



Quality in Gender+ Equality Policies

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Report Analysing Intersectionality in Gender Equality Policies for Belgium and the EU

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1. INTRODUCTION¹

This STRIQ-report, QUING-Deliverable 47, analyses intersectionality in the gender equality policies of Belgium. As this report will show, the concept of intersectionality is an interesting, but rather complex research paradigm, which aims to enable the research of the interaction of gender with other inequalities. The concept was far from new in 1989, when law professor Kimberlé Crenshaw introduced the actual term ‘intersectionality’ in an article. However, it was Crenshaw’s article that made the concept known, and the author became (one of) the theoretical reference point(s) on intersectionality theory.

The key question that unites all STRIQ-reports on intersectionality within the QUING-project, and that will also play an important role in this document on Belgium, is: ‘what are the implications of the intersection of multiple inequalities for the quality of gender+ equality policies?’ Next to this general phrasing, the Annex to the Contract (p. 32) lists three research questions for STRIQ, namely:

- How are inequalities and their intersections conceptualised in terms of their structure and mechanisms?
- To what extent does context matter in the (re)production of inequalities across Europe?
- What attention must be paid to other structural (in)equalities in the making and implementing of European gender equality policies?

Throughout the research and discussions in this report, these questions will provide helpful guidelines. But, in order to investigate intersectionality in a Belgian context, specific material on the country is needed. That is why the **second chapter** of this STRIQ-report – **Literature review** – aims to contribute to the exploration of the appearance of intersectionality by providing country-specific questions. These are:

- Belgian gender+ equality policy is characterised by fragmentation, or separation of inequality strands, in both legislation and equality bodies. Even the federal Minister of Equal Opportunities, who is responsible for all inequalities, treats gender independently from the other inequalities in her policy plan. In this policy approach then, can the inequalities merge with and influence each other, or does the approach rather form an obstacle for intersectionality in Belgian equal opportunities legislation?
- There has been a shift from gender policy towards diversity policy in Belgian politics. Does a diversity policy that concentrates on a large list of inequalities endanger the attention for gender in equal opportunities policies? Or does it rather open the way to work on intersectionality and take into account how inequalities mutually constitute and affect each other?

¹ The structure of both this introductory chapter and the STRIQ-report for Belgium as a whole is based on the *Possible Structure of Deliverable D47: report analysing intersectionality in gender equality policies for each country and the EU*, prepared by Sylvia Walby and Sofia Strid of the QUING Lancaster University Team.

- At the same time gender mainstreaming is of major concern in Belgium. Does this approach, which is centred around gender, hinder the flexible use of inequalities? Does it stand in the way for an intersectional approach? Or does it rather open the way and create space for new possibilities?

In order to come to these three guiding, country-specific questions and fully understand them, the literature review provides a good starting point. Within this scope, the Belgian academic world, civil society and politics are taken into consideration and compared to international literature on the matter. The first part of the literature review focuses on the concept of intersectionality as it was introduced in an international academic context (Crenshaw) and how the QUING-project makes use of it, in order to move on to how and to what extent intersectionality ‘travelled’ to the Belgian academic world. Secondly, intersectionality is considered in relation to (publications) in Belgian civil society. The third and last part of the literature review researches whether and how intersectionality is present in Belgian policy literature. Here, not only the federal government’s policy texts are at stake: the policy texts of the Belgian regions are explored as well.

The **third chapter** of this STRIQ-report zooms in on **the range of meanings or frames concerning gender equality in gender+ equality policies**. Here, the discussion is divided according to the four QUING-sub-issues: general gender equality, non-employment, intimate citizenship and gender based violence. In the part on general gender equality, firstly, Belgian gender equality policy is elaborated on, placed in a historical perspective, and seen in relation to diversity policy, which currently tends to be of concern in the Belgian context. Secondly, the meaning or frames of gender+ equality policies that come across via frame² analysis and voice³ analysis – and were already discussed in the country reports – are investigated more thoroughly. The non-employment part first elaborates on the connection between the policy area of Labour and Employment and how this has been related to gender equality policies throughout the years (1975-now). The answers to questions such as to what extent the sub-issues of non-employment are (de)gendered, and which frames are of importance are provided via searches in the frame and voice analysis material as well as the country studies. As regards intimate citizenship, the main question to ask, before turning to the actual information on frames and meaning, is how the issue is related to gender equality. In the last part of this chapter, on gender based violence, the historical backdrop of how violence against women is intertwined with gender equality policy is elaborated upon. Lastly, the frames and meanings concerning general gender equality in gender+ equality policies are generated from the frame and voice analysis as well as the country reports.

When the frames and meanings in the Belgian context have been unfolded and discussed, the **fourth chapter** continues on **the range of intersecting inequalities**. A hypothesis that will be

² Frame analysis is defined as follows in the QUING *Frame and voice analysis guidelines*: ‘Frame analysis analyzes the content of policy frames allowing for comparison of frames. A policy frame is defined as “an organizing principle that transforms fragmentary or incidental information into a structured and meaningful policy problem, in which a solution is implicitly or explicitly enclosed (Verloo 2005, 6).’ (QUING 2007, 2).

³ The QUING *Frame and voice analysis guidelines* mentions the divide in voice analysis between ‘two modes that are about who is involved in policy texts’: 1) ‘who is directly speaking’ and 2) ‘who is cited in a text, referred to, and where concepts used come from’ (QUING 2007, 3).

investigated within this respect is that ‘allochthonous⁴ women’ play a fairly important role in Belgian policy and civil society. Is that really the case? And does this idea systematically apply to the four issues the QUING-project concentrates on? Not only political intersectionality is of concern here, structural (and sometimes even representational) intersectionality also appear. Next to policy approach, civil society and its relation to intersectionality are researched, and compared to each other. As in chapter 3, a division is made between the four issues. In the first part on general gender equality machinery and legislation, the Belgian anti-discrimination laws and equality bodies – Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism and Institute for the Equality between Women and Men – are subjected to questions such as if and how intersectionality is of concern and what its meaning is. The following parts on non-employment, intimate citizenship and gender based violence mainly aim to investigate which inequalities have manifested themselves in the frame analysis of the selected sub-issues, and how and if they are related to each other: does intersectionality come across – and in what way – or does it not?

The **fifth chapter** goes more deeply into the question: **what are the implications of different versions of intersectionality for the meaning and practice of gender+ equality?** In order to answer this question in a nuanced and detailed manner, the chapter is divided according to the issues. In the part on general gender equality machinery and legislation, the consistency of the Belgian legislation with the equality bodies is investigated. Further, the implications of the different versions of intersectionality are discussed with respect to non-employment, intimate citizenship and gender based violence. In a conclusive chapter, the various appearances of intersectionality are brought together and compared to each other.

Identifying changes and the relevance of different forms of intersectionality is at stake in the **sixth chapter** of this STRIQ-report. In contrast to most of the other chapters, a division according to the various issues is not needed. A general line will be drawn, based on the information that is provided in the report.

The last chapter, **chapter seven** is the **Conclusion**. Here both the general and country-specific guiding questions that were mentioned in the beginning of this introduction, are recapitulated and provided with answers that have come up during the research in the literature review, the discussions on the range of frames and meanings, the range of intersecting equalities, the implications of the different versions of intersectionality as well as the identified changes.

Terminology: allochthonous?

Throughout this intersectionality report for Belgium, the term ‘allochthonous women’ (*allochtone vrouwen* in Dutch) or ‘allochthonous people’ (*allochtonen* or *mensen van allochtone afkomst* in Dutch) will be used. The concept is frequently utilized in Flemish society: politics, academics, civil society,

⁴ At the end of this Introduction extra information is provided on the term ‘allochthonous’.

media... they all make use of it. But what does 'allochthonous' actually mean? To which groups of people/women does it refer?

The term 'allochthonous' was introduced in 1971 by sociologist, Hilda Verwey-Joker, who was looking for a more neutral alternative for 'immigrant', 'migrant worker' and 'foreigner' (Van Aerschot 2007, 1). In 1998, a first Flemish definition was published in the *Moniteur Belge/Belgisch Staatsblad* within the scope of Flemish policy on ethnic-cultural minorities.⁵ Allochthonous people are:

People who legally reside in Belgium, irrespective of the fact that they have the Belgian nationality, and who comply with one of the following conditions:

- a) At least one of their parents or grandparents was born outside Belgium;
- b) They have a disadvantaged position because of their ethnic origin or their weak socio-economic situation.

In another Flemish definition from 2004⁶, being 'allochthonous' was reduced to being a:

person with a nationality of a country outside of the European Union or person of whom at least one parent or two grandparents have the nationality of a country outside of the European Union.

As Marjan Van Aerschot mentions in her article on the subject, the notable differences in both definitions show that defining 'allochthonous' is a difficult exercise (Van Aerschot 2007, 2). Moreover, in the Netherlands – where the term 'allochthonous' is used as well – yet another definition is provided: 'an allochthonous person is a person of whom at least one parent was born abroad' (quoted in Van Aerschot 2007, 1). In an article on the intersection of migration and gender equality in the Netherlands, Conny Roggeband and Mieke Verloo have also commented on the terminology. They add to Van Aerschot's definition that in the public debates in the Netherlands, 'second- and third-generation migrants, although often naturalised Dutch citizens, are still labelled "allochthonous"' (Roggeband and Verloo 2007, 261).

Even though the term seems to refer to a large group of people in Belgian society, in everyday use 'allochthonous' is often interpreted in a much more narrow manner in which 'allochthonous' people are often seen as – for instance – Muslims, or as people from African countries. Within the same lines, 'allochthonous' often has a negative sound to it. Literally, the word means 'from somewhere else, not native, foreign'. Allochthonous (they) is distinguished from 'autochthonous' (we): 'original inhabitant of a country'. This autochthonous group sets an example; it becomes a norm of what the allochthonous group should aim for. Helma Lutz and Gloria Wekker also elaborate on the distinction between allochthonous and autochthonous, and refer to them as 'Other' and 'Self'. According to them, the terminology discussed here 'provides a hidden manner to talk about "race" and class, without explicitly using the terms' (Wekker and Lutz 2001, 28).

⁵ Flemish Decree of 28 April 1998 on the Flemish policy concerning ethnic-cultural minorities. Published in the *Moniteur Belge/Belgisch Staatsblad* of 19 June 1998.

⁶ Flemish Decree of 24 December 2004 to promote and support the equal opportunities and diversity policy in the Flemish administration. (article 2, §1, 3)

The negative connotation is for example clear in the 1998 definition in Flanders: here the, rather blunt, remarks 'disadvantage' and 'weak socio-economic situation' denote that 'allochthonous' always seems to entail some kind of problem.

The definitions of the terminology have already pointed out that in Belgium, 'allochthonous' is a term that is mainly used in Flanders, by the Dutch-speaking. The French-speaking Belgians do not use it and even oppose it. They make use of *personnes issues de l'immigration* (literally translated into 'persons coming from immigration') and as such do not deal with a definition in which the distinction between 'we' (autochthonous) and 'they' (allochthonous) is so apparent.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this literature review on intersectionality in the Belgian context, attention is paid to publications and debates in the Belgian academic world, civil society and policy-making. These three realms all approach and deal with intersectionality in different ways. The national and international theoretical literature and the Belgian policy texts as well as the ongoing debates on the matter will lead to questions connected to the Belgian experience with intersectionality. They will help to outline the shape and structure of the following sections of the report.

2.1. Intersectionality in the academic world

Even though the notion of intersectionality was already used in academic research in general and in gender and feminist studies in particular, the key articles of UCLA Law professor Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989 and 1991) introduced the concept of 'intersectionality' and firmly placed it on the agenda as a new and promising – according to Nina Yuval-Davis even 'tremendously popular' (Yuval-Davis 2006, 194) – research paradigm. In 1989, Crenshaw originally used the concept of intersectionality 'to denote the various ways in which race and gender interact to shape the multiple dimensions of Black women's employment experiences' (Crenshaw 1991, 1244). The 1991 article 'build(s) on those observations (...) by exploring the various ways in which race and gender intersect in shaping structural, political, and representational aspects of violence against women of color' (Crenshaw 1991, 1244). The author specifically deals with race and gender, but does so to highlight 'the need to account for multiple grounds of identity when considering how the social world is constructed' (Crenshaw 1991, 1244). Here the author points out that next to race and gender, other inequalities can also play a role as regards intersectionality. Crenshaw originally subdivided intersectionality in three categories: intersectionality can either be political, structural or representational⁷ (Crenshaw 1991).

Research within the QUING-project is mainly concerned with political intersectionality. Sylvia Walby interprets political intersectionality as 'political practices of those at points of intersection' (Walby 2007a, 7). Emanuela Lombardo and Mieke Verloo also elaborate on this form of intersectionality, denoting it as pointing 'to the necessity to address the interdependencies between intersecting inequalities because strategies on one axis of inequality are mostly not neutral towards other axes'. For them, political intersectionality 'indicates how inequalities and their intersections are relevant to political strategies' (Lombardo and Verloo forthcoming). Political intersectionality thus signifies how the intersections of inequalities are relevant in a political manner.

Even though political intersectionality is the main concern of this report, structural intersectionality will also play a role, since it will clarify and create a context for the discussions in a

⁷ Representational intersectionality is not a stake in this report. Kimberlé Crenshaw defines representational intersectionality as including 'both the ways in which these images are produced through a confluence of prevalent narratives of race and gender, as well as a recognition of how contemporary critiques of racist and sexist representation marginalize women of colour' (Crenshaw 1991, 1283).

Belgian context. As Emanuela Lombardo and Mieke Verloo have pointed out, in comparison to political intersectionality, structural intersectionality has received more attention in academic studies. According to Lombardo and Verloo, in structural intersectionality 'inequalities and its intersections are directly relevant to experiences of people in society' (Lombardo and Verloo forthcoming). Sylvia Walby states that structural intersectionality refers to 'socially patterned forms of practice' (Walby 2007a, 7). As regards structural intersectionality, the practical experiences of people are concerned. The main questions one can ask within this respect are 'How and when does racism amplify sexism? How and when does class exploitation reinforce homophobia? How and when does homophobia amplify racism?' (Verloo 2006, 213).

In order to fully understand if and how intersectionality works and takes place in the Belgian context, a working definition, which elaborates on the range of different versions by which policies can pay attention to the relation between gender and other inequalities, is provided here⁸. Policies can be single-minded, which means that there is only attention for one inequality strand. Here, no intersectionality takes place. A step further is characterised by the attention for multiple strands that are treated separately from each other. This version is simply called multiple, but different strands and cannot be seen as intersectionality. The next step is additive. Here, on top of one discrimination ground, already disadvantaged groups or persons are seen to suffer from an 'extra' discrimination or disadvantage that originates in another inequality. Here the stage is set for intersectionality. The following version is certainly intersectionality, in which attention is paid to the interaction of multiple inequalities. Another version of intersectionality concerns the attention for the genderedness of structural mechanisms as racism, ethnocentrism and heteronormativity. Here, intersectionality also takes place. A last, and rather ambiguous version, is defined as inarticulate intersectional categories. Here, intersectional categories are mentioned, but they are not accompanied by an articulate vision or conceptualisation of how the inequalities relate to each other. Whether this is intersectionality or not is ambiguous since there is no conceptualisation.

In Belgium's neighbouring country, the Netherlands, Gloria Wekker and Helma Lutz publish theoretical texts on intersectionality. In 'Een hoogvlakte met koude winden', Wekker and Lutz elaborate on the history of gender and ethnicity thinking, and the introduction of intersectionality in the Netherlands (Wekker and Lutz 2001). In 'Zonder blikken of blozen', Helma Lutz (2002) refers to the debates on multiculturalism – she provides the example of for instance headscarves – in the Netherlands to illustrate the importance of intersectionality. She describes both the theory of Susan Moller-Okin who wonders whether feminism is compatible with multiculturalism (Lutz 2002, 8) and voices such as Sawitri Saharso and Sander Gilman (Lutz 2002, 8-9) that oppose that vision and instead focus on the relationship between feminism and multiculturalism. In her discussion of Crenshaw, Lutz adds 14 axis of difference to Crenshaw's list of inequalities which consists of 'gender, ethnicity, class, nationality and sexuality' (Lutz 2002, 13-14) and provides an example of how to apply the theory on a Dutch film. Dutch academics, and specifically Gloria Wekker and Helma Lutz have a certain influence on the breakthrough of intersectionality in Belgium, as will become clear further on.

⁸ A scheme of the working definition can be found in the Appendix of this report, under the title '1. Range of different versions by which policies might pay attention to gender and other inequalities'. This scheme was developed in the Radboud QUING team by Sophie Lauwers, Saskia Martens and Femke van der Wal.

Even though intersectionality has become a 'buzzword' (Davies 2008)⁹ and has been elaborated on in numerous, but mainly Anglo-American articles, in Belgium intersectionality is a fairly young research area that is gradually becoming more and more researched. The researchers mentioned below are not always primarily working on gender, but always focus on the inequalities discussed in QUING and steep them into an intersectional view.

Chia Longman is a doctor in Comparative Science of Culture at Ghent University in Belgium. She wrote a dissertation on the religious practice and identity among strictly Orthodox Jewish women. She has published several articles concerning diversity and intersectionality, both on a theoretical level and from a practical point of view. In 2003, for instance, she wrote an article on how religion is often marginalised in gender studies. (2003). Moreover, according to her, 'religion' is often the missing axis in the construction of identities (Longman 2003, 273). Longman argues that more attention for diversity and intersectionality would result in more openness for the feminist study of religion and consequently, the acceptance of religion in gender studies (Longman 2003, 269). An example of one of Chia Longman's more practical publications on this issue is 'Gendering the diversification of diversity: the Belgian hijab (in) question'. She published this article in 2008 – together with Gily Coene, who also works on and publishes articles concerning intersectionality. The article deals with the currently very heated Belgian debate on the prohibition of the headscarf or *hijab*, migrant women, wear sometimes in public places (such as schools).

One of the Belgian professors who teaches and writes on the concepts of diversity and intersectionality is Magda Michielsens. She is specialised in feminist theories and women in media, and was the Director of the Centre of Women's Studies of the University of Antwerp. She lectured several classes and courses on diversity and intersectionality. However, she is not an advocate of the concepts and criticises the complexity of intersectionality as a theory. Michielsens for instance pities that equality between women and men is not the central interest of equal opportunities policies anymore. Gender equality seems to 'drown in the diversity pool' (Michielsens 2006b, 1). Other inequalities have been added to equal opportunities policies and seem to overshadow gender. Within this list of inequalities, another inequality ground especially has stepped in the limelight: ethnicity and race. Michielsens even states that diversity in Belgium has become the 'flag for anti-racism' (Michielsens 2006b, 3). Since gender seems to be the victim of this new shift, diversity consequently needs to be interpreted as a 'killing concept' (Michielsens 2006a).

Here, we have to go back to neighbouring country, the Netherlands, where Helma Lutz refers to this shift from gender to gender + ethnicity (also named diversity thinking) in her article 'Zonder blikken of blozen' of 2002. She mentions the evolution in time from a) sex to gender, then from b) gender to gender + ethnicity/diversity thinking, and then from c) gender+ ethnicity/diversity to intersectionality (Lutz 2002, 10). This is a short overview of the evolution she mentioned and explained in a former article written together with Gloria Wekker (Wekker and Lutz 2001). The idea of evolution in time that Wekker and Lutz present, is not really theoretically underpinned and Michielsens's claim even shows

⁹ This term was used by Kathy Davis in a recent article, 'Intersectionality as buzzword: a sociology of science perspective on what makes a feminist theory successful', which considers the success of intersectionality. See Bibliography.

that it is questionable whether the last shift (from diversity to intersectionality) comes about in Belgian equal opportunity policies.

When we turn back to the Belgian academics who work on intersectionality, another critical voice is Sarah Bracke, who is both an academic and an activist (she is member of NextGENDERation, see *infra*). She uses the concept of intersectionality in her articles and publications, but tries to avoid the ‘traps’ connected to the difficult methodology as much as possible. Moreover, she does not write about intersectionality as a theory or frame, but only uses the concept. In the summer of 2008, Bracke and Gloria Wekker coordinated a course on intersectionality – ‘Intersecting Identities: Transnationalism, Gender and Power’ – at the Noise European Summer School in Women’s Studies from Multicultural and Interdisciplinary perspectives. This was held at the University of Utrecht (the Netherlands).¹⁰

In Flanders in 2001, the Flemish government installed an Office for Equal Opportunities Policy (Steunpunt Gelijkekansenbeleid) at the University of Antwerp and the University of Hasselt. The academics who work at this Office conduct research to support the policies on equal opportunities, diversity and integration of non-Belgians, and provide information to everyone who is interested in these issues. In the vision of the Office for Equal Opportunities Policy¹¹ it becomes clear how researching various inequalities entailed an urge to merge the inequalities and not only treat them as separate strands. The Office started in 2002 with research on four target groups: women, older people, LGBT’s and allochthonous persons. But, as is stated in its ‘Vision’, the Office became aware ‘that nobody is ‘only’ a man or woman, but always allochthonous or autochthonous, heterosexual or LGBT’¹². Consequently, intersectionality became of greater importance for the researchers of the Office for Equal Opportunities Policy. Some examples of the research¹³ and publications by the Office for Equal Opportunities Policy include:

- Jozefien Godement, Alexis Dewaele and Jef Breda researched the social environment and specific needs of older LGBTs (intersectionality between sexual orientation and age).¹⁴
- K. Levecque, Steven Van den Eede, Ina Lodewyckx and Christiane Timmerman researched the (mental) health of allochthonous people in Belgium (intersectionality between race/ethnicity and health).¹⁵
- Marjan Van Aerschot has researched the situation of self-employed women and how they deal with maternity leave (intersectionality gender, class, family status).¹⁶
- Joz Motmans works on sexual identities, gender and LGBT’s.¹⁷ Currently, he is conducting a

¹⁰ <http://www.genderstudies.nl/summerschool2008/index.php>, accessed 6 October 2008.

¹¹ ‘Visie’: http://www.steunpuntgelijkekansen.be/main.aspx?c=*SGK&n=61096, accessed on 30 September 2008.

¹² ‘Visie’: http://www.steunpuntgelijkekansen.be/main.aspx?c=*SGK&n=61096, accessed on 30 September 2008.

¹³ These are only some examples of the large list of publications of the research staff of the Office for Equal Opportunities Policy. All information can be found on: ‘Publicaties’ http://www.steunpuntgelijkekansen.be/main.aspx?c=*SGK&n=56405, accessed on 30 September 2008.

¹⁴ Godement, Jozefien, Alexis Dewaele and Jef Breda. 2004. *Geen roos zonder doornen: Oudere holebi’s, hun sociale omgeving en specifieke behoeften*. Antwerpen: Steunpunt Gelijkekansenbeleid.

¹⁵ Levecque, Katia, Ina Lodewyckx, Steven Van den Eede and Christiane Timmerman. 2006. *Gezondheid en gezondheidszorg bij allochtonen in Vlaanderen*. Antwerpen: Steunpunt Gelijkekansenbeleid (Consortium: Universiteit Antwerpen – Universiteit Hasselt).

¹⁶ Van Aerschot, Marjan. 2006. *Roze wolk en zwarte sneeuw: moederschapsrust bij zelfstandigen*. Antwerpen: Steunpunt Gelijkekansenbeleid, Consortium Universiteit Antwerpen en Universiteit Hasselt.

¹⁷ Motmans, Joz. 2006. *De transgenderbeweging in Vlaanderen en Brussel in kaart gebracht: organisatiekenmerken, netwerken en strijdpunten*. Antwerpen: Steunpunt Gelijkekansenbeleid, UA-Uhasselt. And: Godement, Jozefien & Motmans,

research on equal opportunities policy and diversity policy.¹⁸

- Tinne Mertens and Nico Steegmans investigated the position of lower-skilled women on the labour market (intersectionality between gender and class).¹⁹

2.2. Intersectionality in civil society

In Belgian civil society, intersectionality gradually becomes discussed as well. In 2004, the Office for Allochthonous Girls and Women (Steunpunt allochtone meisjes en vrouwen) organised a debate on 'multiplied feminism'. This debate was preceded by a presentation of Maayke Botman of the University of Utrecht and NextGENDERation, who introduced the theory of intersectionality (*kruispuntdenken*) and elaborated on its reception in the Netherlands.

During the following discussion, various – Flemish – women's organisations talked about their visions of feminism, diversity and intersectionality. Katrien Bruggeman of the Dutch-speaking Women's Council (Nederlandstalige Vrouwenraad) states that her organisation already makes use of intersectionality, but did not provide any examples. Anne Grauwels of the Women's Consultancy Committee (Vrouwen Overleg Komitee) does not go more deeply into diversity or intersectionality either. Sarah Bracke of NextGENDERation believes it is impossible and artificial to treat various axes separately. Women's organisations should base their politics on intersectionality since gender as a separate inequality constitutes a power mechanism. It is necessary to always deal with gender as related to other inequality strands. NextGENDERation tries to produce critical knowledge and rejects the notion of representation. For Sultan Balli of the Office for Allochthonous Girls and Women 'tailored feminism' is of utmost importance: the central ideas of her organisation are diversity and multiple identities. Throughout the discussion, the headscarf is considered as an important theme for the intersectionality debates within Belgium.

The Dutch-speaking Women's Council elaborated on the subject in one of its dossiers (2005). This dossier defines the concept of intersectionality, outlines its history (from Sojourner Truth to Crenshaw), stipulates how it works (with reference to Mari Matsuda), and relates intersectionality in practice to women's organisations. Only in the end (Vrouwenraad 2005, 3), intersectionality is related to the Women's Council when the question is asked how this organisation can relate to other (women's) organisations with intersectionality in mind. The question is however not answered.

In the Walloon Region, the French-speaking Women's Council (Conseil des Femmes Francophones de Belgique, abbreviated CFFB) represents the interests of the Francophone women's associations. The organisation knows the concept of intersectionality, but has not yet published any articles or other documents in which the issue is theorised, analysed or elaborated upon²⁰. The CFFB claims to take

Joz. 2006. *De fluwelen driehoek nader bekeken: netwerken, ideeën en strategieën binnen het Vlaamse gelijkekansenslandschap van vrouwen- en holebibewegingen*. Antwerpen: Steunpunt Gelijkekansensbeleid, UA-Uhasselt.

¹⁸ 'Naar een geïntegreerd gelijkekansen- of diversiteitsbeleid?' http://www.steunpuntgelijkekansen.be/main.aspx?c=*SGK&n=59966, accessed on 30 September 2008.

¹⁹ Mertens, Tinne and Nico Steegmans. 2006. *Waar zijn alle kapsters naartoe? Positie van lagergeschoolde vrouwen op de arbeidsmarkt*. Antwerpen: Steunpunt Gelijkekansensbeleid, (UA, Universiteit Hasselt).

²⁰ Information provided by CFFB via e-mail, 19 September 2008.

intersectionality into account but it does not link this statement to a practical example. However, the publications of this women's organisation show that in practice, the CFFB pays attention to intersectionalised groups: some of the articles in their quarterly bulletin, *Objectif Femmes*, concern for instance older women, the position of young allochthonous persons who go on holiday in their countries of cultural origin (Morocco and Turkey) and have to deal with migration and marriage. The interest of the CFFB for intersectionality can be interpreted as being structural, because it concerns experiences of people.

The aforementioned Flemish Office for Allochthonous Girls and Women comes across as the most important organisation in Belgium (Flanders) in relation to intersectionality. It was established in 2000 and focuses on intersectionality (*kruispuntdenken*) since it takes allochthonous women as its reference point: they are both women and allochthonous and their experiences should be interpreted at the crossroads of both inequalities. Gily Coene and Chia Longman (2005) interviewed coordinator Judith Perneel and member of staff Nadia Babazia. They confronted the interviewees with a number of critical questions on topics such as the two forms of emancipation (internal and external²¹) and the two sorts of participation (formal and informal²²) the Office uses, the types of feminism allochthonous women reject and take on, the tasks of the Office, forced marriages, empowerment, interculturality, (ex-)Dutch politician Ayaan Hirsi Ali, headscarves and domestic violence.

2.3. Intersectionality in Belgian gender+ equal opportunities policies

Even though on the level of gender+ equality policies both QUING and this intersectionality report mainly examine gender+ equality policies in federal Belgium, the policy actions and plans from the Belgian regions and communities are also interesting to look at. Since an elaborate discussion and comparison of the various gender equality policies across the different political levels of Belgium would be too exhaustive and is not the aim of QUING, next to a basic sketch of the Belgian governments, only a short overview and discussion with the basic notions are provided in this report.

Since 1993, Belgium has a complex federal structure with six governments on the federal, regional and communal level. The federal government comprises the country as a whole (1). Next to this federal government, the regions – based on territory: Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels – and communities – based on language: Dutch-speaking, French-speaking and German-speaking – have different governments. In Flanders for that matter, the Flemish region and Flemish community have joined in one Flemish government (2). The third government is that of the Walloon region (3), the fourth is the French-speaking community (4). Brussels, the capital Belgian city has a region government as well (5). And finally, the German-speaking Belgians are represented in their own community government (6).²³ On the federal and regional levels as well as in the French-speaking

²¹ *Internal emancipation* concerns women's emancipation within the allochthonous community. *External emancipation* concerns the minority position of women within the scope of a majority or dominant society. (Coene and Longman 2005, 30).

²² *Formal participation* has to be interpreted as 'normal participation': working outside the home, being active member of organizations... *Informal participation* concerns taking up an active role within – for instance – the religious community. (Coene and Longman 2005, 31).

²³ See appendix: '2. Belgium: federal state' for an overview of the Belgian governments.

community, gender equality structures have been embedded. The German-speaking community does not have such structures.

Intersectionality is only mentioned as a theoretical concept in the *Policy Plan Equal Opportunities* of the Flemish government. The Flemish Minister of Equal Opportunities, Kathleen Van Brempt²⁴, actually makes use of the theoretical literature by Helma Lutz and Gloria Wekker (Van Brempt 2004, 17) – see part 2, the Literature Review – when she elaborates on intersectionality. In Flanders, ‘next to the differences between women and men, it is of importance to address the differences between women’ (Van Brempt 2004, 24, translation by Martens). Consequently, identities are defined as follows:

Gender, sexual orientation, ethnic-cultural backgrounds, age and possibilities to function are crucial to us all for experiencing our identity. The interpretation of these elements always happens simultaneously and in interaction to each other. These elements of your identity do not have one dimension but are the result of simultaneous crossing patterns of relations and meanings. A ‘pure’ element does not exist: identities are always on the crossroads between these elements.

(Van Brempt 2004, 17, translation by Martens)

Both intersectionality and diversity come across as being of concern in the Flemish equal opportunities policy, which aims to be a dynamic policy since: ‘Equal opportunities is two-way traffic, next to the efforts of the government, the commitment of individuals is important’ (Van Brempt 2004, 16, translation by Martens). Among those individuals, both men and women are target group and responsible actors.

On an abstract and theoretical level, it already has become clear that intersectionality is of importance in the Flemish equal opportunities policy. But is this abstract reference also present in practice, in the implementation of the policy? Or does it rather remain a dead letter and is intersectionality not translated in practice? Consequently, the question that pops up is whether Minister of Equal Opportunities, Van Brempt, knows how to deal with these ‘identities (...) on the crossroads’ in reality.

Throughout the *Policy plan Equal Opportunities* examples are provided of intersectionalised persons. The Flemish Ministry of Equal Opportunities has attention for the discriminations and unequal treatments persons of various inequality groups suffer. In the second chapter, on ‘Inequality illustrated’ (Ongelijkheid in beeld gebracht), references are for example made to allochthonous girls and boys and LGBTs and how they are treated in and by the education system; allochthonous women and men, people with disabilities, LGBTs and low-skilled women within labour and employment; and single, deprived, older and homosexual people who have to find housing. The heteronormativity of homes for the elderly is also elaborated upon. Consequently, the Minister’s starting point is based on intersectionality. Moreover, she states that ‘the Muslim woman’ should not be seen as a static category: all people differ, women differ and Muslim women differ (Van Brempt 2004, 25). When the

²⁴ See appendix: ‘3. Gender+ equality policies in Belgium: Ministers and State Secretaries’.

Policy plan Equal Opportunities zooms in on the 'Challenges' of the Flemish equal opportunities policy in the third chapter, four inequalities are listed separately: gender, sexual orientation, age and disability. However, the independent treatment of these inequalities still entails an intersectional approach: in the part on gender, single mothers, allochthonous women and girls, women with low wages and older women are mentioned; where sexual orientation is at stake, attention is given to allochthonous LGBTs, lesbians and homosexuals; in the part on age wages and housing as well as health and abilities are considered; and finally as regards disability, the intersection with age is the most clear one. The Flemish equal opportunities policy is inclusive, and does not stop with the responsibility of the Minister of Equal Opportunities: all policy domains are responsible, and the Minister of Equal Opportunities has a coordinating function (Van Brempt 2004, 32).

The classic issues and target groups of equal opportunities policy remain of utmost importance, but we must not limit ourselves to these. In an ever changing society new 'inequalities' come about. (...) For these people, equal opportunities policy must make place as well. (...) The ultimate goal is an inclusive society in which everybody gets opportunities and can feel well.

(Van Brempt 2004, 46, translation by Martens)

When taking this policy approach into consideration, it seems that the theoretical reference to Lutz and Wekker as regards intersectionality must not be interpreted as a dead letter. It rather appears that this theory is actually present to create a framework for the practice. Within this scope, in the conclusion of the *Policy plan Equal Opportunities*, the Minister metaphorically writes: 'what does a nice pair of glasses help if you refuse to open your eyes'? (Van Brempt 2004, 46) This metaphor denotes that the Flemish Minister of Equal Opportunities aims to implement the intersectional idea in her policy actions and objectives. She thus makes use of and pays attention to interacting inequalities.

In the *Action Plan* of Brigitte Grouwels, the State Secretary of Equal Opportunities of Brussels, the capital region, intersectionality and diversity appear as well, but in a completely different way. Here, theory does not matter and is not touched upon as this document aims to be 'a tool to empower the position of women in Brussels' (Grouwels 2007, 3).

The State Secretary of Equal Opportunities provides an overview of which issues need to be tackled in order to improve the equal opportunities between women and men. The topics discussed are 1) women and decision-making, 2) women and employment, 3) women and security, and 4) mutual respect between women and men. Here, intersectionality is visible in the specific target groups mentioned. The most important, intersectionalised target groups are 'single women with children' (gender+family/marital status, sometimes + class) and 'allochthonous women' (gender + race/ethnicity, sometimes + class). Brigitte Grouwels does not explain their experiences in a theoretical way, but gives an example:

The situation of women only becomes more difficult when their socio-economic status is unfavourable or when they are of foreign descent. In these cases, they are subjected to double discrimination or sometimes even triple discrimination.

(Grouwels 2007, 16, translation S. Martens)

The 'crossroads' the Flemish Minister Van Brempt mentioned in her policy plan, have been replaced by a more descriptive way of thinking. The question that comes along is in what way the Brussels equal opportunities policy pays attention to gender and other inequalities: is intersectionality present here? This question cannot be answered with a simple and firm 'yes' or 'no'. Attention is paid to more than one inequality, and these multiple strands are not quite treated separately. These two remarks would lead to the conclusion that intersectionality is definitely present. But, at the same time there is a lack of expertise or knowledge about what the intersection looks like. So, linked to the working definition on intersectionality, here it is rather a matter of adding discriminations or disadvantages on top of one another.

Nina Yuval-Davis also mentions 'triple discrimination' – taking into account the same inequalities Grouwels refers to – and argues against it because 'there is no such thing as suffering from oppression "as Black", "as a woman", "as a working-class person". (...) each social division has a different ontological basis, which is irreducible to other social divisions'. However, at the same time Yuval-Davis mentions that 'this does not make it less important to acknowledge that, in concrete experiences of oppression, being oppressed, for example, as "a Black person" is always constructed and intermeshed in other social divisions' (Yuval-Davis 2006, 195). What the author describes here can be understood within the scope of what we called 'setting the stage' in the working definition. Another author who mentions triple discrimination – she calls it triple disadvantage – in this respect is Sylvia Walby, who states that 'adding up the disadvantages, as in the notion of double or triple disadvantage, does not fully account for the intersection; they may often, at least partially, mutually constitute each other' (Walby 2007b, 451). Whether it being called double/triple disadvantages or discrimination, the example of the Brussels equal opportunities policy and the theories of Nina Yuval-Davis and Sylvia Walby show that one cannot call this intersectionality yet. The additive nature rather sets the stage for intersectionality.

So far, in their policy texts, the Flemish and Brussels government have dealt with intersectionality in different ways. In the Walloon region, there is a Minister of Health, Social Actions and Equal Opportunities, Didier Donfut. For him – as for Minister Van Brempt and State Secretary Grouwels – equal opportunities policy is also a 'transversal preoccupation which needs to be kept in mind by all departments'²⁵. Gender mainstreaming is of concern. He has a list of most important aims and points of action, which are both related to gender and other inequalities such as immigration and sexual orientation. Moreover, in his work on the Social Actions area, he also deals with disability, age, class, health... Throughout the subjects he addresses some intersectionalised groups appear – e.g.

²⁵ <http://donfut.wallonie.be/site/1Template1.asp?DocID=938&v1ID=&RevID=&namePage=&pageParent=>, accessed on 27 August 2008.

migrated women with HIV/aids (gender + migrant status + health) – but intersectionality is not discussed nor analysed as it is in the Flemish and Brussels case. It is mentioned without any further reflection. This is a case of what we have called ‘inarticulate intersectional categories’ in the working definition.

The equal opportunities plan of the federal government – the government which is analysed and researched in QUING – does not visibly deal with intersectionality. The general Belgian approach towards equal opportunities and fighting discrimination becomes clear in the structure of the most recent (2008) *General policy plan. Equal Opportunities* by federal Minister of Equal Opportunities, Joëlle Milquet. There are four important challenges within the matter of equal opportunities: 1) equality between women and men, 2) fighting every form of discrimination, 3) strengthening cultural diversity and 4) fighting racism and xenophobia (Milquet 2008, 6). Here, even though the federal Minister is responsible for all the inequalities, gender is clearly separated from ‘the other inequalities’. This trend of separating (certain) inequalities persists in both Belgian anti-discrimination legislation and in the federal equality bodies.

In May 2007, new anti-discrimination legislation replaced the former anti-discrimination law of February 2003. Whereas the law of 2003 still gathered all inequalities, the new anti-discrimination legislation consists of a set of three laws: one on gender, one on racism and xenophobia and one on discrimination based on race, age, sexual orientation, civil status, birth/descent, property, religion and philosophy on life, political preferences, language, current or future condition of health, disability, physical or genetic characteristic or social descent. As such, Belgium decided not to restrict itself to the possible grounds of discrimination as provided by the EU Directives. The Belgian Court of Arbitration held this exhaustive list to be unlawful. ‘It could not locate any reasonable justification for the exclusion of grounds such as language or political opinion, and consequently (...) required the law to be interpreted as covering any ground, including those not explicitly mentioned.’ (Cormack and Bell 2005, 19).

Next to this fragmentation in the anti-discrimination legislation, the equality bodies in Belgium are separated: there is an Institute for the Equality of Women and Men, and a Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism. Instead of merging the inequalities, gender is thus separated from the other inequalities. The question that consequently pops up is whether this leaves any space for intersectionality? Does this separation hinder the attention for the crossroads of gender and the other inequalities?

The former federal Minister of Equal Opportunities, Christian Dupont, announced in his *General Policy Plan. Equal Opportunities* of 2006 that the new anti-discrimination laws would be adopted in 2007 and would ‘enable judges to make more easily use of a legislation that is adapted to the type of discrimination at stake’ (Dupont 2006, 4). Every inequality seems to be linked to another form of discrimination. That is why, comparably to this legislation, the equality bodies are separated according to different inequality strands²⁶. However, in reality, this seems to bring about practical problems. As Danièle Meulders and Robert Plasman point out:

²⁶ Language is an exception, since the Centre is not responsible for this matter.

There is, however, a risk that the particular problems migrant women face due to the intersectionality of gender and race or origin may not be addressed because of the institutional division of responsibilities whereby sex discrimination remains the provenance of the Institute for Equal Opportunities for Men and Women. (European Commission 2006, 131-132)

To which of these two institutions can migrant women turn, when confronted with discrimination based in the merging/intersection of their gender and migrant status? Judith Squires gave a comparable example for the UK, where originally three separate commissions were operational: one for gender, one for race and one for disability. She also puts the question which commission applies to whom: where do migrant women turn? (Squires 2008, 53-58)? The actual implications of the separation of gender and the other inequalities in two different equality bodies will be elaborated upon in part 5 on the implications of different versions of intersectionality for the meaning and practice of gender+ equality.

At the same time, Belgian equal opportunities policies, both on a federal as well as regional and communal level, embrace diversity and aim to fight discrimination that is based on a very elaborate set of possible grounds of discrimination. Minister Dupont even called Belgium 'a pioneer' (Dupont 2006, 3) within the scope of the European fight against discrimination. In comparison to the possible grounds for discrimination, as noted by the European Directives, Belgium embraces diversity by introducing a much larger set of possible grounds of discrimination. The Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism's website is even www.diversiteit.be (*diversiteit* = diversity). This brings us to a next question: does the shift from gender equality policies towards diversity policies endanger the attention for gender (in)equality in policy? Especially when the intersection of gender with other inequalities (or vice versa) is not taken into account? As Judith Squires points out: 'diversity policy may focus on certain inequalities, but neglect others' (Squires 2008, 59). Magda Michielsens believes that equality between women and men 'drowns in the diversity pool' (Michielsens 2006b, 1). Diversity in Belgium is the 'flag for anti-racism' (Michielsens 2006b, 3) and consequently needs to be interpreted as a 'killing concept' (Michielsens 2006a).

Mieke Verloo points out that inequalities must not be seen as independent 'since there are many historical, political, social and cultural intersections' (Verloo 2006, 221). That is why she stipulates that 'conclusions (...) to see the "establishment of single equality bodies dealing with all the grounds of discrimination covered by the Directives" as "positive", seem too fast and overlook political intersectionality' (Verloo 2006, 222). This may lead to the idea that perhaps, next to separating gender from the other inequalities, one equality body or a law that is dealing with a long list of inequalities together is not the answer either. In such a body or law, intersections can be overlooked as well when the inequalities are placed next to each other instead of merging with or mutually constituting each other.

The *General policy plan Equal Opportunities* by Minister Dupont dealt with particular problems of intersectionalised groups of people, especially migrant women, and talked about the 'double discrimination' they face (Dupont 2006, 14). This example can be compared to the 'triple

discrimination' Brussels' State Secretary Brigitte Grouwels was talking about. No intersectionality can be discerned from this statement, since the inequalities simply add up and do not mutually constitute each other (Walby 2007b, 451; Yuval-Davis 2006, 195). Instead of building on this idea of merging inequalities, the Minister refers to the establishment of the two legal centres for these women (see *infra*) and seems to turn this double discrimination into a new, separate, inequality strand, with no room for other inequalities or intersectionalities.

Even though diversity policy might endanger gender, simultaneously and seemingly contradictory, gender mainstreaming has become of utmost importance in Belgian equal opportunity policies. This importance was stressed once again with the adoption of a new, federal gender mainstreaming law on 12 January 2007. 'This law obliges the integration of gender in all areas of public policy: management plans, management contracts, in every other instrument of policy planning of every public service, in every strategic and operational aim' (Milquet 2008, 5). Does this focus on gender mainstreaming leave space for intersectionality?

In a recent article, Alison Woodward, who traces and analyses the success of gender mainstreaming in Belgium, calls intersectionality a 'fruitful new angle' (Woodward 2008, 289) for gender mainstreaming in Belgium (and beyond). This angle is only mentioned towards the end of her article (Woodward 2008, 298) and is not explored any further. It is left open. Woodward however also connects this to some of the questions mentioned above:

Recently, ministers for gender equality have become ministers for equal opportunity with responsibility for other groups, and thus responsibility for equal opportunities has become fragmented. Informants argue that earmarked policies for women's issues need to stay or nothing will happen, since gender mainstreaming is a long-term process, even in policy areas where the connection should be self-evident.

(Woodward 2008, 294)

To conclude this chapter with, the key question of this report is:

- What are the implications of different versions and forms of intersectionality for the quality of gender+ equality policies?

In addition to the question above, three research questions for STRIQ are listed in the Annex to the Contract at p. 32. They are:

- How are inequalities and their intersections conceptualised in terms of their structure and mechanisms?
- To what extent does context matter in the (re)production of inequalities across Europe?
- What attention must be paid to other structural (in)equalities in the making and implementing of European gender equality policies?

Next to these four key STRIQ questions, the literature review on intersectionality in Belgium has led to three major country-specific questions. The most important questions that appear while looking more closely at the Belgian gender+ equality policies are related to the institutionalization of equal opportunities policies on the one hand and to the conceptualisation or content of diverse inequalities as well as gender+ equality policies on the other. They can be summarised as follows:

* Belgian gender+ equality policy is characterised by fragmentation, or separation of inequality strands, in both legislation and equality bodies. Even the federal Minister of Equal Opportunities, who is responsible for all inequalities, treats gender independently from the other inequalities in her policy plan. In this policy approach then, can the inequalities merge with and influence each other, or does the approach rather form an obstacle for intersectionality in Belgian equal opportunities legislation?

* There has been a shift from gender policy towards diversity policy in Belgian politics. Does a diversity policy that concentrates on a large list of inequalities endanger the attention paid to gender in equal opportunities policies? Or does it rather open the way to work on intersectionality and take into account how inequalities mutually constitute and affect each other?

* At the same time, gender mainstreaming is of major concern in Belgium. Does this approach, which is centred around gender, hinder the flexible use of inequalities? Does it stand in the way for an intersectional approach? Or does it rather open the way and create space for new possibilities?

The following sections of this report will go more deeply into, discuss and aim to work towards the (cautious) answers to these questions. These answers will be elaborated upon in the Conclusion in section 7.

3. THE RANGE OF THE MEANINGS OR FRAMES CONCERNING GENDER EQUALITY IN GENDER+ EQUALITY POLICIES

This part is about the range of meanings or frames concerning gender equality in gender+ equality policies. The discussion is organised along the lines of the four issues – general gender equality legislation and machinery, non-employment, intimate citizenship and gender based violence – since they provide different sorts of information.

The information in this third section is based on the issue history for Belgium (*QUING Deliverable No. 19: Timelines of policy debates: Belgium*), the country study for Belgium (*QUING Deliverable No. 40: Series of LARG Country reports. Belgium*) and the frame and voice analysis which was conducted in the QUING software and enables more detailed code searches where necessary.

3.1. General gender equality legislation and machinery

Throughout Belgian policies on gender+ equality policies, gender equality is certainly aimed at. In the policy plan of the current Minister of Equal Opportunities Joëlle Milquet, as well as the policy plans (2004-2007) of former Minister Christian Dupont ‘the equality between women and men’ and ‘equal opportunities for women and men’ are the targets. This may lead to conclude that gender equality is the main focus of the equal opportunities Ministers in Belgium. That would, however, be a too easy a description since gender equality is only part of a much larger equal opportunities policy. Gender equality has been a main focus in politics, but in recent years equality policies have not exclusively aimed at men and women anymore and new target groups were added. The emphasis has shifted from equality policy as regards men and women towards diversity policy in the various Belgian governments.

The history of Belgian gender equality machinery officially started in the mid 1980s. In 1985, Flemish Christian democrat Miet Smet was appointed as federal State Secretary of Social Emancipation. Civil society, and more specifically the women’s organisations, had demanded a Ministry for Women’s Affairs – denoted in the slogan ‘Een ministerie voor vrouwenzaken of we gaan de wetstraat kraken!’ (A Ministry for Women or we will break down the Wetstraat²⁷). However, that Ministry only came about in 1992 when Miet Smet was promoted and became Minister. Because she was promoted, the policy area followed (and not vice versa): from that moment on, ‘equal opportunities for women and men’ was a matter that was treated in a Ministry of its own. Miet Smet remained Minister of Equal Opportunities until 1999. Her policy focused on women on the labour market, fighting violence against women and the participation of women in decision-making. The policy most often had a broad and paradigmatic shape (Nelen 2001, 16). The State Secretary had two tasks. First, to improve activities

²⁷ The Wetstraat (Brussels, Belgium) is the street of the Belgian parliament and is often used to refer to the Belgian (from 1995: federal) government.

which address the equality between men and women. Second, to inform and activate other ministries and state secretaries on the equal opportunities principle within their policies. This sounds like gender mainstreaming, but that remained a rather theoretical given, since in real terms, Miet Smet focused on the first task (Nelen 2001, 16).

Gender mainstreaming was in fact only introduced in Belgium in 1999, the post-Beijing era (Decat and Hondeghe 2006, 30). In 1999, Miet Smet had been replaced by French-speaking social democrat, Laurette Onkelinx. This did not happen without a striking blow, since during the coalition negotiations and government formation, the Minister of Equal Opportunities was 'forgotten' to be appointed. Laurette Onkelinx added the Equal Opportunities agenda to her function as Minister of Employment and Labour. Comparably to the Miet Smet era, gender equality thus remained intertwined with the employment issue. At this time being, Equal Opportunities became part of the inner cabinet, since Minister Onkelinx was vice Minister. The new Minister of Equal Opportunities still focused on women and established, next to the already existing Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism, the Institute for the Equality between Women and Men. Especially the Belgian women's movement lobbied for the separation of the Institute from the already existing Centre on Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism.

Since the elections of 2003 – during which, rather painfully, the Ministry of Equal Opportunities was primarily forgotten again – a shift towards a diversity policy instead of gender policy came about. During the policy term of French-speaking social democrat Marie Arena (2003-2004), migrants and disabled persons were introduced in the Equal Opportunities policy area.

In 2004, during the same government term, the French-speaking social democrat Christian Dupont – the first man in this function – succeeded Marie Arena as equal opportunities Minister. His policy was divided in four sub-issues: asylum, equality between men and women, anti-discrimination and interculturality. In the first part of his policy, refugees and migrants were addressed. The second part – on the equality between men and women – mainly focused on gender mainstreaming. The Ministry however, also paid attention to violence between partners. Concerning anti-discrimination Christian Dupont did not only address the gender aspect of discrimination. His policy referred to the anti-discrimination law of 2003 (which was later on replaced by a new set of laws in 2007, *see infra*). The last sub-issue within equal opportunities concerned interculturality: part of this aimed at migrant women, but the main focus was on interculturality in general. Interculturality is described by the coalition agreement as connected to the dialogue between people of different cultures and cooperation in an atmosphere of sincerity, tolerance, meeting and mutual respect. Society should be convinced of diverse sensitivities, origins and cultures that are continually developing, and adhere to mutual, fundamental values of the constitution and human rights²⁸.

In March 2008, the current Minister of Equal Opportunities was appointed. French-speaking Christian democrat Joëlle Milquet now is responsible for Equal Opportunities and Employment. As stipulated before in this report (*see Literature review*), the Minister does not only focus on equality between women and men, but also takes interest in cultural diversity, the fight against any form of racism or xenophobia and fighting discrimination on all possible grounds. In fact, according to Joëlle Milquet,

²⁸ www.christiandupont.be, accessed in May 2007

'diversity must become a cornerstone of society' (Milquet 2008, 2). However, in her policy plan, gender is not elbowed out; it is rather an aspect of a more broad equal opportunities policy, which is given special attention. The Minister's aims are to improve equality between women and men at work, and she specifically mentions 'pregnant women' as a target group. Gender mainstreaming needs to become more efficient, with the help of the new gender mainstreaming law: the new gender law of May 2007 needs to be implemented. Fighting violence within marriage and violence against women is also one of the action points of the Minister. Women and poverty is of concern, as is the gender dimension of the asylum procedure. Finally, promotion and balanced representation of women and men in decision-making are of importance (Milquet 2008, 8-11).

Interculturality and cultural diversity seem to be important aspects of current Belgian equal opportunities policy. As the definition of former (2004-2007) Minister of Equal Opportunities, Christian Dupont, has shown, interculturality is mainly dissociated from gender equality: it rather concerns people in general, than women more specifically. This definition of interculturality is an illustration of what Magda Michielsens states about Belgian diversity policy, namely that diversity can be 'a flag for anti-racism' (Michielsens, 2006b, 3) and that anti-racism consequently can erase the interests of women within that 'race group'. These arguments are not new and do not solely apply within the Belgian context (Crenshaw 1991, 1253; Squires 2008, 59).

These findings can be linked to the idea of Gloria Wekker and Helma Lutz about the evolution in time from a) sex to gender, b) gender to gender + ethnicity/diversity thinking and finally c) diversity to intersectionality (Lutz 2002, 10). The Belgian example shows that this evolution is not as logical as it is presented and does not generally apply. In the Belgian case, if it were true that 'anti-racism' can silence the interests of women within a 'race group' or women altogether, a shift towards anti-racism would be the final step instead of having attention for intersectionality. Then, the evolution in time Wekker and Lutz talked about would more likely look like: a) sex -> gender, b) gender -> gender + ethnicity/diversity thinking, and c) gender+ ethnicity/diversity thinking -> anti-racism. Whereas in Belgium, anti-racism is an obstacle on the way to intersectionality, the attention paid to merely one intersectionalised group could be limiting as well.

For the sampling of texts for frame and voice analysis, two sub-issues were selected that are representative for Belgian general gender+ policy. The texts on these issues – for every sub-issue that is: a law, a policy plan, a parliamentary debate and a civil society text – were used for frame and voice analysis via the QUING-software. These issues are: 1) the anti-discrimination legislation, and 2) the establishment of an Institute for the Equality between Women and Men.

The texts on general gender equality legislation and machinery are all gendered. They involve the equality of women and men and aim to fight discrimination. The law to fight discrimination in general is aimed at a long list of inequalities and does not mention gender, since this law is supplementary to the gender law (and the third, anti-racism law). The inequalities at stake are race, age, sexual orientation, civil status, birth/descent, property, religion and philosophy on life, political preferences, language, current or future condition of health, disability, physical or genetic

characteristic or social descent. In the texts on the Institute for the Equality between Women and Men it is clear that gender is of importance.

The use of gender equality is definitely relevant within this issue. In the texts on the anti-discrimination legislation it is balanced: a means to a policy goal (fighting discrimination) and an end in itself (gender equality). Gender equality is an end in itself in all the texts on the Institute for the Equality between Women and Men. The target group of the anti-discrimination legislation is based on people who suffer discrimination based on one of the inequalities mentioned above, plus gender. In the texts of the Institute for the Equality between Women and Men, both women and men are the target groups.

The institutions that are responsible for reaching gender+ equality and fighting discrimination in Belgium are the Belgian government and more specifically the Minister of Equal Opportunities. Here, the Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism and the Institute for the Equality between Women and Men play an active role as well. The demands for policy actions are influenced by the European Directives on (gender) equality.

When turning to the frames connected to the general gender equality legislation and machinery, equality is the sole frame related to the establishment of the Institute for the Equality between Women and Men. In the analysed texts on the anti-discrimination legislation, more frames are at stake: equality is significant as a frame in almost all the texts, but other frames such as human rights play a considerable role as well. Economic development as a frame is mentioned in the law, the report and by the governmental voice. Capabilities and well-being are of minor concern in the law and the report, as well as in the debate. The crime and justice frame is very important in the report and the parliamentary debate. And finally, for the right-wing and oppositional voice in the parliamentary debate, freedom is the most significant frame.

3.2. Non-employment

Non-employment, or rather 'labour and employment', has always been closely linked to Belgian equal opportunities policy. Gender was placed on the political agenda in 1975 with the establishment of the Women's Labour Committee (Commissie Vrouwenarbeid), which gave advice, researched and proposed legal and regulative measures on women and labour/employment. Of the five federal Ministers of Equal Opportunities, four held this post next to their assignment as Minister of Labour and Employment. Minister Christian Dupont is the exception: he was Minister of Civil Services, Social Integration, Metropolitan Policy and Equal Opportunities.

Does this connection of the policy area of labour and employment and equal opportunities translate to a stronger emphasis on employment, and thus non-employment, related issues? When going more deeply into the policy plans and actions of the Equal Opportunities Ministers, it seems that labour and employment is an important issue for federal equal opportunities policy. Minister Milquet refers to issues such as the wage gap, the unemployment trap, the combination of work and family, gender equality in job opportunities, and fighting discrimination based on pregnancy in employment

(Milquet 2008, 6-8). In his *General Policy Plan Equal Opportunities* of 2006, Minister of Equal Opportunities Dupont also mentioned the wage gap and elaborated on a diversity label for gender and diversity in enterprises (Dupont 2006, 5 and 13).

For the sampling of texts for the frame and voice analysis, four sub-issues were selected that are representative for Belgian policy on gender + employment/labour. The texts on these issues – for every sub-issue that is: a law, a policy plan, a parliamentary debate and a civil society text – were used for frame and voice analysis via the QUING-software. These issues are: 1) the retirement age for women and men, 2) parental leave, 3) service cheques for self-employed mothers, and 4) equal pay.

All the sub-issues of non-employment are gendered, as are most of the selected texts, with some exceptions. The law on the retirement age for instance is degendered, as is the law on parental leave. However, all the texts must and can be seen within the scope of gender equality policies.

Generally, gender equality is an end that needs to be achieved for women. However, even though they constitute the largest group, women are not the only target group in this selection of texts. Boys and men are also mentioned, because comparable to girls, they make stereotypical choices of education, which needs to be changed. Moreover, equal opportunities policy in the employment and labour field is aimed at women *and* men: both sexes should be treated equally in for instance access to work and entrepreneurship and the promotion at work. In order to achieve equal opportunities for women and men, fathers are also targeted – either as ‘parent’ or with the term ‘father’ – to reach this goal. If they take up parental leave or help with the reconciliation of work and family life, they contribute to the equality between women and men.

This part of gender equality is to be achieved by mainly the Belgian government (Ministries, federal public services), with cooperation of various other instances such as employers, employer’s organisations, social partners and the Institute for the Equality between Women and Men. The approach is thus characterised as top-down: the state takes measure and acts to improve the working conditions of its society.

The demands for gender equality in employment are coming from the government itself and from civil society. A strong lobby group has for instance organised concerning the wage gap issue: Equal Pay Day. The parental leave topic is also widely discussed and lobbied upon by women’s organisations and other parties in civil society. Here, the length and provisions of parental leave are on the table.

Gender equality is the most important frame throughout the non-employment issue. However, some adjacent frames play a role as well. While trying to reach gender equality, the notion of economic growth is never too far away, since labour and employment are at stake here. Well-being/capabilities and health are also important frames. Consequently, even though gender equality is a final aim, and thus an end, it can also be considered as a means to reach well-being and health of the persons involved, as well as a means to increased economic productivity and prosperity for the enterprises in which these persons work.

3.3. Intimate citizenship

Of all the issues analysed in QUING, intimate citizenship seems to be least linked to gender equality. It is connected to gender equality within those topics where gender plays a role, but in many of the sub-issues other inequalities are focused on. This certainly counts for the same-sex legislation that has been passed by parliament throughout the last couple of years: the same-sex marriage act (2003), as well as opening up adoption for same-sex couples (2006). These topics are not seen to concern gender, they concern sexual orientation. In comparison to non-employment and gender based violence – which are of great concern – topics related to intimate citizenship are not really mentioned or interpreted as such in the *General Policy Plan Equal Opportunities* of the current Minister of Equal Opportunities. Sham marriages are rather seen as an example to illustrate the notion of ‘other forms of violence against women’ (Milquet 2008, 9) than they are linked to intimate citizenship. When the Minister refers to ‘the gender dimension of the asylum procedure’ (Milquet 2008, 11), she only briefly touches upon an intimate citizenship issue, namely that of migration and asylum.

However, sometimes gender pops up in this sub-issue. Divorce for instance is seen to be a gendered affair, as is the related establishment of an alimony fund. The same counts for sham marriages, abortion and so on. These sub-issues were not analysed in the frame and voice analysis.

For the sampling of texts for the frame and voice analysis, three sub-issues were selected that are representative for Belgian equal opportunities policy on intimate citizenship. The texts on these issues – for every sub-issue that is: a law, a policy plan, a parliamentary debate and a civil society text – were used for frame and voice analysis via the QUING-software. These issues are: 1) divorce, 2) same-sex adoption, and 3) surrogate mothers.

When looking at the various sub-issues in intimate citizenship it appears that inequalities other than gender are of greater concern. Divorce is degendered in most of the selected texts, but is highly gendered in the civil society text. When put in perspective, this text logically pays attention to gender since it is written by a women’s organisation. The policy texts – the law, the plan and the debate – however are degendered. Gay and lesbian adoption is a matter of equality between heterosexual and homosexual people. When and if gender is mentioned, sexual orientation is still the main inequality axis. As regards surrogate motherhood, the ‘mother’ in the terminology is not really gendered. Rather the marital status or the age of the surrogate mother or the demanding partners plays a role. In only six of the twenty texts on intimate citizenship, gender plays a role.

Consequently, the question of what gender means in gender equality policies does not generally apply in this sub-issue. However, when gender is involved, intersectionalised groups of women (divorced women, married women, pregnant women, disabled women) are seen as the target groups. Other target groups are degendered: divorced people, divorcing couples, and spouses in the case of divorce; children (one time called foetus), surrogate mothers, demanding couples, homosexual couples, heterosexual couples with fertility problems or singles and so on in case of

surrogate motherhood. Instead of gender, it becomes clear that family or marital status plays a much greater role as inequality strands here than does gender. In the gay and lesbian adoption issue, same-sex couples (and a variety of terms denoting them) as well as children and society as a whole are seen as target groups.

The equality that needs to be achieved within the intimate citizenship issue – whether it being gender equality in a degendered way, or equality between heterosexuals and homosexuals – is again characterised by its top-down appearance. The Belgian government is responsible to create legislation to install the right to adoption for same-sex couples, a future law regulating surrogate motherhood in one way or the other, and legislation on divorce.

In comparison to for instance an issue as non-employment, the intimate citizenship issues have led to heated debates with strong voices in favour and against. Divorce is a topic that is addressed by women's organisations, which aim to improve the situation of women in marriage, and during and after divorce. As regards the law on adoption by homosexuals, many voices – both in civil society and in the political world – were in favour and many were against. This led to heated debates. Surrogate motherhood is still being discussed and even has not resulted in any legislation yet.

Equality as a frame is not present in the texts on divorce, with the exception of the civil society text in which it is the main frame. This makes clear that government deals with this matter in a completely different way than the women's organisation. Capabilities and well-being play a secondary role within this issue. In the texts on gay and lesbian adoption it is clear that equality – between heterosexual and homosexual people – is of utmost importance. The human rights frame is also of concern here, as are capabilities and well-being. As regards the topic of surrogate motherhood, human rights, capabilities /well-being and health play roles as frames. Equality does not.

3.4. Gender based violence

The Minister of Equal Opportunities, Joëlle Milquet, considers fighting violence against women 'a key element for the equality between women and men' (Milquet 2008, 9). Ever since – and even long before – the first Minister of Equal Opportunities was appointed in Belgium in 1992, violence against women is one of the most important action fields of Equal Opportunities policy. Gender based violence with all its sub-issues can thus clearly be considered as related to gender equality. The Belgian government and the Minister(s) of Equal Opportunities prioritise the fight against violence against women, and have developed a couple of *National Action Plans* on the matter.

For the sampling of texts for the frame and voice analysis, three sub-issues that are representative for Belgian policy on gender based violence were selected. The texts on these issues – for every sub-issue that is: a law, a policy plan, a parliamentary debate and a civil society text – were used for frame and voice analysis via the QUING-software. These issues are: 1) domestic violence, 2) violence, harassment and unwanted sexual behaviour, and, 3) female genital mutilation.

Gender in gender equality policies concerning gender based violence mainly means women. The texts on sexual harassment are mainly degendered – except for the Minister’s texts, which refer to gender in order to create a framework to understand and illustrate the sub-issue. Domestic violence starts as a gendered issue, but becomes degendered in the law. Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a gendered issue since it concerns genital mutilation of women and thus the biological aspect of women’s bodies.

Simultaneously, there are some exceptions to the notion that women are always the ones who need to be equalised to men. The Minister of Equal Opportunities, Laurette Onkelinx, gendered the bill on domestic violence by referring to inequality between women and men, and the notion of male superiority, which results in domestic violence. Senator Sabine de Bethune pointed out that the original bill on domestic violence was not gender neutral, since it implied that men are the offenders and women the victims, which is not necessarily always true. In the end, the law was degendered and makes use of terms as ‘spouse’ and ‘legal cohabitant’ instead of women and men.

The policy concerning domestic violence mainly targets women who are the victims. The texts on sexual harassment are degendered and do not refer to men or women. In the texts on FGM, it is clear that gender is at stake and the target group of the policy consists of women. Next to women, minors and people with a disability are targeted.

Mainly the government, with the cooperation of justice, health workers, assistance services and the police, is responsible for fighting gender based violence and thus achieving gender equality. However, as regards FGM, the African countries conducting FGM are responsible as well, and can or must be pressurised by the Belgian government to fight this particular form of violence against women. The Belgian equal opportunities policy that focuses on gender based violence also has a top down appearance.

In the law and policy plan on domestic violence, the most important frames are well-being/capabilities and crime and justice. Equality is not of any importance here. In the civil society text, by the Dutch-speaking Women’s Council, many more frames are referred to: equality and capabilities/well-being are of major concern, and human rights, crime and justice and health are also hinted at. As regards the texts on violence, harassment and unwanted sexual behaviour, equality – interpreted as equality between employer and employee – only plays a minor role as a frame, as does human rights. In general, the well-being/capabilities frame and the crime and justice frame play the most important roles, followed by health as a frame. Economic development plays a marginal role in the law and in the report. In the texts on female genital mutilation, equality is not at stake, but human rights are. Other important frames related to this sub-issue are capabilities/well-being, crime and justice, health and integrity and democracy.

4. THE RANGE OF INTERSECTING INEQUALITIES

In order to give an overview of and discuss the range of intersecting inequalities in the Belgian case, the issue history (*QUING Deliverable No. 19: Timelines of policy debates: Belgium*), the country study (*QUING Deliverable No. 40: Series of LARG Country reports. Belgium*) and the country context study (*QUING Deliverable No. 41: WHY Country Context Study. Belgium*) for Belgium are valuable sources of information. Both the literature review of this report and the frame and voice analysis that was conducted in the QUING software provide more detailed information.

Based on the literature review in this report, as well as on everyday newspaper articles and experiences in Belgian society – examples of structural and representational intersectionality – it would seem that ‘allochthonous women’ is the most important intersection or target group of many organisations in civil society as well as of policy actions by the various Belgian governments. However, that only seems to be partially true. Indeed, with the coding for the frame and voice analysis in mind, it appears that race/ethnicity and migrant status or nationality indeed play an important role in the issues of general gender equality and gender based violence. They are however absent in intimate citizenship and almost absent in non-employment. Moreover, it appears that ‘family or marital status’ plays a far greater role in the coded texts.

As the article by Chia Longman and Gily Coene on the headscarf or *hijab*, and the discussion of the Women’s Council on intersectionality have already pointed out (see *literature review*), migrant women are an important minority group – or are they women in minorities? (Coene and Longman 2008, 305) – in Belgian society. This is particularly visible in their organisation in civil society further on in this report. Here, it is important to remark that migrant women in Belgium are not (only) the ‘Black women’ Kimberlé Crenshaw mentions in her articles on intersectionality. Statistics of the Federal Public Service of Foreigners’ Affairs show which nationalities – people who are naturalised included – were living in Belgium in 2002²⁹:

Country of origin	Number
Italy	285314
Morocco	218388
France	163901
Turkey	128589
The Netherlands	121489
Spain	56376
Germany	53718
United Kingdom	32147
Poland	31339
Congo	31017
Portugal	29017
Ex-Yugoslavia	24743
Greece	24273

²⁹ Data taken from [http://www.dofi.fgov.be/nl/statistieken/belgian%20migration%20point/De%2020%20belangrijkste%20bevolkingsgroepen%20van%20buitenlandse%20afkomst%20in%20België%20\(genaturaliseerden%20inbegrepen\).pdf](http://www.dofi.fgov.be/nl/statistieken/belgian%20migration%20point/De%2020%20belangrijkste%20bevolkingsgroepen%20van%20buitenlandse%20afkomst%20in%20België%20(genaturaliseerden%20inbegrepen).pdf), accessed on 26 February 2008.

Algeria	16665
US	13791
Ex USSR	11919
Tunisia	10430
India	9210
Luxembourg	7617
China	7451

Next to the European nationalities, of which the Italians, French and Dutch constitute the largest groups, the Moroccan and Turkish nationality appear most in Belgium. Especially these two latter groups are important target groups in Belgium. They are mainly seen as the allochthonous or migrant people. The 'Black people' Crenshaw talked about (Crenshaw 1991) are not so much identified by the colour of their skin, or by their race, it appears that the common religion of Turkish and Moroccan people constitutes a new type of 'blackness'. The characteristics of the Muslim culture and religion have created 'a new type of race'. 'Race has to do, it has always had to do, more complexly with the set of views, dispositions, and predilections concerning culture, or more accurately of culture tied to colour, of being to body, of 'blood' to behaviour' (Goldberg 2006, 349). Consequently, even though the Turkish and Moroccan are intrinsically different, their mutual religious belief as well as other cultural characteristics, skin colour and so on enable and simplify the distinction between autochthonous and allochthonous people: 'us' against 'them', and erase the differences between and within the Turkish and Moroccan communities in Belgium, leading them into the commonality of 'them', the other people, the allochthonous community, the Muslims.

David Theo Goldberg has described the figure of the 'Muslim' and how its presence is often interpreted in Western Europe. He goes more deeply into the – what I have called – 'we-they distinction' between Muslims and Europeans. He asserts that 'the Muslim in Europe – not individual Muslims, not even Muslim communities, but the idea of the Muslim himself – has come to represent the threat of death' (Goldberg 2006, 345). The Muslim is often seen as the 'monster of our time', 'a nightmare': he is a 'hijacker of planes; killer of the crippled, rapist of daughters. Above all, now, suicide bomber and beastly beheader of innocents' (Goldberg 2006, 346).

Goldberg illustrates both the interpretation of the concept of 'Muslim' and the reaction in European society by strong examples such as the murder of Theo Van Gogh in the Netherlands, the terroristic attacks in New York (US), Madrid (Spain), London (UK), Bali (Indonesia), Sharm Al Sheikh (Egypt)... However, the 'us-them' distinction has also caused some tensions in Belgium these last couple of years. It is present in large cities such as Brussels, Antwerp and Charleroi, and reached its peaks on several, separate occasions between 2002 and 2008. For example, the riots in Antwerp after the murder of Mohammed Achrak, a young Moroccan man, in Borgerhout (Antwerp) in November 2002. This coincided with the rise of the AEL (Arabic European Ligue) with Dyab Abou Jahjah. A more recent event is the trial of Hans Van Themsche at the end of 2007. He is a Flemish young man who was charged with racist murders: he shot and killed a Malian nanny and the Belgian two-year old girl she was with. He also shot and heavily wounded a Turkish woman. This last victim survived. The attacks were racist. Other events include the political discussions concerning the vote for migrants as well as the *snel-Belgwet*, the law to become a Belgian quickly, the discussions concerning

headscarves in Antwerp and Ghent, the riots in Brussels based on the riots in Paris in 2007 and so on.

Next to the ethnic or cultural characteristics that constitute a new form of 'race', religion plays an important role. Chia Longman refers to the fact that religion is often a missing axis in the construction of identities (Longman 2003, 273). These examples show that religion indeed is of major concern, especially in Belgium: the problems mentioned above are often linked to the Muslim/non-Muslim cleavage in Belgian society and cannot always be brought back to race/ethnicity alone, even if religion functions as a racial characteristic (all Turkish and Moroccan people are seen as Muslims, regardless of their religion).

Migrant women have an organisation of their own in Flanders. The Office for Allochthonous Girls and Women (Steunpunt allochtone meisjes en vrouwen) is an organisation that works on equal opportunities for women and girls of allochthonous descent. It does so by supporting the emancipation of their target group by helping them with their specific needs and making them visible as a group in society. The organisation seems to be very aware of intersectionality and even refers to *kruispuntdenken* – the Dutch translation of the term – in its presentation on the organisation's website.

As regards the emancipation of allochthonous girls and women, gender and ethnicity cannot be treated separately. Both influence their lives and futures. The aim of this *kruispuntdenken* (intersectionality) is to start the process of consciousness-raising in a first phase, and to develop instruments to create a gender sensitive and intercultural society. Currently, gender and ethnicity are considered as two, separate systems. When, for instance, a workshop on women and IT is organised, there is not often any attention paid to allochthonous women. On the other hand, projects on and for allochthonous people aim at allochthonous men and boys. This way of thinking has as a consequence that positions of power are normalised over and over again.³⁰

Consequently, it appears that the organisation is aware of the concept of intersectionality. The Office for Allochthonous Girls and Women targets Flanders and Brussels and can be interpreted within the scope of the policy of Flemish Minister of Equal Opportunities Kathleen Van Brempt, who also is aware that identities are always on the crossroads of various elements (Van Brempt 2004, 17). But how does the federal government relate to the situation of migrant or allochthonous women?

It can be concluded that indeed, the Office for Allochthonous Girls and Women is 'better' at 'doing intersectionality' (Walby and Strid 2008, 4) than the federal government. It makes use of the concept and tries to understand and implement it, whereas the federal government does not consciously deal with intersectionality. There is no ready-made answer to the question of what would constitute 'a good use of intersectionality', but the actions and aims of the Office do show that the definition of intersectionality – which is based on Lutz and Wekker, who gave the exact same example on IT-workshops (Wekker and Lutz 2001, 26-27) – is not used to veil a lack of attention to

³⁰ <http://www.samv.be/index.cfm?id=1>, accessed on 2 September 2008, translation S. Martens.

intersectionality in practice. Indeed, the Office for Allochthonous Girls and Women involves these intersectionalised groups of women, invites them to discuss their situation, and provides information, workshops and so on, specifically directed at allochthonous women. On the governmental level: in the *General Policy Plan. Equal Opportunities* of Joëlle Milquet, the equality of women and men is seen as one issue to tackle, fighting discrimination, strengthening cultural diversity, and fighting racism and xenophobia are seen as three other, separate, targets. Again, the anti-discrimination laws as well as the division of gender and 'all the other inequalities' only stress this even more. In fact, the federal government falls into the trap, the Office for Allochthonous Girls and Women warns that there is attention for women, and there is attention for race and ethnicity, but they do not seem to cross. 'Gender and ethnicity are considered as two, separate systems', as the text on the Office's website shows.

However, it is wrong to generalise the idea that organisations in civil society are all 'better at doing intersectionality' than the federal government. The Office for Allochthonous Girls and Women is only one – maybe even the only – organisation that consciously takes intersectionality into account and stresses its importance. A discussion that was organised by the Office in 2005 between several representatives of women's organisations and gender organisations gives an idea.

During the debate, Katrien Bruggeman of the Dutch-speaking Women's Council (Nederlandstalige Vrouwenraad) stated that her organisation already makes use of intersectionality. She did not provide an example at the time. The example however can be found in the frame and voice analysis of texts conducted earlier in the QUING-project. In the analysed part on domestic violence of the *Memorandum of the Women's Council*, it becomes clear that the organisation does not aim at women in general. In fact, the Dutch-speaking Women's Council asks for attention to certain intersecting groups of victims: migrant women, allochthonous women, refugee women, female newcomers, and disabled women. They face both domestic violence and new forms of violence. Even though the Women's Council does not analyse, criticise or simply elaborate on the concept of intersectionality, it asks for attention to be paid to intersectionalised groups in practice, and realises that they are facing 'new' specific problems.

Consequently, the Dutch-speaking Women's Council takes into account multiple inequalities. But this does not mean that civil society organisations – except for the Office for Allochthonous Girls and Women – also organise around intersectionalities and pay special attention. They are rather organised by strand.

When zooming in on women's organisations in Belgium it appears that in general they are only focused on the general target group 'women'. Joke Wiercx conducted a research on the women's movement in Flanders. She concludes that women's organisations collaborate with other organisations once a year: most collaborations take place with immigrant organisations and trade unions, collaborations with LGBT organisations are rather limited (Wiercx 2005, 65).

On the contrary, it seems that organisations that focus on other inequalities such as ethnicity/race rather tend to take multiple inequalities into account more often than women's organisations. The Belgian organisation Merhaba for instance aims at LGBT's of allochthonous

descent. The organisation informs and provides various activities. Merhaba cooperates with other LGBT organisations. The key here is the importance of religion and/or tradition. De Roze Rimpel in Flanders and Vieux Rose in the Walloon provinces, are organisations for people/groups at the point of intersection of (older) age and sexual orientation.

Other organisations that take multiple inequalities into account are:

- Equal Pay Day: an organisation that consists of the women's branches of the socialist trade union and the Flemish socialist party, and fights against the wage gap. Every year on 31 March, they campaign for equal pay. This organisation takes gender and class into account.
- Joka: an organisation that is based in the catholic religion and addresses both older people and people with disabilities.
- Moreover, many of the Belgian (women's) organisations are related to religion. The Flemish Catholic Labourer's Wives (Katholieke Arbeiders Vrouwen, abbreviated KAV), and Catholic Work for Farmers' Women (Katholiek Vormingswerk voor Landelijke Vrouwen, abbreviated KVLV) are good examples. Religion however has to be considered as a basis and starting point, not really as an intersection – even though the members of these organisations are most often catholic.
- The same counts for organisations that are related to political preferences. Here, the Walloon Forward-looking Socialist Women (Les Femmes Prévoyantes socialistes) is an example.

When moving away from Belgian civil society, and turning to Belgian equal opportunities policies, it is clear that intersectionality is not of primary importance to the Belgian federal government and its Ministers of Equal Opportunities. Moreover, gender is separated from the other inequalities. The 'other' inequalities, the very long list of possible grounds of discrimination are even seen as separate strands. But, does this all mean that intersectionality is really nowhere to be found in Belgian equal opportunities policy?

Intersectionality is not seen as the general, theoretical scope of the federal equal opportunities policy. The concept is not discussed or analysed nor is its existence recognised or elaborated on. However, the lack of intersections must not be misunderstood as there being no interest in certain inequalities. In practice, some of the legislative texts and policy plans actually mention identities which are constituted of several inequalities.

4.1. General gender equality legislation and machinery

In the sampled texts on the anti-discrimination legislation of May 2007, all inequalities are present.³¹ The law selected here, is the general discrimination law, which focuses on all inequalities except for gender. Remarkable here is that all inequalities are listed as separate strands. This conclusion is explained by former Minister of Equal Opportunities, Christian Dupont, when he mentions that this new set of laws would 'enable judges to make more easily use of a legislation that is adapted to the

³¹ race, age, sexual orientation, civil status, birth/descent, property, religion and philosophy on life, political preferences, language, current or future condition of health, disability, physical or genetic characteristic or social descent

type of discrimination at stake' (Dupont 2006, 4). Minister Dupont clearly indicates that separate inequalities lead to different types of discrimination. He interprets them as independent from each other. So far, all inequalities are thus considered, but no intersectionality takes place since the inequalities do not merge or effect each other.

Now, is there, as Judith Squires points out, a chance that 'promoting equality with respect to one equality strand may (...) conflict with, or even erode, the equality of another' (Squires 2008, 55-56)? As the other sampled texts on the anti-discrimination legislation shows, the answer is affirmative: the law still treated all the inequalities on a same level, but in the policy plan – which was explained in the *Explanatory Memory* to the bill – both ethnicity/race and migrant status are stressed even more. The same is true for two of the three voices who speak during the debate.

In the frame and voice analysis of the sampled texts on the Institute for the Equality between Women and Men, the focus is mainly and quite often exclusively on gender. This is not remarkable, since the Institute deals with gender, and the Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism is responsible for all the other inequalities as mentioned in the general anti-discrimination law, analysed above. The law on the Institute for the Equality between Women and Men does not refer to any intersectionalities. Here, men and women are at stake, they are presented as two static groups. In the *Strategic Plan* of the Institute, there are minor hints at race/ethnicity and migrant status (migrant or allochthonous women). Also, in the parliamentary debate, some speakers refer to other inequalities which intersect with gender. The civil society text does not refer to any other inequality in any other way.

The two sub-issues which were analysed under the issue 'general gender equality legislation and machinery' make clear how Belgium has a diversity policy in which inequalities are treated as separate strands resulting in various forms of discrimination, and at the same time prioritises gender as a separate part of equality policies, leaving no space for intersections with the other inequalities. Intersection appears when migrant women are seen as a specific target group, but there is no flexible use of inequalities. They are not seen as characteristics of identities that influence each other.

4.2. Non-employment

Ethnicity and race may be important topics/inequalities in the other issues, but in the selected texts on non-employment they do not come across as being of major concern. However, it is important to keep in mind that during the frame and voice analysis only four sub-issues were selected and a closed list of texts was analysed. This means that the research findings do not altogether preclude the possibility that ethnicity/race does matter in the labour and employment field in Belgium. What is remarkable here is that other inequalities come into the spotlight.

The texts on the retirement age for men and women refer to age, class and family/marital status as intersecting with gender. In the law, age and class are of greatest concern, whereas marital/family status is present but to a lesser extent. In the part of the *Memorandum of the Women's Council* on the pension system, marital status is of equal concern as age and class.

When zooming in on the issues of service cheques for self-employed mothers and parental leave, there are no major intersections. However, marital/family status, age and class are related to gender.

The same inequalities are related to gender in the equal pay issue. However, here some other intersectionalities are mentioned with the inequality strands ethnicity/race, migrant status and disability. These intersectionalities come across during the debate when both the Minister of Labour and Employment, Peter Vanvelthoven, and Senator Sabine de Bethune mention the diversity label for enterprises: this is a label for enterprises that respect legislation on non-discrimination and have diversity policy. Four inequalities are named in relation to these diversity labels: gender, cultural diversity, age and disability. The question however remains whether this example of diversity policy is intersectional, or rather sees those four inequalities as separate strands.

4.3. Intimate citizenship

The notion of whether gender is intersectionalised by other inequalities does not always apply to the sub-issues on intimate citizenship, because gender is not always central to it. What does apply to all the selected texts during the frame and voice analysis is that the ethnicity/race inequality strand is completely absent, as are migrant status and religion. Here, marital and family status is almost always present. Whether the other inequalities seem to be at stake and to what extent depends on the sub-issues.

In the sampled texts on divorce, marital/family status is the most important inequality. Class and age also play a role, and sexual orientation pops up once. In the texts on gay and lesbian adoption, only two inequalities appear, which are not related to gender at all, but which are related to each other: sexual orientation is the major inequality here, and is related to marital/family status as a less important, but present inequality. As regards the surrogate motherhood sub-issue, family/marital status is of utmost importance again. Here, sexual orientation and age also play a role, albeit to a lesser degree.

4.4. Gender based violence

The sub-issue of gender based violence shows a completely different pattern of intersectionalities in comparison to the former sub-issues. Here, again, ethnicity/race and migrant status as well as religion are of great importance. However, how and if they do come across, depends on the issue discussed.

In domestic violence, marital/family status is of great concern. It intersects with gender. The law does not consider any other intersectionalities, but the policy plan – *the National Action Plan on Partner Abuse* – does. This plan pays attention to ethnicity and race as well as to migrant status and even prioritises it above marital/family status. It remarks that ‘extra and special attention should be paid to allochthonous and pregnant women’ who suffer domestic violence. In the parliamentary

debate, Senator Kaçar also refers to the particular situation of allochthonous women. The civil society text, *Memorandum of the Women's Council*, mentions the importance of diversity in a matter such as domestic violence and as such broadens the issue and mentions all inequality strands. However, they stress the ethnicity/race and migrant status inequalities as well as disability. Here, the question is again if the inequalities do intersectionalise or are rather mentioned separately.

The texts on violence, harassment and unwanted sexual behaviour are very different in referring (or not) to inequalities. The law and the policy plan mention all inequalities since the law is complemented with the EU directives on race, equality in employment and amendment for gender equality. Since references are made to the Institute for the Equality between Women and Men, and the Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism, it is clear that the inequalities here have to be interpreted as individual, and not related to each other. During the debate, Minister Laurette Onkelinx also refers to the Centre again. The other voices in the debate mention another inequality that is not related to any others: the hierarchy between employer and employee. This can be interpreted as a specific form of the class inequality strand.

Female genital mutilation or FGM is, in almost all texts, linked to ethnicity/race and migrant status. The law, which punishes perpetrators of FGM, entails a completely different story and does not mention these inequalities; it was written and adopted within a completely different scope. In the aftermath of the arrest of child-abuser and serial killer, Marc Dutroux³², the Belgian federal government adopted a law to improve the criminal protection of minors. This law of 28 November 2000 entails the punishment of specific crimes against minors, and stipulates how victims should be treated during court cases and interviews. One of the provisions is the introduction of a specific punishment for female genital mutilation in Belgian legislation. It aims at the public in general, but attaches higher penalties to such offences committed against minors or disabled people. The situation differs in the policy plan, the debate and the civil society text. Here, ethnicity and race are of major importance, followed by migrant status and religion.

It is interesting to see how the topic of female genital mutilation was primarily brought on the policy and legislative agenda via a completely different subject than FGM itself. The crimes of Marc Dutroux and his accomplices caused tension in Belgium and even resulted in the modification of the Belgian justice system. The law to protect minors was one consequence, and within its broad scope, FGM was specifically punished for the first time. Throughout the years, the subject however became an issue on its own, and was treated in a completely different framework: that of the protection of migrant women, women and girls of African descent.

It seems that the intersection of gender and race is of greater concern in Belgian policy and civil society texts on gender based violence than on any of the other issues. This is, to some extent, the case for domestic violence and it can particularly be seen in the sub-issue of female genital mutilation. Perhaps, the ambivalent emphasis on diversity and multiculturalism that was mentioned in relation to the Netherlands (Roggeband and Verloo, 263) also applies in Belgium: if migrant/allochthonous women are mentioned, their situation is often problematised as it is in the case of equal opportunities policy on gender based violence.

³² More information on Marc Dutroux and the Dutroux-case can be found at the end of this chapter.

The Dutroux-case

Marc Dutroux is a Belgian serial killer who kidnapped, sexually abused and tortured six young girls between 1995 and 1996. Four of them were murdered, and two other girls were found alive in his cellar in the summer of 1996. Dutroux was arrested and was convicted to life imprisonment in 2004. The other accomplices were his – then – wife Michelle Martin, Michel Lelièvre, Michel Nihoul and Bernard Weinstein.

The proceedings of this criminal case entailed several shortcomings and led to a reform of the Belgian police and justice system. The most important moment was when the examining magistrate was dismissed after a 'spaghetti party' with the parents of the girls, and 300.000 Belgians walked in a protest march (*De Witte Mars*, the White March) asking for a reform of the justice and police system, making them 'more human'. Another very important shortcoming was the fact that police officers searched Dutroux' house while two girls were in his cellar - still alive at that moment -, and failed to find the girls.

Even after the arrest of Dutroux, the sequence of events did not stop. In April 1998, Marc Dutroux managed to escape from the courthouse of Neufchâteau. He was apprehended a couple of hours later, but Minister of Internal Affairs, Johan Vande Lanotte and Minister of Justice Stefaan De Clerck had already resigned because of their political responsibilities.

But what did actually change in the Belgian judicial system after the 'White March'? The Chamber of Representatives decided to establish a Parliamentary Committee to investigate and look more deeply into the research Dutroux-case. It became clear that many faults had taken place, most of them based on the bad collaboration between the police and the justice system. The Chamber of Representatives approved the report of the Committee which resulted in the negotiations on the reform of justice and police: from that moment on, a federal (next to a local) police was installed, the justice system was reformed, a better criminal protection was guaranteed by a law, and Child Focus – a centre for missing children – was installed.³³

³³ All information on Marc Dutroux based on: De Standaard Online. 2004. *Dossier: de zaak-Dutroux. (Dossier: the Dutroux case.)* <http://www.standaard.be/Archief/Dossiers/Index.aspx?dossierId=83>, accessed on 1 October 2008.

5. WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF INTERSECTIONALITY FOR THE MEANING AND PRACTICE OF GENDER+ EQUALITY?

In order to find out what the implications of different versions of intersectionality for the meaning and practice of gender+ equality are, the issue histories (*QUING Deliverable No. 19: Timelines of policy debates: Belgium*) and document analysis (both the frame and voice analysis in the QUING software and: *QUING Deliverable No. 40: Series of LARG Country reports. Belgium*) are the primary sources taken into account. The country context studies (*QUING Deliverable No. 41: WHY Country Context Study. Belgium*), as well as the State of the Art report (*QUING Deliverable No. 8: LARG - state of the art and mapping of competences report: Belgium*) shed some extra interesting light to the discussion in this fifth part.

5.1. Intersections and general gender equality legislation and machinery

Belgian gender equality legislation is consistent with its equality bodies, but it is not consistent with the federal Ministry of Equal Opportunities. The current anti-discrimination legislation (adopted in May 2007) is divided in three laws: one on gender equality, one on racism and xenophobia, and one on discrimination in general with a long list of possible grounds of discrimination. This division comes about in the federal equality bodies as well: the Institute for the Equality between Women and Men (dealing with gender and consequently responsible for the gender law), and the Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism (dealing with 'diversity', the other grounds of discrimination with an extra interest in racism/xenophobia, thus responding to the two other laws of the anti-discrimination legislation).

The inequalities mentioned above are brought together in a single Ministry of Equal Opportunities. Federal Minister for Equal Opportunities, Joëlle Milquet addresses Equal Opportunities in general – with specific attention to gender and racism as well as diversity – and collaborates both with the Centre and the Institute. These institutions are responsible for providing policy recommendations. This however does not mean that inequalities are treated as intersecting: rather, gender, racism/xenophobia and the other inequalities are treated independently. That is very clear in the latest *General Policy Plan. Equal Opportunities* by Minister Joëlle Milquet, which is divided in the following chapters: 1) guarantee the equality of women and men; 2) battle any form of discrimination; 3) strengthen the cultural diversity; and 4) battle racism and xenophobia. This division in chapters runs parallel to the anti-discrimination laws and the Institute for the Equality between Women and Men as well as the Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism in which gender is separated from the other inequalities. Gender again is addressed separately from the other inequalities.

When turning to the frame and voice analysis of the sampled texts of this issue, it appears that gender indeed plays the most important role within the scope of the Institute for the Equality between Woman and Men. However, in the report, and the debate on the establishment of the Institute, other

inequalities are mentioned. The report, the *Strategic plan 2005-2007* of the Institute, once refers to another inequality than gender when it mentions the fact that the issue of gender and migration needs to be tackled. It is clear that this implies that the situation and status of women/men who migrate must be tackled. However, the report does not consider or elaborate on the intersectional character of such a policy action. In the debate, some of the Senators connect the establishment of the Institute to the passing of anti-discrimination laws and to the notion of diversity. However, not much intersectionality can be noted here. The exception is Senator Fatma Pehlivan – who has Turkish roots herself – who asks for respect for allochthonous women and their organisations. In the sampled texts on the anti-discrimination legislation, it becomes clear that all inequalities are mentioned, but without intersecting with each other. In the law, they are all treated on an equal level, but in the report and the debate, it becomes clear that some of the inequalities are of more (major) importance in comparison to others. Racism/ethnicity and migrant status/nationality play a more important role in the report since they are addressed in two of the three anti-discrimination laws. The same can be said for the governmental voice during the debate, and for the civil society text.

With this information on general gender equality machinery and legislation in mind, what then are the implications in Belgium of the different versions of intersectionality for the meaning and practice of gender+ equality? An interesting answer to that question is hinted upon in *Discrimination and diversity*, the annual report 2007 of the Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism. In this report the notion of ‘double discrimination’ is mentioned:

Women of foreign origin or migrant women have to deal with double discrimination: they are women and foreigner. (...) They belong to both the group of women who are discriminated because of their sex (gender group) and to the group of men and women who are discriminated based on their ethnic descent or religious conviction. (Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism 2008, 153)

In everyday practice, the Centre has to deal with this form of intersection. Because, which equality body can help migrant women? Where can they turn? The Institute for the Equality between Women and Men mentions such ‘double discrimination’ as well, since sometimes it has to deal with ‘mixed complaints’, for instance ‘people who are discriminated based on grounds of gender and descent, and on top of that is harassed at work’³⁴. In that case, more instances are responsible. And exactly here the problem is situated. The report of the Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism shows an (initial?) awareness of this matter:

The current system of dealing with complaints has weak spots. The complaints are classified as one or another form of discrimination. Moreover, there is currently no form of jurisprudence concerning multiple discriminations.

(Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism 2008, 153,)

³⁴ Instituut voor de Gelijkheid van Vrouwen en Mannen. ‘Met welke klachten kunt U bij ons terecht?’ (With which complaints can we help you?) <http://www.iefh.fgov.be/ShowContent.aspx?levelID=87&objectID=72&lang=nl>, accessed on 1 October 2008.

In this annual report, in its policy recommendations, the Centre claims that in order to make progress 'in the battle of discrimination against women, a greater awareness on multiple discrimination is needed'. The means to this goal is 'an intersectional approach of discrimination: the combined impact of gender, social descent, race, ethnic descent and religious conviction' (Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism 2008, 153).

Consequently, it appears that the separation of gender in one institution and the other inequalities in another implies practical problems with handling complaints. This results in limiting measures and the need to revise. In its annual report, in the chapter on 'Research and Policy Proposals', the Centre makes the government aware that more attention to intersectionality is needed.

But what kind of, which version of intersectionality does the Centre refer to? It appears that, comparably to the double or even triple discrimination the State Secretary of Equal Opportunities mentioned, the version of intersectionality used in this report is additive: one discrimination comes on top of the other. The Centre itself criticises 'the refusal of feminists to take an intersectional approach into account' (Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism 2008, 153), but at the same time does not itself manage to elaborate its knowledge on intersectionality. The stage is set for intersectionality, but more thorough knowledge and approach are still needed. Naming the concept alone is not enough.

5.2. Intersections in non-employment

The inequalities that come across in the coding of documents for the frame and voice analysis on non-employment are class, family/marital status and age. These inequalities tend to be of more importance than for instance ethnicity/race, migrant status or disability. Sexual orientation and religion are not even mentioned in the texts on pensions, parental leave, and service cheques for self-employed mothers and equal pay. In *Deliverable No. 8: LARG - state of the art and mapping of competences report. Belgium* something similar becomes clear: here, women of minority ethnic/religious groups are not the main interest. The inequalities that come across in that report are again class (lower-educated women, self-employed women), family/marital status (types of families mentioned) and age (women at a pensionable age).

This however does not imply that there is no focus at all in Belgium on the employment and labour of other inequality groups. The most current *General Policy Plan Equal Opportunities* for instance refers – within the frame of fighting discrimination and strengthening diversity – to the special attention the government will pay on 'groups which are underrepresented in employment (young people, women, people of allochthonous descent, older employees, disabled people)' (Milquet 2008, 11). Here, the Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism is denoted as playing a central role (Milquet 2008, 12). Again, gender and the other inequalities are separated, they are loosened from each other and are thus treated as independent inequalities, which need independent actions. Consequently the intersections are overlooked, and the attention goes out to age *or* allochthonous people *or* disabled people *or* women. In 2006, the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men published statistics on women and men in Belgium. In this publication a chapter is dedicated

to employment. What plays a role here – next to gender – is class, age or maybe marital/family status (Institute for the Equality between Women and Men 2006, 27-52). Disability and race/ethnicity are not focused on.

Something completely different can be found in various equal opportunity plans of the regional/communal Belgian governments. The Flemish Minister of Equal Opportunities, Kathleen Van Brempt, refers to intersectionality and consequently pays attention to the influence of gender on religion and vice versa when she mentions Muslim women. For her, 'the emancipation of Muslim women is high on the political agenda'. There is not such a thing as 'a Muslim woman', all women are different and they cannot be treated as a monolithic group (Van Brempt 2004, 25). Next to this intersectionalised 'target group', she also pays attention to older Muslim women and single Muslim women. The Flemish Minister in fact even refers to ethnicity/race and how women of allochthonous descent are often discriminated at work. The same counts for people with a disability and age as well as sexual orientation (*holebi's* in Flanders). Brigitte Grouwels, the State Secretary of Equal Opportunities of Brussels, also pays attention to intersectionalised groups. In the chapter on 'Women and Employment' of her action plan, she mentions allochthonous women and single women with children as 'a particular group of women which experience specific problems' (Grouwels 2007, 12). These women are vulnerable because 'they are women on the one hand and of allochthonous descent on the other' (Grouwels 2007, 17). Even though his policy plans are less extended than the Brussels or Flemish ones, Didier Donfut, Minister of Equal Opportunities of the Walloon provinces also pays attention to 'migrated women'. However, he does not immediately refer to labour and employment when he mentions this intersectionalised group.

What then are the implications in Belgium of the different versions of intersectionality for the meaning and practice of gender+ equality? The federal government does not pay attention to intersectionality when it comes to non-employment. The intersections are overlooked, and the attention is only on one of the inequality groups at the same time. Intersectionality is thus not seen to be at stake, but there is an interest in multiple inequalities, which are treated separately. But that does not mean that there are no gender+ equality policies or policy actions for intersectionalised groups such as allochthonous women, or women of ethnic minorities in Belgium. There are, but they are mainly elaborated on in the regional and communal levels. The implication is that the attention for intersectionality is weak on the federal level.

5.3. Intersections in intimate citizenship

The issue of intimate citizenship is treated separately from gender, both in the general equal opportunities legislation (the anti-discrimination laws) and machinery (the Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism versus the Institute for the Equality between Women and Men), as well as in the specific texts that were selected and analysed in the frame and voice analysis of the QUING-project. As regards to the texts chosen for the frame and voice analysis, gender does not seem to be at stake.

Gender however plays a minor role in the sub-issue 'divorce' since it is related to the position of women (and men) in the civil society text by the Dutch-speaking women's council. Gay and lesbian adoption is a matter of the inequality strand of sexual orientation and is related to the appearance of heteronormativity. Heteronormativity is certainly at stake when the voices against gay and lesbian adoption – Action for Family and certain senators in the parliamentary debate – are taken into consideration, but does not play a role in for instance the law enabling same-sex couples to adopt. In the sub-issue of surrogate motherhood marital or family status are the important inequalities. In 19 of the 20 texts that were sampled for the frame and voice analysis, family status is of importance. Sexual orientation is mentioned in 12 of the 20 texts. Gender only plays a role in 7 out of the 20 texts.

When zooming in on the selected literature on intimate citizenship in the *LARG State of the Art* report for Belgium, more or less the same conclusions can be drawn. The publications within this issue - on for instance marriage migration - focus on marital/family and migrant status. They do not (primarily) entail gender. The same is true for the publications on sexual orientation. However, three of the texts listed in this report actually address intersectionality, when researching migrant women.

Since most of these topics are treated in a degendered or sometimes even 'not gendered' manner, the question of how gender is constructed in the debates within the intimate citizenship issue can only be answered partially. Gender only seems to be at stake in some of the sub-issues and some of the texts. In the civil society text on divorce, women are named as victims. In the parliamentary debate, Minister Laurette Onkelinx similarly talks about 'women in precarious conditions'. Here, class plays a role. When turning to the sub-issue of gay and lesbian adoption, homosexual couples or same-sex couples are at stake, and almost no references to gender are made. The exception is to be found in the parliamentary debate when Senator Jacinta De Roeck talks about 'lesbian couples' and 'gay men'. In the surrogate motherhood sub-issue, most of the terms used are degendered. Only once, in the policy plan, 'pregnant women' are mentioned.

The inequality strand ethnicity/race is also absent in the selected texts. It is important to link this to the choice of texts: the result would have been different if texts on the headscarf or migration would have been analysed. However, it shows that other topics – especially divorce – do not take immigration or race into account.

At the same time, there are discussions going on in Belgium on the legitimacy of legal recognition of intimacy. The discussions concerning 'sham marriages' are an important example. In 1999 a law³⁵ was passed which introduced the concept of sham marriage: a marriage with the purpose of ameliorating the residence situation. In 2006, this form of marriage (or the attempt) was penalised by another law³⁶. The non-profit organisation, Flemish Centre for Minorities (Vlaamse Minderheden Centrum, abbreviated VMC), the Centre for Minorities the 8 (Minderhedencentrum de 8) and the Committee Yes, I do (Comité Ik wil A wel³⁷) joined to condemn the arbitrariness of the federal

³⁵ Law of 4 May 1999 on the modification of several stipulations as regards marriage.

³⁶ Law of 12 January 2006 on the modification of the law of 15 December 1980 on the access to the territory, the residence, the settlement and the expulsion of foreigners.

³⁷ The name of the *Comité Ik wil A wel* is a pun, which is important to understand. Throughout the years, the 'A' has become the symbol of the Flemish city Antwerp, and at the same time it is the phonetic way in which the Antwerp dialect says *jij* 'you'.

legislation on sham marriages and demand clear legislation on the matter, respecting the basic rights of the couples involved. This sub-issue of intimate citizenship was not taken into account in the frame and voice analysis. However, it would be interesting to take a look at the presence or absence of intersectionality here, and discuss the topic within the framework of both ethnocentrism and gender equality.

The question ‘which are the implications of the different versions of intersectionality for the meaning and practice of gender+ equality in Belgium?’ as regards intimate citizenship does not really apply. But finding out the implications for, for example, the way in which gay and lesbian rights are dealt with in Belgium are of interest. The intimate citizenship is framed in another manner – with less interest in gender – than the other issues.

5.4 Intersections in gender based violence

Gender based violence in Belgium is a classic case of the private that becomes public: most forms of gender based violence take place in intimate relations and are punished by legislation. Domestic violence for instance is a sort of gender based violence that starts at home and is very elaborately tackled by Belgian gender equality policy. Laws have been adopted, and the federal government – in collaboration with the regions and communities – keeps working on this matter via its *National Action Plans*. The law on domestic violence is rather restrictive in its definition of what this form of violence entails: domestic violence takes place between ‘spouses’ and ‘legal cohabitants’. Whereas these terms are very general, there is also a restriction to partners who have an actual registered partnership. People who simply live together are not targeted, neither are intersectionalised groups, migrants or LGBT’s. The *National Action Plan on Partner Abuse* stresses that domestic violence is a gender-related issue, affecting women (and men). Here, extra attention is paid to pregnant women. The Dutch-speaking Women’s Council specifically mentions migrant women, allochthonous women, refugee women, female newcomers, and disabled women. The law is thus degendered, the *National Action Plan* is gendered with special attention for pregnant women, and the civil society texts finally makes use of intersectionalised categories which suffer from domestic violence.

Sexual harassment is a different form of gender based violence. It takes place in the employment realms, is tackled by the Minister of Employment and is not gendered. However, in the law, a reference is made to the fact that violence, harassment or unwanted sexual behaviour can be related to religion or conviction, disability, age, sexual orientation, sex, race or ethnic descent.

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is an interesting sub-issue, since it was originally tackled in another law, aiming at another inequality strand than women (gender) (see part 4.4): FGM became punishable by the law on the criminal protection of minors (age) and also paid attention to ‘people who could not mentally or physically take care of themselves’ (disability). The topic of FGM so far has not been tackled in any new legislation, that focuses on this particular form of gender based violence.

Consequently, the name of this committee refers to people who want to marry and want to do so in the city of Antwerp. The committee consists of 48 couples whose marriage was considered to be a sham marriage in Antwerp.

However, it receives attention in academic research, and several Senators of the Committee of Foreign Nations and National Defence aim to draw the government's attention to it. It is placed on the agenda, but needs to be elaborated in new policy actions and perhaps legislation. In the debates on FGM, it is remarkable that this form of gender based violence is interpreted to come from African countries. They are practicing FGM and bring this form of violence to Western Europe via migration. Clearly, a remark or vision such as this can open the way for intersectionalised target groups. And it does: the Senators in the parliamentary debate, and Els Leye, the academic who researches and publishes on the issue mention target groups such as women and girls of African descent as well as migrant and refugee women.

Now, what are the implications of the different versions of intersectionality for the meaning and practice of gender+ equality in Belgium? Within the issue of gender based violence, the FGM sub-issue presents an interesting case. Female genital mutilation is treated as an externalised problem: FGM is a specific problem of migrant women, and as such does not affect the total Belgian female population. FGM can be understood within the 'immigrant problem sub-frame' that was linked to domestic violence in the MAGEEQ project.

It is mostly minority, immigrant populations and women who face the problem of domestic violence, and it is much less typical for the majority population. The problem here is with existing traditions and cultural norms and taboos that predetermine practices such as forced marriages, honour killings, or genital mutilations.

(Krizsán et al. 2007, 151)

Whereas domestic violence in Belgium is more seen to be a problem of all women – even of all legal cohabitants and spouses (degendered thus) – and only sporadically is linked to migrant/allochthous women, female genital mutilation is treated in a completely different framework.

5.5. Summary and comparison

Intersectionality is almost completely absent in the texts on general gender equality legislation and machinery. The inequalities that are named are multiple but they are considered to be separate, which brings about fragmentation instead of intersectionality. On the one hand, gender (gender law), race/ethnicity and migrant status/nationality (anti-racism law) are singled out as inequalities that need extra attention in federal legislation (and machinery). On the other hand, the remaining inequalities are joined in a third law (anti-discrimination law) in which they are considered independent and not merged (multiple but separate again). As such, there is no room for intersectionality left. Here, it is not so much the other inequalities that can be detrimental for – for instance – gender,, it is more likely the lack of intersection that is detrimental for a connection between gender and race, or gender and class, and so on. The only intersection that can be found in the 19 texts that were sampled for the frame and voice analysis is mentioned by Senator Fatma Pehlivan who asks for attention to be paid to migrant

women. And in fact, the Institute for the Equality between Women and Men is aware that attention is needed to 'gender and migration', but it does not look more closely at the relationship between these two inequalities. The Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism however is aware that the lack of intersectionality causes practical problems as regards complaint procedures in which allochthonous women are the target group.

In contrast, intersectionality is visible in the sampled texts on the non-employment issue. Here the attention of governmental texts, parliamentary debates and civil society texts is on people such as lower-educated women, women at the pensionable age, self-employed women and so on. Consequently, the non-employment issue seems to imply intersectionality. But does this always apply to the federal government when the non-employment issue is at stake? And is this use of intersectionality a conscious decision? The example that was provided in the *General Policy Plan. Equal Opportunities* of the current Minister of Equal Opportunities, Joëlle Milquet, would indicate that it is not. The government aims to pay special attention to 'groups which are underrepresented in employment' but rather focuses on all inequalities separately instead of leaving space for an intersectionalised approach. Instead of merging the inequalities – as is done by the responsible Ministers and State Secretary in the regional governments – gender is again treated separately. The intersectionalities that do appear in the sampled texts are thus rather ephemeral instead of being embedded in the gender+ equality policies.

In the intimate citizenship issue, gender does not play a role to the same extent it does in the other issues analysed here. Only seven out of the twenty texts concern gender. The sub-issue gay and lesbian adoption does not deal with gender equality; it focuses on equality for gay and lesbian people and involves gay and lesbian rights and heteronormativity. Moreover, the sub-issues divorce and surrogate motherhood are not primarily interpreted in a gender equality perspective. This implicates that as far as intersectionality is concerned, gender is not an inequality that is primarily at stake in the intersecting inequalities. Here, family/marital status and sexual orientation are at stake. Sexual orientation is related to family and marital status and to class in a minor way (once). The same can be said about the sub-issue divorce, which primarily concerns family and marital status. This is – only a couple of times – related to the inequalities of class, age, once sexual orientation and disability. These inequalities however do not intersect with each other, they are multiple but mentioned separately. Something similar happens in the last sub-issue – surrogate motherhood – in which marital/family status is the primary inequality axis and sexual orientation and age as well as gender are related to the marital/family status.

Gender based violence ranges from being gendered to being degendered. The degendered texts – i.e. the sexual harassment issue – do not make use of intersectionality, but treat the inequalities independently. In the other two sub-issues, domestic violence and female genital mutilation (FGM), intersectionality plays a role. In fact, of all the gender+ equality issues that are tackled in the QUING-project, gender based violence seems to be the most intersectionalised. In particular, the intersection of gender with race and ethnicity plays a role here: target groups as for example migrant women and girls of African descent come into the spotlight as in need of extra attention. In contrast to the other sub-issues examined here, the government, the parliamentary and

the civil society voices seem to be aware of the importance of identities which consist of various inequalities. This brings the discussion back to Kimberlé Crenshaw's article 'Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, identity, politics, and violence against women of color', that specifically deals with intersectionality in the realms of gender based violence. Here, she asserts that domestic violence happens within all communities and 'cuts across racial, ethnic, economic, educational and religious lines' (Crenshaw 1991, 1258). Now does this mean that there should not be any interest in the violence against women in minority groups? No, in fact there should be. At the same time, Crenshaw points out that 'women of color can be erased by the strategic silences of antiracism and feminism' (Crenshaw 1991, 1253). Both race and culture thus contribute to silencing domestic violence that take place in the homes or private lives of minority women. The approach of gender based violence which affects these women, however, can be considered to be ambivalent. As Conny Roggeband and Mieke Verloo have pointed out in the Dutch context: even though attention is needed for their special situations, it seems to be difficult to separate the 'immigrant problem sub-frame' (Krizsán et al. 2007, 151) from a problematising approach. Comparable to the Dutch case, migrant women are seen 'in terms of a range of social problems' (Roggeband and Verloo 2007, 263) within the gender based violence issue.

Throughout this comparative discussion, it has become clear that the use of intersectionality takes on different forms based on the issue is at stake. In the general gender equality legislation and machinery, almost no intersectionality occurs: multiple inequalities do come across, but they are treated separately. The two examples that were found here seem to point out the arbitrariness and even accidental form of intersectionality. In non-employment, some intersectionality comes across, but this does not seem to be a conscious decision, since other examples show that intersectionality can be neglected by placing various forms of inequalities next to each other instead of letting them merge, when dealing with policy actions in labour and employment. The intimate citizenship issue has shown that gender is not the most important inequality axis; in fact, it can also be sexual orientation or marital/family status. If inequalities are related to each other here, they are often seen as independent of each other. And finally, the gender based violence issue tells a completely different tale. Here, there is attention for intersectionalised target groups, next to the attention paid to the rather static gender, which was a target group in the general gender equality legislation and machinery issue.

On the federal level, there is some use of intersectionality, but it quite often appears as accidental and unconscious. In comparison to the governments and equal opportunities Ministers and State Secretary on the regional level, there does not seem to be a knowledge of or actual interest in intersectionality. However, the practical experiences the equality bodies so far have had with complaints of migrant women can be seen as an onset for a next step in dealing with intersectionality in federal legislation.

6. IDENTIFYING CHANGES AND THE RELEVANCE OF DIFFERENT FORMS OF INTERSECTIONALITY

Intersectionality is not of primary concern in Belgian federal gender+ equality policies. As this report already has shown, the federal government separates inequalities instead of merging them. Diversity policy in Belgium implies that the stress is on a diversity of inequalities, and discrimination based on these inequalities should be punished using the anti-discrimination legislation. But, diversity policy does not signify that there is any interest or special attention paid to the intersectionalities of these inequalities. In fact, as former Minister of Equal Opportunities, Christian Dupont, has pointed out, judges need those different laws to adapt to the type of discrimination (Dupont 2006, 4). This implies that every inequality strand can lead to another kind of discrimination. Instead of looking at a possible merging of inequality grounds, they are treated independently, and not in relation to each other in any way.

The former anti-discrimination law of 2003 still treated all inequalities together, but in 2007, gender and racism were separated into different laws and the list of other inequalities was expanded, introducing new grounds of possible discrimination. However, this 2003 law did not take intersectionality into account. Before diversity began to play a role in Belgium, the focus was on women alone, and again, no intersectionality took place. As far as the changes and relevance of different forms of intersectionality are concerned, they are of no concern to the Belgian federal gender+ equality policy.

However, something interesting is happening on another governmental level. In fact, gender+ equality policies are far more elaborated on by the regional/communal governments and especially Flanders has a dynamical equal opportunities policy that takes intersectionality (*kruispuntdenken*) into consideration. Instead of looking at the changes and evolutions of dealing (or rather not dealing) with intersectionality on a federal level, it would be far more interesting to connect the Flemish (but also Brussels) practice to the federal one.

When zooming in on gender mainstreaming, Flanders used gender mainstreaming from the very beginning in 1995. The first federal Minister had not been an advocate of gender mainstreaming, but in 1999, the instrument was also introduced in the federal gender+ equality policy (Decat and Hondeghe 2006, 30). Perhaps, in the future, something similar will happen with intersectionality: the federal level will be influenced by the Flemish. In fact, the practical problems with the separation of inequalities should be noted. Here questions such as which equality body migrant women can turn to will highlight the need of revising the Belgian structures.

Even though many academics in Belgium (e.g. Sarah Bracke, Magda Michielsens) and internationally (e.g. Kathy Davis, Leslie McCall) criticise the methodological complexity of intersectionality, it appears that considering multiple inequalities that mutually constitute each other in equal opportunities policy is far more closer to reality and allows a more dynamic and inclusive policy.

7. CONCLUSIONS

In the 1980s, equal opportunities policies in Belgium started as gender related matters but over the last couple of years – from 2003 on – they shifted towards a diversity policy. This shift has come about on all the Belgian policy levels. One of the three country-specific questions was if gender has become endangered by these diversity policies? Is diversity indeed ‘a killing concept’ (Michielsens 2006a)? Even though Judith Squires might be right when she states that diversity policies can result in focusing on certain inequalities and neglecting others (Squires 2008, 59), gender is not completely endangered in the Belgian context. As Magda Michielsens had pointed out, in Belgium diversity is often used as ‘a flag for anti-racism’ (Michielsens, 2006b, 1). However, as this report has shown, gender does not disappear from the policy agenda. In fact, by separating gender from the other inequalities in legislation and equality bodies, gender perhaps receives more attention than it would if treated as one inequality among others on the long list of inequalities. Yet at the same time, gender is a very static concept, which is separated from other inequalities: it denotes the binary category ‘women and men’, and does not consciously look at the intersection of gender with other inequalities. Moreover, gender is perhaps only focused on some women (autochthonous as a norm), and does not imply any intersections with other inequalities (for instance migrant women).

At the same time, the other inequalities are addressed in one law – two laws in case of race and ethnicity – and one equality body, the Centre of Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism. However, again this does not result in an intersectional approach either, since the inequalities are interpreted as being multiple but independent and separate from each other. On a concrete level, the Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism has remarked in its policy recommendations that ‘in order to make progress in the battle of discrimination against women, a greater awareness of multiple discrimination is needed’ (Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism 2008, 153). This remark was made within the scope of the weak spots in the Centre’s (and Institute for the Equality between Women and Men’s) approach to complaints of migrant women. The Centre is apparently aware of and actually refers to ‘intersectionality’ in its report.

Even though the federal government does not mention this itself: at some places in the federal gender equality policy, something of what in this report has been called ‘setting the stage for intersectionality’ takes place. When multiple discrimination (whether it being double or triple) is at stake, on top of one discrimination or disadvantage, groups or persons are seen to suffer from ‘extra’ discrimination(s)/disadvantage(s) based on other inequalities. These policy views can open a way for a federal, intersectional approach.

So far, it is clear that intersectionality is not of major concern and is not seen to have any theoretical relevance in Belgian federal equal opportunities policies. If intersectionalities are at stake, they are merely incidental and arbitrary. However, at the same time it seems that intersectionality – structural intersectionality that is – does play a great role in everyday life in Belgium, which is illustrated by the example of for instance the headscarf debate. In civil society, some organisations pick up this

importance, but only one organisation appears to fully understand and steep itself into the notion of intersectionality: the Office for Allochthonous Girls and Women. This organisation's target group constitutes the most important example of how a mix of various inequalities mutually constitute each other and lead to intersectionality. These allochthonous girls and women understand and live through 'multiple discrimination'. This structural intersectionality is also picked up by the academic research of the Flemish Office of Equal Opportunities Policy. Moreover, dealing with allochthonous women leads the equality bodies – the Centre and the Institute – to conclude that Belgian politics need to pay attention to multiple discrimination or political intersectionality as well.

In some way, the Office for Allochthonous Girls and Women is 'better at doing intersectionality' than the Belgian federal government. However, this statement cannot be generalised for all civil society organisations. The Office for Allochthonous Girls and Women is the only civil society organisation that understands the concept to such an extent. Contrarily to the federal government, the Flemish Minister of Equal Opportunities and the State Secretary of Equal Opportunities of Brussels do seem to take intersectionality into consideration. This intersectionality report for Belgium has indicated that the Flemish government has a completely different approach, and hence a different kind of policy. Whereas the federal policy actions, that are studied throughout the QUING-project, come across as static, and are characterised by a top-down intervention method – in which the government provides measures to help victims of for instance gender based violence, or to improve the combination of work and family life – the Flemish Minister explicitly mentions that her policy is 'two way traffic' in which the commitment of society is of equal importance as that of the government (Van Brempt 2004, 16).

The question that consequently comes along is whether or not it is sufficient that the regions, rather than the federal government, deal with intersectionality in their equal opportunities policies? This report has shown that the answer to this question is negative. The practical problems that arise from the separation of gender from the other inequalities show, for example: which equality body is responsible for dealing with complaints of migrant women, the Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism, or the Institute for the Equality between Women and Men? These equality bodies are federal. Moreover, the federal government is responsible for the policy area of justice. Especially with gender based violence – female genital mutilation is only one example – in mind, it is important to make policy actions flexible and take into account political intersectionality instead of holding on to a diversity policy with multiple but separate inequalities and ditto discriminations.

A federal recognition of intersectionality as a theoretical concept would lead to a completely new approach. Perhaps, in the future the Flemish government will influence the federal government? Helma Lutz indicated that the shift from a) sex to gender, b) gender to gender + ethnicity/diversity thinking and finally c) diversity to intersectionality is an evolution in time (Lutz 2002, 10). But, can we agree with this, based on the research on intersectionality in Belgium? The Flemish equal opportunities policy – which refers to an article Helma Lutz wrote together with Gloria Wekker – has shown Lutz' evolution, but the federal counterpart so far has not followed and experienced another evolution. Here, another shift seems to replace the 'c) diversity to intersectionality'-evolution: namely an evolution from diversity to anti-racism. Next to anti-racism, gender and gender mainstreaming still

play a role, but they are never influenced by intersectionality, leaving no room for gender intersecting with other inequalities.

If this is the case, the last country-specific question on whether gender mainstreaming leaves place for intersectionality has to be reversed: how would gender mainstreaming fit into an intersectional approach? And does it leave space for gender mainstreaming? The Flemish example shows that there is space for both intersectionality *and* gender mainstreaming. However, in the Flemish equal opportunities policy it also becomes clear that gender has lost some importance since it has become one of the many inequalities the Flemish Minister deals with and does not have the prominent role it has in the federal equal opportunities policy.

APPENDIX

1. Range of different versions by which policies might pay attention to gender and other inequalities³⁸

Version	description	Form of intersectionality yes/no?
Single minded	Attention for one strand Can be gender, can be other inequality. If other: is there a shift?	NO
Multiple, but separate strands	Attention for multiple strands, but treated separately from each other	NO
Additive	On top of one discrimination/disadvantage groups or persons are seen to suffer from an 'extra' discrimination/disadvantage originating in (an)other inequality/inequalities	In principle: NO (because no <i>interaction</i>), but often seems to originate in lack of expertise/knowledge about how interaction looks like/works. Therefore: SETTING THE STAGE for intersectionality
Interacting inequalities	Attention for the <i>interaction</i> of multiple inequalities	YES
Genderedness of structural mechanisms	Attention for the genderedness of structural mechanisms like racism, ethnocentrism, heteronormativity	YES
Intersectional categories inarticulate	Intersectional categories are mentioned, but unaccompanied by any articulate vision or conceptualisation of how the inequalities relate to each other	AMBIGUOUS (because inarticulate difficult to categorise in one of the 'versions'). If intersectional categories are accompanied with vision/conceptualisation, then it IS possible to categorise.

³⁸ This working definition was developed by the Radboud QUING team: Sophie Lauwers, Saskia Martens and Femke van der Wal.

2. Belgium, federal state

Federal Belgian government (1)	
3 Regions:	3 Communities:
Flemish region +	Flemish community = 1 government (2)
Walloon region government (3)	French-speaking community government (4)
Brussels, the capital city, region government (5)	German-speaking community government (6)*

* No specific (gender) equality policies or structures in these governments

3. Gender+ equality policies in Belgium: Ministers and State Secretaries

(1) Federal Ministers of Gender Equality

1985-1992 Government Wilfried Martens VI, VII, VIII, IX (CVP):
Miet Smet (CVP): State Secretary of Environment and Social Emancipation

1992 -1999 Government Jean-Luc Dehaene I and II (CVP):
Miet Smet (CVP): Federal Minister of Employment, Labour and Equal Opportunities

1999-2003 Government Guy Verhofstadt I (VLD):
Laurette Onkelinx (PS): Federal Minister of Employment, Labour and Equal Opportunities (+ Vice Prime Minister)

2003-2007 Government Guy Verhofstadt II (VLD):
Marie Arena (PS): 2003-2004, Christian Dupont (PS): 2004-2007. Federal Minister of Civil Services, Social Integration, Metropolitan Policy and Equal Opportunities

2007-2008 Government Guy Verhofstadt III (Open VLD)
No Minister of Equal Opportunities – Interim government

2008-now Government Leterme I (CD&V)
Joëlle Milquet (cdH) Federal Minister of Employment and Equal Opportunities (+ Vice Prime Minister)

(2) Ministers of Equal Opportunities of Flemish government

1995-1999 Government Van den Brande (SP)
Anne Van Asbroeck (SP) 1995, Brigitte Grouwels (CVP) 1997 Flemish Minister of Equal Opportunities and Brussels

1999-2003 Government Patrick Dewael (VLD) 1999 and Somers (VLD) 2003
Mieke Vogels (Agalev) 1999, Adelheid Byttebier (Agalev) 2001 Flemish Minister of Welfare, Health and Equal Opportunities

2004 - now Government Yves Leterme (CD&V) 2004 and Government Kris Peeters (CD&V) 2007
Kathleen Van Brempt (SP.A). Flemish Minister of Transport, Social Economy and Equal Opportunities.

(3) Ministers of Equal Opportunities of Walloon government

2004-now Government Jean-Claude Van Cauwenberghe (PS) 2004, Government Elio di Rupo (PS) 2005 and Government Rudy Demotte (PS) 2007
Christiane Vienne (PS) 2004, Paul Maignette (PS) 2007. Walloon Minister of Welfare, Social Action and Equal Opportunities

(5) State Secretary of Equal Opportunities of Brussels government

2004-now Government Charles Picqué (PS)
Brigitte Grouwels (CD&V). State Secretary of Equal Opportunities, Civil Services and the Port of Brussels

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