discrimination but they will also articulate a perspective based purely on the short-term protection of the interests of the 'insiders'.

- Finally, there are union activists who both see themselves as having representative legitimacy and who share a view of the dual role of trade unions, as defending and improving local conditions, but also, as a condition for the former, as struggling for social justice everywhere. These local 'leaders' are much closer to national anti-racist policies. They may give support to black self-organisation within the workplace and union if that is the national union position, or often advocate positive discrimination and monitoring to ensure minority workers are fully involved in the local union.

These four distinguishable and recognisable positions were present in all five countries, despite the differences in traditions both in terms of union purpose and union legitimacy. Figure 6 shows how the range of union responses to workplace racism we described in 3.2. can be mapped onto these positions.

Figure 6. Union purposes and source of activist workplace legitimacy



While they can be represented graphically, it is important to stress again that these positions are theoretical constructions. In reality most activists and most workplaces are a mix of all four. This is because trade unionism is a process that is in movement, reacting continuously to changes introduced by management as well as to the wider national political socio-economic and regulatory environment.

The understanding that trade unionism is a process rather than a finished state helps us understand why the organisational-ideological patterns can be different where black workers make up a significant proportion of the workplace labour force. There are risks attached to any worker who becomes an activist. As one French woman retail sector activist explained:[174]

> *In the union, you know, you really have to get stuck in. There's a lot of work to do, and you get hit by a lot of negatives. So you always have to struggle… even in relation to the people you represent, often.*

Yet the additional background racism that confronts minority workers raises the concern about the added personal 'negatives' involved when they become trade union activists. These negatives – to their job, to their promotion prospects, to their personal credibility -

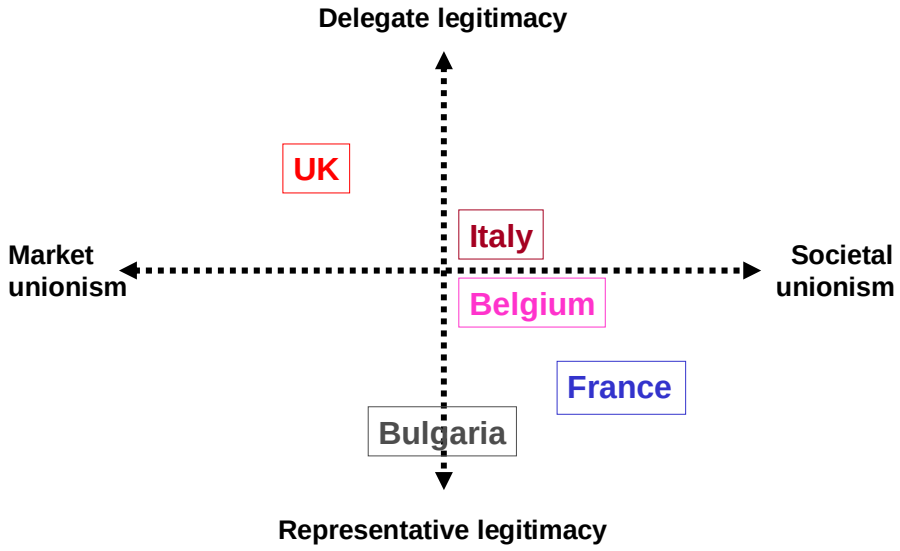
[174] De Rudder et al (2005: 60). Interview with Mme Patrat.

can appear greater in a 'representative' than in a 'delegate' role. Thus particularly over discrimination issues it appears safer and politically more acceptable to justify putting them on the agenda within a 'delegate democracy' logic. The minority activist can then present these 'delicate' issues as reflecting the views of their (minority) constituents rather than as deriving from their own individual leadership. In this context, then, the greater protection afforded to the 'delegate' through their closer identification with their fellow workers may also lead to their pressing these issues more vigorously.

The same logic that tends to lead minority activists to seek legitimacy from 'delegate democracy' can also encourage both formal and informal minority self-organisation. Often in a minority within the firm, if not also within the immediate workplace, minority activists can use the process of consultation and discussion with their peers to construct an extended form of delegate legitimacy. This is particularly critical in identifying the negative impacts of widespread indirect racism, where the legitimacy needed to challenge it with management or within the trade union is often lacking. This wider form of 'delegate democracy' involving the creation of a reference group of those who experience racist disadvantage can articulate the issue and pose alternatives for the participants to organise around.

Viewing trade unionism as a process combining different organisational and political-economic perspectives and values also helps us understand why such minority self-organisation should be tolerated in the UK, but be seen as impermissible separatism in France. In the UK there is a very long tradition of the toleration of union shop floor delegates by the employers – shop stewards for manual workers and workplace representatives for clerical and professional workers. At the same moment that shop stewards appeared on the scene, the trade unions created the Labour Party to focus on political, societal issues, effectively leaving the unions to concentrate on the more immediate labour market issues. In France, by contrast, the bitter resistance of the employers to the trade unions organising within 'their' firms, displaced the unions outside the workplace and into a largely external representative role. The revolutionary syndicalism that this encouraged led over time to a strong focus on challenging and changing the state and society as a whole. If we map these two positions on the same template of organisational and ideological values as we used above, we can see in Figure 7 that France and the UK have quite different centres of gravity.

Figure 7. National clusters of organisational and ideological values



For France the strength of the representative political tradition in a context where the unions are addressing the needs of *all* workers in society, tends to create a logic that sees minority workers' self-organisation as a breakdown in the workers' unity that is essential for mass mobilisation. In Britain's much more fragmented, market-focused trade unionism, the reflection of the different interests of local groups of workers has always had a higher priority.

The centres of gravity on this graphic schema for Italy and Belgium are somewhere between those mapped for France and the UK. In Italy and Belgium there are mixed traditions of union delegation and representation, and in both the movements have reflected political and religious[175] differences that have given them a sharper societal political unionism focus than in the UK. In Bulgaria, the transition from a state-sponsored trade unionism to a free market unionism has left a movement without a tradition of bottom-up workplace-based unionism. Its ideological focus is less clearly defined and its legitimacy still largely comes from the top. On the one hand Bulgaria's confederations are propped up by the new social dialogue institutions being put in place as Bulgaria moves towards EU accession and that propel them towards taking political positions; and on the

[175] And in Belgium, linguistic differences too.

other they are driven by a concern to avoid political controversy that might accelerate membership loss.

This outline of the national differences between the centres of gravity of the trade unionism in these five countries does not imply that the positions in respect of responses to racism are systematically fixed in advance. Individual trade unions and individual activists work within a national and local union culture. But because trade unionism everywhere embraces the full range of positions nothing is absolutely fixed in advance. As new cases of discrimination come up, as the law changes, as the trade union's national position on indirect racism becomes clearer, as minority workers themselves start to organise for greater equality, then individuals and local union organisations will also move. How these things can happen is the subject of the next Chapter.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Our theoretical conclusion that trade union activists balance inclusive and exclusive goals within notions of delegate or representative democracy is central for our recommendations. It points to the significance of appropriate policy choices at all levels. This chapter first comments on how the research has advanced our understanding of the ways in which trade unions mediate racism in the workplace. It next addresses the most important research results, and highlights their policy implications for the EU, national governments, employers and trade unions. It concludes with a discussion of the recommendations' wider European significance, showing the importance of European-wide research and identifying how future European research can continue to assist policy-makers in this area.

1 Advance of understanding

This research project has significantly advanced our understanding of the ways in which workplace racism presents itself, and of how the trade unions have responded against some but not all of its forms.

Unions are complex democratic and voluntary organisations. Before this research project there had been no recent examination of how Europe's trade unions confronted racism in the workplace. A very limited number of excellent studies had examined the presence and role of racism in individual workplaces in a particular country.[176] John Wrench's insightful work had looked at union policies in one or pairs of countries.[177] Other pioneering studies, even more limited in number, had investigated anti-racist trade union policy at the international level.[178] But there had been no systematic study of the experience of racism across European workplaces, nor any attempt to assess the impact on the ground of the 2000 Equal Treatment Directive. Nor had there been any recent attempt to explain why 'majority' trade unionists instigated or tolerated discrimination against minority workers.[179] Finally, prior to this research there had also been no attempt theorise the workplace experiences of national minorities within Eastern and Central Europe and relate them to the kinds of discrimination taking place against older migrant minorities in Western Europe.

[176] See Wrench and Virdee (1996), Kyriakides and Virdee (2003).
[177] See Wrench (1986) and (2003).
[178] See Martens (1999) and Penninx and Roosblad (2000).
[179] S. Virdee (2000: 545).

Earlier attempts at understanding the ways trade unions mediate racism at the workplace had either used selective illustrations to 'prove' that 'white' trade unions were inevitably racist,[180] or had presented a largely unproblematic historical account of the 'forward march' of inter-racial union tolerance.[181] Penninx and Roosblad's approach was to reject any attempt to explain observed behaviours, but instead to suggest that they were entirely voluntarist: 'trade unions' – treated as if they were unitary organisations rather than the moving outcomes of a process - faced three (only three?) 'dilemmas':[182]

> *The first relates to immigration itself: should trade unions cooperate with employers and authorities in the employment of foreign workers or should they resist? The second dilemma emerges as soon as foreign workers appear: should trade unions include them fully in their ranks or exclude them as a special category? If trade unions in principle follow a line of inclusion, they are confronted with a third dilemma: should they advocate and implement special measures for these immigrants or should they insist on general, equal treatment for all workers?*

Their conclusions were that while the national trade union movements they examined have parallel problems, the 'solutions' they had found to these 'dilemmas' were far from converging. Essentially, their methodological approach was to look from the top. They didn't examine the view from the bottom – essential when considering organisations as democratic and participative as trade unions.

Our approach, through focusing on the experience of day-to-day direct and indirect racism at the workplace level – in other words on what actually takes place rather than on the higher level policy formulations – gives a different vantage point and draws different conclusions. Rooting ourselves in the common responses to racism that occurred in different workplaces across our five very different countries, we believe we have been able to cut through national path-dependencies to derive some valuable comparative understandings.

The four notable advances of this research were thus:

1) We went beyond an institutional focus on trade union policy and a culturalist focus on the victim, to investigate in detail what actually happened to the

[180] See Gilroy (1987).
[181] See Martens (1999).
[182] Penninx and Roosblad (2000: 4).

experience of racism in the workplace as a result of trade union intervention or non-intervention.

2) We brought together and applied theoretical frameworks derived from industrial relations with understandings from race and ethnic relations theory to explicate trade union ambiguities across a range of different European societies.

3) Our grounded theoretical approach led to an analysis and conclusions that are applicable across the European Union, despite national historical and political differences.

4) We have drawn up European-wide recommendations to trade unions and policy-makers pointing to an enhanced role for the trade unions in combating racism and xenophobia.

2. Research findings

This research was the biggest sustained project that has covered the role of trade unions in dealing with policy outcomes within a hugely difficult changing European labour market. It coincided with a sharpening of racial tensions across Europe, and took place against the background of a much longer-term decline in trade union influence (everywhere) and working membership (in four of the five countries). The trade unions, Europe's largest voluntary citizen organisations, have been losing influence in a period of accelerating globalisation and improvement in the fortunes of far right political parties.

Our examination and discussion of the existing literature and approaches led us to see racism as a social relationship like those of class and gender that embodies the power relations of both domination and subordination. What is specific about it is that it simultaneously constructs an 'inferior other'.[183](Rudder, Poiret et al. 2000) It was socially constructed in the modern era in the interaction of capitalist development with colonialism and nationalism. Racism is thus a form of exploitation that embraces both material as well as symbolic domination; it is also an ideological construction derived from pseudo-science that stress biological, social and cultural difference.[184]

Racism appears not only within the political and social system (expressed in laws, or in institutions and power relations), but also in individual practice and in ways of understanding or describing the world that justify or tolerate racial inequalities. Here we

[183] Veronique de Rudder, Christian Poiret et François Vourc'h, L'inégalité raciste. L'universalité républicaine à l'épreuve, Presses Universitaires de France (collection "Pratiques théoriques"), 2000.
[184] See Jefferys (2004), *State of the Art* report.

make a distinction between 'direct' and 'indirect' racism. The former represents consciously discriminatory behaviour that participates in the construction of the 'inferior other'. It can be 'jokes' told at minority workers' expense; racist terms used in 'banter' between workers; or deliberate discriminations that deny minority workers access to training or jobs because of the perpetuators' stereotyping assumptions. We found examples of all of these in our fieldwork. More contentious is the term 'indirect' racism. Indeed, it is still being debated among the project researchers. I use it to mean both what is elsewhere termed 'institutional racism'[185] within specific organisations (like the police force, or a trade union), but also 'structural racism'. This occurs when labour market or social, economic or political change leads to the consequence that individuals face discrimination which is not linked to their personal characteristics but to their ethnicity. Unlike 'direct' racism, 'indirect' racism does not necessarily occur deliberately, although it can and does do quite often.

Xenophobia is defined as a prejudice against and dislike of foreigners. The difference between racism and xenophobia, is that while the former implies power relations – the economic, social or political ability to subordinate and harm the constructed 'other' – the latter may be kept hidden. But as soon as the intentional or unintentional consequences of such a prejudice are to harm the 'other', then it becomes racism and racial discrimination.

Our focus was on how the trade unions mediate racism and xenophobia in the workplace, and how they can better combat them. This is now widely recognised to be a critical question for trade unions, since one of their major historic goals is precisely to collectively challenge the injustice that exists in societies in which work is organised around subordination and domination, and the numbers of minority workers are rising, particularly within the areas of the labour market that have traditionally been relatively highly-unionised.

Whereas some authors suggest it is nearly impossible to detect patterns in union responses to migrant workers between different countries, our reading of the national briefings and the wider literature believes it is. Is this perhaps because of our selection of these five countries? This is unlikely. Instead we believe we can demonstrate complex but nonetheless distinct patterns in international union responses. This is because, learning from Penninx and Roosblad (2000), Wrench (2003(Wrench 2003)) and the EUMC (Jandle *et al*, 2003), we have tried to avoid simply contrasting national pictures and

[185] See the Macpherson inquiry definition given above, Section 2.2, and Jefferys (2004) *Comparative Sector A report.*

instead have focused on a genuinely thematic comparative approach. It is, of course, possible that in so doing we are reading too much into the national briefings, comparative reports and original interview transcripts on which this report is based. But the broad approach has been discussed with trade unionists and minority workers in all the partner countries, and while there are clear differences in terms of what to do next, the major findings appear relevant in all five countries.

Our most significant findings are:

1) The 2000 Equal Treatment (Race Equality) Directive was eventually transposed in all five countries studied but lacking any added emphasis on 'positive action' it remains largely unknown and is barely ever referred to.

2) Since 2000, world events and the increased globalisation of labour markets have encouraged a racist and xenophobic political discourse that is often directed against and aims to criminalise 'illegal' immigrants but which in reality attains all minorities.

3) If it had any effect the Directive may have helped persuade unions at national and international level to embrace more formal positions opposing racism.

4) The national trade unions studied now commonly participate in anti-racist events, campaigns and propaganda.

5) There remains a tension within the trade unions between their *exclusive* labour market function and their *inclusive* societal (and, arguably, survival) goals.

6) The national unions rarely define racism as including indirect racism and in general do not critically examine their own employment or promotion practices.

7) Direct racism (frequently from customers) and, to an even greater degree, indirect racism remain present across Europe – even within those workplaces where the trade unions have a presence.

8) Minority activists still encounter racism – direct and indirect – within the trade union movement itself.

9) Most white trade union officials and activists prefer to deny the presence or significance of both trade union and workplace racism.

10) There is now a significant group of ethnic majority activists who do recognise the importance of combating indirect racism and who work with minority activists.

11) The degree of involvement and participation of minority workers within the union is a key element in shaping awareness of racism and strategies for combating it.

12) The nature of democratic legitimacy claimed by the activists, whether delegate or representative, as well as the extent to which the union goals are market or societally-focused, explain much of the variety found in local union responses to racism.

3. Policy implications[186]

What are the policy implications of these findings? The EU has acknowledged the uneven transposition of the June 2000 Equal Treatment (ethnic and racial origin) Directive into the legal framework of member states and the patchy implementation of the anti-discriminatory strategy underlying the legislation. The report on its implementation originally due in 2005 is now scheduled for 2006. It is, however, still intended to chart the progress of the Directive and to ensure that good practice, where it exist, is widely disseminated. In addition, the year 2007 has been designated as the 'European Year of Equalities for All'. The stated EU purpose for this initiative is based on the recognition that:

In spite of the progress achieved so far at European level in eliminating discrimination and promoting equal opportunities, much remains to be done. All legislation, regardless of the care taken in its drafting, will go unheeded if the political will to translate it into long-term action is lacking and if it does not benefit from widespread public support.[187]

This determination clearly resonates with the objectives and findings of this three-year research programme and gives our recommendations on combating racism and discrimination at the workplace added force.

We direct our specific recommendations to four overlapping but distinct audiences. First, to the EU policy level, then to the level of national governments, then to employers and finally to the trade unions. This hierarchy of levels does not reflect our research focus. As is clear from the above report, we studied trade unions and their role in mediating

[186] The first draft of this section of the report was drafted by Mary Davis.
[187] EU, *Activities of the European Union* - Summaries of Legislation.

workplace racism. But trade unions are overwhelmingly reactive organisations. However much influence they have, since their very existence is structured by capital and by the employers, it is only at rare moments that they actually initiate social change. Thus even though the limits of trade union action and responsibility have not been researched in this project, and even though our recommendations to trade unions are much more detailed than those directed at the other audiences,[188] it is nonetheless important to recall that the other audiences have their major responsibilities too.

3.1. Recommendations to the EU

Our finding that the 2000 Directive is making little difference on the ground to the presence of workplace racism in the five countries researched is disappointing. It is also disappointing that in the countries studied the transpositions that took place largely ignored both the promotion of social dialogue in relation to combating racism and the possibility of exercising positive action. Nonetheless transposition did occur and EU trade unions are now clearly signed up to formal equality policies. Given the generally higher levels of public expressions of racism and xenophobia, it might have been that without the Directive our findings would have been even more negative.

Two policy issues arise from this finding:

- How to increase awareness of the Directive and the nationally-transposed measures that flowed from it?
- How to make more central the underused social dialogue and positive action clauses in any review of the Directive?

Our suggestions are as follows:

1) As the most appropriate EU-level organisation to deal with this issue, the **EUMC** could be given the responsibility for and funded to:

   -Develop a **European Discrimination Index** (on lines similar to the OECD (2006) gender, institutions and development database) to better enable national level monitoring of segmentation within the labour force.

   -Produce **biennial studies** in alternate years on EU **employer and trade union anti-discrimination practices** – highlighting both good and bad practices (perhaps commissioned jointly with the Dublin Foundation).

[188] See the comparative reports and the national 'Working against Racism in the Unions' guides.

-It is clear that one of the best ways of doing something about racism is first to recognise it and such an Index and studies, although difficult to achieve, would, over time raise awareness and become significant equality indicators.

2) The EU **Commission** could take a number of important steps:

- It could ensure that the review originally scheduled for 2005 is not delayed beyond 2006. The 2000 Directive must be properly monitored and the Commission should consider revising it in the light of the findings of its first review.

- It could ensure that the Directive's clear critique of indirect discrimination is made the centre piece of the '2007 Year of Equal Opportunities for All'. This involves a massive effort to sensitise national media and politicians to the dangers of toleration of indirect disadvantage based on ethnic or cultural grounds.

- As part of the 2007 events the EU could conduct an exhaustive equality audit itself, with the dual aim both of identifying areas of indirect discrimination and of demonstrating best practice to other organisations.

- The Commission could initiate other specific actions to encourage Member States to do more to promote equality through taking **positive action** to overcome indirect racism – through commissioning research and reports – and through devising appropriate forms of positive action within the EU administration itself.

- Most importantly from the perspective of this research, we believe the Commission needs to specifically encourage social dialogue processes that challenge indirect racism at work:

i) The Commission could organise a European-level Social Dialogue on the issue of equality training.

ii) The Commission could require all firms in receipt of EU funding to undergo equality audits to confirm they are not practising indirect racism themselves and to meet with their trade unions at European and national levels to develop positive action to redress discrimination.

3.2. Recommendations to National Governments

The evidence of weak, incomplete and even ambiguous transpositions of the 2000 Directive and of 'mixed messages' described by the EUMC was confirmed by our five national research teams. They suggest the presence of a major problem that needs addressing. This, essentially, is the national governments' lack of willingness to stand up and confront racism, and particularly indirect racism, within their national space. Many of the governments concerned fear that positive action in this area will not be a vote winner.

However, their lack of firm action during the first five years of this century has not stopped the growing racist background noise that exists across Europe. Doing nothing (or little) does not provide a winning strategy. Indeed it appears virtually to do the reverse, allowing the anti-immigrant, anti-migrant, and generally anti-other discourse to invade large areas of the national polity. The responsibility on the shoulders of these governments is therefore considerable.

The issue is not about national governments declaring themselves again to be anti-racist. The issue is about how to implement appropriate positive action to remove the racially-constructed disadvantage that many non-whites face.

Our basic recommendations to national governments are as follows:

- They should conduct reviews of their own transposition of the 2000 Equal Treatment Directive and take action to redress those areas of weakness identified.
- If they do not already do so they should undertake equality audits of their own workforces to identify any areas of weakness and to demonstrate best practice to other national organisations.
- They should develop strategies aimed at raising awareness of indirect discrimination and of the equality legislation among the national social partners.
- They should specifically open a social dialogue on what forms of positive action to end indirect disadvantage could be negotiated or legislated in respect of the work environment.

3.3. Recommendations to employers

Employers at a national and local level have a major role to play in preventing unlawful discrimination and in promoting equality and good race relations. They should ensure that they introduce measures in partnership and dialogue with the trade unions so that these have a clear commitment from both management and unions. In particular, employers need to ensure they take into account race equality aspects in formal and informal agreements on rules, procedures and custom practice within the workplace. The equality required has to go far beyond the token presence of 'diversity' – with a handful of people recruited from the 'visible' minorities – to genuine equality, where better, promoted or senior posts are systematically occupied by minorities in proportion to their presence in the workforce and in society.

To achieve this equality goal, we recommend that **employers** open social dialogue with the trade unions to ensure:

- The introduction of an annual equality audit or survey making it possible to see the progress (or otherwise) of minority workers (or overseas nationals and of the descendants of overseas nationals) in terms of their proportion within the organisation, their distribution by grade and occupation, and their average salaries and hours of work. The information contained in these audits or surveys should be discussed at least once a year and recommendations drawn up as to how to implement greater equality.

- The establishment of an organisational charter or code of best anti-discrimination practice. While this could be broad enough to embrace other discriminations being combated by relevant European Union directives (such as age, gender, religion and sexuality), it should nonetheless be specific enough so as to directly exclude all racist behaviours and should include 'ethnically anonymous' recruitment procedures, as well as reinforcing policies against racial harassment and abuse. It should also ensure equal access to 'good jobs', training and promotions.

- Policies are put in place to offer real equality to migrant workers. These could include: support for quick access to banking facilities and other social advantages normally available to national citizens; rights to take extended leave so that they can be with their families for limited periods in the same way as national citizens

can readily access their families;[189] rights to information in their own languages; negotiating on language or other training and for the recognition of foreign qualifications.[190]

- A strong commitment to prosecuting members of the public who racially abuse their staff.

- Company managers and supervisors are properly trained in the best anti-racist practices and that it is understood that any form of racist behaviour or its toleration is a dismissible offence.

Our findings show that the force of the law and the fear of disciplinary action do limit the racist noise inside workplaces. If employers and management are absolutely clear as to what constitutes proper and improper behaviour in intra-ethnic relations, then those who tolerate direct and indirect racism will become quieter, giving all workers, minority and majority, a much healthier working environment.

3.4. Recommendations to trade unions

The analytical contribution of this research, identifying tensions between the exclusive (market) and inclusive (societal) purposes of trade unionism as well as between its delegate and representative organisational legitimacy, provides a real opportunity for trade unions to rethink the way they tackle racism. We can now identify more clearly the areas to which trade unionists should direct special attention to help forge a real anti-racist trade unionism to tackle indirect racism and increase minority worker participation.

3.4.1. On trade union purpose

The first area is that of trade union purpose. The inclusive and societal purposes of trade unionism have to be given a higher priority. This societal purpose is something that is already present, but it needs re-iterating at all levels of the trade union movement. In France, as the political strike movements of 1995, 2003 and 2006 remind us, political engagement is not a particular problem. The trade union confederations there remain largely at the societal end of the spectrum. Yet our research found some lack of carry-

[189] In the UK, USDAW has negotiated agreements enabling employees to bank 10 days a year for up to 2 years (20 days in total) to take extended leave to visit relatives living outside the UK once every five years (Grattan), or to carry over 2 weeks' holiday from the previous year and use 3 weeks' leave from the current entitlement to build a total of 13 weeks' leave, once every five years (Midlands Co-operative Society), or be able to take up to four weeks' unpaid extended leave (Morrison's). See TUC (2005).

[190] The TUC's Equality Audit (2005: 33) reports six unions having secured agreements on language training and five on the recognition of foreign qualifications.

through there to local levels. In one union, for example, the only evidence recalled of their union's anti-racist position was a poster showing white and black workers together in the regional union office! In Bulgaria, too, the lease of life afforded the unions by the social dialogue emphasis in the run up to EU entry, means that they are often more at ease 'talking politics' than in more 'market' focused activities. But this 'talk' is almost exclusively at the top of the trade unions, from a relatively small number of union leaders, and it is a discourse which, as we have seen, can vary from inclusiveness to exclusiveness. In Belgium and Italy where a sense of trade union societal purpose is still present, it will also be necessary to strengthen that focus and also to ensure it permeates all levels of the organisation, not just the top. In the UK, where there is a formal but often contentless recognition of trade unionism's inclusive societal purpose, the understanding that trade union purpose includes emphasising social justice and inclusiveness at a national and local level needs to be addressed much more actively.

The reassertion of the societal purposes of trade unionism plays a necessary part in adding legitimacy to a specific emphasis on anti-racism. But this is not just calling for more abstract high level political rhetoric. This reassertion of the importance of a breadth of purpose has to be argued for at all levels of the trade union. It means unions emphasising their political responsibilities and rebuilding, where it has gone into decline, the view of trade unions as collective expressions of workers' voices both within *and* outside the workplace. This is a totally appropriate response to a world where globalisation is rendering labour everywhere more insecure.

How can the agendas of local level trade unionists and trade union officials be broadened? Clearly nothing can be done overnight, but the basic tools involve much more emphasis on societal goals within trade union training. There needs to be systematic training and many more trade union propaganda campaigns arguing and debating societal change to equip the activists who form the trade union process with the arguments and tools to deepen or reinforce the hold of this broader reach trade unionism.

3.4.2. On fighting racism

Within this broader focus, much more needs doing specifically in the area of anti-racism. We have drafted 'Working against racism' trade union guides in each of the five partner countries. The purpose of such advice (produced in discussions with representatives from national trade union confederations) is to provide a tool (based on suggestions made by interviewees) to help trade unionists to consider how best to effect change so that unions are better able to:

1) Understand, develop, and implement the principles, policies and strategies necessary to combat direct and indirect racism.

2) Reflect the concerns of minority workers.

and

3) Improve participation amongst minority workers at all levels of the union.

Specifically we recommend unions:

- Organise a national review of their assimilation/integratiom strategies to ensure that these are firmly inclusionary of minority workers, and then hold follow-up reviews every two years to make sure that they remain so.

- Review their training procedures to ensure that all officials undergo regular training on combating discrimination.[191]

- Ensure that within the union the definition and understanding of what racism is and the damage it does extends to include indirect discrimination. This should be included at all training of officials, workplace representatives and trade union activists.

- Ensure that their rule books allow them to expel workers for making racist comments or for membership of racist political organisations.

- Discuss with minority workers their particular and general concerns and integrate them into a bargaining strategy within the workplace.

- Conduct equality audits of their own staff, representatives and activists in whatever way is legal and appropriate to their national context, so they can consciously consider what to do to improve the involvement of minority workers at all levels of the union.

- Press employers to negotiate on the measures listed above under recommendations to employers to prevent direct and indirect discrimination at work.[192]

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[191] Within USDAW where, for example, all officials receive a three-day training course on race, sex and disability discrimination (TUC Equality Audit 2005, p 24), additional annual training days to consider the experience of fighting discrimination could be held.

[192] In the UK the TGWU published a guide to achieving race equality at work help negotiators in all sectors and at all levels effect positive change to race relations in their workplaces (see text in Jefferys, (2004, UK Transport Report).

- Develop union and/or workplace specific 'Working against Racism' guides.

3.4.3. On organisational legitimacy

The trade unions can also promote a stronger anti-racist stance at the workplace by focusing on the basis of the democratic legitimacy of the local representative. Our research has found that training and an emphasis on anti-racism is not sufficient to change local union activist practice when activists adhere fully to the notion of delegate democracy by which they view their role as merely reporting the views of the workers. In these circumstances, the well-oiled articulation of union anti-racist policy from the top of the trade union to the bottom will almost inevitably break down. 'Delegate' representatives will attend conferences and training on anti-racism, but then 'interpret' what they should do – or rather not do – about it according to the predominant prejudices of the white majority in the workplace. A black TGWU bus convenor (a senior full-time seconded position) saw much of the current training as mere 'lip service':

> *When we have courses or when we have meetings or whatever, when it comes to the question of race I think people will skirt over it very quickly. Unions, courses or whatever that I have been on, you know, we always say it's like a lip service thing that is paid to black people.*

How little sinks in was illustrated by a former white London bus company convenor who had gone through years of union training. He proudly reported keeping the trade union office 'free' from racist views:

> *I remember people expressing racist views, but I can't ever remember it being a problem. As soon as you pulled them up on it. I mean, I would never listen to it in my office. 'You aren't talking like that in here. Get out!' You know, they just probably are not thinking about it too much, you know. Once you pulled them up on it, 'Oh yes, you are right'.*[193]

If his fellow workers kept their racism outside of his union office, then that was acceptable. A narrow interpretation of his own democratic legitimacy didn't allow him to see any wider responsibility.

In this area of democratic legitimacy much needs to be done. This is particularly true for the UK, but it also holds for Belgium and Italy, where the organisational basis of trade unionism also stems more organically from direct workplace support than it does in

[193] Jefferys (2004), *UK Transport Sector Report*, WLRI.

France, where for historical reasons trade unionism was long rooted externally in local area and national organisations.[194] Yet even in France activists need to be won over to the importance of campaigning for 'unpopular' principles even though it might put some of their elected positions at risk. In Bulgaria the tasks are even more challenging: the unions will have to work hard on both fronts, winning local activists with real roots in the workplace, while simultaneously creating new networks of activists between workplaces, welded together by clear societal goals.

The importance of securing higher proportions of activists who see their roles as 'representative' rather than as 'delegate' is not confined to anti-racism. It is also a key mechanism by which trade unions can continue to assert independent, collective and societal goals in a period in which employer human resource strategies generally aim to increase the corporate commitment of workers to the individual firm. By educating and training union activists to interpret the world through a trade union culture the union will create and hold on to activists who see the significance of the broader labour market (and political economy) for their own futures. It is as this wider view gains acceptance that the activists who see their role as representing workers' *interests* and not merely workers' current views, will begin to be more effective in putting anti-racism to the fore.

4. Wider European significance and further research

The recommendations outlined above derive from the detailed studies we have conducted in just five European countries. However, they were not constructed from the national guides to 'Working against Racism' that have either been produced or are in the process of being produced in conjunction with the trade unions. They are not a 'sum of sums' based on the national pictures. Instead, they are derived from a general theoretical analysis of the common role of trade unions in mediating racism across the different countries. For this reason they have a much wider European significance.

In Section 1. above we asked whether the results from these particular national and comparative research studies could be generalised out to the rest of Europe. After the analysis above we believe we can confidently answer yes. The five findings with the strongest European-wide application are:

1) The emergence of a more vocal racist and xenophobic political context towards ethnic minority workers and migrant workers in the early years of the 21st century.

[194] See Jefferys (2003).

2) The adoption by the trade unions of formal equality platforms, condemning racism and xenophobia and attacking extreme right-wing political parties.

3) The persistence of direct racism and the systemic presence of indirect racism in the workplace – still occurring where the minority workers are national citizens and have been for two or three generations.

4) An ambiguity about many trade union anti-racist policies at the workplace level. Many trade union activists consciously or without intent effectively interpret union policies in such a way as to either exclude or give the impression of excluding the promotion of real racial equality.

5) The roots of this ambiguity lie in the tensions between the market and societal goals of trade unions and where their legitimacy derives from delegate or representative democracy.

It is highly unlikely that this study would have been able to arrive at these conclusions and the recommendations to the EU, national governments, employers and trade unions if conducted only on a country-by-country basis. Often in the social sciences comparative international research loses clarity because of the wealth of difference that can always be uncovered. In this project, by contrast, precisely by going below the level of the institutions to the experiences and perceptions of individual workers and trade union activists, we have uncovered a wealth of information testifying to the similarity of the processes of racial subordination.

It was in reading and rereading this national-level data, in analysing it and re-analysing it, in drawing up national reports and then in combining them, not just once in each Phase Comparative Report (authored from three different countries), but then a second time in this Final Project Comparative Report, that we have finally been able to arrive at the scientifically-researched conclusions and recommendations listed above. Only after this comparative cross-checking could we then develop the genuinely European understanding that the nature of the racisms present may be broadly categorised as direct and indirect, and that the range of union responses to their presence may be seen as ranging from those which are protective of the white majority through to those that are positively trying to secure real equality. And only after the collaborative efforts and debates of the 32 researchers and five research teams over the three years could we then move to make the reasonably clear recommendations given above to policy-makers.

This research achievement does not mean that all has been done. There are several areas in which the research begun here requires deepening and broadening, and in any

case, even as this report is being written, many indicators suggest that background racism and extreme nationalism are still major challenges to European social cohesion.

The existing research needs deepening in two directions. First, it is important to research the links between the trade unions and wider civil society. This is an area of the original research proposal that had to be left on one side through resource shortages. But it remains an important one. Second, it is important to understand what exactly the trade unions are doing, and how effective it is, in the areas of education and training in relation to racism. Our research looked at national level policy and local level practice. But it was unable to probe further into the mechanisms that the unions use to create their own anti-racist cultures. An in-depth study of trade union anti-racist training programmes and their effectiveness is another major research need.

The research can also be made still more rigorous through being broadened. The major findings should be tested against the experiences of up to another ten EU members such as Sweden, Denmark, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Greece, the Netherlands, Estonia, Poland and Hungary.

V. DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS

The principal means of dissemination of the RITU project research findings is through the website and the national 'Working against racism' guides being published in each of the partner countries.

The website was first launched in January 2004. Called 'Working against Racism' it has been regularly updated with information on trade union campaigns against racism and with information about the project. It has now been agreed that the Working Lives Research Institute will continue to fund it throughout 2006, during which time its future and the project aim of broadening its language and country coverage and its depth will be discussed with the ETUC and other trade unions.

The national guides are being launched with the support of either the national trade unions or leading anti-racist trade unionists in each of the five countries. Their aim to raise awareness of the problems identified and of the need to search for solutions. At the same time the unions' own publicity systems have undertaken in many instances to provide coverage. A second major area of dissemination is through meetings between the researchers and the trade unionists at several different levels. There is also a significant volume of publications coming out of the research: books are being prepared in all countries and a large number of academic conference presentations and journal articles are underway.

1. Belgian dissemination

In Belgium, the TEF plans to publish two books in French. One will be with Editions Complexe publisher and one with the Presse universitaires de Bruxelles publisher (sociology of work series). The first will be based on the three Belgian sectoral surveys and will enclose chapter on historical approach on immigration, racism and trade unions in Belgium. The second one will bring together the research finding in the three sectors in a European comparative perspective. It will include also a historical view of racism in Europe.

Three categories of audience will be targeted in these books: trade unionists, large public and institutions and scientific community. With trade unionists we aim to think and to improve the trade union strategy to combat racism at the workplace. We would like to test the hypothesis of the conditions necessary for contributing to a successful policy for combating racism: the trade unionists' understanding of the reality of racism and the individual and collective contribution in the production process of tools based on the concrete reality. To achieve this we are working with a group of trade unionists. These

are union representatives at regional and local levels, and they will continue to reflect on racism and how to fight it. It will be based on the research outcomes and the European RITU guideline.

With the wider public, institutions and scientific community, the dissemination strategy will mainly consist of writing papers, giving seminars and lectures, and conference presentations in coordination, as far as possible, with the important Belgian medias.

The Belgian team's intention is to try to influence union policies and attitudes in a sense of increasing their involvement in the combat against racism at the workplace. On the other hand, vis-a-vis a largest public and an academic audience, we would like to inform people much better and to attempt to contribute to their awareness raising.

2. Bulgarian dissemination

In Bulgaria, IMIR plans to publish a book based on the data obtained from the RITU research. Besides the three case studies already undertaken we intend to conduct similar surveys in the health sector and mining industry. The book will contain a historical part on the development of the corresponding sector and analysis on the data obtained from conducted interviews with target groups. All the data will also be published on the IMIR website.

IMIR has established regular helpful meetings with scholars from the Trade Union research institute, with members of the Advisory Committee and university scholars to discuss the changes occurring on the labour market that are influencing the political situation in the country and the new manifestations of racism and discrimination. The good relations established with academics from the University for National and World Economy and the Sofia University will be a good basis for the implementation of annual workshops dedicated to the issues of discrimination at the workplace, as well as to the migration within the country and out of it. In addition, some of the analyses and data from the interviews obtained during these three years will be included in the lecture courses of academics working for IMIR.

3. French dissemination

URMIS intends to publish a book in 2007 based on ten years' research on Racism at work, including the results of the RITU project, with a part devoted to trade unions, racism and racial discriminations. The methods and results of the three year RITU project will be disseminated through several publications, several of which are already in process, as well as through teaching on a Masters programme (Migration and inter-ethnic relations) at Paris 7 and Nice-Sophia-Antipolis universities. In addition the URMIS

academics are frequently asked to speak to meetings and seminars organized by various institutions including the trade unions and anti-racist organisations. The results of this research will also be disseminated publicly and in debate on these occasions.

4. Italian dissemination

In Italy, the team plans to publish a book in Italian with the publisher Franco Angeli of Milan that will bring together the research findings, accompanied by a substantial historico-theoretical commentary. Furthermore, the research findings are to be presented in university courses, academic conferences, and in meetings with the social partners. In addition, on the basis of the data and the reflections that have emerged from the research, the Italian team will carry out further research on the relationship between immigration, racism and trade unions. In particular, their objective will be to employ the concepts of solidarity and competition to focus on the relationship between native workers and immigrant workers inside and outside the workplace. A basic hypothesis to be tested is that in workplaces the presence and intensity of racism is less than in other social spheres.

5. UK dissemination

In the UK the principle method of dissemination is through the trade union movement and the TUC Equality Committee. Already one major conference has been held at the TUC to launch the joint TUC-WLRI 'Working against Racism in the Trade Unions' guide, and it is envisaged to organise another TUC workshop to discuss the issues raised by this report later in 2006. In addition negotiations are in process with the journal, *Race and Class* on producing either a series of articles in 2006-7 based on the academic outputs from the research, or on producing a single special issue of the journal in 2007. In addition a two-book series has been proposed to a publisher and a reply is expected shortly. The publication of this report and selected other reports is also a possibility, depending upon the publishing preferences of DG Research. Papers have already been presented to several academic seminars and conferences and will then be written up for further academic dissemination in a broad variety of journals in the industrial relations and sociology disciplines.

Table 13. Dissemination strategies of research partners

Result Title	Audience	Intention	Date
IMIR, Bulgaria			
Orlin Avramov, We and the Others. On Minorities and Law	Human rights organization, minority representatives, trade unionists	Book popularising legal aspects	2004
National representative survey on racism in Bulgaria, IMIR and A.S.A.	Targeted towards the academic audience, human rights organizations and trade unions	Scientific dissemination	2004
Ekaterina Ribarova, Trade Unions and Racism: European Activists look at the Future	Trade union activists, minority representatives and their organizations, employers	Article popularising European views on Trade Unions and Racism	2005
Trade Unions against Racism and Discrimination - Guide book, 141 pages	Trade union leaders and activists, activists in minority NGOs, employers, officers in the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and Labour Inspectorates, regional unions in the 28 municipalities	Popularisation of all outcomes under the RITU project	2005
The Case of the Roma in Bulgaria	Trade unionists and academics from the five partner countries attending the Paris conference	Paper providing Information and awareness raising on Bulgaria	20 Oct 2005
The Law on Protection against Discrimination: Rights and Obligations of Workers, Employers and Trade Unions	National Tripartite Conference involving trade unionists, governmental representatives, employers' organizations	Raising awareness on the rights and obligations of workers TU and employers	Oct 2005 Sofia
Georgeta Nazarska, the Role of Trade Unions in several Bulgarian industries	Academics, trade unions, workers	Book will be published as a scientific dissemination	2007

ULB, Belgium			
Two presentations to "Liberté et Tolérance: une campagne contre le fascisme et le racisme" conference	FGTB full-time officials and union representatives from Brussels Region	Information and awareness raising	13-mars 2003 20 Mar 2003
Presentation to union meeting launching social election campaign in May 2004	Meeting of full-time officials and union representatives	Information, contacts with trade unionists	20 Mar 2004
Presentation on discrimination on labour market Ethnic minorities	Meeting of Walloon FGTB full-time officials and union representatives	Awareness raising	26 Oct 2005
Presentation of French and Flemish language guides.	Francophone and Flemish full-time and lay representatives and members from (CSC, FGTB, CGSLB)	Information, awareness raising	Nov 2005
Presentation to FGTB conference in Namur	Workers and trade unionists	Information, awareness raising	12 Dec 2005
Presentation to CSC conference in Brussels	Full-time officials and union representatives from Brussels Region		
Seminar with trade unionists from three union branches who	The15 full-time officials and local union representatives who attended RITU Paris conference	Thinking and improving union combat against racism at the workplace	From Feb 2006
Agenda Interculturel journal article on Trade unions and racism in Belgium	Ethnic minorities and NGOs, teachers, trade unions, medias, policy makers, public administration	Information, awareness raising	1 May 2006
Presentation to Joint Committee on discrimination and racism	social partner conference of trade unions and employers, policy makers, labour inspectors	Information, awareness raising	May 2006
Trade union newspaper articles in Le syndicaliste (CSC); Tribune and Syndicats (FGTB)	Trade unionists	Information, awareness raising	First half 2006
Special issue of Travail, Emploi,	Information to Researchers, trade unions,	Information, awareness raising	July-Dec

Formation	public administration		2006
Book for Editions Complexe called: Rôle des syndicats dans la lutte contre le racisme	Trade unionists and wider public	Information and argument	July-Dec 2006
Book for Press universitaires de Bruxelles called Syndicats en Europe et racisme au travail	Analysis and methodology presented to Researchers, students, teachers at the higher education level	Information and argument	July-Dec 2006
Brussels Working against Racism Conference	Trade unionists, political, institutional and NGO policy makers, workers and researchers with political actors of the three Belgian regions (Brussels, Flemish, Walloon)	Dissemination of the research results, information, awareness raising to a wide public	Feb 2007
URMIS, France			
Article in *Sociologie du Travail* called 'Le traitement du racisme et de l'insécurité dans une entreprise de transport urbain'.	Academics	Information and argument	2004
National Guide to Working against Racism	Trade unionists, anti-racist organisations and Institutions (HALDE, …)	Information and awareness raising	March 2006
Journal article called *Entre la base et le sommet: racisme, discrimination et postures syndicales*	Academics and interested trade unionists	Information and awareness raising	April 2006
Chapter called 'Racisme et discriminations au travail'	Academics	Information and awareness raising	Sept 2006
RITU research lessons of in integrated into Masters teaching programme	Students of Universités Paris 7 and Nice-Sophia-Antipolis	Educational dissemination	2006 and after
Special journal issue of *Revue européenne des migrations internationales*	Academics and students.	Scientific dissemination	End of 2006

Book on all URMIS research conducted into racism and discrimination at work since 1995	Academics and students.	Scientific dissemination	2007
Venice, Italy			
Presentationon on North African migration to conference organized by the "CGIL-Camera del Lavoro Metropolitana" of Venice	Trade unionists from Algeria, France, Italy	Social partners dissemination	27-28 june 2003
'On the Relations between Immigrants and Trade Unions'. Chapter in L. Mauri and L.M. Visconti (eds.), *Diversity management e società multiculturale*	Trade unionists, HR managers, academic community	Scientific dissemination	2004
'Precarity at work and the politics of migration', "Precarizzazione del lavoro e politiche migratorie". Chapter in F. Coin (ed.), *Gli immigrati, il lavoro, la casa. Tra segregazione e mobilitazione*,	Trade unionists, HR managers, academic community	Scientific dissemination	2004
'Immigration and trade unionism': National seminar on the working conditions of the maritime and shipbuilding workers in Italy and throughout the world	Italian trade unionists, Ngo's, public and private institutions	Social partner dissemination	22 April 2005
'Immigration and trade unionism': Annual International Anti-racist Meeting in Cecina	European anti-racist organisations, Ngo's, trade unionists, foreign activists, members of civil society, academics	Political dissemination	July 2004 and 2005

The Labor Dimension of Racial Discrimination in Italy. 2004 and 2005 Report; RAXEN Project	Expert audience via European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia	EU level scientific dissemination	2004 and 2005
National good practices guide soon to be distributed throughout Italy through the *Rassegna sindacale* review	Italian trade unions and social partners	Social partner dissemination	2006
'Immigrants, racism and trade unions in Italy and Europe'. Book to be published by FrancoAngeli of Milan	Italian social partners, policy-makers	Social partner and political dissemination	2007
WLRI, UK			
Presentation on project to Oxford seminar on Transnational families and networks	Academics	Drawing attention to the research and issues	8 May 2003
Chapter on immigration into the UK in Italian book on immigration published by FrancoAngeli of Milan and edited by Basso and Perocco.	Academics and trade unionists	Drawing attention to the ambiguities of UK policy	2003
Presentation to UNI-Europa London conference on the fight against racism and xenophobia	European trade unionists	Information and awareness raising	June 2004
Chapter on UK policy on migration and integration in Belgian book edited by Alaluf and Krzeslo.	Academic and policy makers	Drawing attention to the ambiguities of UK policy	2005
Presentation on 'Trade Union Responses to Racism and	Ethnicity and Employment in the Private Sector seminar attended by UK Policy makers and trade	To provide an overview to trade unionism in the retail sector and	22 Sept 2005

Xenophobia in the Retail Sector' to Joint Policy Studies Institute and TUC seminar	unionists	highlight key findings from the RITU research	
Presentation on 'Racism from the Public: Response of Trade Unions and Workplace Organisations' to Paris Conference	Trade unionists and academics from the five partner countries	To highlight one particular issue that crossed over all three sectors in UK fieldwork	20 Oct 2005
Joint conference launch of UK national guide at TUC	UK trade unionists	UK National guide for trade unionists	24 Feb 2006
Steve Jefferys and Nouria Ouali conference paper on Transport sector comparisons	Academics	Scientific dissemination	12 April 2006
Web-site maintained until end of year	European trade unionists and anti-racists	Information and awareness raising	2006
Book based on this report	European trade unionists and academics	Dissemination of findings to European audience	Oct-Nov 2006
Dissemination through special issue of ETUI *Transfer* journal	European trade unionists	Dissemination of findings to European audience	2007
Two book proposal on Racism and European unions with	Academics	Information and awareness raising	2007
Dissemination through *Race and Class* journal	Anti racists in Britain including trade union activists	Issue based articles about findings from the UK research	2007

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VII. ANNEXES

1. Reports produced

1) Comparative Perspectives on Racism and Unions in the EU (Steve Jefferys (2004), *Racism and Trade Unions in the EU: National Perspectives on a Common Challenge*, London: Working Lives Research Institute).

   i) Belgian National Report (Nouria Ouali, Mateo Alaluf, Andrea Rea).

   ii) Bulgarian National Report (Antonina Zhelyazkova, Nadezhda Daskalova, Georgeta Nazarska, Orlin Avramov, Violeta Angelova).

   iii) French National Report (Véronique De Rudder with Christian Poiret).

   iv) Italian National Report (Silvia Cavallin, Andrea De Bonis, Filippo Perazza, Fabio Perocco).

   v) UK National Report (Mary Davis, Umut Erel and Rebecca Gumbrell-McCormick).

2) Phase 1 Comparative Case Study Report (Steve Jefferys (2004), The practices of trade unionists and the concerns and apprehensions and participation of racial and ethnic minorities within Public Transport, construction and light metal work: a five-country comparative case study report, London: Working Lives Research Institute).

   i) Belgian Public Transport Report (Nouria Ouali).

   ii) Bulgarian Construction Report (Georgeta Nazarska and Zhelu Vladimirov).

   iii) French Public Transport Report Report (Christian Poiret, Philippe Poutignat, Christian Rinaudo, Jocelyne Streiff-Fénart, with Mireille Eberhard).

   iv) Italian Light Engineering Sector Report (Elisa Banfi, Andrea de Bonis, Filippo Perazza).

   v) UK Public Transport Report (Steve Jefferys and Mary Davis).

3) Phase 2 Comparative Case Study Report (Nouria Ouali (2005), The practices of trade unionists and the concerns and apprehensions and participation of racial and ethnic minorities within Retailing, textiles and shipbuilding: a five-country

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i) Belgian Retail Report (Nouria Ouali, Lorenzo Munar Suard).

ii) Bulgarian Textiles Report (Georgeta Nazarska and Zhelu Vladimirov).

iii) French Retail Report (Veronique de Rudder, Simona Tersigni and François Vourc'h).

iv) Italian Shipbuilding Report (Elisa Banfi, Andrea de Bonis, Filippo Perazza).

v) UK Retail Report (Sukhwant Dhaliwal).

4) Phase 3 Comparative Case Study Report (Fabio Perocco and Rossana Cillo (2005), The practices of trade unionists and the concerns and apprehensions and participation of racial and ethnic minorities within the health and tobacco industries: a five-country comparative case study report, Venice: Laboratorio di Formazione e Ricerca sull'Immigrazione).

i) Belgian Retail Report (Nouria Ouali).

ii) Bulgarian Tobacco Report (Georgeta Nazarska and Zhelu Vladimirov).

iii) French Health Report (Christian Poiret with Veronique De Rudder and Simona Tersigni).

iv) Italian Health Report (Adriana Bernadotti, Rome: Ires).

v) UK Health Report (Sukhwant Dhaliwal).

5) European Best Practice Guide for Trade Unions against Racism (Mary Davis).

i) Bulgarian Best Practice Guide (Antonina Zhelyazkova, Violeta Angelova, Nadezhda Daskalova, Georgeta Nazarska, Dotcho Mihaylov).

ii) UK Best Practice Guide (Mary Davis, Roger McKenzie, Wilf Sullivan).

iii) French Best Practice Guide (URMIS).

iv) Italian Best Practice Guide (Pietro Basso, Fabio Perocco).

v) Belgian Best Practice Guide (forthcoming: Nouria Ouali).

2. Project publications

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4. Deliverables List

No.	Deliverable title	Delivery date	Nature	Status
1	'Union Anti-racism' Web site built	2003	Internal	Completed
2	First Report: 'National Perspectives on Racism and Unions'	Sept 2004	Public	Completed
3	Workshop with International Advisory Group	Jan 2004	Internal	Completed
4	First International Conference to launch Web Site	Jan 2004	Public	Completed
5	Second Report: Results of Sector A fieldwork and analysis	Dec 2004	Public	Completed
6	Third Report: Results of Sector B fieldwork and analysis	Oct 2005	Public	Completed
7	Joint ETUI 'Best Practice' guide on combating racism and xenophobia	Oct 2004	Public	Partially completed [195]
8	Second International Conference on 'How Trade Unions Fight Racism'	Oct 2005	Public	Completed
9	Successful Negotiation of continuation of Web Site	Dec 2005	Public	Partially completed [196]
10	Concluding Report: Comparative results of research in Sector C with A and B and international comparison	March 2006	Public	Completed

[195] A draft was translated by the ETUC for the October 2006 'Working against Racism' conference in Paris. Its future is still being discussed within the ETUC as this report is written.

[196] The future of the Working against Website has been guaranteed by the Working Lives Research Institute for the whole of 2006. Its further existence will then depend upon new sources of funding that are currently being approached.

5. Workpackages and embedded deliverables

Work-package No	Work-package title	Deliverable reference	Nature	Status
1	Research Preparation	National briefings on contexts of racial discrimination and xenophobia The development of a project-wide Bibliographic Data Base One full Project Research Team meeting at the outset in London followed by a second PRT meeting in Paris five months later to complete debates on definitions, perspectives and organisation of the research. A second London Project Management Team meeting four months after that (at which sub-group discussions will finalise a common analytical framework for grouping the evidence). A report on 'National Perspectives on Racism and Unions in the EU'. Identification of the key issues to ensure the research design is as fully harmonised as possible. All partners will purchase QSR's N6 software for use in the collection of project materials and interview analysis.	Public Internal Internal Internal Public Internal Internal	Completed Completed Completed Completed Completed Completed Completed
2	Web Site	Working Web Site by month 6. Expanded and impressive Web Site by the Launch Conference in month 12.	Internal Public	Completed Completed
3	Web Site Maintenance	A regularly-updated interesting web site on which will also appear a regular Project Newsletter. Continuation funding to be sought from the 35th month.	Public Internal	Completed Partially Completed

4	International Advisory Group	An effective first meeting with positive input by the Advisors to the project design and the fieldwork research methods. Active participation by at least some of the International Advisory group in the first Conference	Internal Public	Completed Partially completed
5	Research Sector A	One-day PRT meeting in Paris (including sub-group meeting progressing the analytical framework to be used within NVIVO for analysing qualitative data) One-day full PRT meeting in Brussels (coinciding with the First Conference and an Advisory Group meeting) Transcribed interviews from Sector A analysed under NVIVO and exchanged between partners. Second research report comprising national reports and an outline of a comparison concerning the Sector B case studies.	Internal Internal Internal Public	Completed Completed Partially completed [197] Completed
6	Research Sector B	One-day PMT meeting in Sofia (including Data analysis sub-group discussions). One-day full PRT meeting in Venice Transcribed interviews from Sector B exchanged between partners. Third research report comprising national reports and an outline of a comparison concerning the Sector B case studies.	Internal Internal Internal Public	Completed Completed Completed Completed
7	Research Sector C	Two-day PMT meeting in London. Transcribed interviews from Sector C exchanged between partners. Fourth research report comprising national reports and an outline of a comparison concerning the Sector C case studies. Production of ETUI 'best practice' guide	Internal Internal Public Public	Completed Completed Completed Partially completed
8	First Conference	Good publicity High profile conference Well-structured successful conference.	Public Public Public	Completed Completed Completed

[197] The debate on the coding frame for N6 absorbed so much time that effectively there was no time left for the actual coding of the interviews, given the inexperience of most of the research teams in using this methodology. However, all the interviews were transcribed and exchanged on the project intranet system, and a smaller number of the interviews in both of the following two case studies were also coded up and exchanged among the research partners.

9	Second Conference	Successful conference bringing together trade unionists from partner countries and more widely from within the EU and associate countries. Serious conference that discusses problems and offers solutions	Public Public	Completed Completed
10	Research conclusion	Final one-day PMT meeting in Venice. Completed *3 sectoral studies from each of the five countries Completed comparative account of all five country experiences Published trade union 'best practice' handbooks in all five countries	Internal Public Public Public	Completed Completed Completed Partially completed [198]

6. Additional annexes

6.1 Summary of Report 2: public transport, construction and engineering sectors

1) Research into how trade unions mediate racism in the workplace was carried out by teams in three member states in the public transport industry (Belgium, France, UK), in Italy in the light engineering industry and in one candidate country (Bulgaria) in the construction industry.

2) The fieldwork in this report uncovered the continuing presence of discriminatory practices against 'foreigners' and 'immigrants' and 'black and ethnic minority' workers whether or not they are national citizens across a range of workplaces, but principally in the transport industries.

3) Only exceptionally did such discrimination involve a physical rejection of the minority workers. But nonetheless, the actions of the employers and the inactions of the trade unions at workplace level systematically amounted to the exercise of power with the effect of subordinating the minority and of maintaining 'white' national privilege.

4) Public transport union officers and activists held varied views about the role of the unions in the face of such 'institutional racism'. The report develops the concept that union responses may be seen to share one or more of these perspectives

[198] Two guides had been published by March 2006 (UK, Bulgaria); the three others were still being discussed with trade unions in the partner countries, as was a pan-European guide with the ETUC.

- **Protection**: openly trying to protect the privilege of the historical white 'national' majority

- **Denial**:

  - *Total denial*: a refusal to admit the presence of racism.

  - *Definition denial*: defining racism as extreme behaviour like 'apartheid', and therefore never finding any.

  - *Fear denial*: denying the issue of racism out of fear of the consequences of raising it.

  - *Victim denial*: seeing the victim's protest against racist behaviours as excuses for under-performance or a lack of qualifications when 'all' workers have the same experiences.

- **Delegation**: allocating the work of recruiting or servicing minority workers to a small number of activists.

- **Assimilation**: seeking to co-opt minority workers and to integrate them into the 'traditional' union roles and policies.

- **Self-organisation**: minority workers take initiatives to mobilise around their own interests and demands.

- **Positive discrimination:** the union takes action to boost the numbers of minority workers who are active and involved.

5) The research also finds that the loss of union influence and the retreat of collectivism has exposed many minority workers to a sense of disempowerment. They lack confidence that the unions want to respond to their problems, but know that the potential individual legal remedies to the discrimination they face actually constitute a personally very high risk strategy.

6) The research proposes that the trade union movement should develop action programmes to make it much clearer what racism is and how affects both 'new' workers and 'old' minority workers and how it needs to be resolved by more active policies aimed at increasing minority involvement in the unions.

6.2 Summary of Report 3: retail, shipbuilding and textile sectors

1) This comparative report on five different case studies by teams of researchers in the retail sector in Belgium, France and the UK, in the shipbuilding industry in Italy and in the textile industry in Bulgaria uncovered the continuing presence of discriminatory practices against 'foreigners' and 'immigrants' and 'black and ethnic minority' workers, whether or not they were national citizens.

2) The research shows that racism at the workplace takes many forms. It shows itself in as much through rejection, subordination, exploitation and segregation as it does through inequality of treatment (discrimination) in various work situations (such as recruitment, promotion, inspection, evaluation…).

3) Customer violence, particularly where minorities are concerned, is increasing in retail distribution. It reflects the more general problem of violence in social relationships that workers in contact with the public are presented with. This customer violence has, however, been noted by the trade unions, who have mounted campaigns to make people more aware of the issue.

4) Trade union responses to racism are divided between denial (in all its various forms), delegation (with issues allocated to minority activists or specialist services), assimiliation and positive discrimination or minority self-organisation.

5) Full time union officials and local union activists believe that fighting discrimination and inequality is the same as struggling against all forms of exploitation. From this aspect the defence of specific demands for minority workers goes against the general interest and the principal of equality of treatment.

6) Minority workers believe that the struggle against racism and discrimination is an integral part of the trade union's function of protecting workers, and so there is no contradiction between the defence of the general interest and the struggle against racism. They demand that the unions end the 'law of silence' on issues of racism in the workplace, and want greater consideration given to certain specific demands.

7) The research finds that although the unions have become aware that they must open themselves up more to ethnic minorities, the top of the trade union movement still does not reflect the ethnic and national diversity of the workers. Minority workers are demanding better access to full-time and more visible positions.

8) The rate of trade unionisation and the levels of mobilisation among minority workers depend both upon the quality and the frequency of the contacts between trade union representatives and the minorities. Minority trade union activists' experience of racism and their less secure position within the labour market makes them more sensitive to struggles against racism and the extreme right, but they are also more sensitive to trade union struggles to improve both rights at work and in society as a whole.

9) The research finds that racism is also fought through countering the division of the working class at local, national and international levels and that it requires a general improvement in the living conditions of all the citizens.

10) The research finally proposes several ways in which the trade unions can struggle more effectively against racism through campaigns sensitising workers to this issue, through information and training, through supporting local initiatives within the workplace and the creation of spaces allowing the direct raising of problems of racism.

6.3. Summary of Report 4: health and tobacco sectors

1) Over the past ten years the health systems of Belgium, France, Italy and the United Kingdom have experienced the implementation of neo-liberal policies (marking the transition to the idea of health as a consumer good with investment). The health system "reforms" have meant new forms of work organization based on outsourcing and subcontracting, sharp cuts in health-service spending, and the transformation of health-service management on the basis of business models. Bulgaria, too, as has seen substantial privatization, with grave consequences for the condition of workers

2) These changes have been criticized by the trade unions.

3) The increased delegation of work to 'non-medical' personnel, and to nurses in particular, with the fragmentation of nursing into 'nurses' and 'health care assistants' has accompanied the above processes and led to a worsening of working conditions, especially with regard to workers of foreign origin.

4) The new forms of work organisation, and especially the recourse to the subcontracting of services inside and outside hospitals, have a particularly negative impact on these workers, who are more easily blackmailed and who usually" to do the humblest and heaviest tasks with little or no job security.

5) The trade unions occupy relatively strong positions in the health sector and are highly representative.

6) Today, although they are indeed critical of the processes of public health privatization, at times, they are still failing to carry out a complete and careful investigation of the continuing social welfare cuts and of the linked transformation of work organisation that is taking place based on an expanding recourse to migrant workers.

7) Workers of foreign origina employed in the health sector are subject to many forms of discrimination. In the four country health sectors discrimination and racism is concentrated for the most part in the following areas: selection, hiring, recognition of qualifications, job assignment, mobility, shift and holiday allocation, contractual typology, training, relations with the public.

8) All the countries are characterized by strong racial stratification. In the UK racism principally comes from management and from the public, but in Italy there is a fully-fledged (institutional, organisational and informal) discriminatory system.

9) The trade unions have responded differently to this situation. We can distinguish between three levels of response:

a) in the UK responses have been more effective and relatively systemic, aiming particularly at involving the migrant workers themselves;

b) in Belgium there has been a little movement and its unions may be placed in an intermediate position between those of the UK and Italy/France;

c) in Italy and France the trade unions are far behind, at times taking "defensive" - nearly "corporatist" - positions, and at times going so far as to deny the racism present in the workplaces.

10) In the Bulgarian tobacco sector only minor incidents of discrimination and racism were reported; the workers' major problems concerned efforts to keep their jobs under threat from globalisation, to improve working conditions, and to raise wage levels - issues pursued and supported by the unions.

11) The intersection of national migration policies, the condition of workers of foreign origin, the context of the health system and the role and policies of the unions in the five countries considered have influenced the forms of resistance and of mass struggle pursued by the workers of foreign origin. The situation is

highly diverse, especially in terms of self-organization and trade-union participation.

12) The following common elements emerge: a lack of involvement in the unions (particular of workers of foreign origins); and the need for greater cooperation and exchange to promote common and comprehensive action.

6.4 Europe's discourses on migrant workers, 1950-2005

Before 1950	1950-1970		1970-2005	
Citizen/Subject	Patrial/indigenous	National	Second-generation	Black
		Regional	Ethnic minority	Asian
			Immigrant	Arab/North African
			Foreign-origin	Muslim
			New	Traveller/Roma
	Naturalised	Immigrant		
Non-national/foreigner	EU citizen	Tourist		
			Student	
			Temporary	Seasonal worker
		Resident		Migrant
			Accession member national	
	Third country national	Tourist		
		Immigrant	Documented	Student
			Undocumented	Highly-skilled migrant
				Illegal
		Refugee	Documented	Seasonal worker
				Migrant

				Student
		Economic migrant	Undocumented	Asylum seeker
				Traveller/Roma
				Muslim
				Arab/North African
				Terrorist

Source: Jefferys (2004), Table 3.5.

6.5. External and internal policies of exclusion and inclusion towards migrant workers expressed by European trade unions, before and after 1980

	Exclusion		Inclusion	
	Before 1980	**Since 1980**	**Before 1980**	**Since 1980**
	Opposition to immigration	(Racist descriptions of minorities)	Welfare, legal and personal advice to migrant workers	Opposition to degradation and criminalisation of asylum seekers
External	Calls for repatriation	Active or tacit support for restrictions on immigration	Opposition to restrictive immigration laws	International solidarity with trade unions in migrant countries of origin
	Support for job openings being restricted to 'nationals' or 'family'	Calls for tight control over migrant qualifications	Support for special holiday provisions for migrants	Negotiating issues raised on behalf of migrants (ranging from prayer rooms, special holidays to equal opportunities)
	Calls for tighter labour laws targeting undocumented workers	Silence on asylum issues and on undocumented workers	Opposition to employers having control over work permits	Anti-racist and anti-fascist campaigning within localities and firms
		Calls for action against Roma	Calls for labour legislation to target employers and not undocumented workers	Affiliations to anti-racist movements and links with migrant associations
				Calls for amnesties regularising

				undocumented workers
				Mobilisations in support of workers being deported
	Rejection of union membership	Denial that migrant workers have different issues and demands	Advocacy of integration	Recognition of difference and monitoring of minority involvement
	Reluctance to recruit	'Colour-blind' approach to integrating migrants into the union	Services established for migrant workers	Encouragement to migrants to become union activists/workplace representatives
Internal	Reluctance to support migrant workers in industrial conflicts linked to racism	Reluctance to represent migrants over race discrimination	Individual recruitment of migrants to union	Election or appointment of migrant-origin union officials and organisers
		Paternalistic control over migrant workers in the union or in struggle	'Colour-blind' approach to migrants	Encouragement of self-organisation
			Recognition of linguistic difference	Union rules introduced outlawing racism
			Support for migrant workers in industrial disputes	Development of union strategy for involvement of migrants

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