



## NEWS REPORT

<b>Date:</b>	6 October 2010
<b>Expert:</b>	Emmanuelle Bribosia
<b>Title:</b>	Pupils of a primary school being discriminated on the grounds of their origin.
<b>Country:</b>	Belgium
<b>Context</b>	
<b>Issue at stake:</b>	Primary section of a school in Lokeren is classifying its pupils on the grounds of their origin, separating foreign-born and native children.
<b>Ground of discrimination:</b>	Race/ethnic origin.
<b>Source:</b>	Written Press <a href="http://www.rtlinfo.be/info/belgique/societe/738143/une-ecole-de-lokeren-cree-les-classes-en-fonction-des-origines-des-enfants">http://www.rtlinfo.be/info/belgique/societe/738143/une-ecole-de-lokeren-cree-les-classes-en-fonction-des-origines-des-enfants</a> <a href="http://www.lesoir.be/actualite/belgique/2010-09-17/lokeren-le-directeur-d-ecole-se-defend-d-organiser-l-apartheid-793609.php">http://www.lesoir.be/actualite/belgique/2010-09-17/lokeren-le-directeur-d-ecole-se-defend-d-organiser-l-apartheid-793609.php</a> <a href="http://www.lesoir.be/actualite/belgique/2010-09-16/des-eleves-allochtones-separe-des-autochtones-a-lokeren-793520.php">http://www.lesoir.be/actualite/belgique/2010-09-16/des-eleves-allochtones-separe-des-autochtones-a-lokeren-793520.php</a> <a href="http://www.standaard.be/artikel/detail.aspx?artikelid=DMF20100917_033&amp;subsection=3">http://www.standaard.be/artikel/detail.aspx?artikelid=DMF20100917_033&amp;subsection=3</a> <a href="http://www.demorgen.be/dm/nl/989/Binnenland/article/detail/1158523/2010/09/16/Allochtone-kinderen-in-aparte-klassen-in-Lokerse-basisschool.dhtml">http://www.demorgen.be/dm/nl/989/Binnenland/article/detail/1158523/2010/09/16/Allochtone-kinderen-in-aparte-klassen-in-Lokerse-basisschool.dhtml</a>
<b>Field:</b>	Education
<b>Legislative provisions:</b>	Decree of 10 July 2008, establishing a Framework Decree for the Flemish equal opportunities and equal treatment policy ( <i>Decreet houdende een kader voor het Vlaamse gelijkekansen en gelijkebehandelingsbeleid</i> ) <sup>1</sup>

## Content

**Case:** In primary section of the school 'Onze-Lieve-Vrouw' in Lokeren, the school principal has divided pupils into separate classes, classifying them on the grounds of their origin. Indeed, some classes are organised in such a way that foreign-born and native pupils are separated. In particular, amongst the seventeen classes, two of them are exclusively made up of foreign-born pupils.

The school primary section has 70 percent of foreigners, with the result that parents were increasingly taking their children out of the school.

<sup>1</sup> *Moniteur belge*, 23 September 2008, pp. 49410-49424.



Therefore, according to the school principal, the decision of separating foreign-born and native children in some classes was justified to avoid the school becoming a “ghetto”. The number of native pupils would soon be so low in some classes that the school principal found it necessary to bring them together into the same classes, so to make sure that these native pupils have also the possibility to develop friendly relations among themselves

The Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism considers that this is not legal to separate classes and make differential treatment on the grounds of origin. Schools should not answer to parents’ discriminatory expectations. Therefore, according to the Centre, there is prohibited discrimination on the grounds of origin under the Flemish decree on equal opportunities and treatment of 10 July 2008.