



# SEEM II

Services for Elders from  
Ethnic Minorities

# Final Report

SEEM III



# Services for Elders from Ethnic Minorities SEEM II

## Final Report

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in co-operation with the project partners

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Disclaimer

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## **I Background and Introduction of the Project SEEM II: Aims and Activities of SEEM II**

The European project “Services for Elders from Ethnic Minorities” (SEEM II) has sought to develop and promote solutions to improve health and social care service delivery for minority ethnic elders. This has mainly been achieved through the exchange of good practice between the different partner cities. Within SEEM II, the focus of exchanges was on the exchange visits of minority ethnic elders and their organisations and on better consultation practices with minority ethnic elders and their organisations (for example through consultation meetings’).

The project was based on a first phase, SEEM I, which lasted for nine months, and functioned as a pre-study which brought together the main actors involved. (Gerling 2003; Gerling & Miller 2003)

There are 11 official partners involved in the second phase of the SEEM project.

These are:

- Five local authorities: Leeds City Council (lead organisation) (UK); Stadt Dortmund (Germany); SDF Gunnared (Sweden), Ville de Lille (France) and the Province of East-Flanders (Belgium).
- An academic institution, the Forschungsgesellschaft für Gerontologie e.V. (Dortmund, DE)
- Five non-governmental, ‘voluntary’ organisations. : the Verein für Internationale Freundschaften e.V. (Dortmund, Germany), Leeds Older People’s Forum (Leeds, UK), Leeds Black Elders Association (Leeds, UK), the Geron Foundation (Bucharest, Romania) and Matca 2000 (Bucharest, Romania).

Four of these partners are new to the second phase of the project: Leeds Black Elders Association<sup>1</sup>, Matca 2000 Foundation, Geron Foundation, and a regional partner, the Province of East-Flanders (Provincial Department for Minorities).

Leeds Black Elders Association has been providing services with and for black and minority ethnic elders in Leeds for more than 12 years. It was an informal partner on the SEEM I project and has been actively involved in organising SEEM in Leeds.

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<sup>1</sup> However, this organisation was already unofficially involved in SEEM I and thus has been well informed about Seem and its aims.

Matca 2000 has a long history of voluntary work with socially excluded people. Since 2000, it has been a member of a national Initiative Group promoting the creation of a network of houses and services for elders. It also has a track record of working on transnational exchange projects, for example, on a YOUTH project entitled ‘Generation XXI Interactive Magazine.’

The Geron Foundation has been working since 1991 to improve the lives of elders in Romania. It has extensive experience in this area, including, for example, a project called ‘Elderly in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.’ It has also been working with the Roma community in Bucharest, for example, on a 1998 project called ‘Community Services for Romany.’ In addition it has participated in transnational projects, for example, a Leonardo da Vinci project entitled ‘Know How Transfer in Geriatric Care.’

The Provincial Department for Minorities in Gent has been working with minority ethnic elders for several years. One example is the ‘Becoming Older in Flanders’ project, which informed minority ethnic elders, voluntary associations and carers about becoming older in Belgium. The department has experience of working transnationally. In October 2002, they presented their projects at a workshop about older immigrants in Bonn (Germany).

The project’s exchange and research agenda has involved three full partner meetings, twelve consultation meetings with minority ethnic groups on a local level and 10 city-specific minority ethnic elders' partner exchanges. As a result of the project, a good practice checklist has been produced that aims to help other interested actors at a local level to improve services for minority ethnic elders (see recommendations). There will also be a seminar in Brussels towards the end of the project that will be hosted by minority ethnic elders themselves and intends to inform European politicians and NGOs about the needs of minority ethnic elders.

The overall goals of SEEM II are to:-

- Raise the profile of the contribution made by minority ethnic elders, and of their needs
- Combat the isolation of minority ethnic elders
- Increase the consultation with minority ethnic elders and their organisations in planning and developing their services
- Improve information about, and access, to services
- Share good practice in each city, country and across EU member states
- Support partner cities and accept the different structures in which we work
- Disseminate the project in each city, country and across EU member states
- Influence and inform member states and European level social policy to take full account of

the needs of minority ethnic elders.

The structure of this final report was chosen to match that of SEEM I. The partners agreed upon the outline during their last meeting in Gent. Structure, chapters and sources are described below.

Chapter I gives an introduction into the SEEM II project, its goals, partners and background.

Chapter II serves as a preamble. Within the context of different national histories, diverging integration concepts and different models of welfare states, the issue of ‘Services for Minority Ethnic Elders’ is addressed and termed differently between the countries involved in the project. To make sure that everybody understands what certain terms mean, this chapter discusses and defines the following terms: personal social services, integration / assimilation, (Black and) minority ethnic groups, migration, migrant / immigrant, race, historical minorities, Roma, Gypsies and Travellers and self-help. The chapter is based on the results of SEEM I, discussions with partners during their meetings, background reports written by partners, and academic literature.

Chapter III focuses on minority ethnic elders and their situation in Belgium / East Flanders / Gent and Romania / Bucharest. It describes minority ethnic groups and migration histories, social-political and legal aspects, life circumstances and approaches and models of good practice in both countries and regions/cities. This chapter exclusively focuses on the two countries that are new to the project since the other four countries/cities already involved in SEEM I (UK, Germany, France, and Sweden) are described at length in the final report of SEEM I. The chapter is based mainly on information that is drawn from the background reports and other briefing material written by partners. Often it was not possible to double-check relevant information such as statistics. This was mainly due to language barriers, missing data and limited resources. When possible, additional academic literature was analysed.

Chapter IV describes the exchange visits of minority ethnic elders and their organisations and analyses their results in Leeds, Dortmund, Lille, Gent, Gunnared/Gothenburg and Bucharest. Main sources were the partners’ exchange evaluation reports and group discussions during the last partner meeting in Gent.

Chapter V describes the influences and results of SEEM II in Leeds, Dortmund, Lille, Gent, Gunnared/ Gothenburg and Bucharest. It gives information regarding the general backgrounds of the cities/region, discusses the outcomes of the consultation seminars and the overall results of SEEM II and gives information about what each city intends to do in the future. A

final subchapter describes the barriers partners had (and, in some cases, still have) to overcome. This chapter is mainly based on the consultation and progress reports that were written by the partners.

Finally, Chapter VI gives recommendations at different levels and includes the good practice checklist that aims at helping other interested actors at local level to improve services for minority ethnic elders.

A short version of this report is going to be produced soon.



## **II Preamble / Remarks on Terminology**

Within the context of different national histories, diverging integration concepts and different models of welfare states, the issue of ‘Services for Minority Ethnic Elders’ is addressed and implemented differently in the six countries that have participated in the project. The difference also has a clear impact on the prevailing terminology. Unfortunately it is not possible to find and use a terminology that suits the views of all the countries involved in the project. This very complex problem cannot be discussed here in full but a few remarks should be made to illustrate the problem and to define certain terms used.

### **1. Personal Social Services**

This is a widely accepted term within the field of social policy and social work. It is commonly applied in international and comparative studies. Within this report, the term personal social services is defined as comprising of services in the fields of advice, support, care and medical treatment. Thus, personal social services mainly react to material social needs and are therefore problem-orientated. In general, personal social services are provided by the informal care system such as families, neighbours, friends and acquaintances or by the professional care system such as statutory services. (Naegele 1999: 435)

It is worth noting however that in the UK the term ‘social services’ also refers to local Social Services Departments (SSDs) that provide social services for children and adults.

When speaking of (personal) social services in this report and not explicitly referring to the services of SSDs, the broader definition is meant.

### **2. Integration / Assimilation**

Within the discourses in migration sociology different concepts are used to describe the relationship between members of the host society and immigrated people, focusing on the latter. The way and intensity with which they are included within the host society is described with terms such as assimilation, absorption, integration, acculturation etc. Until the end of the 1980s it was mostly assumed that assimilation (in the sense that immigrated people totally adopt the culture of the host society) was something that inevitably had to happen. Only from then on did some concepts develop that were not based on the model of final assimilation. Multicultural approaches are more often found at the level of political ideologies than at a

theoretical sociological level. The UK especially views itself as a multicultural and multiracial society and its approach of anti-discrimination legislation also has a clear impact on the delivery of social services for black and minority ethnic elders themselves. In contrast to Germany, specific and separate services for elders from minority ethnic communities are more widespread and not in general regarded as an obstacle to integration. (Gerling 2002)

France also has an anti-discrimination legislation and the legal basis for immigration used to be the so called principle 'ius soli', which is friendly to immigrating people in the sense that people who are born on French territory automatically gain French citizenship. In the 1990s, the principal of the 'ius soli' was changed and amplified by elements of the principle of 'ius sanguinis' which relates to the origin of people. Although the Republican tradition emphasises the idea of a society of citizens ('citoyens') in which equal citizens are obligated to the French nation, no matter what their origin or the colour of their skin, there has always been a monoistic, one-sided pressure that immigrants have to assimilate (Mintzel 1997: 414f.)

In Germany the term integration is more widespread than assimilation, but integration is often viewed as a one-sided integration of immigrated people to the German culture and thus is very close to the concept of assimilation.

The Swedish general and official approach is that diversity is very important for society. Just like in Germany, the term integration is used rather than assimilation, since assimilation is a one-sided concept.

In Belgium, within the last ten years, a former concept of "integration" has been abandoned within immigration policy. It has made room for concepts such as "citizenship", "emancipation", and "diversity" which were implemented by the "Decree Concerning the Flemish Policy towards Ethnic-Cultural Minorities", dating from April 1998. However, the integration concept is still very deeply rooted in the minds of politicians, social workers, and most citizens. In recent years, the policy regarding minority ethnic groups has stressed the importance of "inclusiveness". This means that separate services can be created for minority ethnic groups, but that in general the existing services should take full account of their specific needs.

In Romania, because of the existence of historical minorities, the situation is very different from that of the other countries involved in SEEM II. At government level, there are a number of institutions which aim to promote the interests of minority ethnic groups. In recent years, there have been different additional approaches applied to specifically improve the situation of Rroma.

From these short introductions into underlying national approaches and views of the interaction between members of the host society and immigrated people it becomes clear how difficult it is to find a term that is accepted by the different partners.

In this report the term ‘integration’ is not used as one-sided assimilation but as a two-sided process both by immigrated people and by members of the host society. Furthermore it is mostly used in the sense of social inclusion, meaning integration in social and societal and not cultural contexts.

### **3. (Black and) Minority Ethnic Groups**

This term is mainly used in the UK to describe people who are not of white British origin. A lot of the Commonwealth migration to Great Britain occurred from the West Indies, Asia and Africa and most of these people are visibly not ‘white’ and thus have been called ‘black’. The term ‘black’ is often used as a political term to emphasise the impact of racism on those who are thus defined. During the first phase of the project, the term ‘black and minority ethnic groups’ had been used in general, because it was believed to be more neutral than other terms described above and below. However, with the project being extended to Belgium and Romania, the term ‘black’ was not felt to be appropriate any more. Also, in Germany, France and Sweden this term was very uncomfortable and felt to be unacceptable. So partners have agreed upon using the term ‘minority ethnic group’ or ‘minority ethnic elders’ when referring in general to those people who are not indigenous to the respective country. However, when speaking of a certain country, the respective ‘national’ terms are used. This means that, for instance, in the case of Germany, minority ethnic elders are also referred to as ‘foreigners’ or ‘migrants’.

### **4. Migration**

In this report migration is described as a process of leaving one’s home country to resettle in a new country on a long-term basis. The reasons for migration can differ but comprise mainly of economic, political and social (for instance family reunification) reasons. Short-term migration such as seasonal work migration is not considered here.

## **5. Migrant / Immigrant**

These terms are widely used in Germany, France, Belgium and Sweden and usually try to describe people with a migration background in a neutral way. In general, the term is not being used as a legal one, but as a socio-demographic one. In Germany, both within the socio-scientific and the political / public sphere the term ‘migrant’ is increasingly used and often replaces the official term ‘foreigner’ in order to avoid the negative (hostile) associations of the latter. In general the term ‘(im)migrant’ refers to a bigger group than the legal term ‘foreigners,’ and this is especially the case for Germany and France. For instance in Germany, most migrants do not have German citizenship, although some immigrated groups are statistically counted as German people, such as ‘(late) emigrants’ (people of German origin<sup>2</sup>).

However, in the UK the term ‘migrant’ or – even more so – ‘immigrant’ is more associated with the political far right and thus also has a (different) connotation and is mainly used in a negative, ‘racist’ sense. Against the background of the specific migration history of the UK which is linked to migration from the Commonwealth to the ‘mother country’ there is another reason why the term ‘migrant’ or ‘immigrant’ is not liked: it implies a process of migration that is not yet finished, meaning that people have not fully settled. Since a lot of people in the UK with a non white British background have been living in the UK for several decades and most of them do have British citizenship the term ‘black and minority ethnic groups’ is widely accepted there.

## **6. Race**

In the UK, this term used to be accepted and was widely used to describe people of different origins. It still is used in official language, e.g. anti-discrimination legislation (‘Race Relations Act’) but has lost currency in recent years.

However, in Germany, France, Belgium, Romania and Sweden the term has never been used at all. In Germany this is due to the national-socialist past in which belonging to a Jewish ‘race’ was interpreted as being inferior with all its horrible implications and consequences. In France, there is also a tendency to avoid the term ‘race’ and ‘racism’ and instead much of the discourse is framed in terms of ‘culture’ which again links to the greater importance of uniformity and assimilation in France. (Lloyd 1991: 67)

From a sociological perspective, the term ‘race’ is not a concept with a clear content and thus

in sociological theory the term is not used.

When the term ‘race’ is used in this report, it does not refer to the existence of different races on earth but in the context of the former British usage or official language.

## **7. Historical Minorities**

This is a term that refers to the special migration pattern in Romania. In Romania, the great majority of its minority groups are included in this category. Migration of these populations happened many centuries ago.

Historically, these ethnic groups settled down and organised themselves into strong communities – there are entire municipalities having a majority population of Hungarians or Germans (Saxons of Transylvania, known as "Swabians") or Ukrainians, Lippovans, Bulgarians, Serbians, Rroma, Tartars, Turks, Csangos, Carasovens, Ruthenians or Poles. In towns there are also numerous communities which are organised and keep alive the culture, language, traditional handicrafts and specific holidays of the original country. (Curaj, Barbuta & Mesteru 2004)

## **8. Rroma, Gypsies and Travellers**

The Rroma are a traditionally nomadic people who originated from northern India. They are believed to have left India about 1000 A.D. Today it is impossible to identify Rroma still living in India. The reason behind the diaspora of the Rroma remains a mystery to this day. Unlike other diaspora populations, which may cling to the idea of a place where they might one day be ‘at home’, the Rroma have been a nomad people with no homeland to return to, and no original territory to reclaim. And this is completely accepted by them.

Collectively referred to as Rroma (singular *Rom*), they are more commonly referred to as Gypsies or Travellers. The term Gypsies was born when the Rroma first arrived in Europe, their darker skins causing many Europeans to believe that they were natives of Egypt, which was the only hot foreign country that most Europeans had knowledge of. The term Gypsy itself is seen by many Rroma as derogatory. However, this may differ between countries. In the UK, the word ‘Gypsy’ has been ‘reclaimed’ amongst some of the travelling communities. The term ‘Gypsy’ has never been used by the Rroma to describe themselves but was imposed

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<sup>2</sup> ‘Late emigrants’ are people of German origin who used to live in the former Soviet Union and came back to Germany after the fall of ‘iron curtain’.

by outsiders. Furthermore, the term Gypsy has long been associated with persecution and fails to recognize that, due to geographical location and cultural and dialectical differences, the Roma comprise different groups, which, however, are culturally and socio-economically related<sup>3</sup>.

Each of these main divisions can be further divided into two or more subgroups distinguished by occupational specialization or territorial origin or both<sup>4</sup>.

The Roma speak their own language known as “Rromanes”, a language closely related to the modern Indo-European languages of northern India such as Hindi and Punjabi. Only recently has there been a movement toward the use of the ‘double-R’ in the spelling of Roma (for the people) and ‘Rromanes’ (for the language). (Briefing Report, 2004)

In UK, Roma are mostly referred to as Gypsies and Travellers, in Germany as Sinti and Roma, and in Sweden as Travellers and Roma.

In this report, when referring to the situation in Romania, the term Roma is used, as this seems to be the most neutral term.

## **9. Self Help**

Within the field of social policy, social work and the delivery of social services, self help has always been an important issue. However, depending on the particular welfare state system, these principles have a different meaning and play a different role in different countries. For instance, due to stronger principles of political and economic liberalism, self help and self responsibility play a more crucial role in Anglo-American countries than in Germany or Sweden. In the UK, from the 1980s on, the voluntary sector has been strengthened by neo-conservative reforms of the welfare state (Gerling 2001: 18f.) and this is characterised as a two-edged sword because it also means cutting back elements of the welfare state. On the other hand, due to this political tradition, the voluntary sector is strongly developed. This is also true for the so called ‘black and minority ethnic’ voluntary sector (i.e. the organisations of minority ethnic groups) which is, compared to France, Germany, Belgium and Sweden,

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<sup>3</sup> There are four main confederations:

- the Kalderash (smiths who came from the Balkans and then went to central Europe and North America; they are the most numerous),
- the Gitanos (also called Calé, mostly in the Iberian Peninsula, North Africa, and southern France; strong in the arts of entertainment),
- the Manush (also known as Sinti, mostly in Alsace and other regions of France and Germany; often travelling showmen and circus people),
- and the Romnichal (Rom'nies)(mainly in Britain and North America).

most developed in Great Britain.

Sweden, as the prototype of the modern (social-democratic) welfare state, with its universalistic approach of social security and a dominance by the public sector (Schmid 2002: 206), hardly knows self help organisations in the way they are known in the UK, France or Germany.

When using the term ‘self help’ in this report is it not used in a normative way but simply as a way of, for instance, delivering social services. Supporting self help in this sense does not imply (further) cutting down elements of the welfare state, but implies supporting self help abilities for instance by structural or organisational measures.

Within SEEM II, the great value of voluntary work has become even clearer. As described above, the five voluntary organisations involved in the project comprised the Association for International Friendship (Dortmund, Germany), Leeds Older People’s Forum (Leeds, UK), Leeds Black Elders Association (Leeds, UK), the Geron Foundation (Bucharest, Romania) and Matca 2000 (Bucharest, Romania). Some of them had to deal with very limited or even nonexistent financial support and resources and, for them, participating in the project meant even more effort and work than for the rest of the partners involved.

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<sup>4</sup> Some of these group names include Machvaya (Machwaya), Lovari, Churari, Sinti, Rudari, Boyash, Ludar, Luri, Xoraxai, Ungaritza, Bashaldé, and Romungro.

### **III Elders from Minority Ethnic Groups in East Flandern/Gent (Belgium) and Bucharest (Romania)**

The following chapters give an overview of the groups, migration histories and the life circumstances of minority ethnic elders in Belgium/Gent and Romania/Bucharest. They then show relevant socio-political and legal aspects of the situation of minority ethnic elders in the respective countries and finally summarise the similarities and differences.

#### **1. Groups and Migration History**

This chapter gives an overview of the various minority ethnic groups on a national and regional level and the respective migration histories in Belgium/Gent and Romania/Bucharest.

##### **1.1 Belgium: East Flanders / Gent**

Large scale immigration to Belgium initially took place in the context of recruiting workers after World War II, earlier, however, than in Germany.

In Flanders, there was some immigration Before World War II, mainly from Central / Eastern Europe and from Italy. But it was only after the war that large scale immigration took place. The reason was economic: the post-war economy of Belgium needed a lot of labour, and coal mining became crucial. However, there was a great shortfall in the labour. In 1946 an agreement was made with Italy to recruit 50.000 Italians as miners. Between 1946 and 1949, 77.000 Italians came to Belgium and worked in the coalmines in Wallonia and in the province of Limburg.

The situation changed drastically in 1956. During a catastrophe in the old mine of Marcinelle (Wallonia), 262 people were killed, among them 136 Italian miners. The bilateral agreement with Italy was stopped, and other agreements were settled with Spain, Greece and Portugal, causing new immigration from these countries. Still not having enough workers, people were also actively recruited from Morocco and Turkey. Gradually, they spread over a great deal of the Flemish territory (mainly in the larger cities), working not only in the mines, but also in factories, ports and public transport. After some years, many of the original workers were rejoined by their families. Between 1961 and 1966, some 130.000 new workers immigrated to Flanders, but in 1974, due to the oil crisis, the immigration was stopped for new workers – only family members could rejoin their husbands and fathers. By that time, it also became



clear that most of the immigrants would not go back to their countries of origin. Thus settlement intensified, being officially recognized in 1980 by the "Vreemdelingenwet" (the 'law on foreigners'). Through this law, immigrants got more legal security.

During the last decades, new waves of immigration have come from all over the world, and people immigrated mainly as refugees or asylum seekers. This group is very heterogeneous and their situation is completely different from that of the old labour immigrants. For instance, this group is still relatively young.

In 1999, there were about 10.2 million people living in Belgium. About 890.000 did not have Belgian citizenship, and thus make up about 9% of the whole population. As described above, this group is very heterogeneous. About 560.000 people (62%) belong to countries of the European Union, the remaining 340.000 people (38%) are mainly of Moroccan or Turkish origin.

A statistical problem is that these figures are based on people's nationality. This means that minority ethnic people who became Belgian citizens are statistically counted as Belgians. Thus, official numbers of 'foreign' people underestimate the real number of minority ethnic people.

Minority ethnic groups in Belgium<sup>5</sup> live mainly in those parts of the country where the first generation settled for jobs and housing. The province of Limburg has a large and older population of Italians and an equally large but younger population of Turkish people. The Brussels-Antwerp axis is mainly inhabited by Moroccans, and the axes Antwerp-Gent by Moroccans and Turkish people.

In Flanders, 3/5<sup>th</sup> of the 25.000 Italians live in Limburg, and half of the 45.000 Moroccans live in the city of Antwerp. 40% of the Turkish population live in Limburg, 30% in East Flanders and 23% in the city of Antwerp.

The concentration of minority ethnic groups is highest in the region of the capital Brussels, where nearly as many "foreigners" live as in the whole of Flanders. They include a large group of Moroccan community and a lot of people from Southern Europe. (Gent Background Report 2004)

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<sup>5</sup> In the federalised state of Belgium, there are four regions: Flanders (Dutch speaking), Wallonia (French speaking), the small German speaking region, and finally the capital Brussels with the surrounding municipalities.

### 1.1.1 Minority Ethnic Elders in Flanders

In Flanders, in 1999, there were about 49.000 non-Belgian people aged 55 years and above. That makes up about 3% of all people aged 55 years and above in Flanders.

As in other countries with work labour immigration, there are more older foreign men (56%) than women (44%) in Flanders. Most of them are still relatively young: 88% of the men and 82% of the women are younger than 75 years.

The group of elders with a foreign nationality is very heterogeneous. Most of them stem from other member countries of the European Community, (40% are from the Netherlands). Medium sized groups are comprised of Italians (11%), Moroccans (8%) and Turkish People (7%). Smaller groups of ethnic elders are from Spain, Greece and Portugal.

The following table shows the origin and age groups of minority ethnic elders in Flanders. It shows clearly that the largest groups of minority ethnic elders are originally from the former recruitment countries Spain, Italy, Turkey and Morocco (together they comprise 38% of the older foreign population).

| <i>Origin</i> | <i>Age</i>   |              |              |              |             | <i>Total</i>  | <i>%</i>      |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|
|               | <i>55-59</i> | <i>60-69</i> | <i>70-79</i> | <i>80-89</i> | <i>90 +</i> |               |               |
| Spain         | 461          | 1.270        | 481          | 56           | 9           | 2.214         | 11.36         |
| Greece        | 194          | 534          | 146          | 22           | 1           | 897           | 4.0           |
| Portugal      | 168          | 263          | 73           | 11           | 4           | 519           | 2.66          |
| Italy         | 1.420        | 2.207        | 1.411        | 277          | 30          | 5.345         | 27.42         |
| Turkey        | 1.278        | 1.856        | 232          | 32           | 3           | 3.401         | 17.45         |
| Morocco       | 1.564        | 1.987        | 250          | 26           | 5           | 3.854         | 19.77         |
| Other         | 878          | 1.203        | 859          | 255          | 70          | 3.265         | 16.77         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>5.963</b> | <b>9.257</b> | <b>3.474</b> | <b>679</b>   | <b>122</b>  | <b>19.494</b> | <b>100.00</b> |

Source: NIS Statistics, Foreign Population, 1-1-1999

**Table 2** shows the distribution of the population 55+ over the five Flemish provinces and the Brussels Region.

| <i>Province</i> | <i>Italy</i> | <i>Turkey</i> | <i>Morocco</i> | <i>Spain</i> | <i>Portugal</i> | <i>Greece</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>% of target group.</i> |
|-----------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| Brussels        | 6.572        | 1.794         | 7.284          | 5.478        | 1.297           | 2.324         | 24.749       | 60,4                      |
| Limburg         | 3.649        | 1.765         | 576            | 530          | 73              | 591           | 7.184        | 17,5                      |
| Antwerp         | 364          | 656           | 2.316          | 748          | 254             | 107           | 4.445        | 10,8                      |
| Flemish Brabant | 977          | 98            | 360            | 733          | 145             | 142           | 2.455        | 6,0                       |
| East-Flanders   | 213          | 871           | 518            | 166          | 16              | 38            | 1.822        | 4,5                       |
| West-Flanders   | 142          | 11            | 84             | 37           | 31              | 19            | 324          | 0,8                       |
| TOTAL           | 11.917       | 5.195         | 11.138         | 7.692        | 1.816           | 3.221         | 40.979       | 100,0                     |

*Source: NIS Statistics – Foreign Population, 1-1-1999*

Table 3 shows a prognosis of the size of the minority ethnic population for the years 2010 and 2025 for the regions of Flanders and Brussels.

| <i>Origin</i>  | <i>Year</i> | <i>Flanders</i> |             | <i>Brussels</i> |             |
|----------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|
|                |             | <i>60 +</i>     | <i>80 +</i> | <i>60 +</i>     | <i>80 +</i> |
| <i>Italy</i>   | 2010        | 7.270           | 1.618       | 8.413           | 1.623       |
|                | 2025        | 13.639          | 3.611       | 14.203          | 4.523       |
| <i>Morocco</i> | 2010        | 5.231           | 324         | 9.765           | 989         |
|                | 2025        | 12.184          | 3.342       | 22.120          | 6.167       |
| <i>Turkey</i>  | 2010        | 4.780           | 312         | 2.619           | 278         |
|                | 2025        | 11.440          | 2.853       | 6.373           | 1.506       |

*Source: NIS Statistics and personal research by Jo Kavs (Limburg)*

The table shows rapidly growing numbers of minority ethnic elders in both categories 60+ and 80+. (Gent Background Report 2004)

## **1.2 Romania: Bucharest**

The situation of minority ethnic groups in Bucharest/Romania is totally different from that in the other cities/countries involved in SEEM II (Gerling 2003). Romania has many minority ethnic groups that have been living for centuries in the country respective what is now

Romanian territory. Some of these populations are the representatives of different ethnic precincts assimilated into Romania's territory during the evolution of the Romanian state (such as Lippovans, Ruthenians).

Other groups that migrated to Romania were attracted by the former abundance of economic resources, such as Hungarians, Tartars, Turks, Poles, Ukrainians, Rroma, Armenians and a part of the Bulgarian population (Catholic religion).

Further ethnic groups were brought to Romania during the medieval period by their former local kings and aristocracy (named "voivod" and "boyar") because their knowledge of handicrafts wanted to be used. These groups came mainly from Italy, Germany, and a part of Albania. They also included Rroma from the handicraftsmen castes (named "rudari", as well as musicians, goldsmiths and silversmiths.)

Greeks, Jews, Armenians and Turks settled in Romania for economic and political reasons.

The majority of these populations benefited from donations of land and properties. They often had a more privileged status than the indigenous population.

Through history, these minority ethnic groups settled down and organized themselves in strong communities – there are entire municipalities having a majority population of Hungarians or Germans (Saxons of Transylvania, known as "Swabians") or Ukrainians, Lippovans, Bulgarians, Serbians, Rroma, Tartars, Turks, Csangos, Carasovens, Ruthenians or Poles. In towns there are also numerous communities which are organised and keep alive the culture, language, traditional handicrafts and specific holidays of the original country. (Curaj, Barbuta & Mesteru 2004)

Apart from historical minorities, there are two other categories of ethnic minorities in Romania.

Political refugees came to Romania after 1945 and included mainly Croatians, Serbians, Slovenians, Albanians, Greeks, Cubans, Kurds, Syrians, Congolese and other people from Central Africa. The total number of refugees who came to Romania since 1988, is about 1,200 people. Some of these people went back to their countries of origin after conflicts had settled there, others remained in Romania.

Finally, there are so called foreign citizens in Romania, who have been attracted by the economic opportunities after 1990 and settled down on Romanian territory within the last ten years. These groups comprise mainly Greeks, Turks, Chinese, Italians, French, Syrians, Lebanese, Jews, Indians, Koreans, Vietnamese and others. They are traders, small

enterprisers, business people or employees of companies managed by multi-nationals.

Because of the real integration of some minority ethnic groups on the one hand and the oppression of others during the period of communism on the other hand, a great proportion of minority ethnic groups in Romania are assimilated and, for instance, do not know their mother tongue anymore. However, in certain regions, there are more Hungarian language speakers than Romanian, because in those regions, where the Hungarian population used to be the majority, Romanians had to learn the Hungarian language. (Curaj, Barbuta & Mesteru 2004)

**Table 4: Minority ethnic Groups in Romania**

|                         |                   |              |
|-------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| TOTAL of POPULATION     | <b>21.698.181</b> | <b>100 %</b> |
| ROMANIANS               | 19.409.400        | 89,5%        |
| HUNGARIANS              | 1.434.477         | 6,6%         |
| RROMA * declared        | 535.250           | 2,5%         |
| * <i>real number</i>    | ~1.300.000        | 5,9%         |
| GERMANS                 | 60.098            | 0,3%         |
| UKRAINIANS              | 61.091            | 0,3%         |
| SERBIANS                | 22.518            | 0,1%         |
| TURKS                   | 32.596            | 0,2%         |
| TARTARS                 | 24.137            | 0,1%         |
| SLOVAKS                 | 17.199            | 0,1%         |
| JEWS                    | 5.870             | *            |
| RUSSIAN – LIPPOVANS     | 36.397            | 0,2%         |
| BULGARIANS              | 8.092             | *            |
| CZECHS                  | 3.938             | *            |
| CROATIANS               | 6.786             | *            |
| GREEKS                  | 6.513             | *            |
| POLES                   | 3.671             | *            |
| ARMENIANS               | 1.780             | *            |
| SLOVENES                | 175               | *            |
| RUTHENIANS              | 262               | *            |
| CARASOVENS              | 207               | *            |
| ITALIANS                | 3.331             | *            |
| CHINESE PEOPLE          | 2.249             | *            |
| ALBANIANS               | 520               | *            |
| MACEDONIANS             | 731               | *            |
| CSANGOS                 | 1370              | *            |
| OTHER ETHNIC MINORITIES | 19.633            | 0,1%         |

Source: 2002 Census of Population (National Institute for Statistics)

As mentioned above, the great majority of these minority ethnic communities have been settled in Romania for a long time and integrated into the life style and economic structure of Romania as a whole. This is with the exception of the Rroma population, for whom there are great inequalities. (Curaj, Barbuta & Mesteru 2004)

## **The Roma Population**

The Roma history of the past nine hundred years is that of a nomadic minority ethnic group.

The Roma are a traditionally nomadic<sup>6</sup> people who originated from northern India. They are believed to have left India about A.D. 1000. Today it is virtually impossible to identify Roma still living in India. The reasons behind the diaspora of the Roma remains a mystery to this day and furthermore, the failure of this dispersed population to return to their homelands after mass migrations to the hostile lands of Europe where they encountered persecution and oppression, is an enigma. Although unlike other diaspora populations, which may cling to the idea of place where they might one day be ‘at home’, the Roma have been a nomad people with no homeland to dream of, no original territory to reclaim. What makes them so special is that they are quite happy with this situation.

Under the Communist regime, the Roma were denied the status of a minority ethnic group, and as a result, no education was provided in their mother tongue and no account was taken of their specific culture. Many maintained their traditional ways of life, including turning back to nomadism, a process which accelerated after the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe as the political climate did not favour them any better. The different groups of Roma have adapted themselves in different ways to the new situation. Few have found a niche, friends, professional relations, within mainstream Romanian society, while many are victims of poverty and discrimination. (Briefing Note SEEM II, 2004)

At present, two important trends affect the Roma community:

- ⇒ the appearance of a strong ethnic and political movement of Roma, sustained by new processes and trends in Europe, demanding the observance of fundamental human rights;
- ⇒ a process of impoverishment which is much more significant amongst the Roma than amongst the rest of the population.

Estimating the size of the Roma population is difficult, since many of them manifest an ambiguous ethnic status or even declare their status in a contextually different way. For this reason, there are different estimations of their population size, depending on the approach and the methodology used. However, it is estimated that there are about 1.3 million Roma people living in Romania, which makes nearly six percent of the overall population (see table 4

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<sup>6</sup> Communities of nomadic people move from place to place, rather than settling down in one location. Many cultures have been traditionally nomadic, but nomadic behaviour is increasingly rare in industrialised countries. Typically there are two kinds of nomad, pastoral nomads and peripatetic nomads. Pastoralists raise herds and move with them so as not to deplete pasture beyond recovery in any one area. Peripatetic nomads are more common in industrialised nations travelling from place to place offering a trade wherever they go to.

above).

The Roma have a distinctive spoken, but no written language. As a result, they have no written history or cultural records. Their language is also not used in church: usually they take part in religious life together with the majority population, using the language of the majority.

The Roma life style, values, norms and strategies for resolving different life problems, differentiates them the most from other ethnic groups. Their ways of living and working, characterised by the dominance of extended families and their unique ways of obtaining resources, are more important than differences in language, religion or folklore (such as dress).

Today, Roma have gained a more symbiotic life style than in former times, living together in small groups. If employed, they usually do low-paid skilled work: pail makers, brick makers, wooden tools makers (such as spoons and tubs), and comb and broom makers. They also exploit different resources with a low economic potential, usually unused by the dominant population: second hand clothes, feathers, different recyclable resources (empty bottles, iron, copper, etc.) or various small items (such as bath stones or small souvenirs). Often they obtain funds from the dominant population from marginal activities: begging, magic tricks and fortune telling, selling small cheap items, etc. There is a strong link between Roma and music, which is part of their life. Many play different instruments “by ear“. In general, their music is appreciated and can give Roma musicians a very good social status.

The family structure of Roma is that of an extended family. The average number of people in a Roma family is more than 6, compared to about 3 for the majority population. The younger generations make up the majority of family members, which generates certain economic difficulties. The share of non-legalized marriages is very high, approximately 40% of the adult population, and there is no sign that the younger generation is changing this custom. The average age for getting married is 17 years for women and 18 years for men, significantly lower than for non-Roma (22 for women and 25 for men). (Curaj 2004)

### **1.2.1 Minority Ethnic Elders in Bucharest**

Bucharest, the capital city of Romania is situated in the central area of the Muntenia region on the Dambovitza river. Built like Rome on 7 hills, the city covers 239 km<sup>2</sup>, with a density of population of 1300 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup> and a total population of 1.926.334 people.

**Table 5: Population of Bucharest by Ethnic Background and Sex**

|                           |           | MEN     | WOMEN     |
|---------------------------|-----------|---------|-----------|
| TOTAL POPULATION          | 1.926.334 | 900.465 | 1.025.869 |
| ROMANIANS                 | 1.869.069 | 870.224 | 998.845   |
| HUNGARIANS                | 5.834     | 2.193   | 3.641     |
| RROMANY * <i>declared</i> | 27.322    | 13.707  | 13.615    |
| UKRAINIANS                | 425       | 164     | 261       |
| GERMANS                   | 2.358     | 1.129   | 1.238     |
| RUSSIAN – LIPPOVANS       | 1.141     | 351     | 790       |
| TURKS                     | 2.473     | 1.697   | 776       |
| TARTARS                   | 363       | 160     | 203       |
| SERBIANS                  | 324       | 160     | 164       |
| SLOVAKS                   | 49        | 25      | 24        |
| BULGARIANS                | 370       | 174     | 196       |
| CROATIANS                 | 67        | 43      | 24        |
| GREEKS                    | 1.592     | 891     | 701       |
| JEWS                      | 2.473     | 1.260   | 1.231     |
| CZECHS                    | 57        | 21      | 36        |
| POLES                     | 245       | 112     | 134       |
| ITALIANS                  | 646       | 452     | 194       |
| CHINESE                   | 2.038     | 1.180   | 858       |
| ARMENIANS                 | 815       | 387     | 428       |
| CSANGOS                   | 21        | 11      | 10        |
| OTHER ETHNIC MINORITIES   | 8.106     | 5.772   | 2.334     |

Source: 2002 Census of Population (National Institute for Statistics)

In Bucharest, the largest minority ethnic groups are of Rroma, Hungarian, Turkish, Jewish, German, and Chinese background. There is no available data of minority ethnic groups in Bucharest concerning their distribution by age. (Curaj, Barbuta & Mesteru 2004)

## 2. Social-Political and Legal Aspects

As described elsewhere (Gerling 2003) the countries involved in the project SEEM I and II are characterised by different socio-political, historical and legal circumstances that indirectly influence the way the respective welfare system treats minority ethnic elders and develops benefits. This is also the case for Belgium and Romania. How far minority ethnic groups are excluded or included in the prevailing social security system is largely dependent on their legal status. In general, when they are citizens, meaning they do have the prevailing citizenship, they have full political and social rights and are entitled to the whole spectrum of welfare services.

The following chapter gives an overview of the social-political and legal frameworks in Belgium and Romania.



## **2.1 Belgium: East Flanders / Gent**

### **2.1.1 Old Age / Services for Older People**

In Flanders, there has been a long tradition of "denominational segregation" concerning services and corporate life in general. This means that unions, health insurance funds, socio-cultural organisations and so on, often belong to one political "family". This is also the case for most of the older people's organisations, although a number of "pluralistic" initiatives have been taken since the 1970s. In the 1980s, older people's advisory councils were set up. They bring together representatives from the local older people's organisations, the appropriate magistrate and civil servants of the city or municipality. Additionally, in several Flemish provinces, there are Provincial Older People's Councils. The aim of these councils is to give elders the chance to participate on a local level in social policies in general and in older people's policies specifically.

In 1993, an Older People's Consultation Committee was created as an umbrella organisation to influence policies at the Flemish level. On the local level, meeting points for elders and service centres have been created in order to help older people with access to services, social contact, education and recreation.

In the field of health care and social work, there are lots of organisations and institutions working for and with older people. Apart from old people's homes, there are networks of social and health care workers visiting people at home. There are also centres where one can rent appliances (such as wheelchairs, crutches etc.), meals-on-wheels services for older people, and so on.

In many cities, there is a service centre for older people. This is usually a meeting place where older people can go for information, education, recreation, etc. Many services centres are very active and most of them are connected to the local OCMW<sup>7</sup>. The visitors to these centres mostly belong to the group of younger elders.

In some cities, there is also a network of club houses for older people. Generally, they attract Flemish elders who belong to older age groups (from 70-80 years old). The average Turkish or Moroccan elder is much younger than the target group of these club houses. The club houses are, in the first place, meeting places for older people, where they talk to each other, play cards, have a drink etc. Club houses do not organise many activities and they certainly do not attract minority ethnic elders. However, they could be encouraged to involve themselves more actively in multicultural activities such as story telling sessions, reminiscence projects,

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<sup>7</sup> In every city in Flanders, there is a OCMW or Openbaar Centrum voor Maatschappelijk Werk (Public Centre for Social Work)

cooking activities etc.

It is a significant fact that minority ethnic elders do not participate in any of these organisations and that they do not make use of the mainstream services. Only very recently, some of these organisations have started to discuss the situation of minority ethnic elders and the challenges of a multicultural society.

Since 2001, there have been discussions within the Flemish government concerning a new decree regarding older people's policy. This policy has three important targets:

- ⇒ to keep older people active and self-determined as long as possible
- ⇒ to prevent the risks of dependency and
- ⇒ to guarantee the best possible services for older people in case they are in need of help.

The government has also taken some measures to assure the income of older people and their rights to receive a retirement pension. From the beginning of the new discussions, the Flemish government has included the issues of minority ethnic elders in the debate. This inclusion of minority ethnic elders is clearly illustrated in the three basic values of the new decree:

- ⇒ take full account of the competences of older people,
- ⇒ strengthen solidarity, and
- ⇒ deal with diversity. (Gent Background Report 2004)

### **2.1.2 Integration Policy**

It was only at the end of the 1980s, that Belgium started working out an immigration policy by setting up a "Koninklijk Commissariaat voor het Migrantenbeleid" (Royal Commissariat for the Immigrants' Policy). This body collected and conducted research on the social and economic situation of immigrants in Belgium, resulting in a number of reports with policy recommendations.

The most significant element of these reports was the way the integration concept was defined – as something between assimilation and segregation for which a neologism was created: "inpassing"<sup>8</sup>. There were some positive elements in this concept, for instance that any policy should also include the issues of immigrants and that a positive integration of immigrants in society was aimed at by eliminating social barriers. But on the other hand, the concept remained very vague: it did not define what integration really meant and what was expected

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<sup>8</sup> It is difficult to translate this concept into English; "adaptation" (in Dutch: *aanpassing*) is not the right word; the verb "inpassen" means "to fit in".

by immigrated people. Also, the role of the indigenous population had not been made clear. What remained was that the difference between "inpassing" and "assimilation" stayed very small, and that there was no discussion of mutual rights and duties of both parties.

So, in more recent years, the concept of "integration" has been abandoned by immigration policy. It made place for concepts such as "citizenship" "emancipation", and "diversity", which were implemented in 1998 by the "Decree Concerning the Flemish Policy towards Ethnic-Cultural Minorities". However, the integration concept is still very deeply rooted in the minds of politicians, social workers, and the average citizen. The sentence "let them adapt themselves" is commonly heard, and it will take some time before "citizenship" or "diversity" will be accepted by all.

The decree stipulates the fields of action of the minorities policy and the structures of the so-called "integration sector". The Flemish policy regarding minority ethnic groups includes three fields of action: receiving, welcoming and emancipating. The first two are aimed at newcomers. 'Receiving' means that newcomers are taken care of and that they are helped with their basic needs (housing, health care etc.). 'Welcoming' is meant for those newcomers who are legally allowed to stay in the country and this includes lessons in Dutch-as-a-second-language, and social orientation and individual guidance classes. The initiatives for older people are part of the third field of action, that of 'emancipation'. This refers to those minority ethnic groups who have settled in Flanders for good.

In recent years, the policy regarding minority ethnic groups has stressed more and more the importance of "inclusiveness". That means that separate services can be created for ethnic minorities, but that in general the existing services should take full account of their specific needs. (Gent Background Report 2004)

## **2.2 Romania: Bucharest**

### **2.2.1 Old Age / Services for Older People**

The structure for planning and delivering social services for elders in Romania and Bucharest is in the middle of extensive changes.

In 2000, there were about 3.06 million people living in Romania, aged 65 years and older. This is a 13.3% share of the whole population. Thus, compared to the other countries involved in SEEM II, Romania is the country with the youngest age structure. In general, the development of appropriate social and health care services for older people is still in its very beginning.

In Romania, traditionally the role of the family has been essential in providing care for elders, especially in rural areas.

During Communism, urban communities were broken up and the houses completely destroyed. With their residents being relocated to 10 flat apartment blocks, many old people have been left isolated in depressing and unfamiliar neighbourhoods, without family, in small flats and on a very low pension. Former rural communities were forced to split up and to resettle in cities, ignoring the value of family traditions and community life.

In the period of transition from dictatorship to democracy, traditional family structures were put under great strains again. Due to changes in family structure and lifestyles and the rising mobility of the population from rural to urban areas, care in the family has become more and more restricted.

### **Formal Care Services**

The formal care services for older people are not yet developed enough. Up to now, for a total of 4.5 million older people, there are nationwide:

- ⇒ 19 homes for older people with about 2 120 places (co-ordinated by the Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family)
- ⇒ 39 residential centres with health care and social assistance services for older disabled people with about 4 230 places (co-ordinated by the National Authority for Disabled People)
- ⇒ 17 social centres for elders with about 780 places (financially supported by NGOs and governmental institutions) and
- ⇒ 39 home care services for elders for less than 5 000 people.

Thus, only 0.3% of all elders receive formal care services.

There are also additional services and social centres for elders that are provided by NGOs and the dominant religions, but because of high demand there are unmet needs.

Regarding minority ethnic elders, the organisations of minority ethnic groups provide some social care services for their elders. Some of these organisations are supported by embassies, other organisations (NGOs), charitable foundations, churches and business people from the respective minority ethnic communities.

There is also a programme of the European Union (PHARE SESAM) that tries to develop and diversify social services in Romania. Within this scope, forty-two innovative projects were initiated in the country, such as a day care centre network for older people, a temporary

housing centre for homeless people, home care services for older or disabled people, social and medical centres for elders, a pilot centre for active physical and mental recovery and social integration, and day-clubs for senior citizens. Services offered within those projects comprise for instance consulting and social guidance, legal consulting, leisure activities, medical home assistance, distribution of food and clothes, housekeeping, shopping aids, medical recovery assistance, club activities, night shelters, social reintegration, meals on wheels, small repairs, assisted personal hygiene, temporary housing, meals at social canteens, and a help line.

Most of NGOs' projects are developed in partnership with local authorities and also organise training for social workers, home carers or community nurses.

There are other publicly financed measures to assist and support older people, such as the income support benefit or special benefits granted to disabled people.

Despite all these measures, it must be emphasised that most old people live in very poor circumstances. The average pension in Romania amounts to 67 €.

The Government has built a new system of care for the elders taking into account new strategies that aim at changing attitudes, developing formal and informal networks and diversifying the home care services to sustain an independent life as long as possible. In 2000, the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity issued the "Law of Social Assistance for Elders, which has the following main objectives:

- ⇒ to remove the incoherence of the actual residential care system and to define the modality of payment according to the income of each recipient;
- ⇒ to develop and diversify the forms of social assistance taking into account the real needs of elders, to assure outpatient care services, to offer help and support for daily activities and to enable their involvement in all social activities;
- ⇒ to increase comfort and to ensure care in institutions, within families or at home.

The law also defines the categories of recipients who will have priority in receiving care. These are:

- ⇒ Older people without families
- ⇒ Older people who do not receive care even though their families are obliged to provide it
- ⇒ Homeless older people
- ⇒ Older people with no or very low income

⇒ Older disabled people who do not take care of their social-medical needs.

On the basis of the law, their defined target groups can use following services:

⇒ Short term or permanent care at home

⇒ Short term or permanent care in older peoples homes

⇒ Care in day care centres, clubs for senior citizens and social homes.

All these services are free for elders with low income. Older people with average income have to pay 60% of the real costs. Some local authorities also offer money for care at home that can be claimed by the husband or wife.

In Romania, there are three categories of institutional care for elders, (1), older people's homes, (2) homes for pensioners and (3) homes for chronically ill patients.

Social and community care services are paid from the local budget and provided by organisations, foundations and religious associations that are financed by the state.

For a better inquiry into the needs and demands of older people, the Romanian government has issued a national assessment system in 2000. With the help of this instrument, the physiological, sensory and psychological-emotional status of older people is going to be measured.

Care needs will be assessed on three levels:

1. for those who are able to live independently,
2. for those in a situation of dependency and
3. for those with partial autonomy.

In Romania, it is now possible to develop other types of institutional and intermediate care such as day care centres, nursing homes, centres for social re-education and recovery, etc. However, as stated earlier, formal care for older people is still at the beginning.

Parallel to the implementation of new laws, the Ministry for Labour and Civic Solidarity has installed a method of authentication which means that certificates are given to informal care givers at home. These people are allowed to act as formal carers for one year and are able to make contracts with local authorities when they participate in special training schemes.

Apart from this infrastructure of care, Romania has set up a National Council of Elders, which ensures the involvement of elders when it comes to the development of social policies and other issues for older people. This council is completely autonomous and has an advisory role. It represents the older people's associations and supports the social dialogue between public

authorities and representatives of older people. (Prelici 2004; Curaj 2004)

### **Health Care**

The health care system is not patient but medically orientated. There is a strong emphasis on self-care to compensate for the lack of social and health care facilities.

Theoretically, older people can live at home or choose to move to an institutional setting, which mostly consist of nursing homes and residential facilities for senior citizens. In practice, however, the senior citizens' residences and nursing homes do not meet their real needs, both in number and in quality of care. The needs are several times larger than the supply.

There is a lack of outpatient health services. In Bucharest, with more than 400 000 senior citizens, there are only a few community care projects involving less than 350 elderly patients; 120 of them are Geron's patients.

There is also a lack of educational programs to train nurses for community care. The nursing schools only train for general nursing. Their curricula do offer courses for community nursing, but the students do not have access to practical activities and do not know what these activities really mean. The only contact with practice is made through the few home care programs organized by NGOs. There are no programs in the regular education system for community nursing or home care. There is no coherent educational system covering training needs departing from low-level nurses (nurse level 1) up to the university level.

Health care services are provided by the state system and in general free. The family physician (general practitioner) ensures the primary medical care. For elders and seriously ill persons there are facilities for getting medicines - free or at reduced prices – which are compensated by the National House for Health. Regarding specialised medical assistance, the elders benefit from free services in dispensaries and hospitals, usually referred to by the family physician.

In rural areas, medical care is almost non-existent, because of the lack of equipment and specialised staff such as physicians and nurses. (Curaj 2004)

#### **2.2.2 Integration Policy**

At the government level, there have been a series of institutions established, which aim at promoting the interests of minority ethnic groups. These are:

⇒ National Council of Minorities (1991)

- ⇒ National Council Against Discrimination (2001)
- ⇒ National Office for Refugees
- ⇒ National Office for Rromany Problems
- ⇒ Specialised departments at different ministries (Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family, Ministry of Culture and Cults)

After the reorganisation of the local administration in 2003, special departments for Roma and other minority ethnic groups issues were also established at the level of every mayoralty in the big cities.

Historical minority ethnic groups are specially sustained by the state. This means that:

- ⇒ Every community receives residences and financial resources on a yearly basis from the Government and/or the local authority for running the representative organisations. These comprise funds for management, endowment, administrative expenses, wages, and editing of their own bilingual publications.
- ⇒ Apart from the results of parliamentary elections, every minority ethnic group has by law at least one elected representative in the Deputies Chamber.

Minority ethnic organisations are members of the National Council of Minorities and monthly meet the Government representatives in order to discuss different problems and issues.

At the request of minority ethnic community groups and sustained by the state, representatives were established at kindergartens, schools (or classes), secondary schools (or classes) and sections in universities, that teach the mother tongue language of minority ethnic groups.

In places, where a certain minority ethnic group has a share of more than 30%, it is mandatory to have bilingual inscriptions in public spaces and to have mother tongue speakers in public institutions.

Refugees, asylum seekers and persons with conditional humanitarian protection are taken care of by the Romanian National Centre for Refugees (established in 1996), and other organisations that are sustained by the state. These organisations offer housing and other services for people in need. (Curaj, Barbuta & Mesteru 2004)

### **Integration policy aiming at Roma**

In the last few years, there has been greater awareness of the difficulties faced by Roma people in society. The Roma issue has been increasingly addressed by various national and



international non-governmental organisations. Different economic, social, political, and cultural approaches have been applied in the hope of improving the living standards of the Roma, of promoting a more just social policy, of strengthening Roma cultural identity, and of encouraging Roma political participation. Solutions have been sought in the context of the struggle against racism and nationalism, as well as in the context of enhancing cultural pluralism. These recent projects are fragments of a growing all-European Roma movement that is now only in its formative stage. The shape of this movement is still amorphous and incomplete. A significant internationalised human rights strategy initiative to monitor the human rights situation of the Roma and to provide legal defence in cases of human rights abuse still does not exist.

In 2001, the Romanian Government adopted the “The National Strategy for Improving the Roma Situation”, to tackle their problems and implemented a methodology for the specific measures of this strategy. (<http://www.Rroma.ro/government.htm>)

Other strategies to tackle problems of Roma are included in:

- ⇒ The development of pre-university education in which the amelioration of the degree of Roma occupation in the formal education systems represents a major objective
- ⇒ The programme “Access to Education for the Disadvantaged Groups with Focus on Roma People”, initiated by the Ministry for Education and Research and co-financed through the EU Programme Phare
- ⇒ The work of the National Agency for Employment
- ⇒ The Ministerial Commission for Roma, which is formed of representatives from the Ministry for Work and Social Solidarity, from the National Agency for Employment and from Roma organisations
- ⇒ A Seminar "Improving the situation of the Roma in Romania", organised by the UN that took place in Bucharest in 2001

A Conference: ‘Roma in an Enlarged European Union’, organised by the European Commission, DG Employment and Social Affairs and DG Enlargement. (Curaj, Barbuta & Mesteru 2004)

### **3. Life Circumstances**

Although minority ethnic elders are very heterogeneous groups in both countries’ respective cities and face very diverging life circumstances, there is evidence that, like in many other European countries (Gerling 2003), compared to indigenous elders most of them tend to be

more disadvantaged in many fields of life. This is especially the case for older work migrants in Belgium and Rroma in Romania.

The situation of some of the historical minority ethnic groups in Romania is different in that many of these populations benefited from donations in lands and properties. They often had a more privileged status than the indigenous population. Some of their minority ethnic groups, (as for instance the Greek, visited in their community centre in Bucharest by the SEEM II project partners), seem to have less economic problems than indigenous groups, because of the relatively high socio-economic status of many of their members.

### **3.1 Income**

In Belgium, most of the minority ethnic elders have a rather low socio-economic position. The career of many first generation immigrants has been characterized by heavy, unhealthy and badly paid labour. Often their careers were short because of unemployment or occupational diseases. Among the first generation women, only a few were professionally active and earned an income of their own. Since the income of this first generation was always low, their pensions are also among the lowest ones. The Italians have a slightly better income than the Turks or the Moroccans, because many of them worked their whole life in the coalmines, which gave them some advantages – but even their average income is lower than that of the average Belgian (Gent Background Report 2004).

In Romania, most Rroma people live in acute poverty, which is even worse for families with many children. About 63% of the Rroma population are living below the subsistence level. (Curaj 2004) There is no detailed data available as to the income situation of older Rroma people, but it is estimated to be very poor.

### **3.2 Housing**

The housing situation of the Rroma population is very different from that of the rest of the population in Romania and has to do with their nomadic past and presence. Rroma people used to build very rich, large houses with a totally different architectural style especially regarding the roofs. Often, this architecture was not very functional. Today, they often live in tents or wagons in yards.

The housing conditions of the Rroma population in Romania are much poorer than those of the rest of the population. On average, about 3 people share one room, compared to about 1.3

people for the total population. In more than 10% of Rroma families, five or more people live in one room. There are even incredible cases such as 12, 14 and even 21 people living in one room. This cannot be explained only by “traditional customs”, but by a housing shortage that is more marked among Rroma. There is evidence that the housing situation of Rroma people is going to become even worse.

### **3.3 Health**

The needs of the Rroma in Romania have been neglected in healthcare policy and research, and data on the health of the Rroma people is scarce and fragmented. Their life expectancy is up to 10 years below average. Poor living conditions - including overcrowding and inadequate sanitation - make Rroma communities more susceptible to communicable diseases--for example, hepatitis and tuberculosis - and skin diseases, such as eczema. In Bulgaria, Romania, and Macedonia, the last reported cases of poliomyelitis were in Rroma communities. (Briefing Note SEEM II, 2004)

Similar results regarding a very bad health status were found in a research study on Gypsy and Travelling people living in Leeds (Leeds REC 2005).

### **3.4 Access to Services**

Because of a number of barriers, access to health and social services is a lot more difficult for minority ethnic elders than for indigenous elders. The barriers exist both on the part of minority ethnic elders themselves and on the part of service providers. They include at least the following:

On the part of minority ethnic elders:

- ⇒ Language barriers
- ⇒ Insufficient knowledge of availability of, and rights to, social and public services
- ⇒ Low expectations of their lives
- ⇒ Negative experiences of retirement
- ⇒ Negative experiences with services used before
- ⇒ Certain cultural and religious concepts
- ⇒ Fear of, and experience of being discriminated against
- ⇒ Poor mental and physical health
- ⇒ Inadequate support from their families

On the part of service providers:

- ⇒ Racism – overt and often inadvertent – at individual and institutional levels. This includes ‘professional’ assumptions that their family will provide care and a ‘colour-blind’ approach to service provision and assessment
- ⇒ Myth ‘they care for their own’
- ⇒ Universalistic and ‘colour-blind’ approach of service delivery
- ⇒ Lacking staff of matching ethnic background
- ⇒ Lack of knowledge of the life situation and life styles of minority ethnic elders
- ⇒ Lack of consultation with minority ethnic communities in service planning and delivery
- ⇒ Lack of cultural sensitivity (especially concerning communication, care, food and religion)
- ⇒ Lack of information about the services in languages of minority ethnic elders (Gerling 2003)

The lack of cultural sensitivity is reflected in the high rate of people either not accessing or being refused services.

### **3.5 Discrimination**

There is evidence that in both countries discrimination against minority ethnic elders occurs.

The Roma people is still the least integrated and the most persecuted one in Europe. Almost everywhere, fundamental civil rights of Roma are threatened and they are common victims of racist violence, a process hastened by the decline of the Communist dictatorship. Discrimination against Roma in employment, education, health care, administrative and other services is observed in most societies, and hate speech against them deepens the negative anti-Roma stereotypes which are typical of many public opinions of European states.

Usually, Roma feel rejected by the state and the majority population, which creates another obstacle to their integration. Furthermore, Roma are usually the targets of various forms of prejudice.

The rising wave of racism and violent assaults against the Roma has forced many Roma of Central and of Eastern Europe to flee from their countries, and, as a result, they have been forced to ask for political asylum or refugee status in the states of the European Union. In most of these cases, border authorities of the European Union do not allow these people to enter their territory. Also they contradict the repatriation agreements signed between the member states of the European Union and States of Central and Eastern Europe, since refugees are treated as goods. (Briefing Note SEEM II, 2004)

## 4. Approaches and Models of Good Practice

This chapter shows models of good practice in both countries' respective cities, which aim at improving the life situation of minority ethnic elders by facilitating access to services for older people.

### 4.1 East Flanders / Gent

There are some projects in East Flanders aiming at minority ethnic elders that show good practice regarding how to meet their special needs.

#### **Gent Model of good practice I**

##### **Becoming older in Flanders**

This project started at the end of the 1990s with the adaptation of a Dutch project about informing minority ethnic elders and preparing them to growing old in the immigration country. From the start, the Department of East Flanders collaborated with the province of Limburg: while the latter realised an Italian version of the project, the former implemented a Turkish version, and later collaborated with the realisation of an Arabic version.

The project aims at two target groups: minority ethnic elders with their specific needs and problems, and staff of the local welfare services for older people who do not know how to handle these specific needs. The elaborated educational concept on which "Becoming older in Flanders" is based wants to bring both parties together and ensure permanent communication between them.

The project starts with informing minority ethnic elders within a series of six meetings. The minority ethnic elders are actively recruited – for example by visiting them at home – and brought together for the meetings.

There is a specific methodology to these meetings. In the first meeting, the focus is laid on handling emotions. The elders take a look at a series of photo cards and talk freely about their feelings at getting older in what is for them a "strange country". During the next sessions (2-5), they are given a lot of information about older people's services in their neighbourhood. Representatives of those services come to present themselves and a number of them are visited by the elders themselves. The final session is dedicated to listening to the participants' needs and problems, and to answering their questions.

The meetings are organised by two educational workers (one Turkish and one Moroccan origin) in co-operation with local partners (such as integration centres and social centres). A number of follow up activities are also being organised. These are workshops being set up with the elders who participated in the project. The aim is to create a network of minority ethnic elders, to give them the opportunity to talk about their needs and to get more information about existing services for older people.

Workshops are also organised for the staff of services for older people, to learn more about the specific needs of minority ethnic elders.

Thus, the overall aims of the project are multiple and comprise of:

- informing and educating minority ethnic elders about the existing welfare infrastructure in Belgium;
- Sensitising welfare sector staff about the needs of minority ethnic elders;
- Stimulating reflection among minority ethnic elders about their life, their migration history, and about becoming older in Belgium;
- Creating a permanent communication system between the elders and the services.

The project has been extended to the Province of Antwerp and the Brussels region. (Gent Background Report 2004)

## **Gent Model of good practice II**

### **Memories**

It was a Turkish self-help organization that, in 1997, proposed a project following a reminiscence methodology. The aim was to interview some of the oldest Turkish immigrants in the province of East Flanders and to write down their immigration stories.

During the first stage of the project, young students of Turkish background were trained as "reminiscence interviewers". Then, elders' life stories were recorded. At the end, there was a small exhibition, a beautifully illustrated storybook and a video that was made by a professional filmmaker of Turkish origin. He went back to Turkey with two of the interviewed old men (one from Istanbul, one from Emirdag), and with the first man's daughter and the second man's grandson. He recorded their comments and thoughts about being an immigrant, about their joys and worries, about their families and their relation with their children and grandchildren – which turned out to be a very touching and moving document.

The final documents can also be used to inform staff, to educate students and to sensitise people in general.

The importance of this kind of project is twofold: for the older people, it is a way of communicating which can help them to strengthen their self-appreciation. For the younger people involved, it can lead them to a better understanding of their elders. So, reminiscence projects can also help to bridge a gap between generations. (Gent Background Report 2004)

### **Gent Model of good practice III**

#### **The Family Care Project**

This project also started in 2003, and is a result of the project “Becoming older in Flanders”.

The aim of the Family Care Project is not to promote care for older people by relatives, but to enhance the competences of those who are prepared to do so.

Just like with “Becoming older in Flanders”, the regular services for family care were involved in the project from the start on. When the project was carried out the first time, it was organized for a number of young Turkish women. It included seven meetings during which the young Turkish women were given information about the existing services, and were taught the right techniques of caring for older people etc.

The most important aspect of this initiative was that Flemish institutions were confronted with Turkish people. They could compare traditional Turkish and modern Flemish ways of caring and thus exchange experiences. For the Flemish services, it was an occasion to learn more about the specific needs of minority ethnic elders. It was a significant result that the people involved realised that there weren't big differences between Flemish and Turkish carers after all.

Another important outcome of the project is young Turkish women are given ideas about the sector in which they might find a job. (Gent Background Report 2004)

## **4.2 Romania: Bucharest**

In Bucharest, there is also one model of good practice that shows how to better integrate Rroma elders by working with minority ethnic mediators.

### **Bucharest Model of Good Practice**

#### **Preparing Rroma Women for Providing Social and Health Care to Senior Citizens**

The project was initiated by the Geron Foundation, which was founded in 1991 and is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation acting in the field of social and community care services for senior citizens in Bucharest. The Geron Foundation develops projects to help the elders to live at home, in the community, together with family, friends and neighbours, delaying the need for institutional care.

Geron's core activities focus on the marginalized senior citizens living in district 5 of Bucharest. This district has a relatively large Rroma community. Of more than 300,000 inhabitants of the district, there are about 20% Rroma, including over 3 000 Rroma elders. Due to their traditional way of living in their own communities, and their suspicion of outsiders, it is very difficult to reach them with social work. To overcome the cultural gap and communication difficulties with Rroma elders, Geron designed this project.

The Geron Foundation works closely together with a Rroma organisation that is called Partida Rromilor. The aim of the project is to develop training programs for young Rroma women in order to qualify them to work in the health and social services care sector. Thus, Rroma women will act as social mediators between their community and Romanian society.

The project was designed for three years as follows:

The first year's objectives were:

- To train 10 Roma women to act as social mediators in the Roma community;
- To organise activities in the Roma community (health promotion, family planning, caring for elders at home, educational activities for women with little formal education etc.);
- To work with a Roma organization in District 5 to develop the work and managerial skills of its active members;
- To make a strong connection with the Social Assistance Department at the District Local Administration level responsible for the implementation of social policies.

The second year's objectives were:

- To build the core team consisting of women involved in the training program during the first year and train the second group of Roma women;
- To transfer part of the administrative responsibilities for the project to the Roma organisation;
- To develop a directory to facilitate access to the social and care facilities developed by governmental organizations and NGOs.

The third year's objectives were:

- To consolidate the Roma women team and to organise activities in the Roma community (health promotion, family planning, care of elderly at home, etc.);
- To transfer all project's administrative and managerial tasks to Roma organization;
- To send application forms to various financing organisations to obtain resources for project consolidation;
- To develop a District Roma Women's Association for the emancipation of Roma women through education.

The first year was financed by the Open Society Foundation, which is the Romanian branch of the Soros Foundation.

The project started with activities to extend the collaboration with Roma organisations active in District 5. The next step aimed at recruiting ten Roma women. The Roma partner organisation proposed a group of thirty women motivated both by the training and by the fee offered to the participants.

The training comprised a mix of theoretical lessons and practical field activities. The curricula covered a range of topics, such as: structure of the care team, basic needs of people, role of the family in care for patients, education for health and the prevention, nutrition and hygiene-essential factors for health, mother and child care, care for elders, care for disabled persons, family planning, and patients' rights.

The training was delivered by professors of nursing schools, representatives of different national or local administrative departments, doctors, social workers, nurses, and so on. The project team arranged with the Labor Office to issue a diploma recognised by the labour market for the Roma members who passed the final test.

As a result, six Roma women completed the training and received diplomas. Four women dropped out at different stages, being unable to overcome the difficulties of working in their community.

Although there was no financial support for the next steps, two of the Rromany women are now full-



time members of the Geron team, undertaking various activities related to home-care for elders. They act as infirmaries (nurse level 1) doing a lot of social and care activities for elders in the home-care program. Another two graduates have part-time jobs at Geron for the same activities. Two graduates have jobs in a Rromany organization working in a social field.

There are limits to the project because it only existed for one year and ended in 1998. Both Geron and the Roma organisation are still looking for other financial sources to carry out the next steps. (Curaj, Barbuta & Mesteru 2004)

## **IV Exchange Visits of Minority Ethnic Elders and their Organisations: Activities and Results in Leeds, Dortmund, Lille, Gent, Gunnared / Gothenburg and Bucharest**

One of the major aims of SEEM II was to actively involve minority ethnic elders and their organisations in the project and to improve consultation with them. By showing them the ways of service delivery in a foreign city, the aim was to empower and encourage elders to positively influence service delivery at home.

This chapter focuses on the exchange visits and the outcomes and results. It is based mainly on the evaluation reports each delegation wrote after their respective visits. Comments and quotations from the minority ethnic elders themselves about the visit are included in some of the documents. Most of the reports contain at least indirect answers and views from minority ethnic elders who took part in the exchange programme. However, the extent and quality of the reports differ greatly.

Another source of this chapter is based on the outcomes of a workshop held at the last SEEM II partners' meeting in Gent, during which the exchange visits and their results were discussed.

### **1. Structure and Contents of Exchange Visits**

This chapter gives an overview of the exchange visits and their contents. In 2004 and 2005, the following ten minority ethnic elders exchange visits took place.

- 1. Gothenburg to Leeds: 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> June 2004**
- 2. Dortmund to Leeds: 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> June 2004**

The group from Gothenburg comprised four people. Three were of Iranian background and one of Swedish. The groups from both Gothenburg and Dortmund shared the same programme. The German exchange group consisted of two elders and one carer. The carer was German and the elders were both of Ukrainian background.

Besides the exchange of good practice in general, the Dortmund delegation focused on the topic consultation and involvement, whereas the delegation from Gothenburg took a closer look at the voluntary sector and organisations of and for minority ethnic elders.

The group was greeted in Leeds by Leeds Older People's Forum, Leeds Black Elders' Association, other voluntary sector organisations, and local politicians and council officers. After that the groups were informed about the life situations and living conditions of minority ethnic elders in Leeds. During the second day they met with the Leeds Jewish Welfare Board (LJWB) and looked round the new housing development for its elders. They then visited the Frederick Hurdle Day Centre that is located in Chapeltown and has mainly members of African -Caribbean origin; and this was followed by a visit to the Association of Blind Asians (ABA).

There was an evening reception at one of the Leeds Sikh Temples which provides activities and services for its elders. This event included information and consultation sessions and was attended by at least 70 people including the exchange visitors, and representatives from local organisations, politicians and council officers. (A video was made by the Sikh Temple of this event and distributed to SEEM II partners and all concerned).

### **3. Leeds to Lille: 21<sup>st</sup> -23<sup>rd</sup> July 2004**

The Leeds group consisted of six people, four of them minority ethnic elders, two of Asian and two of African-Caribbean backgrounds. They were accompanied by two Social Services staff. The objectives of the visit were to share, compare and transfer good practice on food projects and food preparations with and for minority ethnic elders, to begin building contacts between minority ethnic elders' organisations in Leeds and Lille and to highlight the importance in both cities of providing appropriate food for minority ethnic elders.

The group visited the Quartier du Faubourg de Béthune Nursing Home where one older woman of Magreb origin was living and also a multicultural street market. The Reaction Sud was a project for which volunteers fundraised and distributed food for free to 60+ families in an area with large proportions of minority ethnic people, particularly from the Magreb (Algeria and Morocco). In addition, the group visited the Areli hostel where 240 men from other countries, (mainly Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia), were living and an afternoon club for older men from the Magreb.

### **4. Lille to Dortmund: 21<sup>st</sup> -23<sup>rd</sup> July 2004**

The Lille group consisted of one older man from the Magreb and two people from the city of Lille who were of French background. In Dortmund, the group was welcomed at the town hall

by members of Senior Citizens Advisory Council, Foreign Citizens Advisory Council, and ZWAR e. V. (Between Work and Retirement). There was a discussion about the life situation of elders from minority ethnic groups in Dortmund from the perspective of the members of the organisations listed above. Afterwards, the group visited the social centre Wilhelm Hansmann Haus and received information about a working group “Migrants”.

The second day started with visiting the International Day Centre for Elders, run by the Association for International Friendship and a mutual exchange of experiences between guests from Lille and elders from minority ethnic groups in Dortmund. In the afternoon the group went to the Arabic Mosque Abu Bakr in the Northern inner city district of Dortmund and had a chat with Ahmed Aweimer and members of the mosque. Mister Aweimer, the hodscha of the mosque, informed them about their activities.

The exchange ended with visiting the social centre “Bernhard März Haus” on Friday, which is run by the Caritasverband Dortmund e.V. (welfare association) and gives advice about social and legal questions for different nationalities, mainly catholic.

#### **5. Leeds to Gothenburg: 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> May 2005**

The group from Leeds consisted of four people (one of African-Caribbean origin, two from the Rroma community and one LCC Equality officer). The programme of the visit contained not only visits to initiatives such as the Oliven project but also a visit to the state funded Lougardets Aldreboendo, a care home for Finish elders and Dalia, a day care centre for Spanish elders. It was also discussed how the Social Services Department from Gothenburg could get more in contact with the Rroma community in their city.

#### **6. Lille to Leeds: 18-20<sup>th</sup> April 2005 and**

#### **7. Bucharest to Leeds: 18-20<sup>th</sup> April 2005**

The group from Bucharest consisted of three people (one of Rroma origin, one of Greek origin, one carer) whereas the group from Lille consisted of four people (one of Moroccan origin, one of Algerian origin, one interpreter and one carer). The programme of the visit included not only a visit to the Frederick Hurdle Day Care Centre but also visits to other voluntary sector organisations including the Woodsley Road Kashmiri Elders Association and the UCA (United Caribbean Association) House (an older people’s home). In addition to this, a meeting was organised with Leeds representatives from the Rroma – Gypsies and Travellers

- community. Both exchange groups were welcomed by Leeds City Councillors, including the Older People's Champion, on the first day of their visit.

#### **8. Gothenburg to Dortmund: 20<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> April 2005**

The two elders from Gothenburg (both of Iranian origin) are members of the Oliven project providing services for elders mainly of Arabic origin. They were accompanied by a Finnish recreation officer from the Träffpunkten in Lövgärdet and a lady of Lebanese background working for the Oliven project. Discussions concentrated on language barriers Turkish elders face when they go to the doctor or to hospital in Germany and how this could be overcome. The group was introduced to the International Association for Friendship, a voluntary sector organisation offering information brochures on different topics and advice in different minority ethnic languages. The visitors also got the opportunity to visit the Caritas office based in the Bernhard Maerz House in Dortmund, a catholic welfare association organising for instance advice and language classes and visited the Arabic Mosque Abu Bakr.

#### **9. Gent to Lille: 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> March 2005**

Four people (two of Tunisian origin, one of Moroccan origin, and one Flemish carer) took part in the exchange visit from Gent to Lille in March 2005. The project co-ordinator and assistant from Gent also joined the group for a day. The visitors were welcomed at the Areli foyer, which is mainly occupied by minority ethnic elders from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. The programme of the visit also contained visits to the club "Café crème et thé à la menthe", where minority ethnic elders can meet up for leisure activities and Assfam, an organisation offering language courses to new arrivals. At the request of the visitors, the group also took part in a prayer meeting in a Mosque in Lille.

#### **10. Dortmund to Gent: 11-13<sup>th</sup> May 2005**

Three people (one of Turkish origin, one of Moroccan origin, and one carer) went to Gent in May 2005 to share good practice on self-help groups, consultation and practical involvement of minority ethnic elders in service development. The visitors were introduced to the two projects "Becoming Older in Flanders" and the "Family Care Project" and discussed how language learning and leisure activities could be improved for the elders. One of the focal points was also how minority ethnic elders could be integrated better in regular services for

older people in the case of specific funding not being secured for specific services by the local authority or by the voluntary organisations working with minority ethnic elders.

## **2. Analysis of Outcomes and Results of the Exchange Visits**

This chapter analyses the way the exchange visits took place and focuses on their results and outcomes, mostly on the basis of collective perception of minority ethnic elders involved in the exchanges.

The chapter is based on the evaluation reports of the exchange visits and a workshop held at the last partners meeting in Gent.

### **Goals of Exchange Visits**

As mentioned above, the exchange visits of minority ethnic elders and their organisations to a partner city aimed at sharing, comparing and transferring good practice on specific topics, such as self-help organisations for minority ethnic elders or the provision of culturally appropriate food and cooking. In general, the exchange visits focused on allowing partner cities to explore issues of common interest in greater depth. As described above, the host cities showed different projects to the delegations that were of interest to the overall topic “services for elders from minority ethnic communities”. Depending on the respective approaches and existing projects, the host cities more or less gave visiting minority ethnic elders the opportunity to speak with members of the projects and other minority ethnic elders.

The overall goal of the exchange visits was to empower and involve minority ethnic elders and their organisations in the project SEEM II and to exchange good practice and ideas between the cities involved.

The delegations were given questions beforehand to help structure their visits and the impressions they gained. These questions covered the key issues:

- ⇒ What have you learned from the visits and the specific projects you saw?
- ⇒ What is the situation of minority ethnic elders in the cities you have visited?
- ⇒ Are there any similarities and differences between the situations of minority ethnic elders in the two cities involved in the exchange?
- ⇒ Are there any proposals or recommendations on how to improve the situations of minority ethnic elders and services for them in their home cities?

It turned out that not all questions could be answered in detail by all delegations. Of course it was not possible for these one-off delegations to actually analyse fully differences and similarities between the two cities involved in the project but most of them were absolutely able to compare their situation in their home cities to the situation of their “colleagues” in the cities they were visiting.

Most of them knew exactly what the exchange visits were about and the specific aims of the trip. This was illustrated by one elder from Leeds when visiting Lille:

“In the end, the visit was not really about food projects. It was a way of finding out what was on offer to black and minority ethnic elders. The food theme was a way into learning about this”. (Quotation from a Leeds elder visiting Lille)

Thus, many of them were able to give comments or personal evaluations of what they experienced. These are described below.

### **Organisation and Programmes of the Exchange Visits**

The programmes and contents of all exchange visits were chosen and organised by the host cities. The host cities usually chose projects to be visited that have to do with how services for minority ethnic elders are delivered in their cities. Very often the delegations were given the possibility to speak with members of the projects or minority ethnic elders themselves. The visiting delegations did not always have the chance to speak about the projects and approaches in their own home cities and this was criticized by some.

“We would have liked to talk to each person individually, to find out and understand a lot more. And we really felt the language barrier” (Quotation from an elder from Leeds visiting Lille)

Some of the Moslem elders found it difficult to carry out their prayers.

“The elders found that everything had gone very well – the accommodation was fantastic! - and they were very much interested in what they saw. On the other hand, the visit was sometimes tiring and a bit superficial, and they found that the hours for prayer should have been better inculcated into the programme.” (Quotation from Belgium Evaluation Report)

In general, host cities tried to show projects or recruit minority ethnic elders that matched the origin or the language abilities of the elders of the delegation. This could not always be achieved, but the attempt was made to compensate by the provision of professional and/or

voluntary interpreters. Still, some elders stated afterwards that there were language problems which could not be overcome and thus encounters unfortunately stayed on a superficial level:

“The language barrier was a big problem in the time available. You could not get into a detailed, in-depth discussion with individual elders.” (Quotations from Leeds elders visiting Lille)

However, very often, language barriers did not matter that much and elders were able to communicate with their “colleagues” somehow, and to empathise with their experience.

The first exchange visit programmes proved to be too ambitious, meaning that there was not enough time to recover from the tiring journeys and to “digest” the many impressions gathered. Many elders stated afterwards that they would have liked to have more time, especially for talking and discussing with their “colleagues” from the cities they were visiting. Some complained the visits were too superficial.

In general and above all, most exchange visits took place without any big problems and all elders proved to be very happy and proud having had the chance to participate in the exchange. For some of them it was the first time out of their host country and many of them had never had the chance to stay in a hotel.

### **Preparation and Choice of Participants**

The choice and preparation of the minority ethnic elders that became part of the delegation was up to the partner teams from the respective home cities. The way of putting together the delegations differed. Leeds, for instance, had a real application process. Letters were sent out to organisations of minority ethnic elders belonging to the Leeds Reference Group. Out of four applications three elders were nominated for the exchange with Lille.

Other city partner teams such as Dortmund chose to nominate participants trying to ensure that the delegation originated from a broad field of organisations. Some partner teams even had difficulties in finding elders willing to participate as not all cities have organisations of minority ethnic elders they could involve in the choosing process. Gent recruited their Maghrebian elders from the city of Ronse, because they wanted to make sure that their elders were matching the background of minority ethnic elders in Lille.

Most project teams met with their minority ethnic elders before they went on the exchange visit and discussed the trip, the expectations, the aims and the programmes. Most delegations met afterwards again to discuss their experiences and to answer the questions they were given.



In some cases, the preparation turned out to be difficult. For instance, one of the nominated elders from the Leeds Reference Group had problems getting a visa for France from a non-English passport and unfortunately had to stay at home. In another case it took a whole day to get all the legal documents needed for the trip.

### **Experienced Similarities and Differences between Home and Host Cities**

Many reports describe experienced similarities and differences between the way minority ethnic elders are treated, their general life situation, or the way services are designed to meet or not to meet their special needs in the home and host cities.

This means that many minority ethnic elders were able to realise similarities and differences and to describe these. In general, they were quite unprejudiced in the way they judged the quality of what they saw. Sometimes they got to know things they found better than at home and sometimes they came to the conclusion that certain things were better at home. Of course, this also had to do with the rate of progress with the topic “services for minority ethnic elders” within their home cities.

The Dortmund delegation, for instance, found many similar problems which their “colleagues” were exposed to in Gent, such as:

- ⇒ poor language abilities of minority ethnic elders,
- ⇒ missing information concerning existing offers, legal entitlements etc.
- ⇒ lack of access to the system of community care for elders
- ⇒ missing adjustment of the care system to the special needs of minority ethnic elders
- ⇒ limited contacts with either German or Belgium elders
- ⇒ limited social contacts in general
- ⇒ missing offers of leisure activities for older migrant women
- ⇒ return wishes that cannot be realised

They also identified differences as to:

- ⇒ the structure of administration and services for minority ethnic groups
- ⇒ in Gent, there are better personal equipment services for minority ethnic groups (Dortmund does not have a comparable service)
- ⇒ in Gent, there are also projects in this field that are equipped personally and financially quite well which is not the case for Dortmund
- ⇒ Dortmund does not offer interpreters for minority ethnic groups that can be used for social and administrative issues and are free of charge for the users

The Dortmund delegation that went to Leeds found out the following similarities and

differences:

- ⇒ In Leeds, the common language of communication for migrants is English (Commonwealth), which makes it easier for migrants to have access to advice and information.
- ⇒ In Dortmund, language difficulties (a lack of German) are the fundamental problem when trying to provide social services for and with elder migrants. They are a barrier to access for minority ethnic groups.
- ⇒ In Leeds, the large number of clubs and groups from ethnic minorities is striking. The great majority of groups are very well equipped, have their own rooms and to a certain extent their own range of housing and support systems. Beside meetings, the groups offer their members the opportunity for advice and supervision, partly through fulltime members. The work done by these groups is transparent and known to the Leeds Older Peoples Forum (LOPF).
- ⇒ Here the differences to the situation in Dortmund are particularly clear. True, in Dortmund there are also many different groups and clubs. But little is known about the content of their work and where and under what conditions it takes place. The Society for International Friendship represents the interests of a number of different ethnic minorities. But because of the difficulties involved with regard to meeting places and the fact that work is exclusively undertaken on an unpaid honorary basis what they can offer is very restricted.
- ⇒ Thanks to the existence of an umbrella organisation, the “Leeds Older Peoples Forum”, financial and expert help, advice and supervision of groups can be guaranteed. At the same time the LOPF serves as a link to social administration bodies and is a spokesman at a political level. Full time workers guarantee the continuity of work.
- ⇒ In this respect too there is quite a different situation in Dortmund. There is no umbrella organisation to represent the interest of ethnic groups at a local authority level. Local authority work with migrants is undertaken in sectional areas by various different voluntary welfare agencies with fulltime workers whose targeted support takes specific account of the ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds of elder migrants. How far individual clubs or groups cooperate with the welfare agencies or social services depends on the individual possibilities. Clubs and groups of elder migrants either have to fall back on membership fees, donations or contributions from social services or welfare agencies in order to implement and further their work.

Although there are great differences between services for minority ethnic elders in all the cities involved in the exchanges, some aspects were recognised as being very different by all delegations visiting. This was for instance the case for the Areli hostel in Lille, which is a very simple home for 240 male elders, from foreign countries, who originally came to work in Lille. Both the delegations from Leeds and from Gent were deeply moved and upset by the

circumstances those elders were living in at the hostel. Quotations from elder visitors from Leeds regarding the hostel comprise for instance the following:

“If this is equality, I don’t see it”

“There was a television and rows of chairs in the cellar, it was worse than a prison”

“You choose to send the money home. The state gets you somewhere to live in this country...hostels in Leeds which were like the one in Aureli only closed down in the last 10 years.”

“The men in the hostel were very friendly and polite, there was no anger, it was peaceful, and so respectful of us as visitors.”

“Everyone has the right to a decent place to live”

“The hostel was bad”

“Is advice given to the men in the hostel about good health care?” (Quotations from Leeds elders visiting Lille)

Most of the identified similarities and differences clearly go back to different cultures of, for instance, how to run homes for elders. The Leeds delegation was very impressed by the residential homes they visited in Gothenburg.

“The residential homes we visited were very clean, very roomy and individuals looked well cared for. There was a lot of space in the accommodation for the elders. The elders were able to bring in their own furniture into the room making it a lot homier for them. The accommodation smelt very fresh and you did not have the sick feeling as you walked in.” (Quotation from Leeds Evaluation Report)

Furthermore, they found out the following similarities:

“In Sweden the situation was very much the same as it is here in Leeds for elders from the different communities. There was a lack of trust in services to start with; once the service has been used the trust is built. But it was also in many cases that once the elders were in the home the family did not visit very often. The families themselves felt they had let their elders down by not caring for them.”

“The cost of individuals staying in the homes was the same as here and it seemed the pensions were also similar, but we need to get a clearer picture of this.” (Quotations from Leeds Evaluation Report)

The Gent delegation learned a lot about the similarities and differences they share with Lille and France generally.

“What we remarked at several moments was that there has been a very different immigration policy in Belgium and in France, which explains a lot of differences in the actual situation of older immigrants.”

“The immigration history of France parallels the immigration history in Belgium, in the sense that there has been a labour immigration from the Mediterranean regions in the post war period, and mainly from the sixties on. Only the composition of the population is somewhat different: most of the older immigrants in Lille are Algerian or Tunisian, in the province of East-Flanders they are mostly Turkish or Moroccan. But in France family reunion has been discouraged while in Belgium, from the seventies on, it has been actively encouraged.”

“That explains why in Lille, there are so many older Maghrebian men living single, without a family or with their families living in the homeland. To our astonishment, most of our contacts in Lille were very surprised when they heard that so-called "foyers" had disappeared in Belgium a long time ago, and that all our delegation members had their families living with them.”

“A second surprising fact was that, apparently, there are no real "immigrant quarters" in Lille. The old immigrant population live in a more dispersed way. On the contrary, in a city like Gent (and other ones in Flanders), the first labour immigrants went to live in the old 19<sup>th</sup>-century working class houses, the cheapest lodging they could find. Those who came later, joined them very soon and thus real immigrant (Turkish/Moroccan) quarters were created.” (Quotations from Belgium Evaluation Report)

The delegation from Gothenburg that visited Dortmund found out the following similarities:

“As a conclusion of our short but intense study visit we can establish the fact that Dortmund as well as Göteborg experience hardships in reaching out to and integrate elderly immigrants in the public activities. Dortmund is trying to develop networks to have a base for facilitating establishments. If you don't want to exclude people you have to open doors to gain fellowship, community and diversity.”(Quotation from Swedish Evaluation Report)

Regarding the differences they became aware that, compared to Sweden, Germany has larger numbers of retired labour immigrants and that minority ethnic elders belong to larger homogeneous groups such as Turkish and Russian groups.

The delegation from Gothenburg that visited Leeds felt that in Sweden the general living standards are higher. Basic pensions are higher for everyone, regardless of previous earnings.

### **Lessons learned from Visiting Delegations**

Apart from the concrete results mentioned above, such as becoming aware of similarities and differences in the way minority ethnic elders are treated or specific ideas of how to improve services, there were some general lessons learned by some of the elders participating in the exchange visits.

Leeds minority ethnic elders visiting Lille have stated the following lessons:

“The visit has changed my way of thinking, my humanity is improved.”

“I think we’re better off here than there in general. It is more complicated there, and easier to get money here.”

“I understand a lot now about the French attitude to Black people.”

“Are older black people in Lille afraid of standing up for themselves?” (Quotations from Leeds elders visiting Lille)

Leeds minority ethnic elders who went to Gothenburg did not know what to expect from the visit. This was the first time that they had made a visit like this and looked into details of the older people’s needs. In general, the elders were very impressed with what they saw. The only concerns that the elders had was that they did not get to see any Black and Asian elders, or Gypsies and Travellers. The elders had the feeling they were not getting the right picture of what was going on. They did not get to see the Rroma and had no contact with any ‘Black’ people. The question that arose out of this was:

“Do they know how many Caribbean and Asian people etc. live in Sweden, and does Sweden have a breakdown of ethnicity?” (Quotation of a Leeds elder visiting Sweden)

The Gent delegation that visited Lille was impressed by the animation of older people in old peoples’ homes:

“What was interesting in the visit was the animators for elderly people (as in the home Alphonse Daudet): in Ronse too, such animators could organize all kinds of activities and excursions on a regular basis, but what is needed is a special training, an infrastructure and payment for them! Asking a small fee from the elders is no problem. The example was given of Zele/Temse where a trip tot the mosque of Beringen and the old coal mine was organized for minority ethnic elders. It can't be difficult to find animators since in Ronse there are already animators for the youth centre who are very good – organizing activities for older people is not that different!” (Belgium Evaluation Report)

The delegation found in general, that in Lille the minority ethnic elders were a bit left to look

after themselves and found it unthinkable that they had to queue up so long for administrative help. On the other hand, they found an institution like "Café crème thé à la menthe" a very good idea. They thought that mosques should also have a social centre where people can meet and they mentioned the fact that in Ronse there are two neighbourhood centres with a good infrastructure (meeting places!) where they try to bring Flemish and immigrant people together. But there are no real organisations of minority ethnic elders in Ronse.

The delegation from Lille that visited Leeds found out that in Britain, services for minority ethnic elders are very different from those in France. The main difference is that Leeds offers specific services for different ethnic minority groups, such as for blind elders from India. There are also specific associations, like the United Caribbean Association, that mainly concentrates on services for people with a Caribbean background. In France, and Lille, there are no specific services for different ethnic minority groups and the existing services are offered to all elders in the same way.

Another difference is that in Britain most immigrated people have obtained British nationality and thus have the same rights as people of British origin. Hostels like the Areli foyer in Lille do not exist in Great Britain. Also, minority ethnic elders in Leeds seem to live more together with their families than minority ethnic elders in Lille, who are mostly male and separated from their families.

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The delegation from Lille found the situation of minority ethnic elders better in Leeds and especially liked the fact that services also address religious needs. They also liked the way the

voluntary sector is financially supported by the municipality They found minority ethnic elders better integrated in Leeds than in Lille.

During discussions, elders from Lille recommended that in Lille, an inquiry into the services for older people should be carried out.

### **Lessons learned from Host Cities**

As it turned out in the end, there happened to be some other results and advantages of the exchange visits that were not intended initially but simply happened along the way. By getting visits from foreign delegations, members of the host city teams were sometimes enabled by accident to see their services through foreign eyes and thus were able to look behind the obvious. So own achievements, lacks, or misconceptions became clearer. Things which were taken for granted, for instance not being allowed to work on a religious basis with, for example, mosques in the case of France, were put in a broader context. In many cases, host cities got ideas through the exchange, of what could be done to improve services for minority ethnic elders. This sometimes even led to setting up new projects, for instance the Dementia Café in Leeds.

Since host cities had to set up the programmes for the delegations as described above, this inevitably led to a better networking on local level, which sometimes even meant building up new co-operative structures. In the case of Dortmund for instance, setting up the programme was the ignition point for the city of Dortmund to build up links with the Arabic Abu Bakr Mosque that had not existed before and which have been extended during the project.

In general, being visited by a delegation within a European project has also provided a higher profile and more backing for developing the topic “services for minority ethnic elders”.

### **Proposals / Recommendations for Improvement in Home Cities**

Based on the experiences during their visits, many elders developed ideas about how to improve services at home to better meet their needs, and this can be regarded as a success in itself. For some, this might even be the basis for trying to influence the improvement of service delivery at home. How far this has been achieved has not been evaluated and cannot be judged within this report. In some cities, in which structures of participation and user involvement of minority ethnic elders are a given and are highly developed, for instance in Leeds, it might be quite likely that some proposals or recommendations are actually going to

be implemented. In other cities which are less progressed, this might be an aim which is far too ambitious. In the case of Bucharest, for instance, it is more important to build up services for elders in general, and thus considering the needs and demands of minority ethnic groups certainly is not highest on the agenda. There are probably some cities in between these two poles, such as Dortmund or Gent, where the chance to implement strategies or models of good practice explored during SEEM I and II have increased, and so might be supported by the experiences made during the exchange visits.

Eventually, at least at the level of self-help, some of the proposals and recommendations might have a chance to be implemented. However, to the extent that more funding is needed, this again might be an obstacle that cannot be overcome in some cities.

Bearing in mind these considerations, recommendations from minority ethnic elders on how to improve services for their specific needs, are described below.

From the Dortmund delegation visiting Leeds, the following ideas were put forward that mostly refer to the Association for International Friendship:

- ⇒ To improve the “room” situation and the financial conditions
- ⇒ To create opportunities to overcome language problems
- ⇒ To view the work for and with migrants on a local authority and political level, not simply from its financial aspects
- ⇒ To improve social participation in the following areas: meetings (between different ethnic groups) and leisure time, culture, politics, sport, and support in the area of nursing.

The Dortmund delegation that went to Gent made the following proposals:

Regarding the implementation of adequate projects in Dortmund it was discussed that, due to a comparable situation in Dortmund, some projects could be transferred to and implemented in Dortmund. There are comparable institutions that could be used for implementation:

- ⇒ Social centres for elders within different city districts
- ⇒ Meeting and social centres for all generations that are also visited by minority ethnic groups
- ⇒ Housing projects for elders apart from institutional care
- ⇒ Meeting centres for ethnic elders (such as VIF)
- ⇒ Mosques and cultural organisations that work in a multicultural way

The following projects were identified as being transferable:

- ⇒ Growing Old in Flanders



- ⇒ Classes for the care of family members
- ⇒ Project “Memories”
- ⇒ Information booklets for minority ethnic elders in their mother tongue languages (in plain German, additional visual information)

It was also suggested that the implementation could be supported by the intercultural working group that was installed within the framework of SEEM II.

The Leeds delegation that went to Lille was impressed with the inter-generational work the Quartier du Faubourg de Béthune Nursing Home was doing.

“I liked the inter-generational project with the older people being with the children, it was very good. We have tried this in Leeds too.”

“I am used to children and old people being kept separate. This was new for me. Before I did not think it was a good idea for old people to be with young children in this way, but now I have changed my mind.”

“We do have some inter-generational projects, but we really liked theirs – especially we liked the board games, and the fact that they had younger children, and they were so respectful. At Frederick Hurdle, the children are older, 11+.” (Quotations from Leeds elders visiting Lille)

The Leeds delegation that visited Gothenburg/Gunnared came up with following suggestions:

“It would be good to look at the homes here in the UK and how they are kept and run. We need to learn from our partners in Sweden about cleanliness.” (Quotation from Leeds elders visiting Gothenburg)

There is also a feeling that there is a lack of dignity for elders in the UK:

“We learnt that we can provide services to Black and minority ethnic communities in a clean and more dignified way.”

“We need to look at services that we provide and change attitudes, to make services much more ‘Black-and-minority- ethnic friendly’. Hygiene needs to be looked at. Workers need cultural awareness training and understanding of the different communities and cultures. Over all diversity training.”

“We need to have meetings across the board, that means Black and minority ethnic elders from all the different communities meeting together; we have to try and get a group together and take issues forward for change and to get involved in the training for workers.”

“More co-coordinated work is needed so that the services are the same everywhere and

for everyone, to address the needs of Black and minority ethnic elders more, create better services and get together and work together.” (Quotations from Leeds elders visiting Gothenburg)

Minority ethnic elders from Gent who went to Lille felt that their situation at home could be improved:

“Mainly through setting up associations – since one can realise nothing as an individual.”

“There should be more contacts between services and institutions back home. In Lille too, our delegation found that there was not enough contact (and thus not enough cooperation) between the different services and institutions.” (Quotations from Gent elders visiting Lille)

They also felt that to promote communication is important:

“The working group, formed after the project "Becoming older in Flanders" can play an important role here. They can talk about the people's needs to all kinds of services and institutions.” (Quotation from a Gent elder visiting Lille)

Minority ethnic elders from Gothenburg who visited Dortmund came to the conclusion that:

“It is possible to work with small economic resources, but there must be co-operation between the organisations and the authorities to reach larger migrant groups.” (Quotation from Swedish Evaluation Report)

Minority ethnic elders from Romania were so impressed with the work that was being done with elders in Leeds, that they said they were going to try and get on with activities in Bucharest for themselves, and not just to wait while things get started by the Government or the city. (Interview Miranda Miller 2005)

### **Proposals / Recommendations for Improvement in Host Cities**

While visiting partner cities some minority ethnic elders came across things they felt could be improved there:

The Leeds delegation had the following ideas and wishes for Lille:

“I hope our visit has helped Lille people to work better together.”

“We need to send them our consultation questionnaires to help with their university research project.”

“If they ask us, we will be very happy to give whatever help we can. As a first step, we

have swapped emails. But there is always the language barrier.”

„The Leeds exchange group, and, as we understand it, our Lille partners, felt that the visit emphasised the importance of specifically including and providing for Black and minority ethnic elders. It opened up a creative and sometimes challenging discussion on how we can work together to achieve this.” (Quotations from Leeds elders visiting Lille)

When another Leeds delegation went to Gothenburg, they had the following ideas about how to improve the situation there for minority ethnic elders:

“Ria explained how the Treffpunkten Day Centre for Elders is trying to get involved with the Oliven project, to meet in Lougardat Centre, to look at working together, exchange ideas and look at ways of expanding the service to that project. A suggestion from us was to invite and transport the members from the Oliven project to Lougardat Centre.”

“The hosts were shocked at how well we were all getting on. They all thought we had known each other longer. We noted that the workers need to be much more open with the different communities.”

“We would like the contact to continue with Sweden. Lots of different ideas can be exchanged with each other. Sweden needs to look at why the Caribbean community, the Asian communities and overall Gypsies and Travellers are not using the services. They also need to know what percentages of people are from these communities.” (Quotations from Leeds elders visiting Gothenburg)

### **Summary of Benefits and Outcomes of Exchange Visits**

The paragraphs above and the quotations from minority ethnic elders themselves and the evaluation reports, show that there are positive benefits from the exchange visits for both sides.

From the point of view of the minority ethnic elders themselves, the benefits are:

- ⇒ They are empowered and have learned to speak for themselves and make their voices heard
- ⇒ They have become more involved in consultation at a local and national level
- ⇒ They have learned to be proud of their achievements in their own cities and countries
- ⇒ They were able to built up closer links between each other and between different minority ethnic groups
- ⇒ They have become energised and stimulated for self-help and new ideas for projects
- ⇒ They have become more active in getting things and projects to happen

- ⇒ Their possibilities have become more concrete and realistic, and they have learned to be aware of what needs to be done
- ⇒ Information about their situation has been spread across national boundaries

From the point of view of the partner cities participating, the benefits are:

- ⇒ They became aware that other cities have to deal with the same problems
- ⇒ Some of them developed a more relaxed and positive attitude towards improving the situation of minority ethnic elders
- ⇒ All of them got more backing for the issue
- ⇒ Some learned to be proud of their own achievements
- ⇒ The exchanges led to a better networking at a local level
- ⇒ New ideas for projects have been stimulated by the exchanges
- ⇒ Information about their situation has been spread across national boundaries

At the SEEM II level, the benefits are:

- ⇒ The exchange visits have proved to be a powerful part of the project
- ⇒ These exchanges should be continued after the end of the project
- ⇒ The exchange visits have had more impact than expected, namely in both directions
- ⇒ A stronger sense of fellowship has been built up

How far the exchange visits have contributed to building up better links between minority ethnic elders in different cities will also depend on future activities as well as on the will and resources of all the actors involved. However, in most cases, the exchange has been a first step.

“The exchange was a first step in building contacts between Black and minority ethnic organisations in Leeds and Lille. The Leeds group hopes that ways can be found to visit again and to invite Lille elders to Leeds. Sharing information and materials is a first practical step in taking the relationship forward.” (Quotation from Leeds Evaluation Report)

So, all in all, the exchange visits have mostly proved beneficial for the minority ethnic elders

themselves, as well as their home and host cities. (Evaluation reports of exchange visits from Leeds, Dortmund, Gent, Bucharest, Lille and Gothenburg 2004; Minutes from Partner Meeting in Gent 2004)

## **V Influences and Results of SEEM II: Progress in Leeds, Dortmund, Lille, Gent, Gunnared/Gothenburg and Bucharest**

The following chapter describes the influences and results of participating in SEEM II on the local levels of the cities and organisations involved in the project.

As described in Chapter III of this report and elsewhere (Gerling 2003) all cities come from different backgrounds and levels of how to deal with the overall topic of the European project.

There are great differences regarding the political system, the system of services for elders, the ranking of voluntary work, anti-discrimination legislation, migration history, minority ethnic groups and the general rating social services for minority ethnic elders has. So progress is very individual and cannot be compared directly. However, there is evidence that each city did profit from being part of SEEM II, some more than others. Each city also took steps to improve the situation of, and service delivery for, minority ethnic elders in its own way.

The following chapters summarise the activities and results in each city involved in SEEM II. These chapters are based on the overall progress reports that were written by each city and the evaluation reports of the consultation seminars. Background information is drawn from the final report of SEEM I and has been updated if possible.

### **1. Leeds**

#### **1.1 General Background**

Compared to other cities involved in SEEM II, Leeds, which has also acted as lead partner, can be described as having the most experience in the field of service delivery for minority ethnic elders.

The United Kingdom is strongly influenced by its colonial past which has put a stamp on its current population mix and migration policy. The UK experienced immigration from the New Commonwealth (especially the Caribbean Islands, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh). These were people who were already subjects of the British Crown being ‘invited’ to work in the ‘mother country’. In England, black and minority ethnic groups make up about 13% of the total population.

In Leeds, there are at least 9,167 Black and Minority Ethnic elders aged 60 years and above, which is a share of 6.4% of all people aged 60 years and above. The biggest groups are Indian, Irish, Black-Caribbean, Pakistani, Kashmiri, Jewish and Chinese. Smaller groups

include Arab, Black-African, Bangladeshi, and Vietnamese elders, and Gypsies and Travellers.

The UK is a 'hybrid form' of welfare state. On the one side, elements such as self help have always played a crucial role and on the other side social security benefits provide income at a very basic level. The system of social security is universal. Universality, comprehensiveness and appropriateness are the underpinning principles.

Compared to the other countries involved in SEEM II, the legal status of people from minority ethnic groups is best in the UK where the majority are UK citizens.

In the UK, 'community care' for elders aims at securing an independent and self-determined life in freedom and dignity. Services at home rather than in institutions are preferred. Compared to Germany, home based services are a lot more widespread. However, there is a mix of residential and nursing care homes for people assessed as no longer able to live at home. These 'packages of care' are paid for by the individual, the local authority, and the national government. Although legislation in Great Britain aims at including commissioning of services from the private and voluntary sector, the public sector is still the biggest provider of personal social services for elders. (Gerling and Miller 2003)

## **1.2 Consultation seminars**

Within the framework of SEEM II, Leeds organised two consultation seminars, which were held in 2004, on September 30<sup>th</sup> and in 2005, split between two meetings, on April 11<sup>th</sup> and April 19<sup>th</sup>.

**The first consultation seminar** was attended by 47 people, and included elders themselves and representatives from Help the Aged, Age Concern, Leeds Playhouse, the Primary Care Trusts (health), Social Services, and other Leeds City Council departments. The meeting was not only about the SEEM II project, but also the launch of the Leeds Older People's Forum's Black and minority ethnic Elders' Action Group. It was agreed that in future, the SEEM information sharing and consultations were going to take place as part of the Action Group's meetings.

After a presentation of the exchange visit to Lille, the meeting broke up into two workshops, to answer questions about SEEM II, and to discuss progress with and expectations from the SEEM project.

The main points discussed in the workshops were:

- ⇒ The need for letting more elders know about SEEM
- ⇒ The need to make sure that it benefits Leeds Black and Minority Ethnic elders specifically
- ⇒ Established organisations should provide mentoring for the smaller, newer ones
- ⇒ The need to map all the Black and Minority Ethnic elders organisations and produce the information in the same way as the neighbourhood schemes booklets are done
- ⇒ SEEM needs to help reprint the old book of stories by Leeds African - Caribbean older women. It should also help to produce a new one. This would cover the experiences of all the different minority ethnic communities when they first arrived in Leeds/UK, and also their experiences now, as they become older in Leeds. New Leeds arrivals/refugee elders should be included. There is already a lot of work done, for example by the West Indian Cultural Society; there is the Irish heritage project, and Northern College work. There have also been a number of good intergenerational examples. It was recommended that the Action Group would discuss the resources/people needed, because funding applications were to be made for carrying out this work.

**The second consultation seminar** was split up between two meetings. It was part of the meeting of the Race Equality Committee<sup>9</sup> and of the evening reception and consultation event for the SEEM II exchange visits from Bucharest and Lille.

The Race Equality Committee meeting was attended by 23 people, including 20 from different voluntary organisations, with 16 of these people representing black and minority ethnic voluntary organisations. There was a general agreement that this opportunity to share information was valuable and should occur at least once each year. SEEM II partnership board was asked to consider the mechanisms and resources needed for this to occur.

The second event was attended by 64 people. It included a tour of the Mosque for the exchange guests before the reception and presentations by the Kashmiri Association on the centre and its activities.

As part of the event, SEEM II partners and other social services staff distributed a questionnaire, gathering views on SEEM and social services.

The following are examples of comments given to the questions:

*“What do you think of social care services for Black and minority ethnic elders in Leeds?”*

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<sup>9</sup> This is a Social Services Department consultation forum with black and minority ethnic communities, groups, and service providers.



“I need help with shopping, transport to visit people, repairs to my house and central heating; I need visits to check I’m ok”

“Services need to be analysed and streamlined to provide equal care, for all kinds of needs: home, day care, meals, sheltered housing, residential care, nursing homes”

“Transport, funding problems”

“Could have better communication between social services and the agencies that work with black and minority ethnic elders”

“Improvement could be made around investment in voluntary organisations and services in general”

“The Kashmiri Centre is very good for elders, for all sorts of help (filling in forms, lunch club)”

“They are doing their best, but there is still a lot to be done, especially for the Hindu Bengali community”

“Leeds Black Elders Association is excellent in comparison to others at home and abroad. I am very impressed. Social services can be better – they need to improve services”

“Social care is improving but needs to continue to encourage more collaboration among all of the Black and minority ethnic groups in Leeds”

“There is nothing provided for Sikh elders. They lead different lifestyles..facilities need to be available, e.g. food preparation. There is still a lack of understanding.”

Apparently, there were also some elders quite happy with the way it is:

“Much better than many other UK authorities”

“We think it is quite good”

*“What would you like to see happening in Leeds for older Black and minority ethnic people?”*

“More facilities and more knowledge”

“More services!”

“Acknowledgement of the contribution that the black elderly people of Leeds have made over the years”

“Twinning with Kenya and Nevis”

“Funding and more ‘international days’”

“Making elders more independent”

“Homecare and community centre for elders”

“More home help – I only get this once a month and it is not enough”

“I would like someone to help me with shopping once a week”

“A safe environment, culturally and religiously sensitive services, specially trained staff, local amenities or transport to access them”

“More programmes such as SEEM – getting together for social events and exchange visits”

“More services to meet cultural needs – providing services that the elderly could relate to; services delivered by people of their culture that they feel confident with”

“There should be some more help if you do not have a family”

“More independence and more choice – holidays, day trips, transport ”

“Social services, the government, should pay for nursing homes. Residential care should be met half way. It is unfair that the elders struggle to buy their home then have to sell it for care whereas if you don’t have anything or saved any money you get it free. This is wrong!”

(Leeds Evaluation Report of Consultation Seminars 2004)

### **1.3 Direct Results and Outcomes**

In Leeds, there has been a growing number of people and organisations showing an interest in SEEM II and in developing services for black and minority ethnic elders. This is reflected in the large number of occasions (14) on which Leeds has given out information and talks or distributed the SEEM II flyers.

Leeds already had an established list of contacts before the SEEM II project (although this has become better organised and focused since the inception of SEEM I). There are now 93 national contacts and 300 European contacts on the SEEM contact list held in Leeds by the SEEM II co-ordinator.

During the last year, with the setting up of the LOPF Black and Minority Ethnic Elders’ Organisations Focus Group, two new groups have begun to be involved regularly in the network: GATE – Older Gypsies and Travellers Group; and the Indian Women’s Association. The LOPF Focus Group has increased and improved our contact and dialogue with Black and Minority Ethnic elders’ groups and organisations. The Focus Group recently met with the Director of Leeds social Services to discuss the new Social Services Business Plan, and changes in homecare service delivery.

There have been also many organisations consulting Leeds regarding strategic issues of Black and Minority Ethnic elders. These include for instance ‘Better Government for Older People’ (BGOP) and the Healthcare Commission.

There has also been quite a lot of contact with politicians at the local, national and European level about the different levels of the project. (Leeds Progress Report 2005)

SEEM II has provided a focus for the issues and has drawn in more people into being involved in tackling the issues at all levels: from elders using services, to volunteers assisting them, to further development of services by voluntary and statutory agencies, to increased commitment at senior levels within the city council. SEEM II has:

- ⇒ Helped to raise the profile of black and minority ethnic elders and their organisations. It has increased the number of elders participating in debate and discussion locally and has therefore also increased the visibility and focus on the issues.
- ⇒ Put more pressure on social services to develop and support the Leeds Black and minority ethnic elders voluntary sector, and to focus specifically on Black and minority ethnic elders’ needs.
- ⇒ Given a contact point and improved networks, so that for example it is easier for people to find out what is going on, (as in the development with West Yorkshire Playhouse)
- ⇒ And, mainly, it has given greater confidence and backing to everyone ‘pushing the topic up the agenda’. Many of those working at both a practical and strategic level are better informed, clearer about the range of issues involved, and know more about where to go for specific information and support.

Best progress in Leeds has been around involvement and consultation, particularly through:

- ⇒ Development by the Leeds Older People’s Forum of the Black and Minority Ethnic Elders’ Focus Group that includes 14 core member organisations
- ⇒ SEEM seminars, meetings and the exchanges
- ⇒ Partnership work with the Race Equality Forum
- ⇒ And through all these, the newly-established contact with gypsy and travellers’ elders (GATE), which up until now has been a particularly ‘hard to reach’ group.

Leeds Black Elders Association has instigated a number of new developments:

- ⇒ Dementia Café set up January 2005 with 16 people attending regularly
- ⇒ Self-advocacy worker appointed, funded for two years by Joseph Rowntree Foundation; working on involvement, training (for others in advocacy), empowerment, governance and

contributing to policy

- ⇒ Heritage project to capture the contribution to the UK of Black and Minority Ethnic elders. It will use findings to develop an education project for use in local schools and learning centres
- ⇒ Work with service users to inform them about the SEEM II project

Progress was also made on continuing the development of ‘neighbourhood schemes and services’ to meet the needs of Black and minority ethnic elders’ groups:

- ⇒ The Sikh elders’ scheme is planned to start up in 2006/07; and there are wider development plans to include elders’ housing now under discussion.
- ⇒ The Kashmiri elders consultation study is currently being completed to determine what services might be required to meet needs.

The following new initiatives have been encouraged and increased through SEEM II:

- ⇒ Developing domestic services as social enterprises: Black and Minority Ethnic elders needs have been specifically built into the development programme and budget. This has already led to a grant for the Chinese Women’s Group to start up shopping trips to Chinese supermarkets (these trips will cover their own costs once established). Also, LBEA is preparing a business plan for its gardening service, and the funding has been agreed in principle.
- ⇒ The Gypsy and Travellers Exchange (GATE) has been awarded a small grant to set up a group and activities for GATE elders
- ⇒ Arts and culture: Elders’ Arts Exchange – a project under development between Leeds Playhouse and Black and minority ethnic elders’ groups, with the assistance of the LOPF Focus Group. (Leeds Progress Report 2005)

#### **1.4 The way forward**

It is hoped that in the future Leeds will manage to continue to support and consolidate what they already have. They also try to encourage the development of appropriate support for much older people, as, for some elders, their support needs in order to remain independent will increase with advanced age. This will be done through the established partnerships between the statutory and the voluntary sector.

Another big challenge will be trying to ensure that the SEEM II checklist points are built into all aspects of service planning, development and delivery. The emphasis for Leeds now is getting Black and Minority Ethnic elders’ voices heard at local and national levels to affect policy. Leeds needs to encourage people to expect and assert their rights to receive the right

services, for example in the way it is being done in Gent.

A further good idea on the horizon is to develop the involvement of Leeds elders in the national Pensioners Parliament (LOPF).

Finally, as for funding, Leeds is a big city with complex funding ‘streams’. The city now organises itself within five areas, and a lot of the funding has been devolved to these five areas. Each area decides how the money is to be spent. This creates extra difficulties for Black and minority ethnic communities, which tend to be distributed across the city, often concentrated in the inner areas, but not just conforming to five specific boundaries. Leeds SEEM partners will try and work together to identify funding. Leeds Social Services Department attempts to identify specific funding for addressing Black and minority ethnic elders’ needs in partnership with the voluntary sector.

The Leeds partners do not yet know whether the results from SEEM II will be sustainable. However, in Leeds:

- ⇒ They would very much like to establish an exchange programme as an ongoing activity which will draw together groups and individuals and consolidate broader involvement in building and sustaining services.
- ⇒ They will also need to get the SEEM II checklist adopted and into service planning frameworks in Leeds.
- ⇒ They will need continued political and practical commitment underpinning all these activities.
- ⇒ And most of all, Leeds needs active, organised, well informed black and minority ethnic elders (supported by the City Council and by their own organisations). (Leeds Progress Report 2005)

## **2. Dortmund**

### **2.1 General Background**

Germany found itself as an importer of ‘guest workers’ from south-eastern Europe after World War II. (They were needed to enlarge the workforce during the post-war economic boom. Initially these workers were expected to return to their original countries and so they were considered as ‘guests’).

Until the beginning of the 1950s, the situation in Germany was dominated by large numbers of refugees who mostly came from the former Eastern parts of the German Reich and the Sudetenland and people from the Russian occupation zone and then the new German Democratic Republic. From the mid 1950s on, Germany recruited ‘guest workers’ from South

East Europe, North Africa and Turkey. In the 1990s, Germany received refugees from Yugoslavia, asylum seekers, and so called 'late emigrants' of German origin from the former Soviet Union territories.

In Germany, 'foreign' people comprise about 9% of the population, although the total share of people with a migration background (including for instance late emigrants and naturalised people) is higher.

Today (data refer to the end of 2003), there are almost 590 000 people living in Dortmund, of which 76 000 persons are so called foreigners. The percentage of foreigners in Dortmund is 13% which is above average in North Rhine Westphalia and Germany. However, the proportion of people with minority ethnic backgrounds is far higher than listed in official statistics. Aged 60 years and plus, there are about 151 00 people in Dortmund. Their percentage of the total population makes up to about 25,7%. The proportion of foreign elders is still comparably small. Of 76 000 so called foreigners, 8000 are aged sixty years and more. Most of them belong to so called younger elders, only about 1000 persons are aged 75 years and above.

Differentiated between nationalities, the following picture can be drawn:

- ⇒ Turkish elders make up the largest groups with about 2 500 people aged 60 years and more (30%).
- ⇒ Second largest groups are elders from the Ukraine (950 persons)
- ⇒ Third largest group are Greek elders (580)
- ⇒ 470 stem from the former Yugoslavia
- ⇒ All other nationalities have even smaller numbers
- ⇒ About 60% of foreign elders stem from former recruitment countries

Germany is the prototype of the 'conservative' welfare state and was one of the first countries to develop and implement a social security system in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The social security system is focused on the working population. It is dominated by the principle of insurance and has the five pillars of old age pension, health, accident, unemployment and long-term care insurance. Leading principles are freedom, equality and solidarity, social fairness and subsidiarity, (the latter meaning that society should only help when people are no longer able to help themselves).

In Germany, most people from minority ethnic groups are 'foreigners' and thus only have very limited political rights. However, so called late emigrants have the advantage of being

regarded as German citizens. The proportion of naturalised people is not very high. (You can apply for German citizenship after eight years, but in gaining it you will have to relinquish your original citizenship). In Germany, social services for elders also cover a broad spectrum. As in the UK, services aim at securing an independent and self-determined life in freedom and dignity. Within social services for elders there is generally a distinction between so called 'open' community care services providing opportunities for leisure and culture; outpatient services (services at home); inpatient services (institutional care); and a combination of inpatient and outpatient services (intermediate care). Due to the principle of subsidiarity, outpatient services enjoy priority over services in institutions. Services for ill elders (health care) and elders in need of care are provided by the health care system and the long term care system for which the federal level is responsible. Both are financed by health insurance and long term care insurance. Health care is mainly provided by the private sector such as general practitioners and hospitals. Long term institutional care is provided by nursing homes (mainly run by charitable associations) and long term outpatient care by private outpatient services and outpatient services run by the charitable associations. Most social services in Germany are based on the welfare state principle and are financed through taxes. In terms of elders' community care, voluntary organisations have a limited role compared to public providers except for services which are covered by long term care insurance. Thus, the charitable associations, as providers of community care for elders, play a predominant role. Compared to other European countries, the extent and role of the German charitable associations is unique. They do not only offer community care services for all age groups but also offer advice services for people from minority ethnic groups (so called Migrationsberatungsstellen). (Gerling & Miller 2003, City of Dortmund 2004)

## **2.2 Consultation seminars**

In Dortmund, two consultation seminars were held, which took place in 2004, on November 30<sup>th</sup> and in 2005, on April 21<sup>st</sup>.

The first seminar was hosted by the Arabic Abu Bakr Mosque with more than 60 persons participating.

The following issues were discussed:

⇒ Even after 40 years in Germany, many immigrated people still don't feel at home and are faced with a lot of economic, cultural and social problems.

- ⇒ There is one old people's home in Burgholz (district of Dortmund) that provides religious facilities for Muslims.
- ⇒ Ms. Sandra Alberti, Association for International Friendship informed about the work of the association.
- ⇒ In Germany, there is no real tradition to grow old in dignity and in that respect German senior citizens could learn a lot from minority ethnic elders.
- ⇒ In Dortmund, there is an ongoing process of reforming community care for elders that provides a good basis to also tackle issues for minority ethnic elders. It is planned to build up special centres of competence at district level.
- ⇒ There is a need for intercultural qualifications for service providers.
- ⇒ There is a private outpatient service provider that employs carers with different cultural backgrounds and increasingly focuses on minority ethnic elders.
- ⇒ Minority ethnic elders need help with translation as one cannot expect them to learn German anymore.
- ⇒ Because of access barriers it is crucial to organise information seminars in the community centres of minority ethnic groups.
- ⇒ There has been a model project in Unna, in which service providers had the possibility to gain intercultural competence and minority ethnic elders were informed about existing services for elders within their community centres which proved to be successful.
- ⇒ It is necessary to bring together the two sides' migration work and community care for elders.

Further discussion then focused on how to move on with the project. The following proposals were made:

1. Members of organisations of minority ethnic groups should inform their communities of the project and find liaison workers for the Forum.
2. The Abu Bakr Mosque offers to host information seminars or social advice for their elder members on specific issues such as out- and inpatients services for elders and health care.
3. The same can be done in collaboration with a Russian association. Migrants from Russia also wish to find ways to bring in their experience and knowledge. Information about the project should also be placed in the press of minority ethnic groups.

It was finally agreed that the already existing working group "Minority Ethnic Elders in Dortmund", that was set up as a result of SEEM II, should be broadened into a Forum in which minority ethnic elders and their organisations could play a crucial role. Interested organisations or individuals were asked to get in touch with the city of Dortmund. The



working group aims to collect existing information and services for minority ethnic elders and will organise information and advice seminars for minority ethnic elders. It may set up sub working groups.

The second meeting was hosted by the same mosque and included exchange partners from Gothenburg. It was attended by different organisations and interested people including the following: members of cultural centres or mosque charities, welfare and church associations, representatives of inpatient and outpatient care, different departments of the city of Dortmund, Turkish and Arabic colleagues of patient services and interested citizens of Dortmund. Participants came from the following countries: Germany, Turkey, Lebanon, Morocco, Spain, Italy, Russia, Israel and Palestine. Most of the participants had already attended other information events within SEEM II. Members of the Arabic mosque and other mosques located in the Northern part of Dortmund were especially welcomed.

Due to the specific topic of the seminar, which concentrated on „Community Care for Elders in Dortmund - Possibilities for Black and Minority Ethnic Elders“ and a speech that was given by a Turkish doctor on „Special Needs of Health Care for Minority Ethnic Elders in Dortmund“, the participation of colleagues from outpatient services and the statutory sector was especially welcomed.

After the speech of Dr. Güngör, a lively discussion emerged concerning the following topic:

⇒ Problems and psycho social aspects of medical care of minority ethnic elders

The question was raised, in how far involved organisations are able to help the people concerned to overcome their fears by providing them with special information (for instance providing them with addresses of GPs and specialised doctors with matching linguistic and cultural backgrounds or providing escorts from amongst members who can act as interpreters).

⇒ Concrete tasks of the Working Group

To be able to get practical and visible results, it has to be made clear which personal, financial and temporal resources will be available after the end of the project. According to this, the Working Group can be commissioned to work on special measures. This includes for instance to counsel and inform about certain issues at the centres of minority ethnic groups, to develop suitable information materials, to co-operate with certain other projects, to help with developing group work within mosques or cultural centres etc.

The Working Group meets on a regularly basis. The next meeting is to be held in June 2001.

Further topics discussed were:

- ⇒ Networking with other existing projects to be better able to use capacities
- ⇒ Advising and informing through special services in the centres of minority ethnic communities, to strengthen acceptance and usage by people in need of care
- ⇒ More acceptance of ethnic, religious and cultural characteristics (cultural sensitive social work) (

(Dortmund Evaluation Reports of Consultation Seminars 2004, 2005)

### **2.3 Direct Results and Outcomes**

During the time of the project, different information strategies were used and the project has been promoted on many occasions by different German partners.

Information was received by minority ethnic organisations with great interest. It sometimes leads to participation in the multicultural working group. Local print media did not choose to report on the project on a regular basis.

Members of the multicultural working group comprise 36 organisations and interested individuals. Altogether, 118 organisations and people have been informed about the project. From this, 58 contacts chose to participate in at least one of the consultation seminars.

Dortmund has been consulted by services for minority ethnic communities from other local authorities. There has been ongoing contact with the MEP from Dortmund. (Dortmund Progress Report 2005)

The project SEEM II has helped to achieve one major improvement in that many organisations have been sensitised to the increasingly problematic life situation and the needs of minority ethnic elders. This is not only the case for traditional ‘German’ organisations and associations in the field of care for elders in particular and services for minority ethnic groups in general, but also for mosques and cultural organisations of minority ethnic groups. Referring to statements of imams or chairs of those organisations, they have not yet addressed the needs and demands of their elders themselves. This is mainly due to the fact that:

- ⇒ they expected their elders to go back to their own countries and retire there
- ⇒ they thought that their elders were going to be cared for by their children and families which turns out to be a myth in many cases
- ⇒ one thought that there weren’t any special needs in terms of leisure activities and communication
- ⇒ urgent problems of minority ethnic organisations that had to be dealt with in the first place

(such as funding problems and building up centres).

The main focuses of mosques and cultural organisations in Dortmund have been and still are children and youth work and religious education. Referring to relevant actors, sensitising themselves to the needs of their elders (and especially their older women) has to be developed from within. Liaison people also have to stay in touch with both sides and have to make sure that they will co-operate with each other.

The project has also contributed to a better communication between members and representatives of different mosques and cultural centres. A working group “Minority Ethnic Elders in Dortmund” has been set up as a direct result of SEEM II. The Forum sees itself as an umbrella organisation that disseminates results and measures concerning the topic minority ethnic elders. There is a core of members that guarantees continuity and obligation. It is in general open for new members. The goals of the working group are:

- ⇒ Improving access for minority ethnic elders to services
- ⇒ Promoting social integration
- ⇒ Making sure their special needs are met when developing new services
- ⇒ Offering advice and information in their community centres
- ⇒ Informing political leaders about the working group and its activities

Together with care providers and ecumenical organisations, a common language was found that helps to:

- ⇒ exchange arguments and ideas without prejudices and to
- ⇒ install and implement concrete measures.

However, it has to be borne in mind, that a rethinking process in all relevant organisations and setting up concrete measures need a lot of time. (Dortmund Progress Report 2005)

## **2.4 The way forward**

Sustainable social work with minority ethnic elders will only be possible in the long run. Looking back to experiences made within the last couple of years, it becomes clear that cultural centres, mosques or other organisations of minority ethnic groups in Dortmund have not or hardly been able to continuously work in the field of social services for minority ethnic elders. Within their communities, needs of elders have not yet been discussed. Many of their elders still wish to go back home to their countries of origin. Moreover, special services and

offers for elders are not common in most of the countries of origin. Thus, integration into the existing system of care for elders is very difficult. In the long run, ethnic communities must be sensitised for the topic themselves, for instance by the help of their Imams.

The City council, selected members and special committees will be informed about the results of the seminar and the further work of the working Group and will also be invited to future seminars and meetings.

The multicultural working group in Dortmund is going to implement single measures within the frame of existing resources. This could be a signal and impulse for other organisations and groups in Dortmund: to provide simple but effective help as soon and with as little bureaucratic as possible. These measures will combine:

- ⇒ developing adequate information brochures of outpatient services and their special offers for minority ethnic elders
- ⇒ providing information events on different topics of care for elders within the different minority ethnic community centres
- ⇒ offering cultural and other activities for spending leisure time together

After SEEM II is finished, it has to be ensured that activities will go on. The focus will be on:

- ⇒ Ensuring the further and existing work of the multicultural working group as well as the contacts to liaison people
- ⇒ Constant communication and information between different actors from different sides
- ⇒ Developing concerted actions and measures. (Dortmund Progress Report 2005)

### **3. Lille**

#### **3.1 General Background**

France is strongly influenced by its colonial past which has put a stamp on the current population mix and migration policy. France had already become a country characterised by immigration at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when it recruited workers from neighbouring countries (especially Italy and Poland). In the 1960s there was a decline of immigration from Italy but an increase from Portugal, Spain, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria and Sub-Saharan Africa. In France, the share of immigrants (both 'foreigners' and naturalised people) is about 7.4%.

In Lille, there are about 3,000 immigrant elders aged 60 and above (1,755 'foreign' elders and 1,243 elders who have acquired French nationality). The biggest groups of older immigrants are Algerian, Moroccan, Austrian, Finnish, Swedish, Italian, or of other European nationalities.

France has a great variety of services, help and institutions for elders, especially for home based and institutional services. Intermediate care is not that widespread. In France, too, older people have the possibility to stay at home as long as possible. There are several services assisting elders at home: home helps, home care services, day centres and council-run social programme centres. Apart from living at home, elders can obtain support and care in communal housing, retirement homes and long-term care units.

However, However, given that the French Republican system aims to satisfy the needs of all retired people regardless of ethnic origin, the City Council does not offer any specific services for elders of different ethnic or religious background.

#### **3.2 Consultation Seminars**

Within the SEEM project, seven meetings were held in 2003 and led, on December 8<sup>th</sup> of the same year, to an afternoon of debate and reflection on the subject of minority ethnic elders in Lille. Three consultation seminars were held.

The first one take place on December 10<sup>th</sup> 2004 in the committee room of Lille City Council. It was discussed, that in Lille, there is not enough information regarding the numbers, ethnic background and life situation of minority ethnic elders. It was thus decided, to conduct a qualitative study together with the local University.

The second consultation meeting took place on January 19<sup>th</sup> at the town hall and the third at the Aureli centre on June 23<sup>rd</sup> 2005.

During the third meeting, about 25 minority ethnic elders, that live in the Aureli hostel, were given information regarding services for elders that are provided by the local centres for communication and co-ordination (CLIC). Those centres are places which receive, advise, and assist older people. The 'Seniors' Info Point', that is organised by CLIC, provides the public with information about their rights, homes and centres for older people, support in the home, transport, and cultural and sporting activities, as well as making documentation freely available to all. After an initial assessment of a person's difficulties, the 'Seniors' Info Point' may direct that person to relevant bodies or to the Social Support service of CLIC.

During the seminar, the centre's residents discussed the aims of SEEM, and asked about their rights and entitlements regarding questions of retirement and leisure activities.

They explained that their lives mostly revolve around the 'ARELI' centre, and that they would like to "see something else" in their daily life. They were informed about a pensioners' leisure club in their area, which they could visit. There, they could participate in activities such, for instance, as playing cards. It was suggested that the woman who runs the club should come to visit them, and bring them to the club.

One of the centre's pensioners spoke in particular of the two pensioners who went to Dortmund and Leeds. He expressed his regret that up to now, he had not received any feedback from them. It was therefore proposed that as soon as they return from Algeria, they should answer questions within a similar meeting.

Several people at the meeting, however, were disappointed and angry as they thought the meeting would deal with desperately needed renovation work of the centre.

In general, the information event went very well. The residents were very satisfied that the council had approached them in order to inform them about their right and entitlements.

### **3.3 Direct Results and Outcomes**

As a result of participating in SEEM, two studies have been initiated, which are presently being undertaken by 'FASILD' (the Support and Action Fund for Integration and the Fight against Forms of Discrimination), and by students at Lille III University.

The study undertaken by 'FASILD' aims to find out, what actions can be taken to improve the situation of minority ethnic elders in the towns of Lille, Roubaix, and Tourcoing.

This approach aims to better understand what characterises these ageing population groups and to find out what the specific needs and expectations of these people are. This study is soon to come to an end, and the City Council will have the results shortly.

The second study is undertaken by students at the 'ISAS' (the Higher Institute of Social Services), who are studying for their Professional Masters Degree II in "Social Development Strategies" at Lille III's Charles de Gaulle University.

Using a documentary and qualitative approach, and making use of available statistical data, this study establishes an understanding of the position of the ageing immigrant population in the city of Lille, with particular emphasis on its relationship with associations and institutions.

The study takes into account the initiatives undertaken under the auspices of the SEEM project, data relating to which can be accessed from a base which Lille City Council has made available to the students.

The study also establishes a link with the research currently being conducted by the 'AMNYOS' agency, which was commissioned by 'FASILD' (the Support and Action Fund for Integration and the Fight against Forms of Discrimination).

The aim of the study is threefold:

- ⇒ To understand the situational and conceptual factors which may facilitate or hinder comparison between what is happening in France and what is happening in the cases of the other countries taking part in the SEEM project.
- ⇒ To acquire a sufficiently in-depth understanding of the particularly local aspects of the ageing of immigrants in the city of Lille, an understanding which can also be used by the City Council.
- ⇒ To find out what the best innovative practice is, nationally, in terms of the management of ageing immigrant groups, and to draw conclusions from this in the form of recommendations for good practice.

Alongside these studies, initiatives have been taking place on the ground, and these have enabled the City Council to create links with the associations, as well as involving retired people coming from immigration in the thought process.

The woman who runs the Social Centre of the Inner Suburb of Bethune has been out to meet minority ethnic people who live in this district, by going from door to door. This has enabled the Social Centre to canvass people on what they want in terms of cultural, creative, and

leisure activities. This initiative will then allow for the provision of those activities which match the wishes and needs of minority ethnic elders.

The SEEM project has underlined the fact that minority ethnic elders do not participate enough in the life of the city. The city of Lille is presently considering going out to meet them and to inform them about the services which are available to them.

Measures will be taken to allow the SEEM project's work to continue.

## **4. Gent**

### **4.1 General Background**

As described in more detail in chapter III, immigration in Belgium after World War II was mainly due to economic reasons. Bilateral agreements with Italy, Spain, Greece, Portugal, Morocco and Turkey led to an increased immigration from those countries. Within the last decades, asylum seekers and refugees immigrated from all over the world. At the moment, minority ethnic groups in Belgium make up about 9% of the whole situation. In the Province of Flanders, there are about 49.000 people of non Belgium origin aged 55 years and above. The group of minority ethnic elders is very heterogeneous; most of them stem from other member countries of the EU. 40% are from the Netherlands, medium sized group comprise Italians (11%), Moroccans (8%) and Turkish People (7%). 38% stem from former recruitment countries.

In the field of health care and social work, there are lots of organisations and institutions working for and with older people. Apart from old people's homes, there are networks of social and health care workers visiting people at home. There are also centres where one can rent appliances (such as wheelchairs, crutches etc.), meals-on-wheels services for older people, and so on. In many cities, there is a service centre for older people. In some cities, there is also a network of club houses for older people. Generally, they attract Flemish elders who belong to older age groups (from 70-80 years old).



## 4.2 Consultation Seminars

Gent hosted its consultation seminar in 2004 on November 22<sup>nd</sup>. Organising the consultation meeting for elders from ethnic minorities was a rather complicated business for the following reasons:

- ⇒ Gent's target group consists of people of Turkish or Maghrebian (mainly Moroccan, some Tunisian) origin who came for labour reasons and have a rather low educational level. Many of them have a very traditional life style and rarely communicate with the indigenous population. They do not have any experience of participating in meetings and discussing their issues.
- ⇒ Gent's target group is spread over seven municipalities. In order to reach and recruit them, Gent had to collaborate with a great number of local actors.
- ⇒ In order to be consistent with their basic guidelines for an "inclusive policy", Gent also had to collaborate with a great number of mainstream services for older people.

Thus, Gent took different and extensive measures to ensure the consultation meeting would happen.

At first, Gent agreed upon basic principles and guidelines for the meeting. They decided to also invite elders from other provinces and to limit the number of participants per municipality. They planned simultaneous translation into Turkish and Arabic for the plenary sessions, and a translator for every working group.

Furthermore, the whole meeting was split up into four working groups with different topics, of which three were Turkish and one was Maghrebian.

For the participants from four municipalities in the same region a bus was organised, while the elders of the other two municipalities were brought to Gent by private transport which was paid for by the province.

Recruiting the participants was only possible in collaboration with the regional integration centres. Eventually, it was decided to bring together services and integration centres at the same time.

Secondly, the partners with whom Gent wanted to collaborate met before and discussed the ways of recruiting participants, translators, workshop moderators, reporters, and initiators for the different topics.

Thirdly, to recruit minority ethnic elders, flyers were made and translated in Turkish and Arabic and distributed to the local partners. Home visits were made to invite elders. This

proved easier than expected: In some cases, the local recruiters had to insist on a limited number of participants, since there were many more candidates.

Lastly the food requirements and taboos of the target groups were taken into consideration.

The whole day seminar included an introduction and information about the SEEM II project, the aims of the consultation meetings, and the workshops in the morning. This was followed by four workshops that concentrated on language and communication, leisure activities, participation and home care. Afterwards, there was a break for lunch. In the afternoon, results of the workshops were presented and a final, translated speech made by the provincial representative. The seminar ended with a boat trip.

82 people participated in the seminar, of which 44 were women, 38 men, and 21 of Maghrebian origin.

### **Results of Workshop 1: Leisure time**

The workshop started by presenting existing leisure activities for elders in general, such as services' centres, club houses and also specific activities of the services' centre De Thuishaven in Gent that explicitly involve minority ethnic elders.

Questioned, whether participants knew of these leisure activities for older people, the following answers were made:

- ⇒ With the exception of the specific activities for immigrant elders, which were recently organised by De Thuishaven, participants were absolutely unfamiliar with these services.
- ⇒ They sometimes know where an older peoples' centre is located but they do not know what is happening inside.
- ⇒ Some suggested that the offers should be promoted by the integration centres.

Asked what kinds of leisure activities they needed it became clear that:

- ⇒ Minority ethnic elders, especially women, appear to have a great need for free time activities.
- ⇒ It was said that men have some possibilities for passing their leisure time, such as going to the mosque or the café.
- ⇒ The women however are very isolated, which causes many psychosomatic difficulties. The women need to have their own place, such as a "community centre for women" that is open for Flemish and immigrant women. They also would like to have regular meetings about different topics.

- ⇒ The Turkish women of Gent complained about the disappearance of the centre "Beraber", a community centre/local integration centre where specific leisure activities were offered for women only.

The kinds of activities offered should be adapted to their specific needs especially regarding their culture and religion. There should be possibilities to learn new hobbies as well as to concentrate on old ones.

Asked with whom they would like to spend their leisure time answers differed:

- ⇒ The group from Gent had no objections against "mixed" activities between the sexes and foreign and indigenous people.
- ⇒ The group from Aalst/Zelee mostly preferred single sex activities.
- ⇒ Both agreed that the composition of the groups should depend on the kind of activity. For educational activities, mixed sex groups were more acceptable than for leisure activities.
- ⇒ Both groups mentioned that they would like to have classes teaching them to read and write and to learn Dutch in local centres and one group (Aalst/Zelee) also mentioned a need for intercultural meetings.

Asked, under which conditions they would visit mainstream centres, it became clear that:

- ⇒ Many fear to be unable to communicate with others and to get lost in the centre. They would need Turkish speaking staff.
- ⇒ Many also fear not be welcomed by Dutch elders. They would like Dutch people to be friendly, tolerant, attentive and non-discriminating.
- ⇒ Most participants would like to be invited personally – by telephone or through house visits.

## **Results of Workshop 2: Participation**

This workshop started by a definition of participation. The initiators then presented the Elders Advisory Boards which exist in several municipalities.

Most of the participants had never heard of these and do not know how to become a member. Both groups agreed that there is a need for minority ethnic elders to participate in such boards.

Some elders mentioned several specific problems that could be put on the agenda of the advisory boards, such as:

- ⇒ The problem of the extra allowance they lose when they stay longer than 29 days in their home countries

- ⇒ The problem of the very expensive garbage collection;
- ⇒ The problems of finding decent housing
- ⇒ The problem of the taxes on water consumption

It was made clear that most of these problems are not specific for immigrant elders.

It was then discussed that immigrant elders are not members of the Elders Advisory Boards because:

- ⇒ they never heard about them, and they do not know how to become a member
- ⇒ they do not speak enough Dutch to participate actively
- ⇒ some proposed to bring interpreters with them to overcome that problem
- ⇒ it was agreed upon that women should participate just the same like men

### **Results of Workshop 3: Home Care**

The workshop started by presenting the home care services: nursing services at home, household help, social services, transport services, services for family care and centres where all kinds of appliances (e.g. crutches, wheelchairs etc.) can be rented.

The discussion was structured around three cases: illustrating nursing services, household help and social services. Several questions were asked, such as: in which ways do minority ethnic elders need help? Do they know the services for elders? Why don't they make use of them?

The following points were made during the discussion:

- ⇒ Nursing services are the best known, mostly through the family doctor or the health insurance fund.
- ⇒ Household help is nearly unknown – only one of the participants had ever made use of it – and social services, for instance help with administrative problems, are unknown as well.
- ⇒ If the elders needed this kind of help, they would rather go to the integration centres.
- ⇒ Occasionally, some elders made use of the nursing services, but they were confronted with cultural-religious objections.
- ⇒ The fact was mentioned that male nurses cannot wash women, and vice versa. Minority ethnic elders felt that they would like to have more people from their own communities working in

the home care services. However, due to cultural/religious taboos, young immigrant women prefer to work in hospitals or older people's homes and not in the home care sector.

- ⇒ The Turkish group said that household help could be useful, but within their community, there is a rather negative attitude towards accepting (household) help from outside the family.
- ⇒ As for social services, the participants had the impression that social assistants do not know a lot about their background and community.
- ⇒ Other reasons why they would not make use of the home care services were the language barrier and the fear that it would cost too much.

It was discussed under which conditions home care services would be used by minority ethnic elders:

- ⇒ For the Maghrebian group household help would be acceptable, if meals were cooked according to their customs.
- ⇒ In general, knowledge of and respect for their culture and religion, are very important. The Turkish group explicitly stated that home care staff had to behave according to the basic rules, for instance, taking off their shoes when entering the house.
- ⇒ The language barrier is felt to be less important. However, staff would be welcomed who spoke their language, at least to a basic standard.
- ⇒ And last but not least home care staff is expected to be friendly and non-discriminating.

From discussion about ways of informing minority ethnic elders about home care services it became clear that:

- ⇒ Up to now, the family doctor and sometimes the health insurance fund are the only actors that have informed about home care services.
- ⇒ There is a need to get more information, mainly through home visits, written material in their own language, and through informative meetings.
- ⇒ For the Maghrebian group, such meetings could be organised for men in a mosque, for women in integration centres.
- ⇒ Off the record, the Maghrebian group also mentioned the need for Islamic homes for older people. They were very concerned about what would be done about this need.

### **Results of Workshop 4: Language and communication**

The workshop started by presenting education centres for adults and by stating that many Belgians also have problems with reading, writing or counting. The discussion was structured around five propositions, in the course of which several questions were asked, such as: How do minority ethnic elders cope with problems of language and communication? Do they get enough assistance? Would they like to learn Dutch? Why or why not? Where and how? How could they enhance their participation in activities of their region or neighbourhood?

The following comments were made regarding coping with problems of language and communication:

- ⇒ In general, minority ethnic elders help themselves in their own language, and occasionally look out for an interpreter (e.g. a family member). However, they prefer not to depend on a third person because it is not always easy to find an interpreter and there is a danger of being misinterpreted.
- ⇒ Some of the elders think that language is more a problem for the second and third generation and that learning Dutch in the working environment should be promoted strongly. Some Turkish participants suggested that Turkish should be an optional subject at school. They themselves are much more concerned with health problems or with the fact that they want to stay as long as possible in their homeland (without losing their extra allowance).
- ⇒ A (fair) complaint was that, when immigration started, nothing was done to teach them Dutch and that now, maybe, it is too late.

To the question “Is it possible to learn a language in old age?” the answers were:

- ⇒ Most of the participants think that one can learn a language at any age, although it is easier when one is young.
- ⇒ Some stressed that other problems had to be solved first before they could concentrate on learning Dutch.
- ⇒ Most of the participants agreed that speaking Dutch would be very useful, but they feared that it would not be possible to learn a lot of new things.

Promoting conditions for learning Dutch are:

- ⇒ Dutch to be learned must be practical Dutch, to be used on the job, in the supermarket, the neighbourhood, services etc
- ⇒ Learning should include visits, excursions, exchanges
- ⇒ In the Turkish group it was suggested that there should be a practical Dutch-Turkish

dictionary, adapted to their needs, or a handbook adapted to their learning capacities.

- ⇒ Minority ethnic elders also stressed that the lessons should be very simple. The level of some teachers is much too high so that people can't follow (certainly not the illiterate people), and thus they give up after a few lessons. That means, before starting with language courses, participants must be tested thoroughly, and then get classes that are adapted to their needs.
- ⇒ The "Houses of Dutch", which were set up recently, are not yet very well known among minority ethnic elders.
- ⇒ The Maghrebian elders also suggested that welfare services should be able to give information about language courses. A general problem is that there are not enough Dutch-as-a-second-language courses and that the waiting lists are long!
- ⇒ In the Turkish group, some people remarked that they wanted to know first what Belgian society expected them to learn!
- ⇒ Language lessons must be organised in the neighbourhood, because of the mobility problems of the older people.
- ⇒ In the Maghrebian group, the local mosque was suggested as a good place. The same group also mentioned specific problems with Dutch lessons for women: in some cases babysitting could be needed, and single sex classes are preferred.

Asked, whether they would like to communicate with other elders, the answers reflect individual opinions:

- ⇒ Some said that they do have contacts with Belgians, mainly through their children and grandchildren. They would like to get more in touch with them, but then they think that both parties must make some effort, for instance write simple letters, speak slowly, not speak dialect etc.
- ⇒ Some said simply that they would like to have contacts with Belgians, but that they can't.

General conclusions about the consultation seminar:

- ⇒ It was felt to be an absolute success.
- ⇒ The participants were very happy to come and appreciated the extras like the lunch (all halal!) and the boat trip.
- ⇒ Minority ethnic elders felt they were being taken seriously and talked about their needs openly, women the same as men.
- ⇒ A clear problem of concern seems to be the changed role of the integration centres and the general line of "inclusive policy". This means that first line activities, exclusively for a target group of Turkish or Maghrebian immigrants, have practically disappeared and that, from now

on, they are expected to be helped by the mainstream services and institutions. The problem is, that the work of the integration centres stopped rather suddenly and that the mainstream services are not yet prepared to cope with minority ethnic elders. The elders themselves are so used to being served by the integration centres that they are not inclined to seek help elsewhere. That means that a lot of work has to be done concerning the mainstream services and the information for the elders.

- ⇒ The lack of knowledge of minority ethnic elders regarding mainstream services is a big concern. They do not have an attitude to seek information actively by themselves, and they still prefer to be informed personally.
- ⇒ The most urgent and overall problem is that of language and communication and is clearly the main barrier to social participation in every field. (Gent Evaluation Report of Consultation Seminar 2004)

### **4.3 Direct Results and Outcomes**

The project has been promoted to many instances and in different ways. In general, the response from the media and local services and organisations was quite positive.

Most of Gents personal contacts with minority ethnic elders were made before their engagement with SEEM II, but new elders became interested more recently through personal contacts with elders who had participated in other projects and through the activities Gent organised within the SEEM II activities. When Gent organised the large consultation meeting on 22 November 2004, they even had to refuse people because too many elders wanted to participate.

Gent has been consulted by the Province of Antwerp and the Brussels Community on how to organise "Becoming older in Flanders". Gent has also been consulted about the family care project. (Gent Progress Report 2005)

The most progress within the Province of East Flanders has been made in the field of networking and contacts with mainstream services in different relevant fields. The partners involved have been mentioned earlier, such as:

- ⇒ The organisations for home care and family care
- ⇒ All kinds of services for older people in general
- ⇒ Basic education
- ⇒ Services' centres



- ⇒ The federation of elderly people's organisations
- ⇒ Minority ethnic organizations etc.

Within all these examples, Gent now knows people who can be contacted when needed. They can be invited to discuss and/or to set up initiatives.

This is seen as a great progress, since Gent needs the collaboration of many actors if they want to go on implementing their projects successfully.

For Gent, participating in the SEEM II project has meant a lot:

- ⇒ In the first place, it ensured that Gent could go on with their initiatives for minority ethnic elders. At the end of 2003, the contracts with their Turkish and Moroccan collaborators (needed for the realisation of "Becoming older in Flanders" and the family care project) ended without further perspectives, which would have been the end of all activities in that field. Thanks to their European engagement with SEEM II, contracts were renewed for two years, so that a firm basis was given to Gents projects.
- ⇒ Secondly, the European engagement meant a strong argument to convince external partners to collaborate with them and to put the topic minority ethnic elders on their agendas. (Gent Progress Report 2005)

#### **4.4 The way forward**

Gent has many possible initiatives in mind for the near (and more distant) future. Being part of the public administration, they do not have to search for funding. They can use their annual budget within which initiatives have always been implemented. A problem could be that ongoing efforts to economise could lead to some cut-backs in their budget.

Projects in mind are the following:

- ⇒ In the first place, they plan a Maghrebian version of the projects "Becoming older in Flanders" and the family care project.
- ⇒ As for the latter, a specific methodology must be found to cope with the problem of the young daughters-in-law who have come to Belgium recently and who do not speak enough Dutch to follow the training for family carers. Often, their mothers-in-law want to keep them at home because they fear that speaking Dutch and knowing about the Flemish society will prevent them from caring for their elders.
- ⇒ Then, Gent is going to tackle how to recruit minority ethnic women to work in the home care services. They will also further collaborate with the research initiative about minority ethnic

needs in home care. In general, home care must get particular attention.

- ⇒ Training of the services' staff is another issue that will need attention in the future. Services cannot adapt their services for ethnic minorities when their collaborators do not know how to cope with that target group.
- ⇒ At the same time, Gent wants to work intensively at making their vision on diversity and their diversity plan more concrete, which is seen as the only way to cope with the specific needs of all specific target groups and to remain feasible (e.g. financially).
- ⇒ The project about Dutch language classes for minority ethnic elders will be supported, as communication is very important and the only way to ensure social participation of minority ethnic elders. Gent also aims at extending initiatives like the one in the Thuishaven, because that is viewed as real integration and participation on the local level. Gent wishes to integrate both projects, e.g. organising Dutch classes in service centres like Thuishaven.
- ⇒ Within their province, Gent considers their initiatives with minority ethnic elders as a basis for the further global inter-culturalisation of the whole caring and social services sector – and that means that within the following years, lots of initiatives will be needed.
- ⇒ There also needs to be a lot of convincing work, for instance in relation to the provincial government, external partners, and local initiatives like the older people's clubs
- ⇒ Basically, what needs to be done after the SEEM II project, is to go on with the activities and initiatives that have already been developed. That means that Gent still has to extend their area of work and increasingly to reach more actors. The final goal is that mainstream services consider it as normal that they take into account the specific needs of minority ethnic elders. (Gent Progress Report 2005)

## **5. Gothenburg/Gunnared**

### **5.1 General Background**

Sweden, which has a strong history of emigration, was the first Nordic country to become a country of net immigration. During the 1950s and the 1960s the migration flow consisted mainly of migrant workers but from the end of the 1980s on, the influx of migrants was dominated by refugees and asylum seekers. In Sweden, minority ethnic groups make up about 2% cent of the total population. In Sweden, most immigrated people are naturalised, (for example, 76% of the elders born abroad are naturalised Swedes).

In Gothenburg, there are about 19,450 Black and Minority Ethnic elders aged 55 years and above. The biggest groups are from Finland, Denmark and Norway, former Yugoslavia, Germany, Poland, Iran, Hungary, Estonia and Turkey, or from 'other countries'.

Sweden is the prototype of the modern welfare state or the 'classic social-democratic' welfare state. In the 1930s, traditional welfare for the poor was replaced by a social policy based on the ideals of the social-democratic party. Its underlying principles are equality, consideration, co-operation and assistance and it aims at solidarity to reduce competition and social injustice. The welfare system covers the entire population. A central element of the Swedish system of social security is a universal, non-contribution, minimum state pension.

Sweden aims at giving elder people opportunities to live an independent life at home for as long as possible. The range of services is broad, including residential homes for the very old and home help services that have been expanded from the 1960s and now benefit some 300,000 pensioners. There are municipal pensioners' dwellings, which are an intermediate form of housing care based on a high degree of self-help. (Gerling & Miller 2003)

## **5.2 Consultation seminars**

During the spring of 2005, Gothenburg made an inventory of the local organisations in Gunnared in order to widen their network. They found about 40 different organisations that were invited to the consultation seminar by letter, email and sometimes by telephone.

Besides wanting to inform about SEEM II, the aim was to consult the organisations regarding the activities of the planned one stop centre for elders. Unfortunately, only one organisation (Bokstavsskolan) responded to the invitation. Thus, the consultation seminar did not take place.

However, there was an additional meeting with Bokstavsskolan. Together with them it was planned to contact certain people, who were believed to have a need to take part in activities for elders. It was also planned to contact all organisations once more during the autumn of 2005. (Gothenburg Evaluation Report of Consultation Seminars 2004)

### **5.3 Direct Results and Outcomes**

In 2004, there was a series of meetings to promote the project and to prepare the consultation seminar. (Gothenburg Progress Report 2005)

The most important achievements of Gunnared participating in SEEM II are the intensified contacts with their partners and that more partners have been added to the project. Gunnared is deeply impressed by the projects driven by voluntary organisations in other countries that were shown to them during the project. Gunnared still aims at encouraging voluntary organisations in Gunnared and in Gothenburg generally.

Other outcomes are the following:

- ⇒ During the SEEM project, Gunnared has worked out a project plan to create a rehabilitation centre for elders with a focus on immigrant elders.
- ⇒ The Ministry of Social Affairs has been informed about SEEM II. If asked, Gunnared will be happy to cooperate.
- ⇒ During the SEEM II an agreement was made that associations need to identify their elders as a group.
- ⇒ Voluntary organisations are trying to find ways to manage services for minority ethnic people through joint work. However, these groups are not accepted by politicians and labour unions.
- ⇒ It has been learned through experience that not all individuals wish to have help from their own ethnic group.
- ⇒ Regarding in-service training, there are staff originating from Chile, Bolivia, El Salvador, Uganda, Iran, Iraq, Finland, the Philippines, Poland, Russia, Belarus and Serbia. Invited partners include a nurse from Nigeria, an occupational therapist, a physiotherapist from Iran and two social workers. The objective is to document and evaluate existing services and how they meet the needs of elders. (Gothenburg Progress Report 2005)

### **5.4 The way forward**

It is important that those in charge include the issues of minority ethnic elders in their work. This can be done in the different documents that are produced, such as budgets, activity plans and follow-ups. (Gothenburg Progress Report 2005)

## **6. Bucharest**

### **6.1 General Background**

As described in more detail in chapter III, in Romania / Bucharest, the situation of elders in general and that of minority ethnic elders in particular differs a lot from that in the other countries and cities involved in SEEM II.

Romania has many minority ethnic groups, so called historical minorities, that have been living for centuries in the country or what is now Romanian territory. They often had a more privileged status than the indigenous population. However, the situation of Rroma is very underprivileged. There are two other categories of minority ethnic groups in Romania, namely political refugees and foreign citizens. In Bucharest, the largest minority ethnic groups are of Rroma, Hungarian, Turkish, Jewish, German, and Chinese background. There is no available data regarding the number of elders from these communities.

The structure for planning and delivering services for elders is in the middle of extensive changes. The formal care services for older people are not yet thoroughly developed; only 0.3% of all elders receive formal care services.

### **6.2 Consultation seminars**

Bucharest organised three consultation seminars that took place in 2004 and 2005.

The first consultation seminar was held in 2004 on September 21<sup>st</sup> and organised by the GERON House, the GERON Foundation and the M.A.T.C.A.-2000 Foundation. Due to other important events organized in Bucharest at the same time, the number of participants at this first meeting was small (only 16 persons). So a second seminar was held on September 30<sup>th</sup>, to which 35 persons showed up.

The following institutions and organisations participated in the seminars:

- ⇒ The National Council against Discrimination
- ⇒ The National Council for Elders
- ⇒ ARCA – FRRM, the National Forum for Refugees and Migrants
- ⇒ The Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family - the Spanish experts who work in the PHARE Project: The “Social Services Institution Building in Romania”
- ⇒ The National House of Health Assurances
- ⇒ Bucharest City Council, the General Department for Social Assistance

- ⇒ The General Departments for Social Assistance from Bucharest sectors 1, 2, 4 and 6
- ⇒ The League of Albanians from Romania Association
- ⇒ The Armenians Union of Romania
- ⇒ The Greek Union of Romania
- ⇒ The Romanian Federation of Jewish Communities
- ⇒ The Romanian Democratic Forum of Germans
- ⇒ The Italian Community of Romania
- ⇒ The Romanian Russian-Lipovenians Community
- ⇒ The Ukrainian Union of Romania
- ⇒ The Macedonian Association of Romania
- ⇒ The German-Catholic Humanitarian Association
- ⇒ Diakonisches Werk Bucharest
- ⇒ The AMARET ANESTE (Vatra Satra) Organization (Rromany)
- ⇒ The AVEN AMENZA Organization (Rromany)
- ⇒ The “Speranta Omeniei” (Hope of Humanity) Organization (Rromany)

During the seminars, the following topics were covered:

- ⇒ Presentation of SEEM II and models of good practice
- ⇒ Presentations of activities of minority ethnic organisations attending the seminar
- ⇒ Exchange of information between local and governmental institutions and minority ethnic organisations about services for elders.
- ⇒ Discussing needs of minority ethnic elders

Besides approving the work of SEEM II, the conclusions of the seminars were:

- ⇒ Elders in Romania live under very difficult circumstances caused mainly by poverty (low income), lack of social services and the low quality of medical services;
- ⇒ Minority ethnic elders are not discriminated against but are confronted with the same difficulties to reach services like the majority of elders;
- ⇒ All organisations participating in the seminar (except Rroma), have organised day centres for elders, providing access to publications in their mother tongue languages and organizing socio-cultural events and help for their community elders by distributing some material aids;

- ⇒ Some organisations respective communities have set up their own socio-medical services (based mainly on voluntary work);
- ⇒ There are some cases of positive discrimination within minority ethnic communities (such as Germans, Jews, Italians, and Greeks) where socio-medical services are organised by ethnic communities and sustained with external aid such as funds, medical treatments, food, clothing etc., by churches, embassies or by enterprises of their own communities. However, these examples are perceived in a positive and stimulating way by other minority ethnic communities, because these services and/or material aids are provided not only for themselves, but for all elders (including Romanian or Rroma);
- ⇒ A special case of age discrimination was highlighted by several elders and representatives and directly reported to the National Council against Discrimination representatives: the emergency ambulance public services do not respond to the calls of elders;
- ⇒ The language is not seen as a problem, because the great majority of elders from ethnic minorities are well integrated and speak the Romanian language. Exceptions include elders from the first generation of immigrants (for instance Ukrainians and Russians), but they don't have any difficulties either because they live in communities where the majority is from the same ethnic group. Also social workers have the same nationality and speak their language;
- ⇒ There have not been any special needs in providing social or medical services identified. The only special need mentioned by some participants concerns the access to spiritual services in their mother tongue language;
- ⇒ In general, elders are not consulted or involved in the process of designing services, but all participants recognized the benefits of it and decided to continue with it.

After the exchange visit to Leeds and the third SEEM II partners meeting in Gent, GERON and MATCA 2000 Foundation have organised two more consultation seminars in 2005. The first was especially addressed to the elders from the Greek community in Bucharest, and the second with all stakeholders, namely institutions, representative organisations and elders.

Minority ethnic elders, who went on the exchange visit to Leeds, were involved in the planning of the consultation seminars. Both seminars were organised in collaboration with representative organisations for minority ethnic elders in Bucharest.

For the first seminar that took place in 2004, on May 30<sup>th</sup>, elders from the Greek community were invited by telephone.

For the general seminar, which was held on June 6<sup>th</sup>, over 40 invitations were sent to the relevant institutions and organisations by fax, email and phone.

The first seminar took place at the Greek community centre, and the general consultation seminar was held in the GERON house seminar room.

The first seminar's programme was structured in three sections and included general information about SEEM II and the exchange visit to Leeds, debates with participants and proposals for future projects for the benefit of Greek elders. 15 people from the Greek community and two representative of MATCA-2000 Foundation participated in the seminar.

The discussions concentrated on the needs of elders in general and on the specific needs of Greek elders in particular, such as financial and material support, social services, healthcare, homecare and spiritual and cultural needs.

Most of the participants emphasised the role of elders in preserving language, spirituality, traditions and national pride.

The following concrete actions were proposed:

- ⇒ Organising a "senior club" for Greek elders twice a month, to which the women will bring traditional Greek sweets. In this club, the elders will organise diverse activities such as debates, lectures, expositions, fundraising activities to help other Greek disadvantaged elders, to organise cultural events, international trips etc.
- ⇒ Building up better links with local Social Departments to inform their elders about social assistance rights and opportunities
- ⇒ Organising an 'initiative' group (involving also young community members) to develop and fund projects for social services, health care, home care services, meals on wheels, community centres etc.
- ⇒ Developing collaborations with Greek business people (and their families) from Romania and important NGOs from Romania and Greece (like the Panagia Foundation), to get financial help and support through 'know-how'.

For the general consultation seminar, the programme was structured in five sections and included a short self presentation of participants, a presentation of the SEEM II project and its activities, a presentation of the SEEM II checklist, discussions with participants and proposals for future activities for the benefit of minority ethnic elders. 41 people came to the seminar including: three from national institutions, six from local social institutions, one from a national NGO network for disabled people, one from a national NGO for migrants, and 10 elders and representatives from 10 ethnic communities including Rroma, Armenian, Greek, Jewish, Macedonian, Italian, German, Russian, Ukrainian and Albanian.



The priorities suggested to develop health and social service were as follows:

- ⇒ Access to information on models of good practice, existent health and social services, rights and opportunities, and special advice services (including legal assistance)
- ⇒ Access to and development of good quality and affordable community based health care and social care services
- ⇒ Access to and development of institutional, good quality and affordable health care services for critically and / or chronically ill elders
- ⇒ Preventing homelessness and development of social houses

It was agreed that consultation seminars and other initiatives of this kind are welcomed and should be organised more often.

It was concluded the most disadvantaged communities (new immigrants such as Chinese, and Arabian) without representative organisations and leaders must be included in the work and should be assisted in building up initiative groups and organisations.

A steering committee has to be built up that lobbies for activities.

To overcome financing problems a proposal was made to draw money from each community (including new ones), and to build up working groups with volunteers to find resources for future activities. Volunteers are to participate in training courses, which are offered by MATCA-2000 foundation, to develop projects at local, national and international level. (Bucharest Evaluation Reports of Consultation Seminars 2004, 2005)

#### **6.4 Direct Results and Outcomes**

Within SEEM II, new contacts were made with the Ombudsman Institution and the new team of the Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and the Family.

After the participation of the MATCA-2000 Foundation at the National Social Forum, which was organised by MMSSF in Timisoara, MATCA was invited to be a member of the NGOs working group which is consulted by the MMSSF in the institutional building of Social Services in Romania.

Both GERON and MATCA have signed collaboration protocols with the National Council for Elders and the National Council against Discrimination to work on legislation and strategies for the elders. (Bucharest Progress Report 2005)

As a partner in SEEM II, the Geron Foundation is trying to develop actions involving other country partners and making the project more visible and attractive for the whole of Romanian society.

After the elders exchange visit to Leeds in 2005, Geron has made great efforts to put in practice the experience gained there. In this respect, at least two examples of good practice have been developed in Bucharest.

As one result of the exchange visit, the Greek representative started to spread the information received in Leeds on how to set up common action for the benefit of the Greek community. Geron and one representative of the Greek community had an appointment with the Greek community president to tell them about the experiences made in Leeds and how to organise something similar. Then, a Greek day at Geron was set up. Now, once per week, Greek elders can spend a full day at Geron. They can come in the morning, have breakfast, attend some activities such as playing games, go on excursions, listen to the church service, dance, listen to music, etc. They are assisted by the Geron team and can also join the other Geron elders. The Greek community has to provide transportation, and together they will look out for sponsors. Related to this initiative, Geron held a public launch of a novel that was written by a Greek elder after his wife's death.

Another example of good practice is an agreement between Geron and the General Department of Social Assistance, Sector 4 of Bucharest to organise the project "Grand Parents on Trip around Bucharest". The project offers a bus excursion outside of Bucharest once a fortnight for 20 people. Some come from the Geron seniors club, others from the older people's group of sector 4. The bus and its driver are funded by the mayoralty, Geron takes care of the elders and the snack is provided by sponsors.

There are some other projects to be realised soon:

- ⇒ Together with the "Artists House" organisation, there will be a project in which older people from seniors clubs are invited to take part in theatre assisted by older artists. Again, Geron is going to offer the location for the activity, the show and the social assistance.
- ⇒ The National Council for Older Persons has asked Geron to take part in a debate that aims at improving services for elders. (Bucharest Progress Report 2005)

#### **6.4 The way forward**

To go on pushing the suggestions that have been made during the consultation seminars, Geron will continue to work on several levels, such on governmental and local level and on

the level of organisations. The involvement of minority ethnic elders will be promoted according to the principle “nothing about us without us”. Seminars and discussions with minority ethnic elders will be held more often and the setting up of projects will be supported.

There are agreements with stakeholders from the social and health sector to improve information about services for elders and to collaborate with minority ethnic elders and their organisations.

One of the main barriers for organising services for elders is the absence of locations. Geron aims to organise lobbying campaigns at a local and governmental level and to help local authorities to find funds for building up new services. There is still a long way to go. On October 5<sup>th</sup>, an international seminar in Bucharest will take place on “The elders of tomorrows Europe”. One of the working groups in this seminar will tackle minority ethnic elders’ issues and also the SEEM II project will be presented. Afterwards, an “open letter” will be sent to local politicians including all the SEEM II materials. To inform minority ethnic elders, there will be collaborations with their organisations, magazines and publications. (Bucharest Progress Report 2005)

## **7. Barriers and Recommendations**

### **Barriers**

During SEEM I and II, certain barriers were identified that often stand in the way of developing and providing appropriate services. These include the following:

- ⇒ It is getting harder to get resources and funding as the population profile gets older and social services are stretched beyond capacity to provide for those with the highest needs – often the very oldest. (Leeds)
- ⇒ The complexity of the structures within which the health and local authority services are provided. (Leeds)
- ⇒ Invisibility – which has been challenged by the SEEM II project. In the push to make services simple and accessible to all older people, sometimes the specific needs of black and minority ethnic elders are not made explicit.(Leeds)
- ⇒ Lack of personal, financial and time resources. (Dortmund)
- ⇒ At the moment measures can only be targeted at the largest groups of minority ethnic elders (Turks, Arabs and resettled senior citizens from Russia) (Dortmund)
- ⇒ The greatest barrier is the fact that one needs to collaborate permanently with a great number of partners: the local governments and welfare institutions, the mainstream services and

organisations for older people and of ethnic minorities themselves. For many of them the issue of older people is not a priority. (Gent)

⇒ The local governments, welfare institutions and regular services are often more difficult to convince, since they all have their own agendas, and very often a too limited staff to set off completely new initiatives. (Gent) (Progress Reports Leeds, Dortmund & Gent 2005)

### **Recommendations for other cities**

The following recommendations were given by the SEEM II partners to other cities that wish to become active in the field of service delivery for minority ethnic elders:

“If we were consulting another local authority on how best to proceed, we would say, learn and gather information for yourselves and at the same time seek out and consult and involve your elders and their organisations: LISTEN to your elders. And then also find the resources to create and support new partnerships for delivering services.”

“In order to consult another local authority on how to best push the issue of minority ethnic elders, one needs to think about a lot of things: one has to present good arguments to convince the authorities: figures about the ageing of minority ethnic groups, what are the advantages of adapting services for minority ethnic elders? One has to offer a clear vision and a methodology about how to cope with the problem. Stating the problem is not enough – the local authorities must be offered possible solutions and how to translate them to the daily reality. One has to find good and competent partners in the private sector, people who have a lot of experience in working with minority ethnic communities. They can be members of a minority ethnic organization, or an integration centre, or a neighbourhood centre, or a volunteers' organization... One must have good and competent collaborators with a lot of experience who are able to initiate and coordinate new initiatives, and to promote them in the right way. And, if possible, one must be able to offer some material/financial support (directly or indirectly).”

“Collect information about the population within your area. Spread information and training to staff who meet older immigrants. Document and analyse the special needs requested. Be specific about how this can be developed and established within mainstream activities. Strive to work for integration and avoid segregating organisations.”

## **VI The Way Forward / Recommendations**

As described in more detail above and in the final report of SEEM I, it is not possible to simply transfer solutions from one country to another. This is mostly due to diverging legal and political frameworks.

However, SEEM partners have agreed on general recommendations, which address mainly the local/practical, national, and European level.

## **1. Recommendation for the local/practical level**

### **Understanding the needs of minority ethnic elders**

- ⇒ Are you aware that the number of minority ethnic elders will rise rapidly over the next 10 years?
- ⇒ Do you have detailed, complete and up-to date demographic and needs-related data on minority ethnic elders?
- ⇒ Have you thought about commissioning specific research to find out more about the needs of minority ethnic groups and their elders?
- ⇒ Have you consulted up to date and relevant literature and research institutions which focus on minority ethnic elders and their needs?
- ⇒ Do you take into account that different minority ethnic groups are themselves very diverse and have different needs?
- ⇒ Are you aware that women and men from ethnic minority groups and their elders may require different services?
- ⇒ Do you take into account minority ethnic elders' different expectations and cultural backgrounds when asking them about their needs?

### **Consulting and involving minority ethnic elders and their organisations**

- ⇒ Are you actively encouraging minority ethnic elders to speak for themselves?
- ⇒ Are minority ethnic elders themselves properly consulted and involved in planning and developing their services?
- ⇒ Have you developed mechanisms for regular contact with minority ethnic groups and their organisations?
- ⇒ Is there an umbrella? organisation in place linking minority ethnic organisations at local level?

- ⇒ Are you in contact with other public services such as health, housing or pension services to make sure the needs of minority ethnic elders are met?
- ⇒ Is there a forum in place where elders can express their needs and views on a regular basis?
- ⇒ Do you make sure that their views are communicated to all management levels and departments in your organisation?
- ⇒ Are your consultation processes clearly defined and structured?
- ⇒ Do you have an Action Plan defining aims and strategies to improve health and social care for minority ethnic elders for the next year and more?
- ⇒ Are you informing minority ethnic elders on a regular basis how services have been improved for them because of their contribution?

### **Communication and Information**

- ⇒ Do minority ethnic elders know how to access information about services?
- ⇒ Is information provided in a variety of local community languages, styles and formats?
- ⇒ Do you work together with translators and interpreters so that minority ethnic elders can express their needs in their mother tongue?
- ⇒ Have you identified leaders within the communities themselves (such as religious leaders) who can help to disseminate information about services?
- ⇒ Do you use formal and informal networks and contacts to spread knowledge and encourage people to take up services?
- ⇒ Are you actively trying to get in touch with minority ethnic elders through personal contacts?

### **Service Delivery**

- ⇒ Is there training in place for health and social care staff on the cultures and expectations of minority ethnic elders?

- ⇒ Do you have minority ethnic staff working in your organisation or your team?
- ⇒ Are there clear career paths, development opportunities and additional support for minority ethnic health and social care staff?
- ⇒ Do you actively support and develop minority ethnic voluntary sector organisations, so that they can help plan and deliver services?
- ⇒ Do you consider all minority ethnic groups when planning and delivering services?
- ⇒ Do you deliver appropriate home- based support for minority ethnic elders?
- ⇒ Do you deliver appropriate day care services for minority ethnic elders?
- ⇒ Do you deliver appropriate residential nursing care and respite care for minority ethnic elders?
- ⇒ Have services been confirmed as accessible and appropriate by minority ethnic elders through service-user surveys and questionnaires?

### **Including the specific needs of minority ethnic elders in policy and strategy development**

- ⇒ Are you taking specific measures to improve services for minority ethnic elders at a local level?
- ⇒ Does your policy development process include explicit mechanisms to ensure that gaps in service provision for minority ethnic elders do not arise?
- ⇒ Are the specific needs of minority ethnic elders explicitly included in local planning documents?
- ⇒ Do you actively promote the development of services for minority ethnic elders at all management levels within your organisation?
- ⇒ Are representatives from minority ethnic groups involved in decision-making at local, regional and national level?

### **Evaluation**

- ⇒ Do you regularly evaluate service provision for minority ethnic elders?

- ⇒ Do you take into account the fact that minority ethnic elders might not be used to being asked about their views about services?
- ⇒ Does your organisation set and monitor quality standards to ensure services are sensitive to race, gender and culture?
- ⇒ Is there a clear and accessible complaints procedure in place for minority ethnic elders?

#### Sustainability

- ⇒ Are you aware that developing sustainable services for minority ethnic elders is a long-term task requiring the continuous and active support of all involved parties?
- ⇒ Are you aware that extra resources are needed to ensure that quality services for minority ethnic elders can be developed?

#### Links to other services and agendas

- ⇒ Do you share your good practice with other local authorities, agencies, and providers?
- ⇒ Do you try to influence political institutions to ensure the inclusion of minority ethnic elders in all aspects of civic life?



## **2. Recommendations for the National levels**

### **⇒ Understanding the needs of minority ethnic elders**

A number of research studies from recent years indicate that the number of minority ethnic elders will rise rapidly over the next 10 years in all European Member State and Candidate Countries. However, funded by the European Commission, there is currently only one large comparative research study carried out by the Policy Research Institute for Ageing and Ethnicity (PRIAE) to examine the situation of minority ethnic elders in different countries of the European Union. Further efforts need to be made to get detailed, complete and up-to-date demographic and needs related data for all the Member States of the European Union.

Although a number of research studies already exist at national country levels, more research is needed at local and national level to indicate exact population figures and the structure of the community groups. Specific research needs to be carried out into the life circumstances and needs of very marginalized groups such as older people from the Rroma/Gypsies and travellers communities.

### **⇒ Policy development**

The SEEM partners identified a pressing need for developing a clear policy framework for service development for minority ethnic elders at all levels of governance over the last three years. Policy and strategies address either the ageing, or the racism, or the poverty, but not the combined issues facing minority ethnic elders.

For example the UK's National Action Plan on Social Inclusion 2003 and the Joint Report on Social Inclusion 2003, mention older people, and minority ethnic people, but only as separate groups. Both documents do not make any reference to minority ethnic elders as a specific group who are at risk of social exclusion. In the government's strategic plan "Opportunity for All", specific measures to tackle social exclusion and poverty amongst minority ethnic elders are not included although significant progress in this area has been made by a number of local authorities over the last few years. Further efforts also need to be made to include minority ethnic elders in policies such as the National Framework services of the Department for Health.

In general, it would be helpful if national government provided more funding and encouraged local authorities more to start developing specific services for elders from minority ethnic communities.

The SEEM project would also welcome it if the relevant national ministries published guidelines on how to develop services for minority ethnic elders and took on a stronger role in promoting successful project initiatives, such as the SEEM project, at national level.

### ⇒ **Consulting and involving minority ethnic elders and their organisations**

The SEEM partners have identified a pressing need for local authorities to develop a better relationship with minority ethnic communities and their organisations at local and national level.

For instance, in the UK, the voluntary and community sector plays a very important role in delivering services and bridging the gap between the public sector and the minority ethnic communities. This has to be recognised better and more efforts need to be made to establish a better network between the different organisations dealing with minority ethnic elders at local and national level.

In many of the SEEM partner cities, a forum run by the voluntary sector or the local authority has been developed to encourage minority ethnic elders and their organisations to get more involved in service delivery. It became apparent that this is a good tool to consult minority ethnic elders and to develop new project initiatives.

This should also be more adopted at the national levels.

### ⇒ **Service development**

There are several things an organisation can do to help BME elders to overcome barriers and gain access to services. This includes a more person-centred approach for both patients and service users, provision of information in the person's own language, provision of interpreters, training for health and care professionals in cultural, age and race equality. Further resources are needed to ensure that minority ethnic elders have the same chances to live a healthy and fulfilling life. Successful examples and case studies need to be published by the relevant national ministries to ensure that other local authorities can develop similar projects.

### **3. Recommendations for the European level**

- ⇒ Continue to address the topic of BME elders
- ⇒ Enable further exchanges of good practice between state members
- ⇒ Enable further exchange between academic and research organisations
- ⇒ Enable further exchange between service providers
- ⇒ Commission further international comparative studies
- ⇒ Publish recommendations for member states
- ⇒ Monitor the EU guideline concerning equal opportunities regardless of race or ethnic origin (guideline 2000/43/EC of the Council from 29.6.2000, article 3c)

When setting up a similar international project, the following issues should be taken into consideration:

- ⇒ Of course, there are different minority ethnic groups in every country
- ⇒ Language problems might occur between partners
- ⇒ Minority ethnic elders exchange visits take a long time to prepare (for instance to pick out appropriate elders and organise visas) and it should be recommended that more contingency funding should be set aside
- ⇒ Interpreting is mostly necessary when (minority ethnic) elders are involved and that adds a lot to the time needed for communication and meetings
- ⇒ Minority ethnic elders might need a lot of support if you want to consult them properly
- ⇒ The preconditions of consultation and user involvement differ greatly between member states and some states have more experience than others
- ⇒ Not every model of good practice is transferable because of different social-political and legal circumstances
- ⇒ Progress is very individual and can only be measured against what each city has already done in the field of service delivery for minority ethnic elders
- ⇒ Good partnership work and project management is necessary and takes a lot of time, patience, and good language skills
- ⇒ Political support is quite often missing at local level

⇒ Funding of voluntary work is often a big problem

## **VI Summary of Outcome Evaluation (by Mareike Schmidt, Leeds City Council)**

This section summarises how far the eight objectives of SEEM II have been met.

### **⇒ Objective 1: Combat the isolation of Minority ethnic elders**

Combating the isolation of minority ethnic elders was the main reason for setting up the SEEM project.

Leeds Black Elders Association secured funding for a year at the beginning of 2005 to set up a “Dementia café” for elders suffering from dementia and memory loss. The idea for this project arose from the experience with the SEEM project and increased consultation with service users and service providers. Elders suffering from dementia tend to feel very insecure, anxious, paranoid and frustrated because of their condition which can lead to social isolation. As a result symptoms such as memory loss and other associated mental health problems can get worse. It was therefore important to create a place within the community where they would feel comfortable and at home. In addition to this, it was felt that setting up this new service could help sufferers and their carers to be more open about the condition as the disease is particularly stigmatised within the black community. The dementia café currently takes place on the second Friday of every month and elders are invited to take part in a range of activities such as kite making or dancing to music from the 50s and 60s to improve their memory loss. The club also offers culturally appropriate meals and advice for elders on how to improve their diets as this can help to hold up the course of this degenerative disease. The number of participants attending this club has steadily increased since the start of the project; emphasising the need and importance of such culturally sensitive services within the African Caribbean community in Leeds.

Another example is the involvement of gypsies and travellers in the project work in Leeds. Before the start of the project, the LCC social services department was only in contact with the gypsies and travellers community sporadically. This has changed over the last few months. Through the exchange visits and consultation exercises good links to a gypsies and travellers organisation, called GATE, have been developed. It turned out through a research study that the average age of elders from this community is only 50, in comparison with 68 in Leeds in general. One of the reasons is that gypsies and travellers have poor living conditions and do not have access to health and social care services. It was therefore decided to organise

a project in the field of health promotion to begin with. Funding for this project has already been secured through the health and social services partnership.

One of the problems in Bucharest is that social services have only been developed recently. This means that older people still rely on NGOs providing social and health care services. As a result of the SEEM project, the Bucharest partners can secure funding from the General Department of Social Assistance for leisure activities for minority ethnic elders in sector 4. The project is called “Grand Parents on Trip around Bucharest” and involves visits for example to the Mogosoaia castle, just outside Bucharest. For a lot of the elders it was the first trip outside Bucharest. The Geron foundation also decided to invite representatives from the Greek community to hold a “Greek day” in their premises on the occasion of their monthly “senior club”. Together with social workers, volunteers and students from the Geron Foundation, Greek elders will be invited to take part in leisure activities and attend the church service.

⇒ **Objective 2: Improve the consultation and involvement of minority ethnic elders and their organisations in service development and provision**

The consultation and involvement of minority ethnic elders in the project has been significantly improved. Especially, the minority ethnic elders’ exchanges which were carried out earlier this year gave minority ethnic elders the opportunity to speak for themselves and to contribute to the project. Participants appreciated very much that their problems were taken seriously and became more and more confident about addressing their specific needs. Some of them, such as the Greek or the Rroma elders from Romania are now looking into how services could be improved for their communities in Bucharest. One of the ideas is for instance to build accommodation and a day care centre for Rroma people in Bucharest. One of the participants who came to Leeds earlier this year is currently trying to get funding for this idea. Another example concerns a Moroccan and an Algerian elder from Lille, who are now involved in discussions with the city of Lille about when and how the Areli foyer, a hostel, which is mainly for elders from Algerian, Moroccan and Tunisian origin, will be refurbished or rebuilt.

In Leeds, a minority ethnic focus group was launched in 2004 and further developed in 2005. The aim of this group is to consider and contribute to local plans and proposals for elders in Leeds. The minority ethnic elders focus group, which consists of minority ethnic elders and their organisations had been established at the beginning of the SEEM project and had

assisted with the minority ethnic elders' exchanges. Meetings are currently taking place every eight weeks. New contacts have been established with the Leeds Gypsy and Travellers community. The minority ethnic elders focus group is also involved in the two new project initiatives in Leeds, the Arts exchange project with the West Yorkshire Playhouse and the Health Promotion project with the gypsies and travellers community.

⇒ **Objective 3: Raise the profile of the contribution made by BME elders, and of their needs.**

Lobbying with and for minority ethnic elders and their carers is one of the key issues of the SEEM project. Although the Romanian partners have only a short history of addressing minority ethnic elders' needs, they have already been in contact with a lot of organisations, such as the National Council for Older People, and have raised the issue of minority ethnic elders on several occasions.

The Gent partners have recently organised two meetings encouraging local government and social centres for elders (Openbaar Centrum voor Mmatschappelijk) in Belgium to explicitly consider the issue of service delivery for minority ethnic elders in their activities. The Project Co-ordinator and a representative of Leeds Black Elders Association took part in several meetings of the Leeds City Council Black and Minority Ethnic Strategy Group and ensured that minority ethnic elders were included in strategic documents of the Council. Contacts have been recently established with the housing department in Leeds via a city councillor to look into the high water and electricity costs which have to be paid by gypsies and travellers at one of the camp sites at Cottingley Springs in Leeds.

⇒ **Objective 4: Improve information about, and access, to services.**

Information about services has been improved in various ways. A good example is Leeds Older People's Forum (LOPF), the umbrella organisation of all Leeds voluntary sector organisations working for elders. The LOPF has recently appointed a minority ethnic elders focus group worker to work in particular with minority ethnic organisations and support them in being involved in the planning of services for older people. The Lille partners are currently planning a leaflet summarising health and social care services in their city as it was difficult in the past to get in contact with minority ethnic elders in their city and to convince them that

services such as the older people's homes are open to everybody. Gent is also planning to produce a Turkish-German dictionary modelled on the one that already exists in Dortmund.

⇒ **Objective 5: Sharing good practice in each city, country and across Member States.**

As a result of sharing good practice, new developments have already taken place in the different cities. The Stadt Dortmund for instance is currently establishing a working group to link up voluntary sector organisations working with and for different ethnic minority groups. The aim is to give those organisations a common platform to influence decision - making regarding service provision for minority ethnic groups. The idea for this forum results from visits and discussions with the Leeds team last year where the Older People's Forum (one of the SEEM partners) is already in place.

Another example is the Ville de Lille (VDL) which is currently developing a questionnaire together with the University of Lille on the needs of minority ethnic elders. This research study will take place door-to-door in one of the 10 areas of the city, Faubourg de Bethune. EUR 10000 have been allocated from the VDL's own resources to the University of Lille to undertake this activity. The idea resulted from discussions with the SEEM partners and the exchange visits last year.

The Swedish partners are currently developing a one stop centre for minority ethnic elders together with social welfare and voluntary organisations modelled on the ones they saw in Leeds last year. The aim is to create a place where minority ethnic elders can meet up in a nice environment and get information and advice on health and social care services and leisure activities available to them in Gothenburg. An occupational therapist and a physiotherapist will also be involved in regular information sessions organised by the centre. Funding for this community care centre has already been secured.

⇒ **Objective 6: Support our partner cities, accepting the different structures within we operate**

Partner cities helped each other with project material and information if requested. The Gent partners took a strong role in supporting other partner cities and contacts when writing up all their examples of good practice in detail.



LCC Social Services sent information about how to develop a health and social care leaflet to an organisation in Brussels which could be a potential partner for a follow up project next year.

⇒ **Objective 7: Dissemination of the project and its results in each city, country and across Member States**

The project results have been disseminated in a variety of ways including the SEEM website; flyers sent out across the Member States and the Candidate country Romania; presentations, posters and newspaper articles.

The SEEM website, hosted at <http://www.leeds.gov.uk/seem> has helped disseminate the project's results. It includes documents such as the reports on the exchange visits and the consultation seminars. On the basis of the webpage, new contacts have been made such as with Aktioncourage (DE), or the Forum project (UK). Links to their organisations have recently been included in the SEEM link list on the website. As a result, the organisations from their part, often suggested that they could have a link from their websites to the SEEM website as well (see for instance <http://www.aktioncourage.de/ac/links.htm>).

A couple of newspaper articles about the project have already been published for instance in the LCC Grapevine magazine Leeds Older People's Health and Wellbeing Network or Leeds Social Scene. Articles on the minority ethnic exchange visits for the LCC international Relations office's magazine International Leeds were also produced on a regular basis.

The SEEM project team was asked to contribute to the national report on older people services prepared by the UK's Health Care Commission. The aim of the report is to collate evidence on good practice where organisations have actively and effectively gone out to obtain views of older people, particularly those belonging to minority ethnic groups. Following an interview with the SEEM project team in Leeds, a representative from the Health Care Commission is now producing a case study about the SEEM project for this report.

As a result of the good relationship with BGOP (Better Government for Older People) in London (UK), Leeds City Council was asked to host the "BGOP National Learning Event" focusing on strategic approaches in the local public sector with and for black and minority ethnic older citizens, on the 27<sup>th</sup> September 2005. The SEEM project will be presented at this event and members of the Leeds project board team will chair workshops on themes such as "

Involvement of BME elders in service development” and “The role of the voluntary sector in developing services”. BGOP is also aiming at producing a national checklist for practitioners in the UK and the SEEM checklist will be the basis for this. The event will form part of the Leeds International Day of Older People.

Two photographs, taken by photographer Bukkie Opebiyi and showing minority ethnic elders from Leeds, were recently included in a national exhibition in London under the UK’s presidency of the EU. The photos were taken at the Black Elders ‘Dementia Café’ in Leeds, which was organised as a result of SEEM by Leeds Black Elders’ Association. The pictures show a group of minority ethnic elders socialising and making kites, one of several activities which take place as part of a programme designed to improve confidence and social inclusion within the group. The photographic exhibition, entitled “What has being European done for me?”, is aimed at showcasing the benefits of European integration at an individual level. The original exhibition ran from 2<sup>nd</sup> June to 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2005 at the Sheridan Russell Gallery in London, and plans are in motion to take the collection of photographs on a national tour.

In June 2005, a representative from the university of Dortmund attended the 18<sup>th</sup> World Congress of Gerontology in Brazil in order to give a presentation on European approaches to service delivery for minority ethnic elders, and specifically on the SEEM project. The overall theme of the Congress covered ageing in Brazil and South America, with presentations and seminars on many subjects under this wider theme. Although SEEM did not relate directly to the Congress’ theme of ageing in South America, the speech was well-received and generated much interest, as the role and needs of minority ethnic elders will increase greatly across the world in the coming years.

Dr Vera Gerling is also preparing a comparative chapter about minority ethnic elders in Germany and the UK for a book on comparative studies to be published in autumn 2005 in both countries.

The project co-ordinator from Gent has recently taken on a central role in informing other cities in the Flemish community about the SEEM project and its results. Meetings were held with an organisation dealing with minority ethnic elders in Brussels, called Ovallo, and with the Social Services Department in the province of Antwerp to discuss how projects such as “Becoming older in Flanders” and “Memories” could be established in the respective cities. During the third partners’ meeting, a Belgium TV channel also broadcasted a feature about the SEEM project in one of its programmes.

⇒ **Objective 8: Influence and inform Member state and European level social policy to take full account of BME elders**

Partners have already built up their capacity to influence the next round of the National Action Plans on Social Inclusion (NAPsincl) in 2006. LCC has recently been in contact with the Department for Work and Pensions (UK) to discuss further the input of the SEEM project into the NAPincl 2006. It was suggested by the DWP to organise a workshop with the minority ethnic elders on the NAPsincl using the Get Heard Toolkit developed by the UK's national contact point. As time is pressing regarding the organisation of the final event in Brussels and a couple of other events related to the project work, it was decided not to organise an extra event but to summarise the results of the consultation seminar held with minority ethnic elders in the course of the SEEM project and to ask the minority ethnic elders focus group to comment on this report at the next meeting of the group in early September. Other SEEM partners have also tried to get in contact with their contact point but for most of them this was difficult as no clear consultation process is in place.

A workshop about the SEEM project has recently been held by the SEEM II project team at the European Social Services conference in Edinburgh. The conference addressed how public services in Europe should respond to growing care and health needs in a challenging social and economic environment. The SEEM presentation focused on examples of good practice from the partner cities such as the minority ethnic elders focus group in Leeds (UK) to discuss issues around health and social care for minority ethnic elders or the establishment of a community centre for minority ethnic elders in Gothenburg (Sweden). The Dutch minister for Health showed interest in the project and as a result of his assistance new contacts have been established with an umbrella organisation for minority ethnic elders in the Netherlands.

Discussions are under way with the UK's Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to present a workshop on the SEEM project at the EU Round Table on Social Inclusion in Glasgow from 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> October 2005. Leeds will be also hosting the Eurocities Social Affairs Forum from the 31<sup>st</sup> October-1<sup>st</sup> November 2005 focusing amongst other things on demographic change and immigration.

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