



ONE-STOP-SHOP

A NEW ANSWER FOR IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

JLS/2006/INTI/148

MINUTES OF THE FOURTH STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

I. DATE: Monday, 7 July 2008

HOSTED BY: Netzwerk Migration in Europa, e. V. – German Partner

LOCATION: Conference Centre of the Max-Planck-Institut - Berlin, Germany

II. PARTICIPANTS:

- Catarina Reis Oliveira, ACIDI, I.P., Lisbon – Portugal, Project Coordinator
- Maria Miguel Santos Silva, ACIDI, I.P., Financial Coordinator
- Cristina Casas, ACIDI, I.P., Director of the National Immigrant Support Centres
- Maria Abranches, International Organization for Migration (IOM) - Lisbon Mission, Portugal & Country Researcher for Portugal
- André Costa Jorge, Director of the Jesuit Refugee Service, Mission in Portugal
- Denise Charlton, Immigrant Council of Ireland
- Ruth Evans, Immigrant Council of Ireland
- Gerard William Folan, Integration Unit, Dublin City Council, Ireland



- Miguel Ángel Gil, Dirección General de Integración de los Inmigrantes, Madrid - Spain
- Gloria Pérez Arredondo, Country Researcher for Spain
- María Luz Valdivia, Asociación de Cooperación Bolivia España, Madrid - Spain
- Gloria Carroccio, Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies, Rome - Italy
- Triantafyllia Avramid, Hellenic Migration Policy Institute (IMEPO), Athens – Greece
- Theodoros Katsas, IMEPO
- Zoi Balomenou, IMEPO

III. MAIN ACTIVITIES:

1. Presentation of the main activities of *Netzwerk Migration in Europa, e. V*, Germany, by Rainer Ohliger.
2. 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, by Rainer Ohliger.
3. Presentation and Discussion of the Final versions of the IOM Working Documents by Maria Abranches.
4. Discussion of main characteristics of OSS model proposed for Handbook by Catarina Reis Oliveira.
5. Discussion of inputs brought by further minutes of Advisory Committee meetings.
6. Discussion of progress of Project Website.
7. Account management of the Project by Maria Miguel Santos Silva.



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8. Planning Fifth Steering Committee meeting in Rome, Italy, 28 November 2008.

IV. MAIN OUTCOMES:

1. Rainer Ohliger of *Netzwerk Migration in Europa, e. V.* presented the characteristics and the main activities of the organisation, including several publications and a newsletter.
2. Because the German partner had not been able to participate in the meeting in Athens, the final version of Country Report on Germany was presented by Rainer Ohliger at this Steering Committee meeting. The presentation and discussion on the German Report mainly focused on the feasibility of Germany (or in particular Berlin) developing a one-stop-shop. Further considerations were made on the fact that, in contrast to the other country partners of the project, Germany is considered to be an “old” or “established” immigration country. Having said that, the country has already tested and developed policies and programmes on integration of immigrants, and may be therefore more resistant to incorporating new experiences, especially if these originate in a new immigration country (such as Portugal). It was also described that Germany has been developing new measures that aim to pay more attention to new immigrants (e.g. offering language programmes and integration programmes), as established immigrants are expected to use the mainstream services. Additional discussion also took place around the fact that Germany is a federalised country and that because of this, integration policies are not uniform across the country.

Discussion: a. what is the target group of the one-stop-shops? / whom do we call an immigrant?; b. how can we implement the one-stop-shop in federalised states? / Is this different from implementing it in centralised states?

3. Maria Abranches of IOM reminded the partners that they are expected to fill in the gaps in the First and Second Working Documents for the OSS Project in order that they can be finalised and made available on the official website of the project.
4. Catarina Reis Oliveira presented a proposal for the structure of the *Handbook on How to Implement an OSS* (the final deliverable of the project) with the following contents:
 - (1) Introduction: with a presentation on what is a One-Stop-Shop, keeping in mind the recommendations of the European Commission’s Common Agenda for Integration and the exchange of good practices developed in the project. It was further suggested at the meeting that there be a brief description on the



preconditions to creating and running a one-stop-shop (e.g. dialogue with immigrant associations, namely through the creation of an advisory committee such as the ones that were created for the purposes of this Project).

The identification of the target group of the OSS should become particularly clear in this chapter. As agreed at this meeting, the OSS intends to target immigrants that have integration needs (not specifying whether we are talking about new arrivals or long-term resident immigrants, or even which kind of legal status we are referring to). The OSS is recommended as a useful tool for the transition period before immigrants can access mainstream services¹.

It was also discussed that a brief reference should be made to the fact that nationals could also have access to the OSS services whenever they require specialised information about integration, immigration or immigrants.

- (2) Mediation services by immigrant communities: this chapter should provide a definition of what is a mediator, an explanation on what the role of the cultural mediators in the one-stop-shop is, and what the advantages are to having them there (e.g. importance of building trust, building bridges between the immigrant communities and the Government of the receiving society, to translate the rights and duties of immigrants into their own languages, pre-sorting services to identify immigrants' issues when they arrive). Furthermore several questions should be raised to present the main contents of this chapter:

(a) *Who are the cultural mediators?* - It was stressed at the meeting that this chapter should highlight the discussion around the idea of whether to have in the one-stop-shop a diverse team of cultural mediators, mainly reflecting the diversity of immigrant communities in the country (with different linguistic needs), or to have only mediators from the most numerous immigrant populations in the receiving country. Further criteria should be established for the definition of the team of cultural mediators in the one-stop-shop: level of educational and work experience (it is not mandatory to have a third-level degree), expertise in speaking the languages most needed by the immigrant communities in the country, a team diverse in beliefs and cultural backgrounds, diverse in gender, a mixed team with both immigrant and native mediators.

(b) *How to reach the cultural mediators? How to select them?* – in the majority of the EU countries the professional category of mediator does not yet exist, however, it should be put to a tender (in which immigrant associations should be called to participate). The awarding of the

¹ In this Handbook, we will be using the term *mainstream services* to mean services available to all residents of a country, as distinct from *targeted services* only for immigrants.



tenders should be made by a board that includes public administration officials and leaders of non-governmental organisations. Following on from that process a special investment should be made in vocational training for the applicants for the post of mediator. Ongoing training and evaluation of this team will be crucial for the provision of services in the one-stop-shop.

In this chapter, examples of programmes that work with cultural mediators or of services provided by immigrants should be provided. It was further suggested that Spain, being the country with the most experience in this respect, could define a full presentation on the third-level qualification for Mediation that is available there and the role that those professionals have in Spanish society.

(3) Partnership in integration services:

(3.1.) Partnership between Public Administration Services and

(3.2.) Partnership between Public Administration and civil society (including immigrant associations) as an integrated and collaborative response.

In this chapter we intend to argue about the importance of providing integration services to immigrants through partnership (between different public administration services and between state and civil society organisations). Keeping in mind that not all the states agree on defining partnerships with immigrant associations for the provision of integration services, the idea that the implementation of an OSS should be a continuous process that could reinforce partnerships over time will be discussed. The Centres may begin as information and mediation points 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.

Furthermore, several arguments on why is so relevant to work with immigrants as partners will be provided, detailing the idea that immigrants can be part of the solution to promote integration (in line with the Common Agenda for Integration).

Another relevant idea to be stressed in this chapter is that the responsibilities of institutions presented in the one-stop-shop are not delegated, but rather a branch of each Government agency is opened in the centre. In other words it should be clear in the chapter that the one-stop-shop provide coherence among all the services that immigrants need to contact, but not necessarily coordination (not all the countries will accept that a certain ministry will have responsibility over all the others in the one-stop-shop). Several partners



stressed that in their countries sometimes it is very difficult to guarantee inter-ministerial dialogue, particularly if they would feel that the other ministry would interfere in their work.

- (4) Accessibility: it was agreed in the meeting that this chapter would be divided into two sub-chapters:

(4.1.) Structural Accessibility:

It was agreed that this sub-chapter would deal more with the dilemmas of location and not so much with opening hours, which would depend on each country (that kind of information can be provided as examples in boxes). Structural accessibility will be discussed namely in discussion questions such as: where are the main services that immigrants need to contact located (existing structure, public services distribution)?; should the one-stop-shop be located in each part of the country (taking in consideration higher densities of immigrants)?; keeping in mind the country structure – central, regional, local powers?; should the one-stop-shop be located in the principal immigrant residential areas or in the city centre with public transport facilities?.

As in the previous chapter, the idea of the implementation of the one-stop-shop as a process rather than an instant application should be reinforced, 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 a pilot project, demonstrating the attendant benefits in efficiency, lowering costs and quality of services to other municipalities.

Different approaches to implementing a one-stop-shop would be expected depending on whether we are dealing with a:

- (a) *centralised state* - in the centralised state it would be expected that the national Government would decide, from the creation to the decision on the location of the one-stop-shop. After the location has been decided upon, a dialogue with local authorities will be started to start the implementation process.
- (b) *federalised state* – the state would recommend the creation of the OSS, each region would choose to implement or not, and from that regions would articulate or not in local authorities for its implementation.
- (c) *states combining features of both centralised and federalised states?*

- (4.2.) Accessibility of Information (substituting chapter 4 on “sustainable organisational structure of internal communication” proposed by



the project coordinator in the earlier draft of the Handbook discussed in this meeting). This chapter would also highlight the relevance of:

- translating informative brochures into several languages in cooperation with several ministries;
- the creation of a virtual OSS Service (suggested in several country reports and by several Advisory Committees);
- integrated IT system;
- touchscreen OSS information points that provide access to relevant and official information (provided by the different ministries involved in the OSS), including legal information in several languages and information about service providers (e.g. kind of services provided and their location). Those structures could be available in different locations, including different cities and different institutions (governmental and non-governmental).

(5) Services provided at the OSS: it was agreed that the OSS would correspond to a concentration of different governmental services (aiming to be consistent with each other) that immigrants need to contact during their integration process in the receiving society. Having said that this chapter would detail that the implementation of an OSS should be a continuous process that could reinforce its activities and role in the integration of immigrants over time (e.g. start as a centralised and coherent information service of the Government, proceed to being a mediation service between different public administration services, and develop into a institution that provides services and resolve problems). It could also promote the creation of new support services that the branches of the different ministries do not provide (as is the case in Portugal with the creation of complementary services such as: the legal advice support office, employment support office, family reunification support office, etc.).

(6) Immigrant participation mechanisms in integration policy-making: although this chapter was proposed in the earlier draft of the Handbook, at this meeting not all the country partners agreed that would be a relevant chapter. Some argued this on the basis that the Handbook should provide a road map on how to implement a one-stop-shop in the EU countries and this does not necessarily presuppose that the receiving countries accept immigrant participation in policy-making. Others argued that the information and arguments that would be provided in this chapter could be easily integrated in several sections of the Handbook, namely in the chapters on cultural mediators and on partnership between public administration and civil society organisations. Even so others argued that this idea is not new and should be consensually accepted by all the



country partners since it is also recommended in the European Common Agenda for Integration. A potential solution would be to emphasise the potential benefits of immigrant participation in policy-making throughout the Handbook, rather than allocating a specific chapter to it.

- (7) Costs and Benefits: it was agreed that this chapter would provide qualitative arguments on the costs and benefits of implementing an OSS and not a pure econometric analysis on costs and benefits. Even so the Handbook should recommend that an actual assessment by economists should be made in several EU countries in the process of the implementation of the OSS. Further concerns on the cost of the implementation and sustainability of the OSS should be discussed in this chapter.

The partners agreed that they would revise the titles of each chapter and further discuss the proposed contents. ACIDI and IOM committed to send a more elaborate draft of the Handbook by November. Each country partner also agreed to provide specific information to the project coordinator that illustrates examples for each chapter of the Handbook (that information will be included in boxes along with the main contents of each chapter). The project coordinator should provide a template for the partners to define those boxes.

The Immigrant Council of Ireland – the Irish partner of this project – organised on 4 July 2008 in Dublin an international workshop about the *One-Stop-Shop and the delivery of public services for Migrants: Learning for Ireland*. This initiative followed the Ministerial Statement on Integration Strategy and Diversity Management by the Minister of State for Integration of Ireland, launched on 1 May 2008, where it was suggested that the Government was considering the concept of a one-stop-shop approach for the delivery of public services to migrants. Hence, to support some of the country partners' comments and remarks about the contents of the Handbook of this project, Denise Charlton, CEO of the Immigrant Council of Ireland, gave a briefing on the main discussion that occurred at that Workshop. Among the main ideas and concerns of the Workshop participants were:

- from the Irish Minister's point of view, Ireland is facing an economic downturn, and accordingly investment in services only for immigrants - that could potentially attract them to the country - should not be promoted;
- keeping in mind that Ireland does not have one-stop-shops for nationals (such as Portugal's "Citizens' Shops"), the creation of one-stop-shops only for immigrants could be seen as problematic;
- the philosophy behind the success in the Portuguese case – including the partnership between the state and civil society organisations, and fact that the



leadership of ACIDI (the Portuguese State integration service) has been founded on the role of civil society leaders (the past three High Commissioners were not politicians) - is not experienced in Ireland;

- should Ireland invest in the creation of targeted services for the integration of immigrants or in mainstream services?
 - the concerns of certain public administration services in transferring their service to a new one in partnership;
 - cultural mediators are not still recognised by the State as having importance or representing a contribution for integration in public services;
 - it is important to guarantee the coherence of service provision and information to immigrants;
 - the importance of evaluation of both the mediators and the services that would be provided at the one-stop-shop.
5. Each Partner gave a brief outline of developments at the national Advisory Committee meetings and agreed to send the final versions of the minutes before 21 July to be made available on the official website of the project.
6. Catarina Reis Oliveira presented the developments of the OSS official website: 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. Maria Miguel Silva clarified some questions of each country partner about the account management of the project. The Partners were asked to send a new progress financial report by 18 July.

V. FIFTH STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

The fifth Steering Committee meeting will take place in Rome, Italy, and will be hosted by the Direzione Generale dell' Immigrazione. A new date was scheduled, in agreement with all the country partners, for 28 November. An additional meeting to discuss and approve the final version of the Handbook before publication will also be proposed by the project coordinator.



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Provisional Agenda for Fifth Steering Committee meeting:

- i. Discussion of main characteristics of OSS model proposed for Handbook.
- ii. Discussion of inputs brought by further minutes of Advisory Committee meetings.
- iii. Progress of Project Website
- iv. Account management of the Project.