

Education systems and immigration in the EU: The challenge of preventing social exclusion

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Claude-Valentin Marie

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INTRODUCTION

"Segregation in schools and by schools"

Throughout the EU, the challenge of immigration is forcing change on educational systems. This issue is nothing new: it dates from the mid-1970s when, in the wake of family unification, the increase in the number of children of immigrant parents brought with it enormous changes in school populations in the Member States. This trend intensified in the 1980s, and took a spectacular turn in the major urban centres, where foreign workers and their families congregated for economic reasons.

The picture is the same in Copenhagen, where more than half the pupils are of foreign origin at 11 primary schools out of 68, in Amsterdam (more than one primary school in two) and in Brussels (one school in four). The ambivalence of this situation is that it abounds both in potential for mutual enrichment and in the danger of more segregation.

The municipal school of Jette in the Brussels region, where 19 nationalities are represented, provides proof that it is *"possible to have a majority of immigrant children or children from disadvantaged backgrounds and yet retain the image of a model establishment"*. At this school, where three-quarters of the pupils are foreigners or of foreign origin, children from disadvantaged backgrounds work side by side with other children from privileged backgrounds, and no-one is required to repeat a school year.

However, it must be said at the outset that this experience is an exception to the general rule, which is dominated by the contrasting stigmatisation of schools with *"too many"* foreign children or children of foreign origin. These are the schools from which native parents withdraw their children on the ground that the standards of teaching are too low. These are the schools from which a growing number of teachers, too, endeavour to escape or, if they cannot escape, become disenchanted with their teaching work. And these are the schools, finally where the foreign families themselves mistrust one other, exhibiting all the usual stereotypical behaviour. All these mechanisms are contributing to a de facto reorganisation of the educational system by a triple process of urban, social and cultural segregation.

Foremost among the problems are absenteeism, dropping out and finally academic failure. These three scourges have a massive impact on groups whose cultural diversity, far from being of benefit, is perceived as a handicap by the educational system and in some cases by the pupils themselves, almost as if membership of certain communities were synonymous with cultural deficiency and an inevitable source of social inequality.

The issue, then, is to find adequate responses to three separate requirements: enabling the most disadvantaged pupils to complete their schooling, respect for cultural diversity, and safeguarding the unique nature of the educational framework. It is indisputably up to the state schools to undertake this task, because they alone are capable of dispensing equal treatment in education. This is something which is acknowledged by virtually all the Member States; the same goes for the belief that education and training are two essential

keys to social cohesion.

In the event of failure, the excesses associated with the increasing marginalisation of certain groups will inevitably lead to the destabilisation of society, with all the attendant potential for conflict and violence. Many schools are already experiencing the effects of this violence. Vandalism, damaged equipment, physical aggression, demotivation and disenchantment among the teaching staff, and the predestined failure of pupils - these are everyday experiences practically throughout the EU.

It is here that we find the most disadvantaged young people, those whom the selection processes have marginalised even within the school system, and who have few opportunities to find jobs when they emerge from it. One such example is in Belgium, where, as a result of compulsory school education up to the age of 18, *"it is generally the technical and vocational schools which, acting as 'dustbins', accumulate the drop-outs from the school system"*. But Belgium is far from being alone in experiencing difficulties of this kind.

The detailed arguments which follow will endeavour to analyse these points, emphasising the importance attached to them in each Member State, and the solutions implemented or contemplated to remedy them. Having first established the numbers involved in the schooling of children of immigrant parents (Chapter 1), we will move on to consider the ways in which they are received and integrated into the school system.

This study will be conducted from two angles. First, from the standpoint of the pupils, considering their results and the selection mechanisms (Chapter 2). This will be followed by a study of the conditions under which they were placed in their school (Chapter 3) and the consequences that follow from that (Chapter 4).

Once this overview has been established, we will consider the problems associated with or attributed to their presence, this time from the standpoint of how the school functions. This examination will relate firstly to the questions raised by their presence in terms of the content and aims of teaching (Chapter 5). We will then consider the question of specific support which must be or should be given to them (Chapter 6).

Finally, this study will end by summarising the challenges schools face in providing sustainable management of cultural diversity. In reality, the issue is not the acceptance or rejection of that diversity as such, but its selective and discriminating management. Depending on the specific case, the "cultural difference" will be regarded as a source of enrichment or as a handicap. It is this inequality of treatment that provides food for thought, because it reflects the rising tide of intolerance in our society.

NUMBERS OF CHILDREN OF FOREIGN ORIGIN WITHIN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

In Germany, as in France, the number of foreign children to be educated at all levels at the beginning of the 1992 school year was estimated at about one million²⁰³. In France, this figure is the end product of a trend which, over the last twenty years, has passed through two major phases. First, continued growth (+ 33% in 11 years), beginning in September 1975 and ending in 1986. In the following year, the trend was reversed: the reduction was at first slow and steady, amounting to a few thousand pupils per year, then accelerated sharply in 1992-3 (down by 45,000 children).

In terms of educational levels, the trends are somewhat more complex. In primary education, the increase in numbers stopped around the middle of the 1980s, and the reduction which began at that time first affected nursery schools and then the lower primary school classes. The trend in secondary education was staggered, with the numbers of foreigners continuing to increase until the 1991-2 school year. It was not until the following year that, for the first time, all levels of education experienced an equal decline in relative terms (-2.5%).

As everywhere, the national data conceal radical differences between different local authorities, and between different areas and different schools within individual local authorities. This dispersion of foreign children or children of foreign origin within the system is closely linked to the actual settlement pattern of the foreign population, which focuses births and new arrivals on a limited number of departments. In Paris, for example, one pupil in four in primary education and one in six in secondary education is of foreign nationality; while the figure is no more than one in fifty in provincial cities such as Caen, Nantes, Poitiers and Rennes, which have been little affected by the post-war history of migration.

What this trend clearly shows is the complete history of the transition from work-based immigration to settlement immigration. This same story is also reflected in the changes affecting the immigrant population itself, with those originating from neighbouring European countries being replaced by the children of more recent migrant workers from Africa, Turkey, the former Yugoslavia and Asia. Although specific details vary from one to another, the French example is valid for all Member States with a long-standing tradition of immigration²⁰⁴.

²⁰³ In Germany, at that time, the number of foreign girls being educated was only half that of boys. The majority (86%) of the population in question came from six countries: Greece, Italy, the former Yugoslavia, Portugal, Spain and Turkey. In France, the figure relates to the start of the 1982-83 school year.

²⁰⁴ In France, for example, those originating from the Maghreb now account for more than half of the total numbers, and among these the Moroccans have gradually overtaken the Algerians in first place. The increase in the numbers of Turks is no less notable: They, who were not individually identified by the 1975/76 statistics, are now as numerous as the Tunisians and much more so than all EU nationals, with the exception of Portugal. Conversely, the slowing - and virtual stoppage - of Italian, Spanish and Portuguese immigration, added to acquisitions of French nationality, have greatly reduced the number of pupils of those nationalities. In primary education, they barely outnumber the black Africans (French-speaking and non-French-speaking), whose relative proportion virtually doubled in seven years (1985-6 to 1992-3).

The presence of foreign children in the school systems of the Southern European countries (Italy, Greece, Portugal and Spain) is clearly not on the same scale²⁰⁵. But here, as previously, the history of immigration plays a major part. It affects the numbers of the immigrant population, determines its profile and explains the current pattern of school attendance. The high concentration of foreigners in primary education is attributable to this more recent history²⁰⁶.

This history is also explains the uneven regional distribution. In the case of Italy, for example, it is reflected in concentration in the north of the country, where immigration is more stable, as compared with the south where seasonal workers predominate - the latter often being unauthorised and in any event younger, more mobile and often single. As a result, the foreign pupils in primary education are almost exclusively concentrated in the north and centre of the country (88%).

The composition of the school population in terms of nationality is also attributable partly to the history of immigration, and partly too to the links woven in the past with the countries of origin: a high proportion of people of African origin (mainly Morocco) in the case of Italy, a heavy predominance (more than eight out of ten) of pupils belonging to the Greek minority in Albania and the former Soviet Union in the case of Greece, and a strong presence of those originating from the "PALOPS"²⁰⁷ in the case of Portugal. In the latter case, it should be noted that most of the children in question were born in Portugal of parents who had also been educated in Portugal; this is another specific feature that is notable for a new country of immigration and is associated with the early age of marriage among people from the PALOPS.

Despite a very different context and details, the above results are quite close to those of the northern European countries, which have also recorded a relatively recent increase in immigration from third countries. This is true, for example, in the case of Denmark which in 1992 had 30,000 bilingual pupils in its state primary schools ("Folkeskole") or 5.6% of the school population²⁰⁸.

Finally, special mention must be made of the situation in Luxembourg. This, without a doubt, is where the presence of young foreigners in the schools best and most directly reflects the scale of immigration in the recent history of the country. This, too, is where the question of their integration into the educational system, and the adaptation of that system, is most crucial.

According to Luxembourg's Minister for Education, immigration alone was responsible for the sharp increase in numbers at the start of the 1994-5 school year, especially in the primary sector, though it also affected all other levels from pre-school to higher education.

²⁰⁵ In Italy, for example, there were only 28,285 foreign pupils at the start of the 1991-2 school year (as compared with 5000 in 1983), while in Greece there were 25,600.

²⁰⁶ 46% and 85% for Italy and Greece respectively.

²⁰⁷ PALOPS: African states of Portuguese official language.

²⁰⁸ As against 4.1% in 1990 and 1.8% in 1987. Private schools, with a total of 3,000 bilingual children, recorded a roughly equivalent percentage.

This trend is directly associated with the increasing number of foreign families accompanied by school-aged children who have arrived in Luxembourg in recent years. It is the sign of a dual movement: long-term establishment of groups already resident and the continuance of active immigration.

The immediate consequence was to rekindle the debate on the shortage of qualified teachers. The education ministry is expressing anxiety about a shortage for the next five years, mainly at the lower levels (pre-school, primary and special and preparatory classes); at present 20% of primary teachers have no teacher training qualification. As the minister sees it, if immigration continues at the same pace, recruitment will have to be stepped up. Already, all candidates competing for jobs have been accepted, though they should be selected on the basis of the standard achieved.

Over and above the number of teachers required, however, it is important to think in new terms, more broadly, about their training, their teaching methods and their syllabuses. These urgent questions in Luxembourg are merely an example of a problem that all the Member States face. The only difference being, perhaps, that the situation in Luxembourg is even more urgent than it is elsewhere.

A CONTINUING PROCESS OF EXCLUSION FROM THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

"Something which all European teaching systems have to fight is the compelling trend towards two-track education, social segregation and inequality in the organisation of teaching."

Whether the point of reference is the rate of school attendance, the numbers dropping out of the school system without qualifications, or the type of education, all the indicators emphasise that the situation is generally unfavourable to young people from minority backgrounds. Foreign pupils and those of foreign origin are always proportionally more numerous in the lower-grade areas of education, the effect of which is that they enter the labour market at an earlier age and with lower qualifications. Compared with their native schoolfellows, they spend less time in the educational system and more frequently leave it with no qualification. All the available data, then, show a very high degree of inequality in terms of academic success, something which is to be found in all the Member States.

The process of guidance/selection, which takes place at a very early age, plays a decisive part here²⁰⁹. Because it is reflected in over-automatic channelling of these young people towards early school-leaving courses, it really is a source of segregation and exclusion as far as they are concerned. This is the case, for example, in Belgium as regards certain vocational training courses or short-time teaching, which represent "the parking strip" for young people who failed to make the grade in general and technical education²¹⁰. These courses are most likely to include the disadvantaged pupils, very often including those from immigrant backgrounds. *"More often than not, failure is the factor which guides pupils to particular options or courses. This is how the success pyramid is formed: reserving the best qualifications for a small number of chosen pupils."*

All too often, the kind of inequality we see in segregation at school mirrors certain cultural and ethnic differences. The fact is, though (as we shall see later), that these differences are not really central to the very real problems that foreign youngsters face.

Unequal presence of foreign pupils in the various types of education.

In all the Member States, both those with a long-standing tradition of migration and those that have become acquainted with the phenomenon more recently, the same process of guidance/selection is found. However, the resulting inequality comes also from within the actual foreign or foreign-origin school population, which - in this respect, as in others - is far from being a homogeneous group.

²⁰⁹ In the mechanisms of guidance/selection, which is unfavourable to children of foreign origin, the unsuitability of intelligence tests is certainly significant. Various psycho-medico-social centres in Flanders are to try out a new IQ test designed for those of foreign origin, making allowance for their cultural diversity.

²¹⁰ Similarly, special education acquires an abnormally high percentage of Turkish children. Possible contributing factors here include shortcomings in family education but also a lack of information available to parents, who may also be prompted to take this course by *"the increased family allowances"*.

In Denmark, for example, young Pakistanis and Vietnamese are often an exception to the rule that the time spent within the educational system is generally shorter, and the probability of emerging from it without a qualification considerably higher, for young foreigners than for their Danish schoolfellows. On the other hand, ample confirmation of this rule is provided by young Turks and Moroccans, an increasing proportion of whom are early school leavers.

The same process can be observed in the Netherlands. Between the ages of 19 and 22, nearly half of young Dutch people are still in full-time education, as compared with one-quarter of Turks and one-third of Moroccans and Surinamese of the same age. However, the rate increases to 54% for West Indians. In the 22-25 age group, the differences are even more significant. The same rankings hold good in the various educational courses: more than half of Turkish and Moroccan pupils, as compared with one-quarter of Dutch pupils, attended the LBO (first level of secondary vocational training) and the MABO (general secondary vocational training)²¹¹. Those leaving the educational system with no qualifications confirm these results: from 8 to 17% for young foreigners (the less favoured being once again the Turks and Moroccans) as against fewer than 3% for the Dutch and the West Indians.

In France, this selection is very clearly reflected in the over-representation in special education of pupils from immigrant backgrounds²¹². As long ago as 1980-81 they accounted for 16% of pupils in these courses, but made up only 6% of the numbers in "normal" secondary education and lower secondary. This proportion has increased over the years, reaching 18.4% in 1990-91, thus widening the gap from "normal" secondary education. Despite a slight decline during the next two years, the differences are still very significant.

The situation observed in Luxembourg in no way negates the above. Here again, the distribution of foreign pupils over the various types of education is very significant of their academic problems. They are in a majority in s"complementary" education²¹³, which receives pupils not accepted by the secondary level and obliged to attend school until the age of 15, when they generally leave without qualifications. Young foreigners are also over-represented in the special primary classes intended for children capable of being educated but not suitable for normal teaching. Nor do the German statistics contradict the trends in the other Member States: there is still a very great disparity between young Germans and young foreigners at the time they leave the educational system. There are twice as many foreigners (16.5%) leaving the 'Hauptschule' [lower secondary school] with no leaving certificate, while among the 15-18 age group, only half as many foreigners as Germans are accepted for apprenticeships.

²¹¹ However, a study covering several years emphasizes an improvement in all these figures.

²¹² Special education comprises the SES (specialized education sections), the EREA (regional specialized educational establishments) and the CGA (workshop class groups). The latter exist in some colleges and technical schools to receive pupils with slight learning difficulties who are nevertheless capable of being educated with the other children.

²¹³ The Law of 3 June 1994 integrated this form of teaching into technical secondary education as a form of preparatory system.

Heavy emphasis on the short intermediate secondary courses

This selective orientation towards the lower-ranking courses continues at intermediate secondary level. On average, there are always more foreign pupils on the shorter courses, the end of which marks their entry into working life. Only Denmark seems to be an exception to this rule: once the hurdle of access to secondary school has been surmounted - something beyond the reach of many - no significant inequality seems to exist at later stages between young people of foreign origin and their Danish colleagues. At this level, the drop-out rate is similar for both groups, around 12 or 13%. Among the pupils of foreign origin attending the secondary schools, some have undergone primary education in Denmark while others have arrived in mid-school career. In a similar way to what happens in the "Folkeskole" [primary school], the Ministry of Education encourages initiative and experimentation in the secondary schools. This is reflected in, among other things, greater collaboration between the two levels - primary and secondary - to improve transition from one to the other, greater parental involvement and additional teacher training.

The Danish situation has no real equivalent in the other Member States. In Belgium, for example, results show quite a high degree of marginalisation of young people of foreign origin. This is particularly true of young Turks who, along with the Italians and those from Maghreb, are to be found mainly in the less advanced streams of secondary education: the short-time education centres and the vocational cycle. Moreover, most of those who make up this cycle drop out at the lower level. Among young Turks at this level, only 40% obtain a lower secondary school leaving certificate, while in the case of those from the Maghreb the proportion is 63%.

In France, since the early 1980s, the proportion of foreigners has continued to rise much more swiftly in the pre-vocational and pre-apprenticeship classes than in the overall population of the first stage of secondary education. Nor were things any different in the second stage: in 1980-81 they accounted for 5.3% of the total numbers, but only 3.5% of those attending the long course, as against 8.4% of those in the short or vocational course. Eleven years later, these differences are the same.

Here again, results vary greatly according to nationality. Not all are equally likely to be met with in one particular type of secondary education, the most disadvantaged being the Moroccans, the Algerians and, most of all, the Turks. However, the situation seems to be improving over the years, a trend affecting all nationalities except the Turks. It is they who are most likely, on leaving secondary school, to find their way into the CPPN (standard pre-vocational class) or CPA (pre-apprenticeship class).

An improvement is also apparent in Germany. The President of the Federal Labour Office, Mr. Jagoda, considers that young foreigners are better placed today in education and in the employment market. Over the last ten years, the numbers completing a secondary vocational course or passing the university entrance exam has actually doubled. Out of 100,000 or more foreigners studying at German universities, an increasing number (currently 40%) have previously attended school in Germany, and more and more of them have been born there. They are the children of the "Gastarbeiter" [guest worker] generation. As an example, out of every ten Turkish students, eight have attended German schools.

In Luxembourg, finally, foreigners are more often oriented towards secondary technical (32%)²¹⁴ than towards grammar schools (11.1%), which provides preparation for higher education²¹⁵. As indicated by the table below, this inequality continues throughout the general or technical secondary syllabus, foreign pupils always being less represented in the higher classes than in the lower ones, which is reflected in success in the baccalauréat: 24.3% of 19-year-old Luxemburgers had gained this qualification, as compared with 1.4% of Portuguese, 3.5% of Italians and 3.7% of other nationalities²¹⁶.

General secondary	7th	6th	5th	4th	3rd	2nd	1st
Luxemburgers	85.9%	88.8%	89.5%	89.5%	88.4%	89.8%	92.4%
Foreigners	14.1%	11.2%	10.5%	10.5%	11.6%	10.2%	7.6%

Technical secondary	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	13th
Luxemburgers	67.6%	66.3%	67.7%	64.2%	68.2%	70.6%	79.2%
Foreigners	32.4%	33.7%	32.3%	35.8%	31.8%	29.4%	20.8%

There is another inequality that should be mentioned, which is specific to girls and relates to the traditional practices in the communities from which they come. Some of them, despite a significant success rate, are taken out of school prematurely by their parents, while many others take less ambitious courses than the boys. In Belgium, a project entitled "*Diversification of choice in technical and vocational training courses taken by girls*" is designed to combat this tendency. It is designed to provide additional teaching hours each week at selected establishments which undertake "*to encourage female technical or vocational training pupils to take advantage of the complete training course, and to encourage them to follow certain technical and industrial courses by means of initiatives to make such courses more accessible*".

²¹⁴ Secondary technical education (from the 7th to the 13th grade) comprises three "cycles". *The lower cycle*, or transition level, lasts three years. *The middle cycle* serves to teach pupils a craft or vocation and to prepare them for their senior-cycle studies. It is broken down into three parts: a vocational course (3 years) leading to the CATP (certificate of technical and vocational aptitude); a technician training course (2 years), as preparation for the senior-cycle studies as a technician; and a technical course (2 years) as preparation for the senior-cycle technical course studies. *The senior cycle* (2 years) provides preparation for higher education.

²¹⁵ These data take no account of the populations of the foreign schools based in Luxembourg - the American, British, French and European schools.

²¹⁶ Studies on this subject emphasize the dominant role of mathematics and German in this process of selection. This is true for all pupils, but particularly penalizes the Portuguese. It should be noted that the success rate in the "bac" is improving overall, having increased from 20.5 in 1988 to 32.8 in 1994. These figures take no account of those young people who obtained the same qualification abroad.

The importance of shortcomings in pre-school and primary education.

A study in Luxembourg entitled "*Learning difficulties in early schooling*" has demonstrated that 40% of children are predestined to fail as early as the 2nd pre-school and first primary years, so great are the difficulties they encounter even at this level. The same remark holds true for Belgium. Children of foreign - especially Turkish - origin in Belgium have an abnormally low rate of registration for nursery school. This not unnaturally affects results during the later part of the curriculum: 2/3 fail at least once in primary school, and only 75% of those in the 14-28 age group achieve basic educational qualifications.

The negative effects of shortcomings in early learning are also encountered in Portugal, where pre-school education is very unevenly distributed. Designed to cover the three years preceding entry into primary education, it is however optional, given the dominant role of the family in educating children of this age. This pretext is a poor disguise for the inadequacies of the public pre-school education network and, consequently, the serious inequality which exists from the start between children from relatively affluent backgrounds, who will be registered with private schools, and the rest.

The existence of a few pre-school educational establishments for the most deprived, under the control of social welfare institutions like the Santa Casa de Misericordia, is insufficient to make good the deficit. This is a process of discrimination which produces an impact on the poorest children - both Portuguese and immigrant - from the age of three.

After the first cycle of general education (the first four school years), many children already fail to make the grade for lack of sufficient support. Added to the problems associated with their socio-economic background is the poor quality of the teaching support, provided by teachers who consider themselves badly paid. Many of these children will finish their compulsory schooling with a certificate for effort but none for aptitude.

The study entitled "*Impoverished ethnic minorities in Lisbon*", published in 1991, emphasised that nearly two-thirds of young people from these minorities had failed to finish their compulsory schooling (6 years at the time of the study). Three-quarters of those over 15 had reached a level of study equal to or lower than the first cycle of education. As elsewhere, success or failure in the first cycle of general education - critical in order to complete compulsory schooling - is indicative of the general integration pattern.

The pattern of inequality is no different at the other end of the system. Access to higher education in Portugal being selective, the state-sector universities do not accept even half of the potential candidates, thus encouraging the proliferation of private universities. Here again, the children of the better-off and culturally better equipped classes are more likely to gain admission. The few scholarships granted to the poorest children are insufficient to remedy the inequality of the system²¹⁷.

²¹⁷ In addition, the support granted by the local authorities is, by law, reserved for Portuguese students and foreigners who have applied for Portuguese nationality or are covered by cooperation agreements or conventions which make this provision. Since 1989 it has been possible, in the absence of direct access to university, to go through the vocational training course. However, there are not many vocational schools at present.

Some commentators, however, explain the low social mobility of foreigners by their very recent arrival in Portugal. The assumption is that the first waves of immigrants had limited ambitions regarding their children's schooling. Families were large and children made little effort in class. At home, they spoke their mother tongue with their parents, who had little interest in learning the language of the host country. This inadequate mastery of Portuguese is said to have been the main cause of widespread failure at school.

Things seem to be different today for people from the PALOPS. Their early marrying habits mean that most of their children at Portuguese primary schools were born in the country, and in most cases their parents, too, were educated there. Their mastery of Portuguese is therefore incomparably better. Moreover, it would seem that families are more motivated by their children's schooling, being more aware of its importance for successful integration into the employment market.

In future years, the level reached by pupils at the end of their compulsory schooling is expected to increase significantly. This improvement should have a beneficial effect on school education as a whole, though it is impossible to predict what proportion will continue their studies. That proportion is not likely to be very large, however, if only because of the economic factor (low level of family incomes in Portugal and the cost of higher education).

This same process of economic selection is also very marked in Belgium. Once the period of compulsory schooling under the free education system has been completed, candidates for higher education or for vocational training have to bear very high registration charges, which especially penalise nationals of third countries. In general, and although genuine advances have been made during the last 10 years, few children from immigrant backgrounds reach this level. And it is hard to say whether the slight improvement noted in the Flemish community is the result of an improvement in study levels or the more frequent choice of Flemish rather than French-speaking education. Be that as it may, the number of non-EU students in higher education is still extremely low²¹⁸.

It was this same finding which, in February 1994, led the universities, higher secondary schools and other institutes of higher education in the Netherlands to introduce new measures to try to remedy it. The supervision of these students is to be strengthened: student counselling, adjustments to the syllabus and teaching equipment, better qualified lecturers and multicultural training. A specialised centre is to be set up to ensure that objectives are met. And, to enable the students' participation and development in higher education to be monitored more effectively, their ethnic origins will be registered.

The limited relevance of the "nationality" variable

On the basis of just the foregoing statistics, it would appear, first, that foreign children receive inferior schooling on average to nationals, and secondly that this inequality applies even within the "foreign" category. However, this approach, which stresses the "nationality" variable (the easiest to record and, more often than not, the only one recorded), conceals the influence of other demographic or socio-economic features. For example, taking into account the variable of the parents' "profession" shows that the gap between

²¹⁸ For example, only 2% of young Turks enter higher education, and only 1% emerge with a degree.

nationals and foreigners is significantly reduced if we compare foreigners with manual workers only.

A study conducted in Luxembourg²¹⁹ on Portuguese pupils in secondary education cautions the reader, for the same reasons, against reducing educational attainment problems to a matter of national origin, and this author too emphasises the influence of social status. The same comment is made in Portugal. It has been shown that the difficulties experienced by children from minority backgrounds are much the same as those of Portuguese children from the same social environment. All suffer from poor mastery of the language, a very limited vocabulary and sometimes a motor functions handicap; to which can be added a lack of familiarity with work, associated with the fact that they are regularly left alone in the evening with other children of their own age until their parents come home.

A very instructive study on this same theme was undertaken in France. The results confirm that the socio-economic characteristics of most foreign children explain the essence of their educational failure, with no specific reference to their nationality²²⁰. The data on the proportion of pupils entering the "6ème" [first year of secondary education] and obtaining the baccalauréat confirm, at first sight, the inequality between French and foreign students. Indeed, they suggest that the gap continues to widen: 11.5 points in 1973 and 17 points in 1980. On the other hand, if the variable of the father's socio-professional class is taken into account, the results are very different. In families where the father was a manual worker, only one point, in 1973, separated the proportion of French pupils obtaining the baccalauréat from the proportion of foreigners; by 1980 this gap had widened a little, to five points.

The 1989 panel (27,000 pupils including 8% foreigners) is not conducive to such long-term analysis as the earlier ones; on the other hand, it does offer the possibility of measuring the impact of several other factors. The indicator adopted here is the proportion of pupils who, four years after entering the "6ème" (in 1989), were advised to enrol for a long secondary education course.

The selected reference profile is a pupil whose father is a skilled manual worker and whose mother is not in paid employment, both with secondary school leaving certificates. In this category, the success rate is 40%; for others, it varies as follows:

Father's profession		Father's qualification		Mother's qualification		Size of family	
Executive	unskilled worker	bac or +	none	bac or +	none	1 child	5 to 7 children
57%	40%	49%	31%	56%	28%	40%	30%

²¹⁹ Study by Fernand Fehlen, in: Forum No. 156, December 1994.

²²⁰ Studies by the Directorate for Evaluation and Forecasting of the Ministry for Education. The study comprised monitoring a single group of pupils over several years, enabling their school careers, among other things, to be reconstructed.

THE CONCENTRATION OF FOREIGN PUPILS: OPPORTUNITY OR HANDICAP?

The heavy concentration of foreign children in a single area, a single school or a single class is often presented as a negative indicator. The phenomenon particularly affects the primary schools in the major cities. There are two explanations for this: because the children concerned are still very young (especially in those countries where experience of immigration is recent), and because the selection procedures gradually reduce their numbers. This constantly fuels the debate on the need for a fixed percentage for each class or school.

The example of the municipal school at Jette in the Brussels region

However, all this research provides no proof that this "concentration" is always prejudicial to the quality of teaching. To the contrary, the results can be quite remarkable when the pupils receive genuine attention, when the right attention is paid to learning of their mother tongues and the language of the host country, and their work is appreciated and the emphasis placed on success.

A good example - though not the only one - is the municipal school at Jette in the Brussels region, where 19 nationalities are represented. This school, which is located neither in a ZEP (priority education zone) nor in a ZAP (priority action zone), provides proof that it is *"possible to have a majority of immigrant children or children from underprivileged backgrounds and yet retain the image of a model institution"*. Three-quarters of the 300 pupils are foreigners or of foreign origin, with a high proportion of Moroccan children (46%).

The school has two special features which represent a break with customary standards: children from underprivileged backgrounds are educated side by side with other children from privileged backgrounds, and the repeating of the school year forms no part of the institution's policy. The largest difficulty is non-mastery of the language of instruction. Taking its cue from university work, the school has defined, for each cycle, what a child should be able to do at the ages of 8, 10 and 12, with no end-of-year examination but with an assessment at each stage. *"The children are blooming, and there seems to be no classroom violence"*.

The "dustbin schools"

At the opposite end of the scale, a recent study by an anthropologist from Louvain (*"Growing up as a Moroccan in Brussels"*) emphasises the difficulties experienced in schools with a high concentration of immigrants. The teacher's job is more arduous, or even impossible, and the pupils therefore receive less supervision. The degree of rejection is apparently such that even the foreign children increasingly refuse to attend these schools, which they refer to as *"dustbins"*, and qualifications awarded by them are thus devalued.

In Brussels, for example, an increasing number of foreigners are opting for the Dutch-

speaking schools for their children²²¹, not only because of their reputation but because they are rejected by certain non-EU communities. This trend is such that the Flemish Minister for Education believes that education in Flemish would no longer be possible in Brussels without the foreign pupils. These behaviour patterns naturally reinforce the "flight" of the native pupils to the schools that have been "preserved", and further intensifies the process whereby the most underprivileged pupils are concentrated in the same schools²²².

In Luxembourg, the "flight" towards schools in neighbouring countries is one of the most significant indicators of the difficulties of educating the children of migrants. For the best-off parents, an alternative solution is to enrol their children in the foreign schools based in Luxembourg - an American school, a British school or European schools for the children of international officials.

In Portugal, the same logic leads some teachers to select the children from the more privileged backgrounds, putting the pupils from the ethnic minorities together in other classes. This practice is clearly unlawful, since the rule is that there should be a balanced distribution between the various classes. However, this is not always obvious for every school. Their population is an exact reflection of the areas in which they are located²²³, and, consequently, some schools are unable to avoid a high percentage of children of immigrants, alongside Portuguese children sharing their misfortune in the poor districts.

Dispersion, the tolerance threshold and the stigmatisation of foreigners.

Is it possible to define a minimum threshold of compulsory dispersion, in other words to define a "quota" or "critical threshold"? If so, how should it be organised? Can it have the effect of promoting non-discrimination in schools? Will not attendance at a distant school, requiring long and tiring journeys, disrupt school work at home? The debate as to whether to concentrate or disperse migrant pupils remains one of the most heated.

As an example, in Belgium, the Flemish Minister for Education signed an agreement with the authorities in July 1993 instituting non-discrimination in teaching, which was to be accompanied by a plan for the balanced dispersion of immigrant pupils. It was hoped that

²²¹ The rates are 27% in nursery schools (as compared with 6.6% in 1980) and 15% in primary schools (4% in 1980).

²²² Another report on the same subject introduces the concept of the "critical threshold" - empirically set at 20% - of which the least one can say is that it should be treated with considerable caution.

²²³ Compulsory basic education is provided in the school for the area in which the pupils live (Decree-Law 301/93 of 31 August).

these two measures would produce genuine improvements²²⁴. In actual fact - though predictably? - this initiative has produced the opposite effect: the stigmatisation of immigrants has been reinforced as a result, and the concept of the tolerance threshold has been endorsed through the quota system. Thus, additional discrimination against foreigners has become apparent since the experiment began.

Citing the quota laid down in the agreement (set within a range of 12% to 22%) some educational establishments have refused to enrol (or even re-enrol) many children of foreign origin²²⁵ - to mention selecting pupils from waiting lists! As some observers see it, *"this agreement provided school governors with a stick to beat the dog. The non-discrimination plan has become discriminatory"*. In a reversal of the original intention, the agreement has thus been cited as justification for refusal to enrol children of foreign origin. To counteract these negative effects, the sponsors of the project are stressing two points: the purely indicative nature of the quota which, they stress, can be exceeded, and the constitutional basis of the right to education which cannot be challenged or denied by dint of the agreement.

The controversy has surely not run its course. But it must be acknowledged that the dispersal plan is based on the assumption that a concentration of immigrants is prejudicial to the quality of teaching²²⁶. It never seems to occur to people that the educational system, as traditionally organised, might be the cause of the difficulties. The premise is that the education offered is fundamentally good and requires no change. To the contrary, it is for the immigrants to adapt to the system. In order to achieve that, without lowering the level too much, it is appropriate to arrange for them to be spread around *"in small doses"*. In other words, it is the children who are being identified as the cause of the school's problem.

The far right party Vlaams Blok saw its opportunity, seizing on the proposed weakening of teaching standards to demand a separate network for non-European children; furthermore, this solution was presented as being the best way of preparing for them to be returned to their countries of origin. The NSKO (National Secretariat of Catholic Education) also pleaded for the right to refuse a non-Christian pupil on the basis of the constitutional freedom of education. For the NSKO, *"the municipal dispersion agreements between schools of different networks require unanimous agreement. The schools cannot be stripped of their grants because they repudiate an agreement which they refused to*

²²⁴ The non-discrimination code should be ready for the end of the 1994-95 school year, and the pilot municipalities have already been designated (Mechelen, Genk, Sint-Niklaas, Houthalen en Willebroek). It will be applied first at the primary education level. Secondary level experiments are unlikely to begin until the year 1995-96. In the view of the Director of the Equal Opportunities Centre, this project is *"unique and historic, even by European standards"*.

²²⁵ About twenty complaints from foreign parents were registered to this effect, in particular in Malines and Ghent.

²²⁶ At Deurne, a primary school is developing a multicultural alternative project based on a positive approach to the concentration of children of foreign origin. The objective is to make this school attractive to all sectors of the population, including those of foreign origin.

sign". The agreement does provide for financial penalties in the event of non-compliance.

The problem has been solved rather differently in Denmark, where every child whose period of residence exceeds 6 months is obliged to attend school. Acceptance of newcomers by the municipalities is determined on the basis of a number of criteria such as the number of bilingual children in the district, the frequency of their arrival, their ethnic origin and their age. The districts can thus organise a sort of redistribution of pupils, by agreement with the parents, in an effort to limit their numbers to 20 to 30% per class. This form of distribution has been chosen by about thirty districts²²⁷. Despite everything, the "flight" pattern continues to increase. To combat this trend, some Danish establishments are trying to improve the quality of their teaching, especially in the learning of Danish, or to offer attractive artistic courses.

²²⁷ Copenhagen has not adopted this system, despite having a great many children of foreign origin. In this case, there are two possibilities: either the pupil is enrolled in a familiarization class, where the teaching will gradually be combined with that of a normal class; or he is directly accepted into a normal class, with Danish-language support if necessary.

ABSENTEEISM, DROP-OUTS AND ACADEMIC FAILURE

In Belgium, it is estimated that absenteeism and dropping-out of school affect more than one pupil in ten, with a particularly worrying emphasis in Brussels; the proportion there is said to exceed 20% of the school-age population, making 27,000 pupils apparently not enrolled in any educational establishment²²⁸. This finding apparently concerns both girls and boys, and both Belgians and foreigners²²⁹. In Portugal, according to teachers in slum-area schools, the highest absentee rate is to be found among the children of gypsies.

The cases of Belgium and Portugal are simply examples of a situation which affects all the Member States, and various groups of their populations, although the children of immigrant parents seem to be the most at risk. The gravity of the situation is not only a cause of concern to those responsible for education or social and family affairs; an increasing number of local councillors and Members of Parliament are becoming worried by it, because the repercussions are virtually immediate in terms of delinquency and destabilisation in certain districts. Clearly, absenteeism and dropping-out are not only matters for the schools and families, but - in the most political sense - a civic matter.

This explains the attention paid to means of combating this phenomenon, and the interest shown in the decision to add a more substantial coercive aspect to the preventive measures. New legislation has been adopted to introduce, or increase, the penalties for failing to attend compulsory school. While these measures are directed primarily at parents or the persons in charge of the pupils (Belgium) they also target - which is more of a novelty - the pupils themselves (Netherlands). Furthermore, the families concerned run the risk in some countries (Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark) of being deprived of their family allowances.

At the same time, the new "Objective 3", which followed the revision of the European Social Fund (ESF) in 1993, provides for the possibility of special Community support for preventive programmes. Within this framework, teacher training on the problems of drop-outs and academic failure is keenly encouraged, as is the development of links between schools, parents and employers.

A stricter legislative and regulatory framework to counter school absenteeism

It seems that it was the Netherlands that first concerned itself with the idea of a specific policy to combat backwardness and dropping-out in schools, with the establishment (from 1985) of a device known as "OVB" or "priority education zones", within which the schools were invited to cooperate with social centres and local authorities. A measure known as "regulation by weight" allows assistance to be given to schools where more than

²²⁸ This situation, however, is still difficult to quantify, and has become more so since the extension (in 1983) of compulsory schooling to the age of 18, which greatly increased the number of checks to be carried out for age groups (16-18 years) with the highest mobility.

²²⁹ In the context of the missions sometimes entrusted to it by the public authorities, the Centre for Equality of Opportunity and the Campaign against Racism recently conducted a study of school drop-outs.

one-third of the pupils are shown as being behind; additional funds are granted to them as a function of the "weight" of such pupils, and the number of teachers is increased.

Ten years later, results have failed to come up to expectations. A government note published in April 1994 shows that the additional funds have not been used as intended and that the lost ground has not been made up. The only visible result is a reduction in numbers at OVB schools. Acting on a suggestion from the "Committee on Ethnic Minority Pupils", the government decided, for the purposes of the rules applicable in 1997, to replace the criterion of origin with that of the parental education standard. For pupils whose parents have completed basic education, the primary schools will receive 1.3 times the customary grant; if both parents have undergone only primary education, the school will receive 1.9 times the standard allocation.

The Dutch Parliament, for its part, has questioned the effectiveness of the "regional coordination points" (*RMC*) responsible for combating the drop-out phenomenon, and its criticisms have persuaded the government to revise the arrangements. In each region, a municipality nominated as an official contact is responsible for preparing a regional action plan, defining objectives and resources. To launch this campaign, a new official was to be appointed at local level, and finance of 24 million florins, spread over 4 years (94-97), has been released.

The limited impact of preventive measures has induced several Member States to introduce new legislation on the matter, this time with a view to tightening the penalty aspect. In Belgium, for example, the penal aspects of the 1983 law on compulsory schooling have been strengthened, and the fines increased. In the event of repeated failure to enrol a child in an educational establishment, family allowances may be suspended and fines increased. Doctors have been required to undertake internal checks to restrict the issuing of bogus medical certificates. The Netherlands is showing the same interest in stricter controls. The new law on compulsory education, which came into force in 1994, purports to be stricter. It allows family allowances to be discontinued and, above all, allows legal action to be taken against children who cause real problems. Previously, the education adviser could use only persuasion to bring a pupil back into the educational system, and only the parents could be held responsible for absenteeism or premature withdrawal of a child from school.

Maintenance and improvement of prevention

It is obviously too early to judge the effectiveness of these new constraints. What is certain, however, is that they will not in themselves prove sufficient to deal with the phenomenon, so that they will in no way eliminate the need to maintain and, in particular, improve the preventive measures. Opinion seems unanimous on this point. In Belgium, a round table discussion involving all the institutions concerned resulted in a system involving interested parties at all levels: local, regional, community and federal. Furthermore, the Fund for the Promotion of Immigrant Policy and the "Security Contracts"²³⁰ included the prevention of absenteeism and dropping-out among their objectives. At the end of 1993,

²³⁰ These contracts are cooperative agreements between various partners: The State and the regions and municipalities concerned, which propose lines of action and themselves participate in them. cf. Rimet report, 1994.

an interministerial committee was again assigned to consider the question²³¹.

Still in the interests of improving the harmonisation of activities in this area, the youth section of the Brussels public prosecutor's office issued two directives to the Brussels district authorities, based on three principles: informing parents as quickly as possible if a child dropped out, arranging spot checks in places supposedly frequented by the young people in question, and organising a graduated system of penalties. The Danish Ministry of Education has adopted a similar approach, reminding senior schools staff of their obligation to notify the local authorities of pupils who have been absent for more than a month.

The approach adopted in the Netherlands seems more ambitious as a move towards social integration. A programme known as the JWG - "Jeugdwerkgarantieplan" (youth employment guarantee plan) offers six months' employment to young people under the age of 21. The offer was taken up by 11,000 people in 1992. In response to a proposal by the Secretary of State for Social Affairs, the Council of Ministers decided early in 1994 to extend access to this programme to immigrants under the age of 22 in 1995 who had been unemployed for 6 months. Most important of all, however, a provision of the new Netherlands law on compulsory education allows half-time working for young people aged 14 and older for whom continued attendance at school would be pointless.

At the enforcement/prevention interface, monitoring and warning devices are designed to enable action to be taken before situations become too serious. Portugal and Belgium offer two very different examples of this.

In Portugal, the monitoring of compulsory schooling takes the form of cross-checking of lists originating from various institutions: the schools, the birth registries, the local authorities and the social security family allowance departments. In the event of non-enrolment, the school requests the assistance of the social services and local authorities, notifies the offices responsible for children and young people at risk, and summons the person responsible for the child's education. The system is not unanimously improved. Many people regard the pressures brought to bear on those responsible for the children as an insufficient guarantee, and enrolment does not necessarily result in effective monitoring of absenteeism.

In Belgium, a significantly more sophisticated instrument has been established to make these checks more reliable: the **computerised school identification card**. Instituted by a decree of 14 April 1994 relating to compliance with compulsory education regulations, it includes the pupil's name, date of birth, address and identification number. The card has to be lodged with the principal of the school to prove the child's enrolment at that school. This system, part of a process of modernising the monitoring of school enrolments, should rule out double enrolment, make it easier to track down unenrolled pupils and assist the campaign to prevent dropping-out. Contrary to the limitations of the Portuguese system, there is reason to fear that this scheme might stigmatise the children of foreign parents who are illegally resident and raise many questions in connection with the personal freedoms of all citizens.

²³¹ The anti-dropout scheme, instituted by the interministerial conference of May 1993, was operational in the Brussels Region in September 1993.

*The question of foreign children unlawfully resident:
Registering compulsory schooling as an inalienable right*

The fate of the children of foreigners who are illegally resident is a source of keen concern. Such children are often excluded from the school system for various reasons: sometimes their enrolment is officially refused on the ground of their parent's illegal situation (Greece, Portugal), while in other cases it is the schools which, in defiance of the law, refuse to accept them for reasons associated with financial procedures (Belgium). These additional exclusion mechanisms are suggestive not just of a contradiction but of something which is fundamentally wrong. When added to the inequalities already mentioned, they constitute a deliberate risk of marginalising these young people by refusing them one of the most elementary rights - the right to an education.

This, however, is the choice that has been made in Greece, where only children whose parents are lawfully resident can be officially enrolled in the school system. Anyone who knows the scale of unlawful immigration into Greece will swiftly gain some idea of the scale of the problem²³². The situation in Portugal is both very similar and more ambiguous. Official exclusion only takes place specifically at the start of the second cycle of primary education (5th year of school), at which time an identity card is required before children can be enrolled. On the other hand, because the documents required for enrolment in the first cycle will not disclose any administrative irregularity, these same children will have been able to enrol there and to undergo the first four years of compulsory schooling.

In Belgium, refusal to accept enrolment takes a different form, although there is little difference in the effect on children. Here, inequality is fuelled by the ways in which schooling is financed, ways which exclude foreigners holding no residence permits or those admitted for a very limited period. These decisions are taken by the schools themselves. They relate to the fact that parents who do not appear on the population registers receive no allowance for their children's schooling; schools are therefore reluctant to accept those pupils who receive no public funding. Those which do accept them pay the price by rapidly acquiring a reputation as a "ghetto" school. For this reason, it would seem that several hundred children escape compulsory schooling²³³.

The Walloon Minister of Education has issued a reminder that a state school may not refuse any pupil - all have to be accepted, even foreign minors whose parents are unlawfully resident in the country. By agreement with the Federal government, therefore, the Flemish authorities decided that the children of asylum seekers illegally resident in Belgium will normally have access to education and be able to obtain a legally recognisable qualification. Neither local nor national police will have access to the schools' lists in order to track down people with no right of residence. On the other hand,

²³² Furthermore, all children who are not of Greek origin may be required to take assessment tests before being enrolled for secondary education.

²³³ An enquiry conducted in Ghent shows that immigrant parents sometimes have to apply to 4 or 5 schools before finding one which will agree to enrol their children. In addition, there are prerogatives proper to the private network, which has the right to enrol whoever it likes. Apparently a great many foreigners are refused enrolment in this network for a variety of reasons.

their school attendance may not be used as a reason for regularising the situation of parents threatened with deportation proceedings. An identical approach has been adopted in the French-speaking community, with the publication in August 1994 of a circular on *"the registration of illegally resident pupils liable to compulsory education"*²³⁴.

In Luxembourg, the list of demands by the immigrant defence organisation is headed by the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the protection of the rights of migrant workers and their families and access to schools for children whose parents are in an irregular situation. They regard these as minimum guarantees.

Things are more clearly established in Italy. By a circular of 12 January 1994, the Ministry for Public Education authorised the enrolment in schools of children whose parents have no residence permits. This approach draws its legal basis from the principles of the International Convention on Children's Rights, signed in New York on 20 November 1989 and ratified by Italy on 27 May 1991, and from the requirement in the Convention of preserving children's right to an education. This approach is fully in line with the intentions of the Director of the Centre for Equality of Opportunity, who wonders *"whether there is any justification for visiting the sins of the fathers upon their children"*.

²³⁴ This circular specifies that *"an illegally resident pupil must be regarded as a regular pupil as far as teaching is concerned, [but] he will nevertheless not be counted for the purpose of determining the financing of the schools' activities or the organization or subsidizing of jobs"*.

LANGUAGE LEARNING: A MATTER OF INTEGRATION PHILOSOPHY

Among the many explanations of the school difficulties experienced by foreign children, insufficient mastery of the host country language is one of the most frequently mentioned. It is universally, and unanimously, believed that the learning of that language is one of the keys to integration. Where disagreement arises is on the importance that should at the same time be attached to the teaching of the children's mother tongue, and this will be considered in due course.

A report by the Netherlands Office for the Socio-Cultural Plan expresses the opinion that the difficulty of learning Dutch plays a primary role in the academic failure of pupils from minority backgrounds, especially for those who have not been integrated into the educational system from the start, who additionally suffer from their parents' inability to help them adapt to a system which they themselves find completely alien.

In Italy, emphasis is laid on the great difference between children born in Italy and young people who enter the country at a relatively more advanced age: they do not have the same needs and will not have the same school career. The former, for the most part, go through their schooling with no major problems. Their relationship with the school follows a pattern similar to that of young people of their own age and social origin. In the opinion of the teachers, mastery of Italian and of the dominant socio-cultural codes causes them no major problems. The latter, on the other hand, who are far more numerous, are more liable to fall behind and become academic failures. A study undertaken in Milan showed that 30% of them are far below the level for their age.

The situation of newcomers has thus been the focus of much attention. The Dutch government, for example, acknowledges the failings in the way in which they are initially handled, especially regarding the responsibility for the teaching of Dutch as a second language (NT2). Endorsing the recommendations of the "Committee on Pupils Belonging to Ethnic Minorities", it proposes that the role of the local authorities should be strengthened to include responsibility for distributing funds allocated to this programme. In exchange, the municipalities should draw up a reception programme for the new school-age arrivals and for the NT2 activities proposed by the schools.

In Denmark, a distinction is made between the teaching of Danish as a mother tongue and its teaching as a foreign language. Some districts support this choice by assisting the training of volunteer teachers; some directly employ bilingual teachers. For 1994-95, eight classes for training teachers of the children of immigrants or refugees have been set up by the Ministry of Education.

It is in Luxembourg, however, that the handicap of the language - or rather languages - of the host country appears to be most serious: foreign children are almost immediately confronted with the obligation to become trilingual, while at the same time suffering from a very unequal distribution of integrated mother-tongue courses in normal primary education. The language in which primary education is provided is Luxemburgish, but

children are required to learn German from the first year²³⁵, and eighteen months later they are introduced to French. The passage from primary to secondary education is subject to an examination to assess knowledge of these three languages (French, German and Luxemburgish). The disproportionate significance of these languages in obtaining a qualification induces more and more young people - both foreigners and Luxemburgers - to try to obtain their qualifications in neighbouring countries and join the Luxembourg employment market subsequently.

To help overcome the difficulties encountered in the early stages of learning, the ISERP [teaching training and research institute] has since 1991 been preparing teaching material to gear the teacher's work to the children in his class. He is thus in a position to offer structured teaching of oral German to those who have difficulties in understanding that language²³⁶. Moreover, following the Danish example, the "German as a foreign language" programme for the first year has been in general use since 1991, and was added to the second primary year from 1992. Refresher courses have been organised for teaching staff, and the Minister of Education has issued a circular reminding schools that the differentiation method (national tongue/foreign tongue) is obligatory in classes with foreign children²³⁷.

Finally, we should emphasise that the reforms introduced in both general and technical secondary education have included new compensatory systems to reduce the importance of these language requirements: inadequate marks in one language are cancelled out by good results in another. The idea is to encourage the pupil to make good his deficiencies, and to prevent him cutting his education short. This compensation system also applies to the secondary admission examination and, since 1992, the final secondary examination. However, a number of teachers have opposed these measures which, in their view, are lowering teaching standards in Luxembourg.

The teaching of languages and cultures of origin

The most controversial subject is still the right of the children of immigrants to receive teaching in their language and culture of origin. In its action programme of 9 February 1976, the Community set the Member States two priority objectives: speeding the learning of the language of the host country and facilitating the teaching of the mother tongue and culture of origin. It was specifically stated that the Community would assist in the production of teaching aids to meet the needs of children learning their own

²³⁵ Furthermore, German is taught not as a foreign language but on the basis of a method of transition from Luxemburgish to German, which represents an insuperable obstacle for many children, especially speakers of Romance languages.

²³⁶ This material was in general use in the 3rd and 4th year classes in 1993-94. Similar aids are now being prepared for the 5th and 6th years.

²³⁷ The City of Brussels is offering a total immersion experiment for pupils in two centres owned by the city in France and Flanders.

language as immigrants²³⁸.

In the following year, a Council Directive of 25 July 1977, often quoted as the reference text, instituted three fundamental rules: the objective right for every child of an immigrant to receive a free education suited to his needs in the host country, the need for appropriate training of the teachers providing that education, and the obligation upon the Member States to encourage the teaching of the mother tongue and the culture of the country of origin, both in cooperation with the country of origin and in coordination with normal teaching. This right and obligation were financially supported by the ESF, from the time it was created, in order to *"prevent cultural identities from being forgotten and undermined"*.

There are thus two major features of mother-tongue teaching: demand for it is now increasing within the Member States, and the obligation to meet that demand is enshrined in the founding principles of the Union relating to respect for cultural identity in all its aspects. Even so, this right remains ambiguous. Its legitimacy is frequently disputed, and it is very unevenly applied.

We should recall that the obligation on the Member States to supply this education was originally conceived - an essential point - for the benefit of Community citizens. It was only in the second stage that it was extended, *de facto*, to nationals of third countries permanently resident in the EU. The demand for mother-tongue teaching is therefore a dual one²³⁹: it originates both from immigrants who are Community nationals and from those who come from third countries; but it does not have the same legitimisation in both cases. This is where the ambiguity lies.

The other paradox is that the primary motivation of immigrants who are EU nationals to receive this teaching - return to their countries of origin - was, until recently, shared by third country nationals. Today, however, third country nationals permanently established in their host countries see this teaching as primarily designed to preserve their children's links with their original cultures and no longer as preparation for a hypothetical return home. This is an indicator of a new form of ambiguity, this time related to the actual purpose of the demand. Whether all these aspects are explicit or not, the subject is genuinely controversial everywhere. But only, it should be clearly understood, when the persons under discussion originate from third countries. Which confirms our theory of unequal legitimisation of demand.

In France, for example, disagreements range from the choice of teachers to the actual justification for this form of teaching. The first criticism relates to the fact that the teachers are recruited and remunerated by the countries of origin, and poorly integrated into the teaching staff. The second concerns the organisation of the courses, which either create an additional burden on the children when they are bolted on to the existing

²³⁸ Schemes were to be introduced for various languages (Italian, Greek, Spanish, Portuguese, Turkish, Arabic, Punjabi, Urdu and Bengali).

²³⁹ This dual demand, requiring diversification of the language teaching offered, is supported by the Community through the "Lingua" programme.

timetable or disrupt the organisation of classes when they are "integrated". Their content is also said to suffer from being devised without consideration for the French school curriculum and imparted in the national or "standard" tongue, which is not necessarily the usual language of the children's family background. In some cases, the lessons are said to have a pronounced religious slant, contrary to the principle of denominational neutrality. But, over and above all these cautionary notes, the actual justification for this form of teaching is the controversial point. The majority opinion is that priority should be given to acquiring mastery of the French language, a critical condition for academic success, especially from the standpoint of integration.

The sensitive area in the Netherlands is very different. The law requires educational establishments to respect the multicultural nature of Dutch society, but results are not coming up to expectations. Early in 1994, the Advisory Committee on Primary Education considered that the programme for teaching the mother tongue and culture of origin fails to meet "modern needs".

This programme has seemed to be very isolated within the education system, being taught under poor conditions with a high teacher absenteeism. According to an official report on *"education for a multicultural society"*, only 10% of primary schools make any effort to comply with the purpose of the law. The report calls for greater political determination to implement this teaching of the languages of origin in all schools. In September 1994, the government set up a new working group on the subject. Its mandate was to redefine the foundations for an intercultural project and to lay down a strategy for its practical application.

Luxembourg offers a comparable situation of contrast between official interest in the teaching of languages and cultures of origin and the much more limited practical application of this principle. The Luxembourg Minister of Education, for example, has declared his commitment *"to the indisputable cultural right"* of children from immigrant backgrounds *"to receive additional instruction in their mother tongue"*. And he added, *"This instruction must have a place in Luxembourg's schools. It is of critical importance to arrange the integration of mother-tongue courses such that they represent an advantage rather than an additional burden for the children who receive them."*

In conformity with this declaration, a circular traditionally sent every year to local authorities and teaching staff recommends integrated courses not just **in** the mother tongue but **given in** the mother tongue. *"These courses, while safeguarding the unique nature of Luxembourg's schools, will create conditions more favourable to the academic success of immigrant children."* The reality is that, at the start of the 1993-94 school year, only 13 local authorities had introduced integrated courses in Portuguese in their schools, with a clear imbalance between neighbourhood schools with anything from 80 to 100% of immigrant children and schools in other districts where the proportion is lower²⁴⁰. The Ministry of Education has expressed regret at the small number, but the main difficulty here lies in the autonomy of the local authorities. Their officers do not always comply

²⁴⁰ The courses are provided only in areas where parental demand is sufficient. Specific training courses have been organized for the foreign teachers who give the courses. Monitoring is the province of a group of experts from Luxembourg and elsewhere who supervise the training of the teachers, the development of programmes and teaching aids, and the evaluation.

with the wishes of the Ministry²⁴¹, and immigrants' rights associations accuse the inspectors responsible for providing the link between the ministry and the local authorities of failing in their duties. Believing the April circular to be ineffectual, some Members of Parliament are proposing to use legislative coercion to make mother-tongue courses obligatory above a certain number of pupils²⁴². The Minister is opposing this, on the ground that these courses are given only at the request of the pupils' parents, only if the infrastructure exists and only if there are teachers available from the country of origin. He would prefer consensus to compulsion²⁴³. This shows the extent to which, as in France, the question of the legitimacy and purpose of this teaching has largely been left open. Many doubts thus remain as to the status of the teachers provisionally engaged, the methods of their recruitment and, more generally, the actual principle of their teaching.

The results are no better in Italy. During the last two school years, only one school in four had introduced specific programmes, with a strong difference in motivation between the primary teachers (60.4%) and the secondary teachers (29.8%). This is an ominous sign for the future, since it is known that the success of such projects requires that they be fully integrated into the life of the school, and the programmes be consistent over several levels. This uneven level of interest is also to be found in the commitment of the Regions to creating and financing such programmes: only Emilia Romagna, Friuli and Umbria have shown any real sense of urgency.

On the other hand, the rules allowing foreigners to set up schools or cultural institutions in Italy have been simplified. A decree of the President of the Republic of 18 April 1994 lays down the obligations, depending on whether the sponsor is or is not a native of an EU Member State, the status of the qualifications awarded and the rules of inspection to which the establishments will have to submit.

Parallel teaching or genuine intercultural education

The main criticism levelled today at the teaching of languages and cultures of origin is that they are being progressively marginalised within the educational system and are tending to become a parallel activity, to the detriment of genuinely integrated courses.

²⁴¹ On 6 August 1988, the Appeals Committee of the Council of State declared itself not competent to hear two appeals lodged by Portuguese and Italian parents against decisions by the cities of Luxembourg and Esch/Alzette not to accede to their request that mother-tongue courses be integrated into the curriculum of the Luxembourg primary school. The parents cited Article 3 of Directive 77/486/EEC.

²⁴² In actual fact, the integrated mother-tongue courses are fully functional only in non-State schools in Luxembourg: the French-speaking primary education classes of the French school, the Lycée Vauban, the American High School and the European School. The "parallel courses" organized during free afternoons are often the only way of enabling children living in other districts or towns in the country to attend, since the integrated courses are reserved for children actually attending the schools.

²⁴³ The CLAE wants to see a more transparent system. Above a certain percentage of foreign pupils, the inspector should introduce the integrated courses onto the agenda of the local schools commission, ensure that foreign parents are automatically informed, and monitor the applications.

Examples are to be found in Luxembourg, France and the Netherlands.

In France, ELCO (the teaching of languages and cultures of origin) is provided in periods of three hours a week under one of two systems: "integrated courses", during school hours, and "deferred courses", outside school hours but on the same premises²⁴⁴. Since 1985-86, the number of pupils taking the ELCO has fallen by about 12% (mainly as regards Arabic and Portuguese) and in particular the proportion of "integrated" courses has declined in favour of "deferred" courses; today, the former account for less than half, as compared with 59% six years ago. The same trend is apparent in Luxembourg. The "parallel" courses in Portuguese are the best attended; but they are given during the children's free afternoons, which often represents an additional burden for them²⁴⁵.

The major drawback of these "parallel" or "deferred" courses is that they are often isolated within the educational system. Sometimes, those in charge of the schools know nothing about their content. They are also disregarded, and sometimes even denigrated, by the other teachers. By way of example, there are some schools in Luxembourg where Luxemburgish teachers have tried to persuade Portuguese parents not to send their children to the integrated courses, describing them as harmful for their academic success.

It must also be recognised that the courses are sometimes given in poor conditions by teachers who have neither the skills nor the motivation necessary. In the Netherlands, these problems led the Advisory Committee on Primary Education to recommend that the courses in mother tongue and culture of origin should be continued outside the school framework.

Does this mean that the principle should be rejected? Do these problems endorse the view of those who oppose the teaching of languages and cultures of origin? Do they condemn any attempt to open the school system to intercultural education? It would appear not. The development of the integrated courses can, indeed, be an opportunity for genuine innovation as far as teaching is concerned, based on extremely enriching intercultural education experiences²⁴⁶.

An experiment of this type has been in progress since 1982 in the town of Differdange, in Luxembourg. Begun at the initiative of teachers who were concerned at the academic

²⁴⁴ This teaching is mainly given in primary schools; in secondary schools it is given only where the language is not taught as a study subject. Eight countries have concluded bilateral financing agreements with France: Portugal, Italy, Tunisia, Morocco, Spain, the former Yugoslavia, Turkey and Algeria. They pay the teachers and provide the textbooks. In 1992/93, 1200 foreign teachers were teaching these courses in 4600 primary schools to about 100,000 foreign pupils in the elementary classes (i.e. 22%).

²⁴⁵ In 1993-94, they were attended by 3115 pupils (2387 in the 1st to 6th years of school and 728 in the 7th to 9th years). In 1987-88, integrated courses (Portuguese, Italian) were being given in some ten classes, spread over 5 local authorities, and attended by a total of about 200 pupils.

²⁴⁶ Specific training courses have been organized for the foreign teachers who give the courses. Monitoring is the province of a group of experts from Luxembourg and elsewhere who supervise the training of the teachers, the development of programmes and teaching aids, and the evaluation.

failure of the children of immigrants, it is not confined to integrated teaching of mother tongue and culture. It is used as an opportunity to revise the content of certain courses in the general syllabus, to pool several types of instruction, and to encourage an increase in exchanges between national and foreign teachers.

In such cases, the role of the foreign teacher becomes more important. He is no longer confined to teaching a "second-rate" language. He needs both to transpose the content of the Luxemburgish courses into the children's mother tongue, and also to reach an agreement with the national teacher to ensure that their courses are in step. And he has to stimulate exchanges between the linguistic groups and to encourage each group to get to know the other.

This experiment has been extended by school exchanges between schools in Differdange-Fousbann and Gualdim Pais de Tomar. Thus, young Portuguese from Tomar have recently spent time with both Luxemburgish and Portuguese families in Differdange, and a special teaching programme was designed for them. All this requires powerful motivation on the part of the teachers: the time investment is substantial²⁴⁷ and contacts with Luxemburgish colleagues are not always easy.

A consensus between the Luxemburgish and Portuguese authorities

This type of experiment is strongly supported by the Portuguese authorities. The Portuguese Minister of Education took advantage of a visit to Portugal by his opposite number from Luxembourg (April 93) to welcome the initiative whereby various elements of the Luxembourg syllabus were being taught in the children's mother tongue²⁴⁸. Their convergence of outlook was confirmed on the occasion of the return visit to Luxembourg by the Portuguese Minister, which concluded in an agreement being reached, in particular, on the integration of two lessons given in Portuguese into the normal curriculum.

Stressing the genuinely intercultural dimension of this model, the Portuguese government has undertaken to phase out the "parallel courses". The ministers also decided to set up a joint committee made up of senior education officials responsible for carrying out joint projects between the two countries. In addition, the Luxembourg Minister has proposed to arrange intensive courses in Luxemburgish and German for the Portuguese teaching

²⁴⁷ The Portuguese Ministry of Education allows two hours off for Portuguese teachers who provide integrated courses, as compensation for this additional workload.

²⁴⁸ An ISERP sociologist notes that even if the mother tongue is taught as such, integrated courses in the mother tongue are still important for three reasons: the integration symbolizes recognition and appreciation of the language; the children get practice in the correct use of their mother tongue; and they learn a technical vocabulary (names of birds, rivers, periods of history, etc.) which they will not necessarily encounter outside the school context. An additional point is a more favourable attitude by foreign pupils and parents to the school system: cf. "Confusion à propos des classes intégrées" [Confusion about integrated classes], Christiane Tonnar, in *Ensemble* No. 22, January-February 1995.

staff²⁴⁹. In response to a parliamentary question, he emphasised that *"the support represented by mother-tongue instruction enables pupils to gain a better understanding of the content of the Luxembourg syllabus"*.

The principle and value of this teaching model were strongly defended, in conjunction with discussions on the school organisation in the city of Luxembourg in June 1993, by a deputy mayor of the city. The initial results of the PLUX²⁵⁰ experiment seems to suggest he is absolutely right.

²⁴⁹ These courses have been operating since September 1993. All the Portuguese teachers wanted to enrol. Priority went to those who also provide integrated courses. There has been no follow-up to this experiment.

²⁵⁰ A pilot project promoted by the University of Lisbon, the European Community and the Ministry of Education, intended to seek ways and means of improving the integration of Portuguese children into the Luxembourg school system.

THE CONTINUING NEED FOR SCHOOL SUPPORT

In virtually all Member States, there are classes designed for new arrivals who are not fluent in the language of their host country. A second scheme has been devised for pupils who experience long-term difficulties throughout their school careers. This is not specifically designed for newcomers, nor exclusively for foreign children, but for all those from underprivileged backgrounds and with a variety of social and cultural handicaps.

One of the most frequent problems is that it is impossible for parents from these backgrounds to help their children, when they themselves can hardly read or write. In order to remedy the material or cultural inability of these families to educate their children, some people are calling for an automatic return to "directed study", outside class hours but on the school premises.

These are the children for whom, a few years ago, two types of support were developed - one within the school environment and at its own initiative and the other outside that environment. The latter type of extra-curricular back-up activities are sometimes conducted by the public authorities, but quite often left to the initiative of subsidised associations.

In Greece, the system is highly selective. There are special free schools reserved for children of Greek origin or children of returned emigrants. Some were set up for children of Pontic Greeks in the host villages where the families spend six months after their arrival. They exist at both levels, primary and secondary. The support given to the most underprivileged in fact covers every stage of their school curriculum. While the older and more numerous schemes are directed at all levels, attention is increasingly focused on the two extreme periods - those of entering and leaving the school system.

Experience shows the young people are increasingly disadvantaged in the transitional period between the end of their schooling and the start of their working lives, because of the growing difficulties of entering the employment market. This is where the risk of a drift into delinquency seems greatest, the more so if the individual has dropped out of school early.

However, experience also teaches us that the difficulties encountered, the obstacles to be overcome and the overall risks of failure are greater for children who entered the school system under adverse conditions. The handicaps built up during the early stages of learning prove critical at the later stages.

Reception structures for new arrivals

The first form of support, then, is that organised within the schools and aimed at the first arrivals who are unable to enter the mainstream system without a transitional period. The support comprises either specific cycles or familiarisation courses which are additional to normal teaching. They are found, for example, in France, Belgium and Luxembourg.

However, the principle of these specific transitional structures is increasingly being questioned, on the ground that the pupils become too isolated. This is what happens, for example, in Denmark where the experiment with tenth-grade classes reserved for young

foreigners to improve their knowledge of the Danish language and culture is receiving a mixed welcome. These classes, which exist only in a few districts, are widely believed to receive only the worst pupils; regarded as preferable is the idea of the technical 10th grade, which combines the end of the "folkeskole" (10th grade) and the first year of technical college.

The same trend is encountered in France, though in a very different context. The non-French-speaking pupils in the primary schools are enrolled both in the class appropriate to their age and, full-time or part-time, in a CLIN (primary education initiation class) in which they remain for only a few months²⁵¹. The current trend, however, is to replace these CLINs, specifically intended for the teaching of French, with catch-up (or support) courses which the pupils involved attend for a few hours a week.

Be that as it may, "immersion" in an ordinary class is always preferable, even it does mean supplementing it with French-language support and specific instruction such as the CRIs (integrated catch-up courses). The system functions in the same way at secondary level: enrolment in an ordinary class and attendance at a *reception class* where French is learnt.

The Luxembourg school system, too, has three types of class intended for the integration of foreign children: reception classes, specific classes and integration classes. The *reception classes* numbered 57 in February 1993 and were attended by pupils of 24 different nationalities²⁵². Their teaching method has been somewhat disrupted in recent years by the change in the children's origin, their marked differences in educational level, and the increasing number of different administrative situations (temporary and permanent residence status). The teachers are very concerned by the language barriers which prevent even the most gifted of their pupils from gaining access to appropriate vocational training. They consider it unrealistic to make it compulsory to learn two foreign languages in less than two years. "*Rather than increasing their prospects of integration, these requirements tend to compromise them*"²⁵³. Their verdict supports the opinion delivered by the

²⁵¹ The number of enrolments has never reached 10,000, although primary (or elementary) education takes in from 400,000 to 450,000 young foreigners each year.

²⁵² Of whom 54% were of Portuguese nationality and 34% originated from the former Yugoslavia. These classes were set up in the 1960s in response to the influx of foreign children. It was in 1967 that this name first appeared in a circular. They have come to the fore again since the large-scale resumption of Portuguese immigration in 1986, and more recently, with the massive influx of refugees from eastern Europe, mainly the former Yugoslavia.

²⁵³ Enquiry into reception classes in Luxembourg, ISERP, February 1993, Christiane Tonnar. This enquiry, the first of its kind, included all full-time teachers of reception classes, with a view to compiling an inventory of their problems. The author demonstrates that instructions to teachers amount to no more than a few recommendations. No clarification is provided as to the language to be taught as a priority, nor is any indication given of the relative weighting as between French and German when both are taught. To improve the pupils' prospects of academic and career integration, the teachers propose structural reforms: use of a single teaching language in the reception classes, creation of French-speaking classes in the secondary sector. In her conclusion, the author suggests that the reception classes should be adapted to the diversity of the pupils and the changing nature of immigration. Guidelines specifying their purpose should be laid down by the

Economic and Social Council in 1989 on the economic, financial, social and demographic situation of the country: "*Luxembourg cannot continue to neglect the skills potential of its immigrant population by imposing upon it excessive or inappropriate language requirements*".

As for the *specific classes* given in French, they have been made available to pupils accepted for the entrance examination in the 7th grade of technical secondary education but experiencing difficulties in German (which is taught by a special method). From 1992-93, pilot classes have been launched in the 7th grade of technical secondary education, while others were set up in 1994/95 in two regionally-based secondary schools providing technical education in the lower cycle. They are already functioning throughout the middle cycle of the vocational system, and those for the lower cycle (7th, 8th and 9th grades) should all be operational between 1994 and 1996.

The third structure comprises the *integration classes* (7th, 8th and 9th grades) in German, intended to provide intensive tuition in that language to new arrivals between the ages of 12 and 15. The classes are designed to smooth the transition from the reception classes to mainstream education and are functioning in two technical secondary schools for the school year 1994/95.

The priority education zones in Belgium

The special nature of the Belgian educational system means that a distinction has to be made between regions. In the Flemish community, the "allophonic"²⁵⁴ first arrivals benefit from specific measures at nursery and primary levels for all types of teaching (ordinary, special and temporary). In some districts, reception schools are designated to receive them (30 in all in the Flemish community) and enable them to learn Dutch as quickly as possible to enable them to continue their studies in secondary education. For non-Dutch-speaking newcomers over the age of 12, a temporary educational system has been set up. The size of these classes is limited to 13 pupils, who receive at least 28 hours of lessons a week and special training.

The French-speaking community differs, first of all, in having a dual mechanism of positive discrimination: one element comprises increased resources for nursery schools with a high percentage of disadvantaged children, and the other is a scheme known as "*school success association*", aimed at primary schools with a high population of foreign children and/or those from disadvantaged backgrounds. An annual budget of 400 million Belgian francs has been earmarked for this purpose. But the essential scheme is undertaken in the ZEPs (priority education zones) through the programmes designed to counter failure and dropping-out in primary and secondary education. Within this framework, specific cultural features take second place, in principle, to combating the

government. They should be organized in levels, preventing them from being isolated in an environment where there are no Luxemburgish children. From the teaching standpoint, it is necessary to provide programmes and teaching aids and to offer specific training for the teachers.

²⁵⁴ This term is used for any pupil who is not Belgian or Dutch, was not born in Belgium or the Netherlands, does not have Dutch as a mother tongue and lacks sufficient mastery of the language to follow the courses successfully.

dropping-out phenomenon²⁵⁵. These programmes concern 37 primary and lower secondary schools in five districts of the Brussels-Capital Region. After an assessment, the ZEP Committee laid down three guidelines for the renewal of these programmes: the development of libraries/documentation centres, an increase in the number of cultural events, and social mediation (by social assistants). The annual budget is 75 million francs.

Additional resources have been made available to the schools in the Brussels-Capital Region and in certain disadvantaged districts where schools have "a sufficiently high percentage" of pupils from immigrant backgrounds. These schools are to embark on a campaign to prevent pupils falling behind and to draw up a programme of extramural events in collaboration with other establishments, socio-cultural centres and organisations for combating poverty. In addition, social and vocational integration schemes have been launched which are aimed at the 16-18 age group.

Portugal: tackling poverty comes before school support

For some of these children, the need for food may take precedence over school support. An example can be found in Portugal, where it was noted that once they had gone home, in their parents' absence, they had nothing to eat. Since then, some schools, especially those attended by the children of the PALOP minorities, receive "priority assistance". They have an additional budget from the Ministry of Education, handled through the town halls, to ensure that these children receive a light meal every day.

The teaching staff believe it is very important to make the scheme a general one and to provide lunch for all children in the poorest districts. In some districts they have access to centres run by Misericordia, a charitable religious institution which provides them with a meal and keeps them occupied in their spare time, in return for a contribution which varies according to their parents' incomes. Those whose parents have serious economic difficulties also receive footwear, a raincoat, an umbrella and 2,900 escudos for school equipment. Despite everything, this sum is totally inadequate; it barely covers the cost of books for those who use them. Often, the teachers themselves pay for their pupils' pencils and exercise books.

Extramural programmes

Extramural events tend to be integrated into the broader landscape of youth policy, involving the Ministries of Education, Social Affairs, Youth and Sport. However, because they often have an aspect of delinquency prevention, the Ministries responsible for Internal Security and Justice are also involved. In all cases, these schemes are aimed at the most disadvantaged and support the work of associations involved with these groups.

The security contracts in Belgium partly conform to this model. They support projects which combine measures to combat dropping-out, to prevent crime in schools and higher education, and street education (e.g. sporting events, hard-core young people and alternative sanctions, streetworkers and social mediators). Additional support is provided by the Immigrant Policy Promotion Fund through its investment in a sports infrastructure for

²⁵⁵ The Italian, Spanish, Moroccan, Portuguese and Turkish authorities have nevertheless been asked to cooperate in devising schemes specifically aimed at their nationals.

young people. The baton is picked up at regional level by substantial funds devoted to management training and projects to encourage the integration of young people from immigrant backgrounds.

In the Flemish community, the focus is on giving young people a sense of responsibility. A decree on Special Youth Aid Committees stipulates that each committee which has more than 5% of non-European immigrants in its area must recruit at least one of them. In addition, to ensure that social service activities are better geared to the needs of young people of foreign origin, it was decided in 1993 automatically to record information on the national origins of people benefiting under the Special Youth Aid programme.

In the French community, the emphasis is on the need for more consistent social and cultural activity at district level. The conviction is that social integration will only become a reality if the activities of all operators, public and private, are better coordinated. This presupposes harmonising schemes and assistance in relation to culture, health, teaching and any other institution acting on behalf of young people.

In France, there are two broad types of scheme: the AEPS (extramural educational events) and the "School Solidarity" networks. The AEPS were set up in order to develop, within an associative framework, events designed for young foreigners encountering problems at school²⁵⁶. The proposed activities - taking place outside school hours and the school environment - are intended to develop and consolidate the habits of reading and written and oral expression, knowledge of the environment, etc. They are intended to be complementary to those that take place in school, and assume extensive interaction between organisers and teachers. They are aimed primarily (though not exclusively) at young foreigners or people of foreign origin enrolled in primary schools and in the observation cycle of the secondary schools (6th and 5th grades). Over ten years, the system has been a real success. In 1992-93, 2300 courses were organised, attended by 35,000 children - a 16-fold increase since 1982. Complementing the AEPS, the more recent "*school solidarity*" networks are aimed at providing support on a more personalised basis and one which is better targeted both on the key subjects (French, mathematics, modern languages, etc.) and on the key events of the school curriculum. This programme is aimed at pupils from underprivileged backgrounds in the 4th and 3rd grades, and the vocational secondary schools of second grade and higher, who are encountering problems in various disciplines, or in doing their school work. Set up at the start of the 1992/93 school year²⁵⁷, the experiment was repeated in 1993/94 and 1994/95²⁵⁸.

²⁵⁶ The first AEPS (extramural educational events) date from 1982. They were set up on an experimental basis in 14 departments and financed (mainly) by the Social Action Fund for immigrant workers and their families (FAS). Since then, various pieces of legislation (Social Affairs/National Education) have further developed the mechanism, changing its geographical basis, the make-up of the target public and the type of activities. Current arrangements were laid down in a circular of 10 March 1990.

²⁵⁷ DPM [Directorate of Population and Migration] Circular No. 92-22 of 27 August 1992.

²⁵⁸ In 1993-94 it covered 77 locations and about 2000 teenagers in four regions (Ile de France, Nord Pas de Calais, PACA [Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur], Rhône Alps). For 1994-95, it has been extended to eleven more departments (DPM/DAS [directorate of social action] circular No. 94-23

Extramural activities with an intercultural purpose

In Luxembourg, this type of scheme benefits from a clearer-cut determination to create intercultural awareness. They are not aimed at the same public as in France or Belgium, nor do they serve the same purposes. The emphasis is more on exchanges between higher secondary schools in various countries, organised either by public institutions or by non-governmental organisations, or within the context of bilateral relations between Luxembourg and other European States.

The Ministry for Youth showed its determination to promote the European aspect in schools by organising, in 1992, the Forum for a Multicultural Europe, and by creating, in partnership with Luxembourg's Europe Institute, the European Centre for International Exchanges and Training. This centre has itself initiated international contacts, both through its own programmes and through those of the European Community ("Youth for Europe", "European Dimension at School", etc.). Finally, the "*Daring to Live Together*" prize has been set up by the Intercultural Fund to reward initiatives by children or adults promoting integration and coexistence between immigrants and native Luxemburgers.

The non-governmental organisations, too, have been active in this area. The Congress of Foreigners' Associations is encouraging an increase in periods spent abroad, and the ASTI [association for the support of immigrant workers] is working on an interesting experiment in the field of language visits to German families for young immigrant children between the ages of 11 and 15. ASTI has also opened a day centre (called "Kannernascht") for children from two districts of Luxembourg city with a high proportion of foreign families. The organisation has an "open house" project based on district community work and offering a joint parent/teacher effort for monitoring the progress of children. The main subjects are supposed to be homework assistance, leisure activities and teaching activities based on tolerance and acceptance of cultural differences.

Pre-school education

Although it is important to encourage support for children from underprivileged backgrounds throughout their schooling, the important thing is to prevent a gradual slide into backwardness, failure and exclusion. In this context, the situation is the same everywhere - more and more children are giving cause for concern even at the age they first start school. Inadequate mastery of the language of instruction is the clearest manifestation of this, but it also extends to basic behavioural patterns and, in some cases, the essential motor coordination. Concern with this question seems to be greatest in Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Denmark.

The Luxembourg Ministry of Education attaches great importance to pre-school education. A study programme on knowledge of the Luxembourgish language has been launched in association with the ISERP. Initial findings indicate that the language is virtually unknown to young Portuguese children entering kindergarten, whether they were born in Luxembourg or not. They are already at a disadvantage over Luxembourg nationals of the same social origin by the time they enter primary school. The same finding applies to the Netherlands as regards children from minorities who, frequently, are significantly

backward by the time they enter school. New measures have been decreed in an attempt to remedy this.

Since the start of the 1993-94 school year, kindergarten attendance has become compulsory in Luxembourg for any child reaching the age of 4 by 1 September that year. Specific teaching aids, tested in pre-school classes during the previous year, have been made available to all teachers at this level. Finally, a study entitled "Décolap" (development of linguistic skills in kindergarten) was launched in 1993 and relates to an assessment of the methods of learning and mastering Luxemburgish.

In the Netherlands, the authorities have attempted to improve coordination between the pre-school schemes of the Ministry of Social Affairs (VWS) and those under the authority of the Ministry of Education. An initial project christened "SpeelGoed", initiated by the city of Rotterdam and intended to benefit children from the poorest districts, has received a grant of 8 million florins from the two ministries to increase reception capacities and the number of teachers. A second initiative, known as "Opstap" and intended for children of pre-school age and their mothers, comprises instruction given at home by a "neighbourhood mother" generally of the same origin and trained for the purpose²⁵⁹. The 1993 plan, which envisaged a tenfold increase in the capacities of this second programme over four years, has nevertheless been radically revised. The available financing allows for the number of projects to be no more than doubled in two years. The programme, designed to involve 5000 "neighbourhood mothers", has been revised downwards to 520.

A comparable scheme has been launched in Denmark, at the instigation of some sixty local authorities. A further objective is to encourage the learning of Danish among pre-school-age children by developing activities for them and their mothers and increasing the opportunities for free reception in the nursery classes. In addition, the sum of DKR 100 million over four years has been allocated to Municipal Commission projects. The ministry has subsidised 108 initiatives (Danish lessons, catch-up courses, intercultural education, etc.) covering all age groups, subjects and regions.

The socio-professional integration of young people from immigrant backgrounds

At the end of their compulsory schooling, and sometimes even well before, more and more underprivileged young people are having to confront the transition to working life or vocational training under extremely bad conditions. As always, this transition is more difficult to negotiate for those of foreign origin, who have built up negative experiences over their school days and experience more problems than average in finding jobs²⁶⁰.

It was to meet these difficulties that the Danish Ministry of Education launched, in 1993, a plan known as "*Training for all*", intended for unqualified young people. This plan is

²⁵⁹ A programme known as "Opstapje" has been launched for children between the ages of 2 to 4 and their mothers.

²⁶⁰ This point too is included in the new Objective 3 which followed the revision of the ESF in 1993 and whose aims include making vocational integration easier for young people, supporting those exposed to the risk of exclusion in the employment market, and reducing the risks of marginalization of the children of immigrant workers.

based on a two-year basic training course, improved academic and vocational guidance and an information campaign. In addition, a programme known as "*Youth guarantee*" provides for training or work experience to be made available to all 18-24-year-olds, without discrimination as to origin. This should be particularly beneficial to the very large number of young foreigners who find access to vocational training, and even more so, access to the employment market, barred to them. Another structure, *Youth school*, also exists for this group, alongside ordinary school, and is intended for those who enter the country late or are experiencing serious difficulties at the end of their compulsory school career.

In the Netherlands, the authorities have also tried to reduce inequality of access to the apprenticeship system which has long been geared essentially to young Dutch people. Legislation (the SAL) has been adopted to encourage collaboration between the apprentice schools and the regional organisations working with minorities²⁶¹. This change has been only partially beneficial. The quantitative objectives have been achieved, but the difficulties facing minorities are far from having disappeared: in 1991, a quarter of those enrolled had had no apprenticeship contract. A new regulation is in preparation - the *Kaderregeling Bedrijfstaks gewijze Scholing* [Framework Regulation on Industrial Training - KBS] - which envisages a more efficient and simpler financing system.

In Belgium, moves have been made in a similar direction. Some are national, while others are under the responsibility of the Communities. At national level, three important decisions should be emphasised. The first is that the subject of employment for the young has been added to the objectives of the FIPI (immigrant policy promotion fund). The second is the plan by the public services to appoint consultants specially trained in dealing with young job-seekers of foreign origin. The third is the programme to find jobs for those aged between 16 and 25 who live in the priority action zones (ZAP). In the Flemish Community, a standing working group, known as the "*at-risk group*", has been set up (Decree of 4 May 1994) within each sub-regional committee of the Flemish Office of Employment and Vocational Training²⁶². This group's mandate is to promote the vocational integration of at-risk groups by drawing up a regional action scheme and supporting all initiatives which encourage the stated objective.

Nine immigrant counsellors have been recruited as "placement officers" by the Employment Office and, by way of exception to the existing regulations, applications by non-EU nationals have been accepted. This initiative fulfils the Office's commitment to assist the vocational integration of immigrants under an agreement concluded in 1992 with the Royal Commission on Immigrant Policy and the Ministry of Employment and Labour. Various authorisations and grants have been given to organisations acting, within the Flemish Community of the Brussels-Capital Region, on behalf of underprivileged groups and for the integration of immigrants. The criteria are that these organisations or associations should include a majority of Dutch-speaking members, that their management

²⁶¹ For the school year 1994-95, 76 projects were approved, involving 813 pupils belonging to ethnic minorities and designed to enable them to find an employer for their apprenticeship.

²⁶² The regional coordinator of the "Flemish Committee for Migrant Integration" has been invited to join this group.

should be Dutch-speaking and that all their publications should be in Dutch. Clearly, the quality of project was less important than the linguistic criterion.

New legislative initiatives for foreigners in Germany and Luxembourg

In Germany, legislation on continuing training has been amended to take in all foreigners who have worked for a minimum of four years. Previously, admission was open only to those holding unlimited residence permits. For their part, the IG Metall (metal-workers' trade union) and the Arbeitgeberverband Gesamtmetall (metal-working industry employers' association) want apprentice courses in metal-working skills to be expanded to embrace interpersonal skills and tolerance. There is a special guide for apprentices dealing with xenophobia and racism. Finally, the German Minister for Labour in 1994 earmarked the sum of DM 88 million for, in essence, the vocational and language training of foreign workers and their families, especially women and young people.

In Luxembourg, the innovation has come from the law establishing the preparatory system for technical education, tabled in the Lower House in July 1993 and adopted unanimously on 5 May 1994. This preparatory system, which is in line with an educational policy directed towards vocational training of young people, was integrated into technical secondary education with effect from the school year 1994-95, replacing "complementary education"²⁶³ which was opened primarily to pupils from underprivileged social classes and a majority of foreign pupils.

For the politicians, the important thing was that this form of instruction, bringing together the "*rejects of the normal education system*", should lose its status as a "ghetto", an education without a future²⁶⁴. The purpose of the preparatory system is to offer vocational opportunities to the most underprivileged pupils, giving as many as possible of them the chance to acquire a qualification. More than the change of structure, it is the teaching concept which deserves greater credit: a modular course based on cumulative units, with work in small groups and personalised socio-educational back-up.

In the autumn of 1993, a new training course in the form of cumulative modular units was introduced into the teaching system, the *CITP (vocational initiation certificate)*, which functioned in five technical secondary schools during the school year 1993-94²⁶⁵. This training, carried out over a period of from 2 to 4 years, is designed for pupils with learning difficulties and is intended to bring them, in two stages, to the point of

²⁶³ Complementary education was introduced in 1963. Its three objectives were to enhance primary education, to initiate practical training and to guide pupils in their choice of a profession.

²⁶⁴ In the Draft of Law No. 3816 establishing a preparatory system for technical secondary education, its authors list the features of this kind of "education with no future": absence of any prospects of vocational qualifications, alarming reduction in numbers, concentration of pupils at a very low academic level, enormous range of pupils, unsuitability of syllabuses and content, disparity of methodological approaches, lack of a reference base that can be used to define training.

²⁶⁵ On the basis of Article 12 of the Law of 4 September 1990 on the reform of technical secondary education.

qualification in certain vocations. The other major decision, intended to reduce the inequalities from which young foreigners suffer, is the possibility in future of being questioned in their preferred language (German or French) in all examinations leading to the CATP (certificate of technical and vocational aptitude). It will also be possible, in future years, to follow a French-speaking vocational training course leading to the CATP and the technician's diploma. Only the technical system leading to the baccalauréat will not have a French-speaking parallel alternative. This being so, the organisation of these classes still encounters great practical difficulties, relating both to the training of tutors in a German-speaking environment and to textbooks which are not suited to the new programmes and methods. The need, therefore, is to overcome the - not entirely unreasonable - reluctance of those who fear that, unless they have good mastery of German, their children will be unable to take a course leading to the technical baccalauréat.

THE NEED FOR A GLOBAL EDUCATIONAL STRATEGY

The long-term settlement of foreign workers in their host countries, the development of their family lives and, as a consequence, the increasing extent of the need for schooling on the part of the younger generations living there, long ago began to strain the capacity for integration of the educational systems in the EU Member States.

Initially, the solutions offered were in the nature of transitional measures. They echoed those which, during the 1960s, were designed to provide workers with rapid instruction in the languages of the host countries and to encourage their children's instruction in their mother tongues, preparing for what was then regarded as an inevitable return to their home countries. At best, the objective was to adapt the "transient pupils" to the requirements of the school curriculum, if not to confine them to "parallel" (marginal?) structures, without affecting the general structure of the educational system. This approach was consistent with the approach to all immigration situations in that period. It nevertheless left a lasting, and negative, mark on relations between schooling and immigration. The plurality that immigration brings is disruptive in two ways: for the school, in that it upsets the apparent order and balance, and for the children, because it is perceived as a handicap that needs to be reduced as soon as possible.

In the 1980s, all the Member States had to admit that the transitional measures were unworkable in the face of a reality which had nothing transitional about it. The pattern of migration - as they gradually became aware - enforces more sweeping changes in educational systems. This was confirmed by the Luxembourg Government when, in July 1989, it emphasised that *"the high percentage of children with immigrant parents represents a real challenge to the national school system"*.

The disadvantage is that it is already necessary to take major action to redress the negative effects of the initial approach. School, designed to be the anchor point in the process of integration, has paradoxically become an instrument of downward social mobility. And, in doing so, it is failing in its mission to perpetuate social cohesion.

"School is more a place of failure than of success for young people from immigrant backgrounds: the imperfections of the system and, in particular, its inability to deal with the ethnic and socio-cultural diversity are resulting in massive academic failure, with all the risk of socio-economic marginalisation which that involves through the lack of vocational qualifications to which it leads."

Intercultural education - myth or reality?

The above statement comes from Belgium, but is valid everywhere. Although it is important not to forget the genuine successes which, here and there, give the lie to this negative assessment, a record of failure dominates the scene. The same theme arises everywhere, in Greece and Portugal with their recent tradition of immigration, as well as in the more experienced Netherlands and Luxembourg. Everywhere, the consensus is that today's educational systems are unable to meet the needs of children from immigrant backgrounds.

In this respect, the 1990s will be a truly revolutionary time for all educational administrators and teachers who - like it or not - will have to adapt their structures and their vocabulary to the concept of intercultural education, if only to refute its relevance.

This concept, which suffers as much from the perverse effects of fashion as it does from the denigration of those who reject all forms of change, needs to be clarified. We suggest that the term *intercultural teaching* should be applied to any work on cultures which seeks not to eradicate the differences between them or their potential for conflict, but to bring pupils to a mutual discovery of the richness of their heritage, including all that entails in the way of a sometimes contradictory view of the world. The issue here is that school should be a place where children learn tolerance, critical open-mindedness and respect for the ways in which people are different.

The Commission of the European Communities, very mindful of the political dimension of this tricky matter, has long been advocating integrating this instruction into the framework of the campaign against racism and antisemitism. A resolution by the Council and the representatives of the Member States²⁶⁶ reiterates this, and emphasises the need, from this standpoint, for greater cooperation between the EU partners in educating the children of immigrants. The first requirement, here as in any other school activity, is to impart recognised knowledge through verifiable forms of learning.

Among the subjects which dominate the debate today, the most important are certainly concerned with the purposes of mother-tongue instruction, the capacity of schools to accommodate cultural diversity, and the way in which the system is organised to tackle the processes of social and cultural segregation.

As far as mother-tongue instruction is concerned, the unanimous aim is to bring it out of its "isolation" and to take away its status as something alien to the school institution. It was against this background that the Dutch Centre for Immigrants dubbed "offhand" the Government's proposals reducing the problems of immigrant pupils to mere linguistic handicaps, without considering them within the framework of a consistent overall policy. These views tie in with the conclusions of the report by the Office for the Socio-Cultural Plan which, explaining the problems of children from ethnic minorities, emphasises the inadequacies of the school itself, its curricula and the teachers' performance.

In other words, learning the language in school is not the sole solution to the problem of backwardness, dropping-out and academic failure experienced by children and young people from immigrant backgrounds. The very purpose of that learning is being modified. It can no longer be a mere response to a specific need experienced by transient immigrants. It needs to be, within the school institution, a reflection of the cultural diversity of society which it is the school's mission to illustrate, establish and valorise.

The issue, then, is more one of a renewal of policies and teaching practices in order to adapt them to existing realities. This also requires a new relationship of trust between all concerned: the children, the teachers and the school institution as a whole.

²⁶⁶ Resolution on the fight against racism and xenophobia of 29 May 1990. OJ 157, 27 June 1990.

Realising the potential of the foreign pupil and of his cultural heritage is thus one of the great challenges to educational renewal. The foreign pupil has to be perceived as a source of wealth that can be shared with his school fellows and not as a source of problems that cause damage to all. This requires much more than the mere marginal teaching of a language, especially where this is stigmatised by arranging the teaching outside school hours.

Positive discrimination or reasoned distribution

Finally, as regards tackling social and cultural discrimination, associated as they are with the problems of "concentration" and "flight" that have already been mentioned, two courses of action are now under consideration. One comprises establishing inter-school coordination to achieve a better distribution - as regards both quantity and quality - of the pupils from a given area, in order to avoid "ghetto" phenomena. The other is more concerned with developing a policy of positive discrimination in favour of schools in the most unfavourable environments, although there is nothing to rule out the possibility - perhaps another subject for debate - of combining the two approaches.

The case of Belgium is exemplary from this point of view since both solutions are (contradictorily?) recommended. This is because of the particular way in which the Belgian educational system is organised, being within the jurisdiction of the linguistic communities and not of the federal state. In the Flemish community, a priority education policy in favour of immigrants was inaugurated in 1991. It is based on six essential principles, including dispersion under a distribution plan associated with a charter of non-discrimination²⁶⁷. The principle is one of avoidance of excessive concentrations of underprivileged children, and especially "underprivileged non-national" children, combined with compliance with the principle of non-discrimination in their "reasonable" distribution over the various schools.

In the French community, the dispersion plan and the non-discrimination pact are totally rejected. The system is judged to be unrealistic and to impinge on liberties. The alternative is "positive discrimination" in favour of schools with large numbers of underprivileged children, on the basis of the principle that "*fairness requires unequal treatment of unequal situations*". The objective, then, is to provide effective support to the schools whose task is hardest by allocating them more resources.

Even if the soundness of their logic is accepted, the two systems are at risk of producing unintended effects. The danger of the principle of distribution is that it can itself become a source of further discrimination, for example by authorising schools to refuse to enrol "non-native" pupils on the ground that they have already reached their quota. As for the logic of positive discrimination, at least three conditions need to be in place if it is not to produce undesirable effects.

First, it would be appropriate for the additional financing to be conditional - in other words, backed up by a regular assessment of the benefit which the most underprivileged

²⁶⁷ The other principles are: improving the quality of the teaching of Dutch as a second language; teaching of immigrants' own languages and cultures; intercultural teaching; greater parental involvement; improved reception of new arrivals.

children derive from it. Secondly, it would be necessary to prevent the nationality and number of foreign children from being the only indicators by which schools are classified - other economic and social criteria relating to the parents' situation should also be taken into account. The third imperative would be to link the finance to increased opportunities for success for the underprivileged children. This criterion would be a powerful incentive to educational research and innovative forms of teaching, to the benefit of those who encounter the greatest handicaps.

Here again we find further confirmation that there is no single solution to the problem of backwardness, dropping-out and academic failure among children and young people from immigrant backgrounds. Nor is there any reliable solution to the question of specificity, unless we start seeing it in the context of a delicate social balance. Cultural specificity, or more accurately cultural specificities, are today integral realities of our societies, and that is how they have to be perceived by the educational system.

This is the real challenge to a new educational strategy. It must meet the aims of integration and social cohesion, and be an instrument for combating discrimination. This involves both the need to ensure that all are equal before knowledge, and a need to recognise the cultural diversity of the school population. This is, clearly, a public service mission.

List of requirements for an overall strategy

To say the least, government action is not above criticism. The most frequent charge is that of the piecemeal allocation of resources and schemes with no reference to the size of the task or the urgency of given situations. In most Member States, the primary concern is financial. Some observers are even predicting greater difficulties between now and the turn of the millennium. This is an indication of how much innovative experiment will be restricted, except where it offers the opportunity for making even greater savings. And it shows how, from this standpoint, optimism is far from being the order of the day. This, however, must not deter us from formulating a few requirements that the global programme of educational renewal would have to meet.

First requirement: preserving the unified character of the educational systems while adapting them to the new cultural diversity of our societies. The issue here is to ensure that equality for all in terms of education once again becomes a fact. Only the State and the state schools can really undertake this dual requirement: deep-seated unity of the school systems to meet this need for equality, combined with the flexibility to adapt them to the increasing diversity of requirements and population groups.

Second requirement: working towards an adapted form of education capable of getting the best out of the diversity of the school population, following the example of the Jette municipal school. This will require a consistent plan, providing motivation for the teaching staff and for parents who are invited to help assess the progress.

Third requirement: developing exchange arrangements. In this area, more than elsewhere, the development of exchanges is a priority objective. The need is to derive benefit from every success and, by popularising these experiments and their educational innovations, to demonstrate the benefit that can be derived, in the school context, from pupils' cultural diversity. Analysis, experiment, cooperation - everything here is beneficial

to exchange, and it must be constantly encouraged, if only to explain to people that these are problems which concern us all. The Union and the European Parliament encourage these activities and work to facilitate them.

Fourth requirement: **training and mobilising the teachers**. This training needs to be aimed at initiating them in a form of teaching specific to the reception classes, differentiated education, an intercultural approach to the syllabus, and methods of teaching the national tongue as a foreign language. This requirement is all the more important in that educational funding is suffering from budgetary restraints and it is not obvious how to motivate teachers without offering them additional resources²⁶⁸.

Fifth requirement: **making the teaching of the language and culture of origin a genuine part of the national curriculum**, by resolutely steering it towards intercultural education. This is the way to ensure that this form of instruction complies best with its essential purpose of involving foreign pupils in integration.

Sixth requirement: **developing school support** for underprivileged children. This can take very different forms: catch-up courses, student counselling, psychological support, social and family aid, simple but effective maintenance, organisation of work teams of pupils, special occasions, etc. This support needs to be designed in a manner such as to prevent failure rather than rectify it. Consequently, it needs to be backed up by wider access to pre-school education, special support for language learning and a reduction in class sizes in schools where there are a large proportion of underprivileged children.

Seventh requirement: **opening up the school to the families**, to create an improved dialogue between all those participating in the children's education and make the schools themselves aware of the realities of their environment.

The school is not alone

However, the dual ambition stated earlier - an equal right to education and a teaching system with a unified character - loses all its meaning if the social and cultural segregation which it is intended to combat is paralleled by an urban segregation which divides the system between successful and unsuccessful schools. As is the title of a work recently published in Luxembourg puts it, "*School is not alone*"; it cannot be isolated from its economic, social and cultural environment.

A school in an impoverished area cannot be a protected fortress in a precarious world, and it cannot be asked to perform tasks which are none of its business. Pupils' environment (parents' accommodation, employment, income and health) exercises a decisive influence on their success or failure, whether they be national or foreign. No educational innovation, then, however successful, will be able to make up for the failings of a poor economic policy. Without the future prospects and hopes of social advancement which give a purpose to compulsory schooling, the educational strategy will remain an empty shell.

²⁶⁸ Luxembourg provides an example of how the production of substantial teaching aids appropriate for a multicultural population generated little response. Many teachers failed to attend the continuing training sessions, despite financial incentives. The events intended to familiarize them with "integrated courses" and intercultural education were abandoned for lack of applicants.

"Ensuring equal opportunities of success for all children is thus a national challenge which the whole of society has to meet: it goes far beyond anything schools can do. Left to themselves, schools will ultimately not be able to guarantee every individual the equality of opportunity to which he is entitled to aspire."²⁶⁹

The broad lines of educational policy at Community level

The changes described above - rapidly changing migration patterns, permanent population settlement, growing diversity of the cultural origins of school populations - have been very extensively taken into account in the activities and thinking of the Commission, which has made radical efforts to restructure the broad lines of its educational policies.

Anxious, in this area as in others, not to override the principle of subsidiarity, it decided in 1990 to suspend its support for national and local experiments in favour of networks bringing together practitioners, experts and civil servants from the various Member States to work on projects of joint interest²⁷⁰.

The Commission sees the function of these networks as being to develop an across-the-board approach to questions of common interest, e.g. training educational personnel to deal with intercultural conflicts within schools, learning the language of the host country, and cooperation between schools and businesses to facilitate the integration into the labour market of young immigrants who have failed at school. Other, less numerous networks are more concerned with the potential or difficulties specific to certain communities.

At the same time, three other priorities have been set: a common fund of knowledge, improved indicators, and better exchange of information and experience among the EU partners. In December 1991, a meeting of senior education officials suggested improving the available statistics, promoting comparative research, and establishing a Community cooperation network to exchange experience and information between education administrators and practitioners in the major urban centres of the Community²⁷¹.

Since then, a pilot project has been set up between six major cities of the EU, specifically devoted to the teaching of the host-country language, and work has begun on the statistics, bringing together the competent departments of the Member States and Commission. All these projects have benefited from a new budget heading set up in 1991, at the initiative of the European Parliament, to promote intercultural education within the Community.

In more general terms, the Commission is stressing the key role of education and teaching in the policy of integrating immigrants and their children. In its communication to the

²⁶⁹ "L'école luxembourgeoise face au défi de l'intégration des enfants d'origine étrangère" [Luxembourg's schools and the challenge of integrating children of foreign origin], page 3.

²⁷⁰ cf. "Rapport sur l'éducation des enfants de migrants dans l'Union européenne" [Report on the education of the children of immigrants in the European Union], COM (94) 80 final.

²⁷¹ Note to the member of the education committee: Integration in a pluralist Europe and the role of education, Presidency conclusion, 12 December 1991, SN 1217/92 (EDUC)

Council and European Parliament of 23 February 1994, it recalls the principles of the Treaty establishing the EU, and in particular Article 126, in respect of which it notes that those principles are a "*pledge of democracy and solidarity*"²⁷². The main aim is to offer equality of opportunity to all young people in the EU, whatever their origin or nationality.

In point of fact, this aim has been clearly formulated for nearly twenty years. It appears explicitly in a Council Resolution and Directive dating, respectively, from 1976 and 1977. The former²⁷³ establishes that any initiative concerning the education provided to the children of Community immigrants must also benefit those whose parents are nationals of third countries. The latter²⁷⁴ records the Council's commitment to combat discrimination based on origin or nationality. But the desire expressed by European bodies - the Commission of the European Communities, the European Parliament and the Council of Europe - that school systems in the EU should resolutely set their faces towards a genuine intercultural approach is still far from being received favourably and enthusiastically in all quarters. Member States' attitudes differ depending on how long immigration has been a factor there, the cultural origins of the immigrants and, above all, the underlying social philosophy.

²⁷² Communication by the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on immigration and asylum policy, 23 February 1994 (COM [94] 23)

²⁷³ Resolution by the Council of Education Ministers of 9 February 1976 on the programme of priority actions in education, OJ C 38, 19 February 1976.

²⁷⁴ Directive of 25 July 1977 relating to the school education of the children of immigrant workers, OJ L 199, 6 August 1977.

European Commission

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Claude-Valentin Marie

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