



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
JUSTICE FREEDOM AND SECURITY

Minutes of the First Portuguese Advisory Committee Meeting

I. PARTNER COUNTRY: PORTUGAL

DATE: 26 November 2008

LOCATION: Centro Nacional de Apoio ao Imigrante, Rua Álvaro Coutinho, no. 14,
1150-025 Lisboa, Portugal

TOPIC FOR DISCUSSION:

The One-Stop Shop project and the Portuguese Country Report



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Alto Comissariado para a Imigração e Diálogo Intercultural, I. P.

II. PARTICIPANTS & ORGANISATIONS THEY ARE REPRESENTING

- Rosário Farmhouse, High Commissioner for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue (ACIDI, I.P.)
- Bernardo Sousa, Director of ACIDI, I.P.
- Ana Margarida Moura, Legal Advisor, ACIDI, I.P.
- Catarina Reis Oliveira, Head of Unit of Research and International Relations, ACIDI
- Maria Abranches, Researcher author of the OSS Portuguese report
- Heliana Bibas, Representative of the Brazilian community
- Felismina Rosa Mendes, Representative of the Cape Verdean Community
- Galina Leonova, Representative of the Ukrainian Community
- Raisa Machidonschi, Representative of the Moldavian Community
- Rachid Fathi, Representative of Immigrant Associations
- André Costa Jorge, Director of the Jesuit Refugee Service in Portugal
- Francisco Sales Diniz, Representative of NGOs who work to immigrants
- Carlos Alves, Representative of UGT (Trade Union)
- Eugénio Fonseca, Representative of the CARITAS
- Timóteo Macedo, Representative of Anti-discrimination organisations
- Henrique Pietra Torres, Foreign Affairs Ministry
- Manuel Palos, Director of Foreigners and Borders Service, Internal Affairs Ministry
- Maria José Cordeiro, Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity
- Célia Garcia, Representative of the Azorean Regional government
- Gonçalo Santos, Representative of the Madeira Regional government

III. AGENDA OF THE MEETING

- Presentation of the One-Stop Shop project by Catarina Reis Oliveira
- Presentation of the OSS Portuguese Country Report by Maria Abranches
- Questions on the presentation
- Discussion of the One-Stop Shop project

IV. MAIN OUTCOMES AND CONCLUSIONS

The High Commissioner for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue introduced Catarina Reis Oliveira of ACIDI, I.P. and Maria Abranches – author of the Portuguese country report.

Catarina Reis Oliveira explained that the application to coordinate the One-Stop-Shop project followed from the reference to the creation of One-Stop Shops in the Common Agenda for Integration of 2005. The logic of these is to combine a set of services for immigrant integration in one building. She added that, associated with the Common Agenda, there was a *Handbook for policy-makers and practitioners* promoted by the Migration Policy Group, translated into Portuguese and published by ACIDI, I.P. (then ACIME), in which some illustrative examples of ways of achieving immigrant integration were referred to. There is a reference in the Handbook to the National Immigrant Support Centres as an example of a good practice in the context of a One-Stop-Shop, guaranteed to the partnership of different public administration services and the work of socio-cultural mediators. She further mentioned that, bringing together all of these ideas, ACIME made the application involving seven partners from seven different countries, in which it would be seen to what extent it was possible to implement a One-Stop Shop.

Despite the recommendation of the European Commission and the reference in the Handbook for policy-makers, the One-Stop Shop was not defined clearly. Therefore the significance of the INTI Project is to discuss precisely how One-Stop Shops can be implemented at a European Union level. In order to present what is being undertaken by the Project and its developments, she showed the official Project website, www.oss.inti.acidi.gov.pt. She said that the Project approved by the European Commission had the mission of promoting dialogue on how to implement the One-Stop Shop in the various Member States participating: Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, Germany, Ireland and the Netherlands (the later as the final evaluator of the Project). She added that during the course of the project there had been various outcomes, with the final objective of composing a *Handbook on How to implement a One-Stop Shop*, available to all Member-States. This would not necessarily reflect the Portuguese example, but rather the general consensus of the Member-States involved in the Project on what the model of a One-Stop Shop would be.

She said that all of the outcomes are available on the official website, and mentioned that Maria Abranches was the researcher contracted to undertake the Portuguese country report. She informed participants that some examples of good practices were available on the site in relation to service provision to immigrants, some of which approximated examples of One-Stop Shops. She explained that three transnational workshops had taken place on socio-cultural mediators, service provision to immigrants, and partnerships among Government services and civil society, with an examination of the difficulties or the needs of the partner countries in relation to the emergence of One-Stop Shops.

Catarina Oliveira added that the common methodology for all countries involved included setting up Consultative Councils for Immigration Affairs. She emphasised that in Spain and Portugal those councils already exist – the Forum for the Social Integration of Immigrants and the COCAI, respectively. The role of these consultative councils is to examine and approve the Country Report.

Maria Abranches then presented the Country Report for Portugal. The presentation is available on the website in Portuguese.

After the presentation, **Catarina Oliveira** said that each country report was being presented to the respective national consultative council to validate their quality in terms of content that reflects the national reality. She added that the Portuguese context was very much framed within the experience of the CNAI. She emphasised that the assistance required from the COCAI was a critical reading of the report which had been presented, and had been sent to the Councillors. Guidelines were also required, in view of this experience on what a One-Stop Shop is in the abstract sense, something that does not necessarily need to be framed within the CNAI experience. She mentioned the final conference of the Project, and the launching of the Handbook.

Councillor Timóteo Macedo said that things had changed, they were not exactly like that. He questioned the analysis of the functioning of the CNAI and in reference to good practices, that referred to Governmental organisations, but associations must also be listened to. He said that they did not have any role but to serve, and questioned whether good practices only existed at the level of the CNAI, the Foreigners and Borders Service, and other agencies. He said good practices should be included from the daily lives of many people and associations. Nevertheless, he said that it was a very complete study.

The **High Commissioner** explained that the Country Report was based on Government policies, and that the COCAI could enrich the study. The purpose was not to collect all the good practices of the associations but to convince the Governments of Member-States to implement good practices.

Catarina Oliveira said that the methodology was very much associated with the European Commission's recommendations in the Common Agenda. She said that a fundamental aspect of the model was Government working in partnership with civil society, as happens in Portugal and Spain. She said she would appreciate if Councillor Timóteo Macedo could provide advice on how to improve the Portuguese country report and the Handbook.

Councillor Timóteo Macedo said that the problem was the implementation of European projects at a local level. Though he was not against them, he said they had limitations. He said that associations were not listened to.

Catarina Oliveira explained that this was exactly why all Member-States had been required to establish a Consultative Committee. She mentioned as an example the difficulties of State-third-sector partnership in Greece. She said she would appreciate if they could provide arguments to counter trends in other Member-States, reinforcing the idea of the fundamental role of civil society in immigrant integration policy.

Councillor André Jorge said that as director of the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) in Portugal he had taken part in a workshop in Berlin and he could confirm that the One-Stop Shop example in Portugal was a reference point in integration at a European level, even at meetings of the various JRSs. He said that there was much that could be improved, such as the issue of the roles of the mediators, of the Associations, of the COCAI itself as a space for debate and not as the “final signature on something that is a *fait accompli*”.

Councillor Eugénio Fonseca said that he agreed with the previous comment, as he frequently received foreign delegations, who compared the Portuguese situation favourably with that of their own countries in migration policies. He questioned what exactly was required from the COCAI.

Bernardo Sousa further explained the functioning of the INTI programme and the background to the Project. He mentioned that Portugal was already ahead in relation to the project, as the CNAI (the Portuguese One-Stop Shop) was in place, with both good and bad aspects. He invited the Councillors to present recommendations on the contribution of the Portuguese experience, in the implementation of these centres as a good practice in all 27 EU Member-States.

The **High Commissioner** said that essentially, they were requested to send suggestions on the One-Stop Shop model by 15 December.

Councillor Felismina Rosa Mendes said that the Council was not aware of the application at the time that it was lodged. She recognised that such work was valuable for immigrants, but every time a new support office was created at the CNAI, she thought it a sign that something was not working in the outside world. She said the idea should be the opposite – all public agencies should function like the CNAI. She saw the CNAI as a positive investment, but as a positive ghetto, as legally regular immigrants were supposed to have the same rights as the Portuguese. She questioned how far the extension of the CNAI services would go.

The **High Commissioner** said that the ideal would be for everyone to have access everywhere, but that compared to what was there before, and compared to other countries that do not have a CNAI, it was of significance. In relation to the Council's lack of awareness of the application, she said that applying did not mean it would be approved, but more attention would be paid in the future.