



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL  
JUSTICE FREEDOM AND SECURITY

## Minutes of the First Spanish Advisory Committee Meeting

**Date:** 26 March 2008

**Location:** Dirección General de Integración de los Inmigrantes [Directorate General for Immigrant Integration], (Sala de Cabecera, Planta Baja), c/ José Abascal, 39, Madrid

### Participants:

- Begoña Santos, Technical Director of Red Acoge
- Maria Carmen Fernández, Social Worker at Acobe
- Joaquim Sabater, Manager of IBN Batuta
- Shamira Oukhiar, Immigration Expert, IBN Batuta
- Carmen Roncal, Coordinator of the Area for Prevention and Social Inclusion at the City Council of Alcorcón
- Cecilio Jiménez, Head of Immigration Service of the Regional Government of Castilla-La Mancha
- Javier Pascual, Head of the Area for Inter-Ministerial Legal Coordination at the General Directorate for Immigrant Integration
- Mario Moreno, Coordinator of the Service for Intercultural Mediators at the PMM-IMEDES at the Autonomous University of Madrid
- Gloria Pérez, Researcher and Technical Assistance to the OSS Project
- Amparo Fernández, Head of General Directorate for Immigrant Integration
- Miguel Ángel Gil, Head of Area at the General Directorate for Immigrant Integration

### Spanish Partner:



## I. TOPIC FOR DISCUSSION:

- INTI Project “One-Stop Shop”

## II. MAIN OUTCOMES AND CONCLUSIONS

**9.45h:** The meeting was opened. Those taking part were welcomed and introduced.

**10.15h:** Presentation of the INTI Project: “One-Stop-Shop”

Miguel Ángel Gil, Head of the Action Plan of the Directorate General for Immigrant Integration and Coordinator of the project, introduced the main points of the One Stop Shop Project.

The European Commission INTI Programme

- Aims of the project
- The promoter – ACIDI from Portugal – and the project partner organisations in six European countries
- The responsibilities of the Directorate General for Immigrant Integration in its capacity as member organisation of the project
- The role of the advisory committee in the project and the scheduled working plan

Those attending were invited to make questions or clarify queries on the project.

**10.30h:** Brief presentation of the National Immigrant Support Centres (CNAIs) in Portugal.

Miguel Ángel Gil introduced the model of the National Immigrant Support Centres in Portugal as a basic element of the proposal put forward with the One Stop Shop project. Among other items, the aims of the CNAIs were described, together with the issues taken into account for their creation, the services delivered at the centres, coordination mechanisms and the work carried out by socio-cultural mediators. Both the presentation and the subsequent participant analysis focused on exploring the following items:

- Grouping of various public services and services for integration support in a same location of service to the public
- Service coordination and management relationships between state agencies and ACIDI
- The work of Socio-cultural Mediators to enable access to services
- IT Platform

**11.15h:** Coffee Break

**11.30h:** Brief presentation of the Country Report (Spain).

Spain's Report on immigrant support services was delivered with the support of PowerPoint diagrams, in the same way as the previous presentation.

A presentation of the report's structure of contents was delivered, with a brief introduction of the contents of each section. A more detailed explanation of the following items was provided:

- The One Stop Shop Model in Spain: Identification of experiences described in the report:
  - Integral Hosting Programme
  - Foreigner Offices
  - *Centros de Apoyo al Refugiado* (CAR) [Refugee Support Centres]
- Coordination systems linking government agencies and civil society organisations. A description of five mechanisms for interfacing and coordination in this area in Spain was provided.
- The role of inter-cultural mediators in Spain.

**12.00h:** Discussion.

Following the presentation of the Report, the floor was opened and attendees were prompted to focus their analysis on the feasibility of a new model of the One-Stop-Shop type in the Spanish context. To be more specific, the debate surrounded the advantages and disadvantages that were identified, in the experience of the advisory committee, regarding this model in Spain. This discussion allowed the identification of several elements of interest which, together with others discussed throughout the meeting, were the substance of the preliminary conclusions provided by the advisory committee.

**12.45h** Preliminary Conclusions

Presented by Gloria Pérez Arredondo, Project Researcher and Technical Assistant.

The conclusions reached at the advisory committee meeting can be summarised in eight relevant ideas:

1. In Spain, a model resembling the National Immigrant Support Centres (CNAIs) that have brought about the One Stop Shop project has not been identified. That is, there are no locations or centres that, in a same place, include the variety of multi-administration services included in the Portuguese model. Among other reasons, it was highlighted that a comparison between a country like Portugal and its CNAIs with Spain and its operations is not possible due to:

- a. Spain's larger geographical expanse and the greater spread of immigrant population in relation to Portugal.
  - b. The model of the Spanish State that is very decentralised in autonomous regions, with a large number of immigrant integration responsibilities.
2. However, it was actually possible to identify experiences in Spain that can be compared with the Portuguese model such as those included to the Spanish report (Foreigner Offices, Integral Hosting Program and CARs) and, above all, there are similar experiences at a local and regional level, such as integral guidance approaches, information and delivery of services. Public services directly managed by councils or autonomous regions or by NGOs as cooperating agencies.
3. Integral assistance approaches are substantiated, for example, in community social services that, in rendering own benefits and services for a scope affecting the population as a whole (socio-economic reports, school meal or childcare benefits, etc.), also deliver specific information and guidance in several areas such as legal assistance, labour market integration, access to health services, education, etc. to non-EU foreign users when these demand the services and/or when they are referred to the relevant organisations.
4. It was emphasised that working with an integral focus on assistance to non-EU foreign population in the framework of public services aimed at population as a whole follows the standardisation principle for the use of public services scheduled in public policies concerning the integration of immigrants. The standardisation principle for access to and the use of public services has the backing of the various members of the advisory committee. Among other reasons, it was stated that if integrated models of services aimed specifically at immigrant population were used, there would be dangers involving two issues debated in Spain that could involve risks for better integration. Which were:
  - a. Positive discrimination of immigrant population vis-à-vis local residents could bring about rejection by Spanish population.
  - b. A working focus that considers immigrants as a group in need, deprived or at risk of social exclusion. This approach does not contribute to an active, independent and efficient integration process.
5. In the context of the *standardisation principle* we can see the usefulness and need of having integrated public operations or programmes that focus specifically on immigrants when these are in a situation of "recent arrival at the host country" and they are not aware of the services, support circuits or existing help. However,

once a certain degree of integration has been reached, the group would need to use general public services that must adapt and improve to effectively respond to the needs of this population. To achieve the above, it is obvious that new resources must be added, among which we can highlight the intercultural mediator. In this vein, we find the Integral Hosting Programme being carried out by regional governments and councils with the support of the “*Fondo de Acogida para la Integración de Inmigrantes y el Refuerzo educativo de los mismos*” [Support Fund for the Reception and Integration and Educational Assistance of Immigrants].

6. At the same time, the existence of services grouping and integrating one-stop assistance services for immigrant population in rural or geographically isolated areas was considered of interest. However, this was only considered necessary in the specified cases, as a way of taking public services to any part of the country.
7. Together with the idea of adapting public services to solve the needs of non-EU foreigners, the profile and work of cultural mediators in Spain was noted as a support resource to bring foreigner and the host society closer, bi-directionally. Cultural mediators in Spain were described as follows:
  - a. A position that has been created to solve the change needs of Spanish society, in the context of the mass arrival of non-EU foreigners to the country
  - b. They do not have a standardised professional profile as far as their training, functions, responsibilities, etc. are concerned. A trend involving a variety of criteria and a diversity of functions can be appreciated
  - c. The schools with the longest tradition in the training of intercultural mediators are trying to define and profile the functions and scope of responsibilities of intercultural mediators. From this point of view, intercultural mediators appear to meet the following requirements:
    - i. They are trained to work with any group, foreigners of various origins and also local residents.
    - ii. Their nationality is not relevant, and they can be either foreigners or Spaniards.
    - iii. They do not necessarily need to master several languages to communicate with non-Spaniards. In reality, many intercultural mediators are able to speak one of the most common languages needed to communicate with communities in Spain (French, Arabic, etc.) but this is understood as a support tool rather than an essential requirement for mediation actions. They attempt to communicate with foreign users in Spanish.

- iv. Mediation tasks also serve the purpose of being a “link” between various government agency services or services rendered by different administrations (local, regional and state authorities).
8. Given the above, the need to improve coordination of actions among various organisations supporting integration is obvious and greater progress could be achieved in this direction with the aid of computer programmes allowing the:
    - a. Sharing of common databases on users, benefits, itineraries in the use of support services, etc.
    - b. Extraction of useful data and information to monitor public policy and programme assessment.
    - c. Simplification of procedures and workloads for service teams using interconnected computer tools allowing data insertion and reports on behalf of the responsible services.
    - d. Simplification of access to services and procedures for the population (foreigners and local residents) using teleprocessing means or over the Internet (renewal requests, return certificates, etc.).

**13.15h:** Next steps in the project.

Before the meeting was closed, a summary of the next steps to follow in the advisory committee’s work was given, namely:

- Carrying out a second advisory committee meeting to analyse the common European report that the Portuguese International Organization for Migration Office is drafting. This meeting will be held around the second week in May. Specific dates will be given soon.
- The attendance of a member of the advisory committee at the transnational workshop on “Examples of OSS Models for the Delivery of Services to Immigrants” that will be held in Athens on June 6, 2008. In this context, it is recommended that a representative from one of the public bodies on the committee, whether local or regional, attends the workshop as they have support services for the integration of non-EU foreigners with integral working approaches. Given that there are no simultaneous interpretation services available at these meetings, the person selected must be able to communicate in English.
- As far as the workshop taking place in Berlin between July 7 and 9 is concerned, the subject of this workshop will be "Partnerships between NGOs and Public Services for the Delivery of Services to

Immigrants" and not "ITCs in the Delivery of Services to Immigrants", as stated at the meeting.

**13.30h:** End of the meeting.