



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



HANDBOOK ON HOW TO IMPLEMENT A ONE-STOP-SHOP FOR IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

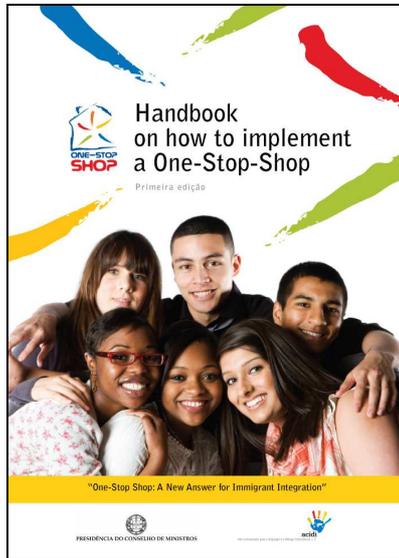
By Catarina Reis Oliveira (ACIDI, I.P.), Maria Abranches (IOM – Mission in Portugal) and Claire Healy (ACIDI, I.P.)

With a Preface by Jan Niessen

ISBN 978-989-8000-76-7

This Handbook has been funded by the European Commission INTI Fund (Directorate-General Justice, Freedom and Security) and promoted by the Portuguese High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue (ACIDI, I.P.).

The Handbook can be downloaded from the project website www.oss.inti.acidi.gov.pt. The Handbook is available to download in English, Portuguese, German, Greek, Italian and Spanish. To request a hardcopy of the book in English, please send an email to oss@acidi.gov.pt



SUMMARY

According to the most recent estimates, the population of third-country nationals residing in European Union countries is around 18.5 million, corresponding to 3.8% of the total population. Hence the management of the integration of immigrants in the European Union is one of the most challenging responsibilities that most Member States are facing today. Both countries with longer histories of immigration and countries that are experiencing immigration flows for the first time are being confronted with the need to define sustainable integration policies.

The European Commission, also aiming to achieve this goal, has been supporting the Member States in formulating integration policy by developing common approaches for the integration of immigrants and in promoting the exchange of best practices. Among the most relevant recent developments in this area are the *Common Basic Principles on Integration*, the general framework for the integration of third-country nationals in the European Union adopted through the Commission Communication *A Common Agenda for Integration*, the *Annual Reports on Migration and Integration*, and the two editions of the *Handbook on Integration for policy-makers and practitioners*. Additionally, in 2008, the Council of the European Union adopted the *European Pact on Immigration and Asylum* and the European Ministerial Conference on Integration approved the *Vichy Declaration*.

These EU documents concur in recommending a coherent, whole-of-government approach to integration, and working in partnership with immigrant communities.

Integration is seen as a process of mutual accommodation, where the receiving society as well as the immigrants take part in the adaptation required.

In addition, the *Common Agenda for Integration* - the European Commission's first response to the recommendation of the European Council to establish a coherent European framework for integration - proposes concrete measures and encourages Member States to strengthen their efforts in developing integration strategies (COM (2005) 389 final). In relation to the sixth Common Basic Principle in the *Common Agenda*, dealing with access for immigrants to institutions and services with a view to facilitating the integration process, actions are recommended that correspond to the overall characteristics of One-Stop-Shops - stimulating partnerships between public and private institutions in order to promote integrated responses -, and to its specificities - involving cultural mediators from civil society institutions and developing the intercultural competences of service providers.

In response to these recommendations, this Handbook presents the One-Stop-Shop service as an approach for immigrant integration. As is comprehensively and clearly described in the Handbook, this approach represents an essential tool in successfully managing integration to realise the full benefits of immigration, specifically in relation to service provision to immigrants. The One-Stop Shop is a contribution to ensuring that integration is a two-way process, where the receiving society actively engages in adaptation.

The *European Pact on Immigration and Asylum* invites Member States to establish ambitious policies to promote harmonious integration based on a balance between immigrants' rights and duties (13189/08 ASIM 68: 6). Consequently, the One-Stop-Shop approach is presented as an ambitious and yet realistic proposal for providing services to immigrants, improving integration and providing more and better information on the rights and duties of immigrants in EU Member States.

As is fully described in the Handbook, the One-Stop-Shop service is a policy that approaches integration from the perspective of the adaptation of the receiving society and the services that it provides, combined with a consultative and cooperative process working with immigrants, to further the integration of both immigrants and the receiving society. It thereby meets the two-way challenge of integration in a sensible and flexible way.

The Handbook is composed of six chapters. The Introduction defines a One-Stop-Shop, outlines the benefits of its implementation and sets out the prerequisites and necessary steps for its creation. It further addresses potential challenges to the creation of a One-Stop-Shop, in order to provide a realistic guide. Subsequent chapters deal with the fundamental pillars of a One-Stop-Shop service: partnership and coordination in the designing and provision of services (Chapter 2); mediation by immigrant communities (Chapter 3); services provided (Chapter 4); and issues relating to accessibility (Chapter 5). The final chapter relates to economic and public finance aspects in terms of the human and material resources that are needed for the implementation of One-Stop-Shops in Member States (Chapter 6).