



ONE-STOP-SHOP

A NEW ANSWER FOR IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

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MINUTES OF THE THIRD STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

- I. DATE:** Thursday, 5 June 2008
- HOSTED BY:** Hellenic Migration Policy Institute (IMEPO) – Greek Partner.
National Coordinator: Triantafyllia Avramid
- LOCATION:** Titiana Hotel, Panepistimiou 52, Athens 106 78, Greece
- 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, Director of the Information and Support Service, Immigrant Council of Ireland
 - Kirsten Fjoser, Communications Officer, Immigrant Council of Ireland
 - Miguel Ángel Gil, Dirección General de Integración de los Inmigrantes, Madrid - Spain
 - Gloria Pérez Arredondo, Country Researcher for Spain
 - Gloria Carroccio, Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies, Rome - Italy



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- Alessia Montuori, IPRS, Rome - Country Researcher for Italy
- Raffaele Di Palma, Ministry of Health - NIHMP
- Triantafyllia Avramid, Hellenic Migration Policy Institute (IMEPO), Athens – Greece
- Theodoros Katsas, IMEPO, Athens
- Dimitrius Parsanoglou, Country Researcher for Greece
- Zoi Balomenou, IMEPO
- Aspasia Plakantonaki, IMEPO

III. MAIN ACTIVITIES:

1. Presentation of the main activities of IMEPO by Theodoros Katsas.
2. Discussion and Presentation of main outcomes of the project and of the Country Reports by Catarina Reis Oliveira.
3. Presentation and discussion of Draft Country Reports chaired by Catarina Reis Oliveira: Italian Report by Alessia Montuori, Portuguese Report by Maria Abranches, Greek Report by Dimitrius Parsanoglou, Spanish Report by Miguel Ángel Gil, and Irish Report by Claire Healy.
4. Presentation and discussion of the second draft of the IOM first working document and of the draft of the Second Working Document by Maria Abranches.
5. Discussion of inputs from Advisory Committee Meetings.
6. Presentation and discussion of the Project Website and Logo by Claire Healy.
7. Further discussion on the fourth Steering Committee meeting and third Transnational Workshop in Berlin, Germany, on 7-9 July 2008.

IV. MAIN OUTCOMES:

1. Theodoros Katsas of IMEPO presented the main activities and characteristics of the organisation. It is a publicly funded private law entity, subsidised by the Greek Ministry of the Interior, through the revenue of fees paid by immigrants. IMEPO is the adviser to the Government on the design and implementation of measures, as well as being a research institute. The organisation has an in-house team researching and publishing works such as Best Practices on Integrating Migrants in Europe, and Legislation on Integrating Migrants in Europe. IMEPO also collaborates with universities. During the last 3-4 years, there have been a number of highly acclaimed



studies on the impact of migration on social welfare and agriculture. There is also collaboration with institutes abroad, such as the Migration Policy Institute in Washington.

The second axis of IMEPO's work is the development of a communications policy regarding immigration, raising public awareness, together with the Ministry of the Interior. The aim is to combat phobias and misperceptions, based on studies. The third axis relates to groundwork on migration policy, developing a database on migration from various ministries. IMEPO also has a well established library on migration.

The first statistical survey of migration in Greece was conducted in 2001, so there is a lack of data, as this is a very new field. IMEPO was founded in 2002 and from 2004 onwards it has been under development, enhancing collaboration with the Ministry of the Interior. In 2009, the World Migration Forum will be held in Greece, coordinated by IMEPO.

2. Catarina Reis Oliveira presented a proposal for the main indicators/characteristics of a One-Stop Shop model that would guide the structure of the *Handbook on How to Implement an OSS* (one of the deliverables of the project):
 - (1) Mediation services by immigrant communities
 - (2) Partnership between Public Administration services
 - (3) Partnership between Public Administration and civil society (including immigrant associations) as an integrated and cooperative response
 - (4) Accessibility (location, opening hours, etc)
 - (5) Sustainable organisational structure for internal communication
 - (6) Concentration of different Government services in the same place
 - (7) Immigrant participation mechanisms in integration policy-making

From this presentation several questions were raised that stimulate the debate around the implementation of an OSS in the different countries involved in the project, namely:

- (1) whether the intercultural mediators working in the OSS should reflect the diversity of immigrant populations living in the country or the most numerous populations?;
- (2) where should be located the OSS? (in which part of the country? in which part of the city?);
- (3) should the OSS only offer information or should also provide services?

Furthermore several ideas were also brought to reflection, namely:

- (4) the challenges related to the lack of coordination between different governmental services (national, regional and local);
- (5) the difficulties of different public administration services in delegating responsibilities – importance of keeping its own responsibilities in the OSS;
- (6) the importance of building the immigrants' trust on the state services;



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- (7) the idea that the implementation of an OSS should be a continues process that could reinforce its activities and role in the integration of immigrants along time (e.g. start as an information centralise and coherent service of the government, continues to a mediation service between different public administration services, and develop into a institution that provide services and resolve problems);
- (8) the role of the intercultural mediator should be: to stimulate trust between the immigrants and the host government, to translate the rights and duties of the immigrants to their own language, to mediate the relationship between the immigrants and the different public administration services.

Gloria Pérez Arredondo outlined the Spanish situation, in terms of to what extent the Refugee Reception Centres, Reception Measures and Offices for Foreigners fulfil the characteristics of an OSS model.

- 3. Catarina Reis Oliveira chaired a series of presentations on the final versions of the Country Reports.

3.1 The **Country Report on Italy** was presented by Alessia Montuori, highlighting the fact that numbers of immigrants were increasing. The problems of the “Sportello Unico” were analysed, and Alessia mentioned that a new law – mostly relating to deportations - had been passed on 23 May 2008. The authority for issuing permits has been transferred from the police to town councils. The Report does not recommend one centre, but perhaps a virtual service to improve the spread of information, and to diversify application procedures, eg by email or through the post office. NGOs and migrant associations should play an active role. Existing local structures could be relied upon.

Discussion: a. Centres at a local, regional and central level. b. Diversity of mediators. c. Problem of perceived delegation of responsibilities.

Model in Italy for refugees and asylum-seekers: the State funds the local council to provide services. Each council tenders for the services. A national framework could be provided, with regional tenders adapted to the municipality context. The OSS model should be flexible enough to be adapted to a local level (IT), a national (PT) and autonomous community level (ES), a province level (D), and a central and local level (GR/IE/PT). For this, the Project needs information on the competences of national Governments in terms of immigration (permits, etc) and integration (social services, etc).

Therefore, the development and implementation of the OSS model in each country should be seen as a process rather than an instant application, beginning at a central level in some countries, or at a local or regional level in other countries (but guided by a national framework). Some municipalities could implement it as pilot projects,



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demonstrating the attendant benefits in efficiency, lowering costs and quality of services to other municipalities.

It is important to stress that responsibilities are not delegated, but rather a branch of each Government agency is opened in the centre. The Centres may begin as an information and mediation point between immigrants and Government and NGO services, gradually acquiring more Government agency branches, as the benefits of the service in terms of costs, efficiency and information become clear.

3.2 The **Country Report on Portugal** was presented by Maria Abranches, highlighting the results from the IOM evaluation of the CNAI and CLAII (Local Immigrant Integration Support Centres) services. The CNAI in Lisbon has protocols with 21 Immigrant Associations to provide Socio-Cultural Mediators, while the CNAI in Porto has 5 such protocols. Benefits are seen from the perspective of Government agencies, who notice the difference of working within the CNAI service. In terms of future intentions, almost 100% of immigrant service-users surveyed expressed their intention to continue using the CNAI and to recommend it to other people. The IOM evaluation recommends the provision of a service for the recognition of foreign qualifications, and the need for further simplification of procedures.

Discussion: The question of the local population's reaction to a Centre is important. The OSS model should build upon existing Citizens' Centres, and should be framed in these terms when being presented to the public.

3.3 The **Country Report for Greece** was presented by Dimitrius Parsanoglou. In terms of the indicators for the OSS model, Greece is similar to Portugal in that policy is centralised but implementation is dispersed. There are twelve Ministries on the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Migration. Government and civil society have cooperated on European Projects, and on a memorandum against trafficking. There is random use of mediation in Greece, but it is not permanent. The Foreigners Service Centre uses translators on a temporary basis. Opportunities do exist for the implementation of the model. The Integration Action Plan is to be implemented by the Department of Social Integration within the Ministry of the Interior, with funding from the European Integration Fund. The Foreigners Service Centre provides language courses and some other services. There would be bureaucratic problems in Greece with the transferral of Government agency employees, so it should begin as an information and mediation centre. The main principle of the Administration is that migrants have equal rights, but many of them do not know their rights.

Discussion: The question of sustainability is raised in the Greek report – should the funding for the OSS come from the national budget and national policy? The question was also raised as to how migrants can participate in policy-making – there is a proliferation of NGOs in Greece and a lack of explicit representation. The Forum of



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Migrants suffers from lack of funding, and some NGOs with national representation are stronger than others, such as the Polish and Filipino organisations.

3.4 The **Country Report on Spain** was presented by Miguel Ángel Gil. Spain presents similar characteristics to Greece, as competences for implementation are dispersed. The principle of standardisation is central in the Spanish context – migrants should use services on an equal manner with Spanish citizens. But new arrivals need special programmes to overcome disadvantages. The Directorate-General of Immigrant Integration works together with NGOs on this. The Strategic Plan for Citizenship and Integration is the only plan in this area at a national level, developed in 2004/5 and implemented in 2007. Each region has an integration plan, and services are being provided in regions (Comunidades Autónomas). With a proposed network of local centres, it would be difficult to provide a standardised model – three types of centres: local, regional and national? A process of implementation, developing the service from mediation to an OSS, was also suggested. The Centres should promote knowledge on rights and duties.

Discussion: The question of sustainability was also raised by the Spanish partner – who pays? – and the question of immigrant participation and representation. The standard of information would be improved by its concentration in one location. Furthermore the Spanish partners also stress the importance of standardize policies to national and foreigner citizens. The current policy trend of mainstreaming/standardisation in countries such as Spain, Ireland, Sweden and the UK was suggested as a potential argument against OSS model at an EU level. One possible solution would be to include an OSS for immigrants within Citizens Shops or to use the OSS services mainly for new arrivals, since long term immigrants should access to the same services that nationals.

3.5 The **Country Report on Ireland** was presented by Claire Healy. In late January 2008, a new Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill was published, to be discussed by the houses of parliament. The various Government responsibilities for immigration and integration present a complicated picture and a lack of co-ordination. However, the establishment Office of the Minister for Integration represents a step forward. There are also examples of cooperation between agencies at a local level, such as in the county of Donegal. The Irish Advisory Committee highlighted the importance of having a database for service providers. The Minister of State for Integration visited the CNAI in Lisbon, together with the Immigrant Council of Ireland, in March 2008. In May 2008, the “Migration Nation” statement of strategy was published by the Office of the Minister for Integration, including an explicit mention of the suggestion of a “one-stop shop” for State services to non-EU and EU nationals, with the assistance of NGOs. The Immigrant Council of Ireland will hold a further meeting in early July with immigrant NGOs, to develop a coherent platform.



The analysis in the Irish report addressed the potential savings for the Government in providing a One-Stop Shop through socio-cultural mediators, the need to bridge the information gap, the need to provide services to EU immigrants and the necessity of building on the existing experience of service providers. Recommendations included having the services in various locations, cooperating with local Government, a Virtual One-Stop Shop to complement the physical one, and the availability of services to both EU and non-EU immigrants.

Discussion: The question of the provision of services to EU immigrants was raised, as enlarging the discourse and providing added value. A positive attitude towards immigrants should also be promoted through the OSS. A virtual OSS should provide standard information.

4. Maria Abranches presented the Second Working Document for the OSS Project based on the conclusions and recommendations of the different country reports. Some of the issues raised in this context were adjust to the earlier discussion around the structure and contents of the Handbook (point 2 of minutes):
 - (1) the funding and sustainability of the model – what are the actual expenses and what are the possible sources of funding? This is dependent on the format of the Centres. Financing through the European Integration Fund was considered, but this aims only to finance start-off projects and is not sustainable. The sustainability of the OSS should be guaranteed by the national budget of the countries since it should rely on governmental services. A list of expected expenses should be considered within the Handbook, using boxes with examples from partner countries.
 - (2) The Working Document reflects the Best Practices in terms of NGO and State partnerships that were considered in the country reports, including the question of whether the State should help migrants to establish organisations or simply provide funding. Should NGOs develop a separate platform, as is planned in IE, or should the State provide this structure? Either way, NGOs need to work together and avoid fragmentation. In ES, the question of the legitimacy of migrant organisations was considered in terms of dialoguing with Government, relating to the legal status of the organisation, similar to the case in PT. The Spanish Government issues a specific call for proposals for integration programmes. The Portuguese Government specifically recognises migrant-led organisations through a decision taken by the Consultative Council on Immigration Affairs, granting them rights in terms of consultation and funding.
 - (3) The potential partners need to come together first in order to set up the service – but how can this be achieved? The Italian Partners suggest a virtual back office for cooperation between various Government agencies, rather than a



front office virtual OSS for immigrants. The back office could have a standard form on a virtual platform. The Project Partners agreed that a virtual OSS would NOT be a replacement for a physical centre, but forms and documents could be submitted online and procedures. The efficiency of an OSS structure should be attractive to Government agencies because it results in a reduction of costs. A virtual platform for Government agencies (back office) would also be complementary to physical OSS providing services.

- (4) The indicators of the OSS (provided earlier in the meeting – point 2 of the minutes) should represent the minimum characteristics, to which extras will be added, and complementary services.
- (5) The OSS would also provide services for employers and other interested parties. It would promote consistency between different Ministries in terms of policy.
- (6) In relation to the question of mainstreaming, the target group of the OSS could be defined, so that immigrants do not continue to use specific segregated services for an indefinite period. This should mainly comprise new arrivals, and the service of renewing permits (although, as it has been presented, the Portuguese OSS provides services to both immigrants that are applying for legalizing or renewing their status in Portugal, as for those who are applying to citizenship). The stability of residence of immigrants is relevant here, particularly within the policy debate on EU Long-Term Residents. The OSS should be particularly for new arrivals, employers and service-providers.
- (7) The Handbook should provide a description of the specific services provided to make the temporary nature of immigrant status, and segregation, clear.

5. Each Partner gave an outline of developments at the national Advisory Committee meetings:

- In GR the main difficulty was to get representatives from each of the Ministries to join the AC.
- In IE the reaction of the AC was very positive, and local examples of integrated service provision were mentioned.
- In IT, the AC consists of five Government agencies and five NGOs, but there were problems in involving migrant-led organisations. The AC focused on the negative experience of the *Sportello Unico* and was therefore sceptical about implementation, as there is little motivation generally at the moment. The virtual option was also suggested. The question of money was also raised – the best option is to improve the existing structure.



- In ES, the AC had a positive reaction, however they approved of the standardisation/mainstreaming policy, with some specific centres for new arrivals. The new figure of the local migration officer was also highlighted.
 - In PT, the AC has not yet met, as the main actors – Government ministries, Immigrant Associations, NGOs, trade unions, employers organisations, etc - are already constituted in the Consultative Council for Immigration Affairs (COCAI), which will meet to discuss the project this summer
6. Claire Healy presented the proposed website of the OSS project and the logo, developed by ACIDI with a designer contracted for that purpose. The idea behind the logo was discussed. Each area of the site was explained, as well as the layout and design. Some suggestions were made by the Spanish Partners in relation to the terminology of “Best Practices” vs. “Good Practices”, by the Italian Partners in relation to the justification and layout of the text, and by the other Partners in relation to the readability of the site, eg “SC Meetings”>”Steering Committee Meetings”. The website will be available at the address: www.inti.oss.acidi.gov.pt. The Partners were asked to verify the accuracy of the information already on the site, and to send on suggestions for Good Practices, news items for the homepage, and any other information or links that they considered relevant.
7. It was agreed that before the meeting in Berlin, ACIDI the Project Coordinator, would develop ideas on the main (minimum) characteristics of the One-Stop Model to be proposed in the Handbook.

V. FOURTH STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING & THIRD TRANSNATIONAL WORKSHOP

The fourth Steering Committee meeting and the third Transnational Workshop on *Partnership between NGOs and Government actors in providing services to migrants* will take place in Berlin, Germany, on 7-8 July 2008. It will be hosted by Netzwerk Migration in Europa, e.V..

Provisional Agenda for third Steering Committee meeting (Monday 7 July):

- i. Presentation and Discussion of the Final Version of the Country Report for Germany, in relation to the discussion of the other Country Reports in Athens.
- ii. Presentation and Discussion of the Final versions of IOM Working Documents



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- iii. Discussion of main characteristics of OSS model proposed for Handbook.
- iv. Discussion of inputs brought by further minutes of Advisory Committee meetings.
- v. Discussion of progress of Project Website
- vi. Planning fifth Steering Committee meeting in Rome, Italy, on 7 November 2008.
- vii. Account management of the Project.