

One-Stop-Shop: A New Answer for Immigrant Integration

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International Organization for Migration

Immigration/ integration background

- ☐ Integration is a recent topic in most countries (Greece, Ireland, Italy, Spain and Portugal).
- ☐ Germany presents the longest history of immigration – integration has been a primary social and political subject over the last 15 to 20 years.
- ☐ Italy follows Germany in what concerns immigration history.
- ☐ Greece, Spain, Ireland and Portugal have experienced the first major influxes after the 1990s.
- ☐ More significant developments after the year 2000 in Spain, Ireland and Portugal.

Immigrant population

☐ Weight of total immigrant population:

Portugal – 4%

Italy – 6%

Greece – 7%

Spain – 8%

Germany – 8%

Ireland – 11.5%

☐ Weight of non-EU citizens:

(Between 3% and 5%)

Some specificities

- ☐ **Greece** (more than 55% represent one single group – Albanian citizens).
- ☐ **Portugal and Ireland** (both main nationalities come from Portuguese and English Speaking countries, respectively) – more noteworthy for the Portuguese case, since 6 out of the 10 main nationalities correspond to Portuguese-Speaking countries.

Territorial settings

Effects on immigration and integration Policies:

- ☐ Greece, Portugal and Ireland – national level oriented.
- ☐ Germany, Italy and Spain – non-centralized states.

Integration Policies and Services

- ☐ Most countries have or are developing integration plans.
- ☐ Anti-discrimination measures are established by law in all countries.
- ☐ Often state integration services are provided at local level (city councils): information and counseling.
- ☐ Health, education and language are considered primary integration areas in most countries.
- ☐ Integration services in many areas are covered mostly by Non-Governmental Organizations.
- ☐ Regarding nationality, *jus sanguinis* is the predominant principle, though a number of reforms in each country's legislation is introducing some *jus solis* elements.

Joined-up Government and Partnerships

- ❑ Experiences of **governmental partnerships** in most countries:
Committees/ Councils targeting the immigrant population
whether locally (regionally) or at national level:

E.g.: Greece (National Committee for the Social Integration of Migrants); Italy (Territorial Immigrant Councils); Portugal (Advisory Council for Immigration Affairs), Spain: Forum for the Social Integration of Immigrants

Cultural mediators

- ❑ Experiences with **cultural mediators** exist in all countries as well, though a lack of legal framework is lacking.

Immigrant experiences with services

1. Services dispersion:

- ☐ Integration services are spread out among various Government departments and NGOs.
- ☐ Strong division between Public Administration offices and NGOs or volunteer organizations.
- ☐ Need for a stronger cooperation and coordination among the existing integration services providers in general.

2. Costs:

- ☐ The high cost (both financial and time consuming) of integration services is increased by dispersion of services.
- ☐ NGOs provide a wide range of integration services with very limited funds, which renders their resources limited.
- ☐ Local public services often also provide integration services with short budgets.

Cost-saving aspects of the implementation of the OSS:

A One-Stop-Shop can ease pressure on mainstream services and provide for better pooling of resources and information between organisations with expertise in the area. Cultural mediators can also help to reduce the State's often high interpretation costs.

3. Complexity of procedures and incoherence in provision of information:

- ☐ Difficulties in information provision – need to bridge the information gap between services and immigrants.
- ☐ Need for better coordination and rapid exchange of information between services.
- ☐ Importance of sharing of expertise and best practices.
- ☐ Need for simplification and acceleration of administrative procedures:

(time and money consuming procedures could be ameliorated by the use of IT in public administration, better communication among government services and reinforcement of the role of civil society organizations and migrant associations).

Quality improvement aspects of the implementation of the OSS:

1. It can contribute to bureaucracy reduction and to minimising the difficulties of coordination between different stakeholders (which renders services inefficient and expensive).
2. The OSS can contribute to improving coherence in service provision and reduce waiting times.
3. A holistic, comprehensive model such as the “one-stop-shop” contributes to improve efficiency in coordinating different actions and services.

Contributions of the OSS for the relationship between State, Society and Migrants:

1. Since contradictory and insufficient information can increase immigrants' distrust towards the receiving State and its services, the One-Stop-Shop will contribute to minimising this distrust.
2. The One-Stop-Shop should serve to enhance a climate of cooperation and consultation between all stakeholders: Government, immigrants, immigrant-led associations, NGOs, employers, trade unions and the public.

Areas to be taken into consideration for the OSS implementation

- ☐ Information and advisory services regarding the different procedures
- ☐ Health sector
- ☐ Specific advice on housing and childcare
- ☐ Information has to be provided in many languages (need to identify the most important languages)

Difficulties and worries concerning the implementation of a OSS

- ☐ Obtaining funding for its implementation.
- ☐ Highly diversified structure of Governmental and non-Governmental immigration and integration organisations.
- ☐ Competing interests.
- ☐ The inexistence of a single Government authority that deals with immigration and integration makes it difficult to combine the different sectors and address all procedures related to immigrants at a single point.
- ☐ In decentralised States the coordination of services becomes more difficult.

Difficulties and worries concerning the implementation of a OSS

- ☐ There is a fragmentation of nationalities among immigrants in some countries and their distribution throughout the territory is widespread.
- ☐ Accessibility – one or two central offices is not the proper response in terms of providing immigrants with easy access, since different cities have different levels of accessibility and transportation infrastructure.
- ☐ Risk that it is seen as positive discrimination of immigrants – may bring about rejection of the idea by the general population.

Suggestions and recommendations for OSS implementation

- ☐ Make clear, through written and enforced legislation, the duties and responsibilities of the different sectors of Government, in order to reduce the spread of erroneous or partial information.
- ☐ At a first stage, the OSS could have the role of intermediary in immigrants' access to services, instead of providing all services on the same premises – initial implementation on a pilot basis of integrated information and advisory services.

Suggestions and recommendations for OSS implementation

- ☐ Add new resources to already existing services (e.g.: cultural mediator), developing some already existing agencies (namely local Government agencies) towards a One-Stop-Shop as a first step.
- ☐ Creation of the OSS in a central accessible location vs creation of further OSSs in different regions, in order to decentralise services, with economic support to local authorities for material and human resources (particularly in rural or geographically isolated areas).
- ☐ Use technology to improve a strong virtual connection and cooperation between different offices, as well as a user-friendly interface between immigrants and the Government.

Suggestions and recommendations for OSS implementation

- ☐ Use of a common database by integration services.
- ☐ Create a standardised professional profile of cultural mediators.
- ☐ Create a central budget for the activities of immigrant organisations.
- ☐ Importance of partnerships with NGOs and use of cultural mediators or translators (use of trained cultural mediators to provide ongoing training on cultural competence to service providers).
- ☐ General public services should also adapt to the specificities of a multicultural population.