



# ***ONE-STOP SHOP***

## **A NEW ANSWER FOR IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION**

**JLS/2006/INTI/148**

### **MINUTES OF THE SECOND TRANSNATIONAL WORKSHOP**

**I. DATE:** Friday, 6 June 2008

**LOCATION:** Titiana Hotel, Panepistimiou 52, Athens 106 78, Greece

**ORGANISER:** Hellenic Migration Policy Institute (IMEPO) – Greek Partner.

**II. PARTICIPANTS:**

- Catarina Reis Oliveira, ACIDI, I.P., Lisbon – Portugal, Project Coordinator
- Maria Miguel Santos Silva, ACIDI, I.P., Lisbon – Portugal, Financial Coordinator
- Marisa Horta, ACIDI, I.P., Director of the National Immigrant Support Centre, Lisbon
- Claire Healy, ACIDI, I.P., Lisbon & Country Researcher for Ireland
- Maria Abranches, International Organization for Migration (IOM) - Lisbon Mission, Portugal & Country Researcher for Portugal
- Brian Killoran, Immigrant Council of Ireland, Director of the Information and Support Service
- Kirsten Fjoser, Immigrant Council of Ireland, Communications Officer
- Diane Nurse, Health Service Executive, Ireland



- Miguel Ángel Gil, Dirección General de Integración de los Inmigrantes, Madrid - Spain
- Gloria Pérez Arredondo, Country Researcher for Spain
- Emiliana Vicente González, Coordinator of Integration Services, Municipality of Alcorcón, Madrid, Spain
- Carmen Roncal Varga, Municipality of Alcorcón, Madrid, Spain
- Glória Carroccio, Ministry of Labour, Health, Social Policies, Rome - Italy
- Alessia Montuori, IPRS, Rome - Country Researcher for Italy
- Raffaella Di Palma, Ministry of Health – NIHMP (Italy)
- Triantafyllia Avramid, Hellenic Migration Policy Institute (IMEPO), Athens – Greece
- Zoi Balomenou, IMEPO
- Theodoros Katsas, IMEPO
- Aspa Plakantonaki, IMEPO
- George Mavrommatis, IMEPO
- Dimitris Parsanoglou, IMEPO
- Toulia Tranaka, Municipality of Athens
- George Nerantzis, Ministry of Employment and Social Protection (Greece)
- Vassiliki Sfyri, Society of Volunteers Against Cancer (Greek NGO)
- Katerina Kondouli, Ministry of Interior (Greece)
- Konstantina Demenika, Greek Council for Refugees
- Lazaros Petromelidis, Greek Council for Refugees

### **III. MAIN ACTIVITIES:**

1. Presentations on the theme of “Integrated Service Provision to Immigrants: Examples of One-Stop Shops in Europe”.
2. Questions and discussion on theme of One-Stop Shop models.

### **IV. MAIN OUTCOMES:**

#### **1. PRESENTATIONS BY ONE-STOP SHOP MODELS**

Chaired by Zoi Balomenou, IMEPO

#### **Marisa Horta, Director of the CNAI in Lisbon, Portugal:**

The High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue (ACIDI) was initially created in 1996, with alterations in 2002 and 2007, as an inter-departmental Government



support structure on the subject of integration. The 2007 law transformed ACIDI into a Public Institute (IP). The CNAI project resulted from the lived reality of immigrants in 2002 – dispersion of services, little coordination and inadequacy, but also from the success of the Citizens' Shops, and the specificity of immigrants' problems. The Lisbon CNAI was opened in March 2004 and the Porto CNAI in April 2004.

The objectives of the CNAI are to provide an integrated response to immigrants' problems, with a real partnership, information-sharing and services in the same place. The CNAI also aims to be attentive to innovation and very flexible, with a total focus on the needs of immigrants in terms of organisation, choice of agencies, creation of multicultural teams, reduction in waiting times and the creation of a pleasant and human space. Proximity to the service-users is guaranteed by socio-cultural mediators representing ten different nationalities, with language skills, cultural proximity and an understanding of problems.

The Government agencies at the CNAI are: the Ministry of the Interior – Foreigners and Borders Service; Ministry of Employment and Social Solidarity – Working Conditions Authority and Social Security; Ministry of Education; Ministry of Health; and Ministry of Justice – Central Registry Office. Support Offices provided by ACIDI are: the Immigrant Legal Support Office, the Family Reunification Support Office, the Employment Support Office – Job Centre and Entrepreneurship, Social Support Office, Housing Support Office and Nationality Support Office. A children's room, pre-sorting service and information counter are also provided. From 8am, the socio-cultural mediators conduct pre-sorting and distribute the first service ticket. The Welcoming and Sorting Office is the first step inside CNAI, where a digital casefile is created, and the clients receive another service ticket, according to their issue.

The added value for clients is the integration of services, response to a large number of questions, and a personalised service. For Government agencies, the benefits include speeding up processes and mutual support, circulation of information, sharing of worries and a common working atmosphere. In 2005, the CNAI had 301,011 visits, while in 2007 this dropped to 270,212. The external IOM evaluation of the CNAI in 2006 was positive in terms of opening hours, organisation and cleanliness, degree of satisfaction in relation to kindness and the relationship of the mediators with the clients. CNAI represents one mission – to serve people, improving their lives, simplifying bureaucracy and ensuring integration; and one team – who are motivated, available, hard-working, professional, creative and multicultural. The CNAI therefore provides hope, reunites parents and children, motivates, is welcoming and professional, and receives the whole world at the workplace. For all of these reasons, it received national recognition in serving clients and international recognition as a best practice in the EU in 2005.



### **Carmen Roncal, Municipality of Alcorcón, Madrid, Spain:**

This presentation was based on the activities of the Alcorcón local council in Madrid, entitled “Citizenship and Coexistence”. The Integration Funds of the Directorate General for Immigrant Integration are channelled through local councils. Alcorcón has a project called “Reception, Mediation and Interpretation (RMI)”, which is a specific process. Alcorcón has 178,000 inhabitants, of whom 14% are immigrants. The programme is within the 2007-11 Alcorcón Plan for Citizenship and Coexistence II, within the reference framework of the 2007-11 Strategic Plan for Citizenship and Integration of the Ministry for Labour and Immigration. It works according to the “normalisation” principle of natives and immigrants. There are ten cross-cutting areas for both natives and immigrants. The aim of the RMI is to standardise demands, and it provides a personalised integration itinerary. Users access the service through local services and referral, just like natives. Users are entered into the social system database, with details on their social history and resources. Once the integration goal is achieved, the project ends.

The council also runs the “PAS” (Participation, Partnerships, Raising Awareness) project for the native community, the intention of which is to normalise the process and not create segregation. The Municipality Volunteer Programme is also run within this. A Local Immigration Observatory analyses cultural coexistence and updates the Resource Guide.

**Discussion:** Local funding is considered positive in this context, particularly as Spain is a decentralised country. Legal frameworks in Spain allow access for undocumented migrants to some rights if they are registered in local town council registers.

### **Stamatoula Tranaka, Municipality of Athens, Greece:**

The Municipality operates an intercultural centre. Immigration has been significant in Greece since 1990. Three legalisation processes in 1998, 2001 and 2005. It has now become a permanent reality. Gradual integration was foreseen in the 2005 law on entry, stay and employment. A holistic programme for social integration is run by the municipality, introduced by a 2005 law. 2006 Municipality and Community Code regulated the competences of local authorities for integration. In 2007, the City of Athens had a population of 702,889, with a decrease in the local population, but an increase in the migrant population to 20% of the overall population (140,000 migrants). In 2006, 94,000 applications for residence were received, 46% of which were from women, mostly Albanian, Romanian and Bulgarian. There were more Albanian men, but more Romanian and Bulgarian women, and a very high number of migrant children in schools.

The migration policy for the city of Athens includes the development of targeted social integration actions and the continuous upgrading of services, aiming at the harmonious coexistence of all citizens of Athens (native and migrant), within the framework of a multicultural society. A new organisation, the Migrant Directorate, developed from the Foreigners Service Centre – which itself developed from the legalisation process. The Migrant Directorate involves administration, an archive and social care. Migrants have



access to mainstream social and welfare programmes. Migrants can use the Service Centre for Migrants and mainstream services. They have access to cultural activities and radio services, as well as a phoneline that serves all Athens immigrants. There are services focusing on natives as well. Specific actions include “Mum Learns Greek” at schools. Services are only provided to legal migrants. The programme is being expanded.

The Athens Council of Migrants will promote active participation and identify issues of concern, to be created in September 2008. The Athens Charter of Rights for the Integration of Migrants is also to be prepared before the end of 2008. A Multicultural Centre, also to be established in September 2008, will provide information, advice, and language and computer courses, together with multicultural workshops and multilingual leaflets.

**Discussion:** The Ministry of the Interior is responsible for the social inclusion of migrants, though the Department of Social Inclusion, established in 2005. There has been an effort to record good practices and actions taken by all agents in the country. An integrated action programme refers to six sectors – health, employment, education, justice, hospitality and culture. This also refers to third-country nationals. Funding comes from the central budget, the European Social Fund and the European Integration Fund. This mechanism is already under way. The programme has been submitted to the European Commission, and all actions are to be completed between 2008 and 2013. The programme is individualised for every year, and includes “pre-travel measures” and other actions.

What is the role of the municipality in the process of regularisation? The municipality simply implements policies. What examples of migrant councils exist in the partner countries? In Spain there is the Forum for Immigrant Integration, while in Portugal there is the Consultative Council for Immigration Affairs.

### **Konstantina Demenika and Lazaros Petromelidis, Director of the Greek Council for Refugees:**

The GCR is the main NGO in the field in Greece, supporting integration through the provision of social and legal services. The GCR has access to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs archives and is the UNHCR representative and the Human Rights Council. The Council provides various services to refugees, integrated into specialist services – social, labour market, rights (for asylum-seekers), intercultural mediators, assistance with citizenship applications. A relationship of trust is established. There is a legal department for asylum and integration. The GCR is also involved in projects at borders, in camps, issuing reports and attending conferences. The integration department provides advice on process and court cases, eg in labour/civil law or citizenship. The Council is also involved in crisis intervention and state mechanisms for asylum-seekers, health programmes and other social services, also with the wider society, all coordinated by the central department.



Labour market integration relates to work permits, social and psychological support, career guidance, Greek language, preparation of CVs, etc. Social integration for adults and children, intercultural events, a rehabilitation project and hostel and housing for people with psychological problems are provided. The GCR participates in EU projects.

Mr. Petromelidis: There are similarities between the OSS model and how the GCR operates. It started as a small service, but needs increased at the end of the 1990s. The Council does not offer health services or housing. It cannot issue public documents but can recommend policies. Funds are provided by the European Commission. Fundraising has not improved but the GCR could have a relationship with public services, as it cannot in itself be an OSS – this should be provided by the local Government. The most important issue is the relationship of citizens with the local authorities. Not all municipalities have translators, but the GCR can cooperate on this. The ideal solution in Greece would be local authorities operating an OSS in partnership with the GCR and other agencies. The GCR does have a relationship with the local municipality.

**Discussion:** In 2007 there were 25,000 asylum applications, partly because of the restrictive immigration law. After 2005, all immigration has been undocumented. The GCR is privately funded to 20% and the EU provides the other 80%, though some funding is provided by the national Government, just for mental rehabilitation. The GCR would like to be more independent in terms of funding during the next 3-5 years.

The recognition rate of refugee status is just 6%, so what is the future of those who are rejected? Some may be recognised at the second instance by a committee, and the GCR supports them during their stay. They may then appeal to the highest instance. People rarely return voluntarily and are regularly arrested as they refuse to leave. The Ombudsman has often had to intervene, particularly as there is no procedure for deportation. Many await the next regularisation process, and may be well integrated by the time they can change status.

### **Glória Carrocio, General Directorate for Immigration, Italian Ministry for Social Solidarity**

The Ministry of the Interior is the principal Government Ministry responsible for regulating migration. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also has competences in terms of aid and visa requests. The Ministry for Labour, Health and Social Policies includes the Directorate General for Immigration, planning immigration flows and promoting social integration. There is also the Department for Equal Opportunities – UNAR (National Office against Racial Discrimination). Within the welfare system, the assignment of responsibility is more complicated. Regions in Italy can approve immigration laws, and the fragmentation of responsibility would render the implementation of an OSS difficult. The Sportello Unico per l'Immigrazione was established in 2002 and implemented in 2005, but there were problems with delegating responsibilities. It is currently only a front office service centre. The back office work is carried out by separate departments, and the





Sportello only deals with employment issues. However, applications can now be made online.

There is also a central service of the Protection System for Asylum-Seekers and Refugees (SPRAR), providing information and support to local authorities in receiving asylum-seekers and refugees and coordinating local services. Its specific roles are: monitoring the presence of asylum seekers, refugees and foreigners under humanitarian protection; establishing and updating a database on local interventions for asylum seekers and refugees; facilitating the dissemination of information on the activities; providing local authorities with technical assistance, also with regards to the implementation of reception measures; and promoting and performing, in accordance with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, repatriation programmes through the International Organization for Migration or other national or international humanitarian institutions.

The Emilia Romagna Regional Centre on Discrimination is also a potential model, providing a network of existing Government and NGO services at a regional level, not in order to create new structures, but to improve services that are widespread within the regional territory and close to the potential beneficiary of the intervention. There is a strong virtual connection and a common IT platform, to improve and connect existing services. The added value of this project lies in the attempts to improve, support and better connect already existing and widespread local services (either public or third sector).

## DISCUSSION OF THE PRESENTATIONS

Question on partnership between NGOs and Government – in PT this is achieved through the Consultative Council on Immigration Affairs (COCAI), which represents the fundamental role that Immigrant Associations play in policy, also through the provision of socio-cultural mediators, who are qualified and trained. There is always a diversity of nationalities and a range of associations, but a programme of recognition can be implemented through public funding, and in PT, the Technical Support Office for Immigrant Associations provides assistance. The COCAI decides on recognition and funding.

In ES there are different models of relationships between NGOs and the Government. Organisations and associations play an important role, providing services and consultative bodies at different administrative levels. The public service cannot provide everything itself. The Municipality makes a public call for proposals; Alcorcón for example has 14 local agreements.

What are the criteria applied to recognition of NGOs? In ES, a series of criteria are applied to NGOs, including their legal status, their own budget, having offices throughout



the country or region, number of volunteers, number of projects and other objective criteria. For Immigrant Associations, the idea is to create an associative movement, which develops its own political and social discourse, representative in relation to the proportion of their nationality in Spain, to be flexible. In PT, Immigrant Associations must have official statutes, and an early analysis of the main ideas is conducted by COCAI. In PT, 92 Immigrant Associations are officially recognised, but recognition can be lost and they must prove their representativeness.

The focus in IE is currently on both new arrivals *and* longer-established communities who are becoming isolated. Are there efforts in other countries to engage with more established communities? In ES, the policy is standardisation/normalisation, to address the specific disadvantages of new arrivals, until they no longer need to go to an OSS. In GR the immigrant population is from Eastern countries and there are very few older immigrant communities. PT is a recent country of immigration, but has a population of second and third-generation Africans. The first idea of the CNAI was to provide services for new arrivals, but it developed to host longer-established communities as well, and also Portuguese Roma.

Should the OSS cater for the second generation, or should they be incorporated in mainstream services? One of the first developments in PT was the establishment of the Intercultural Education Department in the early 1990s to provide intercultural materials for teachers on diversity and to cater for cultural and language needs. Local authorities play a role within the Local Immigrant Integration Support Centres, as branches. The municipality often plays a role in relation to declarations of residence for immigrants.

Initially in setting up the CNAI in PT, there were problems with the Immigration Police, but they now understand the value of partnership. It was not an easy process, and initially immigrants were not motivated to come to the CNAI as they saw it as part of the Immigration Police. There were also issues with data security, particularly for undocumented migrants. Additional problems were experienced with the perception of handing over power to other agencies. However, the CNAI developed its own database. The achievement of a “Gentleman’s Agreement” with the Immigration Police in PT in terms of undocumented migrants was a difficult process. The database ultimately saves time.

The Greek Ministry of the Interior representative asked how many employees the CNAI had, and how were they hired? Does the CNAI also deal with the permit process? The CNAI is staffed by civil servants, socio-cultural mediators and the staff of the High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue (ACIDI, IP). Declarations are provided for the permit process, but permits are granted by the Immigration Police, so the





Ministry of the Interior ultimately decides. The CNAI and ACIDI put pressure on the Police in terms of waiting times.