



ONE STOP-SHOP: **A NEW ANSWER FOR IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION**

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MINUTES OF THE EXTRA STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

I. DATE: Thursday, 8 January 2009

HOSTED BY: ACIDI, I.P.

LOCATION: ACIDI, I.P., Rua dos Anjos no. 66, Lisbon – Portugal.

II. PARTICIPANTS:

- Catarina Reis Oliveira, ACIDI, I.P., Lisbon – Portugal, Project Coordinator
- Maria Miguel Santos Silva, ACIDI, I.P., Financial Coordinator
- Marisa Horta, Director of the National Immigrant Support Centre in Lisbon (the Lisbon One-Stop Shop)
- Maria Abranches, International Organization for Migration (IOM) - Lisbon Mission, Portugal & Country Researcher for Portugal
- Fidele Mutwarasibo, Immigrant Council of Ireland, Dublin – Ireland
- Susanne Schwalgin, Netzwerk Migration in Europa, e. V. - Germany
- Glória Carroccio, Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies, Rome – Italy
- Claudio Canetri, Ministry of Labour Health and Social Policies, Rome, and President of the Italian Advisory Committee
- Theodoros Katsas, Hellenic Migration Policy Institute (IMEPO), Athens – Greece
- Rinus Penninx, IMES – The Netherlands



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III. MAIN ACTIVITIES:

1. Final Discussion of the draft version of the *Handbook on How to Implement a One-Stop Shop* and approval by the partner countries of the final text to be published, chaired by Catarina Reis Oliveira.
2. Evaluation of the project “One-Stop Shop: A New Answer for Immigrant Integration” in view of the project deliverables, by Prof. Rinus Penninx.
3. Planning Final Conference in Lisbon on 6 February 2009.
4. Account management of the Project.

IV. MAIN OUTCOMES:

1. The participants introduced themselves to Prof. Rinus Penninx, and his role as evaluator was explained.

The final draft of the *Handbook on How to Implement a One-Stop-Shop* was presented by Catarina Reis Oliveira.

The Introduction to the *Handbook* provides a definition of the One-Stop-Shop, with boxes on citizens’ service centres. Fidele Mutwarasibo promised to send an information box on Peterborough. Susanne Schwalgin raised the issue of users as national or naturalised citizens. Rainer Ohliger’s diagram was discussed and the Steering Committee agreed to omit it. The definition of users of the One-Stop-Shop is to be as broad as possible.

The challenges in the implementation of One-Stop-Shops were further debated. Partnership with civil society organisations was considered a difficulty in Greece. Fidele Mutwarasibo raised the issue of the international economic crisis in relation to the feasibility of implementation. Susanne Schwalgin discussed mainstreaming integration services, from a coherent and cross-cutting approach, with staff diversity competences. This links in with Spanish policies. Citizens’ Information Centres in Ireland were mentioned as mainstream services with a high number of immigrants as users.

There is a variety in immigration experiences and in the composition of the immigrant population, but there are common problems and a common approach. Partnership between Government and immigrant associations in Greece is considered problematic due to fragmentation, as pointed out by Theodoros Katsas. Prof. Rinus Penninx suggested that the word “partnership” in relation to relationships among Government



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services should be replaced by “cooperation” or “coordination”. This coordination reduces bureaucracy.

The section on cost efficiency was approved. Accessibility was considered a challenge, but cultural mediators are part of the solution. Examples of partnership and coordination were approved. Prof. Rinus Penninx stressed the importance of the examples where practices were implemented. Catarina Oliveira also mentioned the need to refer to other countries apart from the partner countries. Prof. Penninx mentioned the various challenges in integration in various countries and the need to define practical and realistic goals. Catarina Oliveira mentioned the *City Mondial* initiative in The Hague.

In relation to mediation, the *Handbook* describes who the cultural mediators are. Theodoros Katsas had a question in relation to the term “sustainability” and the issue of mediation not being a recognised profession. In Germany immigrants are involved at a local level, as an example of affirmative action. In fact cultural mediation facilitates the mainstreaming of Government services. There is a lot of expertise at a local level.

In relation to Government services, contact with institutions that renew visas is essential, so the word “police” was omitted from “Immigration Police Service”. The services are for newcomers and others, such as naturalisation and political integration in the form of voter registration. The One-Stop-Shop does not have a fixed range of services, but perhaps it could be said to represent the failure of specific Government services to provide their service to immigrants. It was suggested that housing be included within Government services as this is the case in Northern European welfare states.

In relation to accessibility, the issue was raised of provision of services to immigrants living outside the major cities. Virtual OSS, touchscreens and phonelines were suggested as complementary strategies. This section was approved.

The section on economic aspects was also approved, with an enhanced emphasis on optimising funds and an extra paragraph on the consolidation of existing services. There are recognised limitations to this chapter as exact costs cannot be provided.

2. Prof. Rinus Penninx presented his proposal for the main steps in his evaluation. The task is to evaluate the project as a whole, and the main project outcomes (including the handbook), based on Fischer’s methodology of evaluation at different levels. The direct evaluation is a question of whether the project organisers and partners did what they promised to do, and his answer was yes.

At a second level, the project must be seen as part of a context, in view of the content and of how its procedures have been influenced by non-explicit factors. In each country, initiatives like the OSS were identified, and the feasibility of implementation was discussed at the AC meetings. This is a hybrid project, as it involved both



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empirical elements and mobilising stakeholders. The heterogeneity of the partners and of the countries represented had implications for the work. Germany was the only country with a longer tradition of immigration. This has implications for the target groups.

The project presents a different approach due to the fact that the partners are not all academics, which means that the *Handbook* represents a policy document rather than a research document. The *Handbook* provides concrete examples and a legitimisation of the implementation of the OSS within the European policy context. In essence, the OSS is a simple strategic tool, while on the other hand it is based on a number of principles arrived at through political consensus.

Prof. Penninx then posed the question of what this exercise means in the wider political context. The project discussions focused on what would be acceptable for policy-makers. Some policy-makers will look only at the boxes in the *Handbook*. One weakness he mentioned was the lack of analysis of what happens when the OSS or other practices are implemented.

The project involved long discussions about mainstreaming vs. targeting, and on Governments' relationships with non-Governmental organisations. Germany has a strong tradition of civil society involvement in integration. There were various constraints to the project, but the work done is very relevant.

There are different layers of Government in different countries. For example, in Spain, the OSS could not work at a national level because of the devolution of integration competences. It would be impossible to present a blueprint for the implementation of the OSS, but this is a good and worthwhile project. There is a need for political will for implementation.

Prof. Penninx commented that he would like to see more on the process of integration service provision to undocumented immigrants, as happens in the OSSs in Portugal. He emphasised the benefits of attending this discussion as an evaluator. Claudio Canetri agreed with the Professor's comments. Claire Healy asked whether the *Handbook* would be considered useful in Northwestern Europe. Prof. Penninx responded that there would be particular interest at a local level, and he mentioned the CLIP project at city level. The *Handbook* should be inspiring rather than a prescription, particularly as the examples provided in the boxes cannot be transplanted. The *Handbook* provides space for readers to interpret it also at a local level. Prof. Penninx had high expectations in relation to the local level.

Fidele Mutwarasibo stressed the benefits of the establishment of the national Advisory Committees. At the national Advisory Committee in Ireland, civil servants showed great interest in the project.

Prof. Penninx will contact the partners directly should he require any further information.



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3. The Final Conference of the project will take place on 6 February 2009. Catarina Oliveira presented the draft programme of the Conference. The afternoon before there will be a visit to the Portuguese One-Stop-Shop. The morning session will involve the coordinators of each partner country making 10-minute presentations. The partners need to confirm who will speak from each organisation.

There will be a panel on the “One-Stop Shop for the European Commission – Common approaches to integration?” This will involve Prof. Penninx’s evaluation, and a presentation by Jan Niessen of the Migration Policy Group. It will also involve someone from IOM headquarters and from the European Commission. António Vitorino will be invited to moderate. This will be followed by lunch.

In the afternoon, the *Handbook* will be launched by the Portuguese High Commissioner for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue. This will be followed by a final session with invited ministers and Director Generals from several Member States, invited by the Portuguese minister. It was suggested that immigrant representatives should also take part in the conference.

Each partner can bring three people – one project coordinator and two members of the Advisory Committee. Catarina Oliveira requested an email with the name of the partner representative and the two Advisory Committee members who will attend the conference. All National Contact Points on integration will also be invited, together with all official Portuguese immigrant associations, all members of the Consultative Council for Immigration Affairs, the partners at the CNAI, the members of the Commission for Equality and Against Racial Discrimination, and the network of researchers linked to the Portuguese Immigration Observatory.