



INTI Project: One-Stop Shop: A New Answer for Immigrant Integration?

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Country Report for Portugal

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0. Introduction

Although Portugal has traditionally been an emigration country, immigration to Portugal has been increasing over the last decades, predominantly from the late 1980s onwards. This was in the wake of joining, in 1986, the former European Economic Community, which contributed to the development of several sectors of activity. It was however during the 1990s that the number of immigrants living in the country underwent the most visible increase, from 101,011 foreign residents in 1989 (1% of the country's population) to 191,143 (2% of the population) in 1999. The main nationalities were, at that time, from Portuguese-speaking African countries, primarily from Cape Verde, and, in smaller numbers, from Brazil.

More recent developments in migration flows took place after the year 2000, bringing significant quantitative and qualitative changes. As concerns countries of origin, an important flow from Eastern European countries (mainly Ukraine) took place during this period - the first time that immigrants arrived in large numbers from countries with which Portugal has no historical or linguistic linkage. In addition to these entrants, a substantial new flow of immigrants from Brazil took place after 2000, and continuously increased up to the present. However, unlike the previous wave of Brazilian migration, this was mainly composed of low-skilled individuals. Though irregular migration numbers are difficult to estimate, they are believed to be significant, especially with the arrival of these new flows from Eastern Europe and Brazil.

Another qualitative change regards territorial distribution. Whereas until the 1990s immigrants were for the most part largely concentrated in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area, followed by the South (Algarve Region) and some regions of the North coast, the new migration geography reveals that migrants are now more dispersed at national level, mainly in relation to those coming from Eastern European countries. At the root of this change are regional development dynamics and the need for workforce in certain deserted regions, as well as public and private investment in infrastructures and facilities.

In 2006, the foreign population living legally in Portugal totalled 409,185 individuals, which represents around 4% of the total resident population and 9% of the economically active population. If we take only non-EU countries into consideration (also excluding Romania and Bulgaria, which joined the European Union in 2007), the number declines to 315,952, representing 38,561 more individuals than five years before, in 2001 (277,391) (see Tables 1 and 2).

However, it is important to point out that the Romanian population, who until the end of 2006 were still third-country nationals, has a significant weight among foreign residents (7,969 in 2001 and 10,299 in 2006 – 10.3% and 14% of European non-EU citizens in the indicated years. In 2006, Romanian citizens represent 6.7% of all European immigrants in Portugal, who count up to 153,307 individuals – 37.5% of the total immigrant population – and 3.1% of total non-EU population – which correspond to a total of 329,411 citizens if we add Bulgarians and Romanians – see table 3).

Table 1: Main nationalities of immigrants living in Portugal in 2001 (Total non-EU), per type of visa¹

	Residence Permits (RP)	Stay Permits (SP)	TOTAL	%
Africa	107,309	20,102	127,411	45.9
Cape Verde	49,845	5,488	55,333	43.4
Angola	22,751	4,997	27,748	21.8
Guinea-Bissau	17,791	3,239	21,030	16.5
S. Tomé and Príncipe	6,304	1,585	7,889	6.2
Mozambique	4,725	315	5,040	4.0
<i>Others</i>	5,893	4,478	10,371	8.1
Europe (non-EU)	3,952	61,590	65,542	23.6
Ukraine	203	45,233	45,436	69.3
Moldova	45	8,984	9,029	13.8
<i>Others</i>	3,704	7,373	11,077	16.9
Central and South America	28,835	24,433	53,268	19.2
Brazil	23,422	23,713	47,135	88.5
<i>Others</i>	5,413	720	6,133	11.5
Asia	9,724	10,258	19,982	7.2
China	3,953	3,348	7,301	36.5
India	1,360	2,828	4,188	21.0
Pakistan	1,034	2,851	3,885	19.4
<i>Others</i>	3,377	1,231	4,608	23.1
<i>Others</i>	11,002	186	11,188	4.0
TOTAL	160,822	116,569	277,391	100.0

Source: Statistics 2001, Foreigners and Borders Service.

1. The total non-EU population was considered in reference to 2007, for reasons of comparability. Therefore this table does not include Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, though they were third countries in 2001. Bulgaria and Romania, in particular, comprised a significant part of these (2,101 citizens from Bulgaria – 1,666 with stay permits (SP) and 435 with residence permits (RP) – and 7,969 from Romania – 7,461 SPs and 508 RPs).

Table 2: Main nationalities of immigrants living in Portugal in 2006 (Total non-EU), per type of visa

	Residence Permits (RP)	Stay Permits (SP)	Long Term Residents	TOTAL	%
Africa	129,717	5,601	14,664	149,982	47.5
Cape Verde	57,339	1,882	6,264	65,485	43.7
Angola	28,718	1,554	2,943	33,215	22.1
Guinea-Bissau	21,867	885	1,761	24,513	16.3
S.Tomé & Príncipe	8,797	603	1,361	10,761	7.2
Mozambique	5,151	102	601	5,854	3.9
<i>Others</i>	<i>7,845</i>	<i>575</i>	<i>1,734</i>	<i>10,154</i>	<i>6.8</i>
Europe (non-EU)²	31,988	14,552	13,534	60,074	19.0
Ukraine	19,167	10,426	8,258	37,851	63.0
Moldova	5,714	2,911	4,048	12,673	21.1
<i>Others</i>	<i>7,107</i>	<i>1,215</i>	<i>1,228</i>	<i>9,550</i>	<i>15.9</i>
Central and South America	45,977	7,881	18,372	72,230	22.9
Brazil	39,769	7,719	17,975	65,463	90.6
<i>Others</i>	<i>6,208</i>	<i>162</i>	<i>397</i>	<i>6,767</i>	<i>9.4</i>
Asia	16,947	1,640	3,831	22,418	7.1
China	7,609	483	1,603	9,695	43.2
India	2,440	392	782	3,614	16.1
Pakistan	1,699	107	319	2,125	9.5
<i>Others</i>	<i>5,199</i>	<i>658</i>	<i>1,127</i>	<i>6,984</i>	<i>31.2</i>
<i>Others</i>	<i>10,942</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>300</i>	<i>11,248</i>	<i>3.6</i>
TOTAL	235,571	29,680	50,701	315,952	100.0

Source: Statistics 2006, Foreigners and Borders Service.

² Though not included in this table, Romanian citizens with legal status in 2006 had a significant weight of 10,299 individuals (14% of European non-EU citizens). Immigrants from Bulgaria, also not part of the European Union in 2006, were then 3,160 in total (4.3% of total European non-EU). Total European non-EU would total 73,533 instead of 60,074 if we were to include these two nationalities.

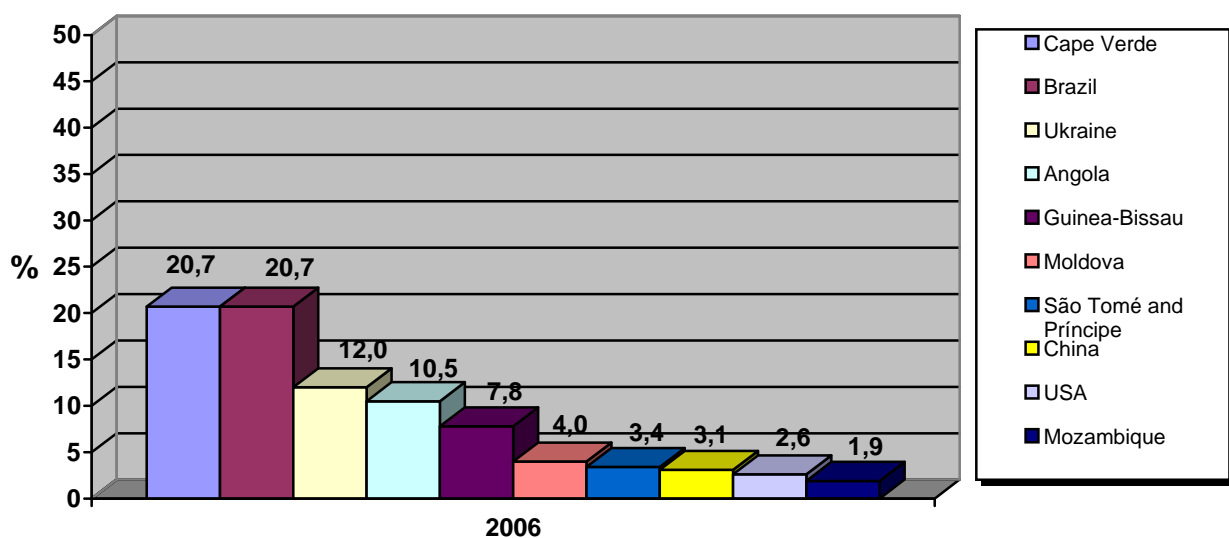
Table 3: Sixteen main nationalities of immigrants living in Portugal in 2006
(Total non-EU, including Romanian and Bulgarian citizens)

	N	%
Cape Verde	65,485	19.9
Brazil	65,463	19.9
Ukraine	37,851	11.5
Angola	33,215	10.1
Guinea-Bissau	24,513	7.4
Moldova	12,673	3.8
S.Tomé and Príncipe	10,761	3.3
Romania	10,299	3.1
China	9,695	2.9
USA	8,227	2.5
Mozambique	5,854	1.8
Russia	4,945	1.5
India	3,614	1.1
Venezuela	3,256	1.0
Bulgaria	3,160	1.0
Pakistan	2,125	0.6
<i>Others</i>	28,275	8.6
TOTAL	329,411	100.0

Source: Statistics 2006, Foreigners and Borders Service.

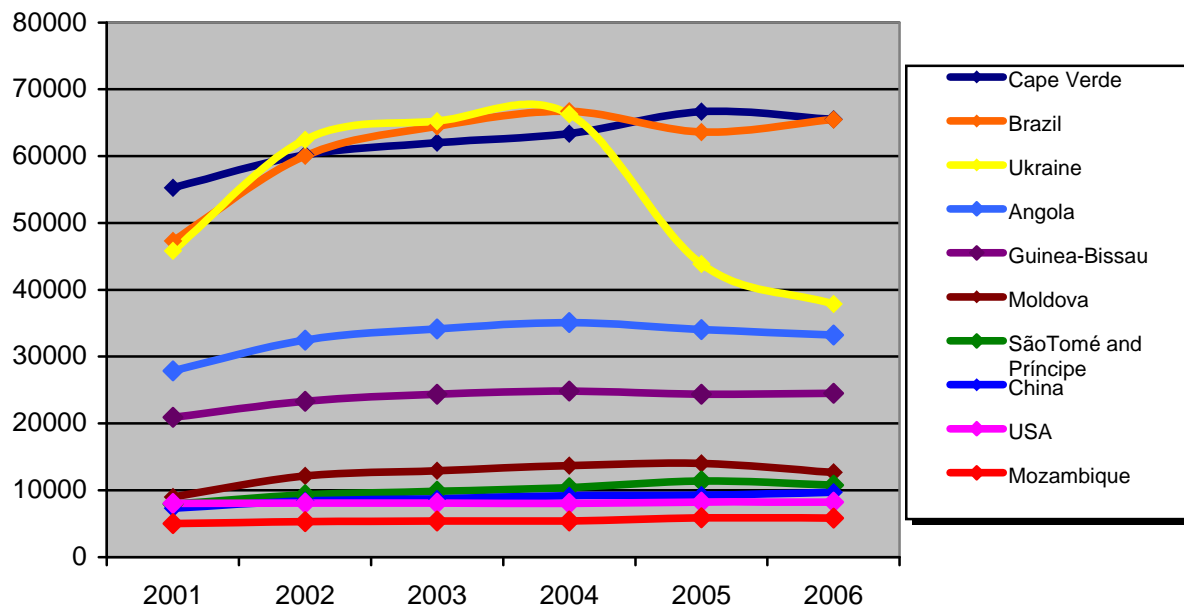
In 2006, the ten main immigrant nationalities corresponded to 86.6% of the total non-EU foreign population (273,737 of 315,952), though Cape Verdeans and Brazilians are far more representative than the other nationalities (41.4% in total) (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Top-Ten nationalities of immigrants living in Portugal in 2006
(% of total foreign non-EU population – TOTAL 85.2%)



If we analyse the evolution of these flows between 2001 and 2006, we can observe interesting developments among the nationalities in reference (top-ten nationalities in 2006), mainly as concerns Brazilian and Ukrainian citizens (see Figure 2). In fact, while the former continuously increased from 47,321 citizens in 2001 to 65,463 in 2006, numbers relating to Ukrainian migrants legally living in Portugal started significantly declining after 2004, although they are still the third most represented nationality in 2006.³

Figure 2: Evolution of top-ten nationalities of immigrants living in Portugal, 2001-2006



Source: Statistics 2001-2006, Foreigners and Borders Service.

³ When comparatively analysing these data it is important to take a number of limitations into consideration. Firstly, the stay permit (SP) – which is a legal status introduced in the law in 2001, in order to allow the regularisation of a large number of illegal migrants (mainly from Ukraine and Brazil) who had arrived after the year 2000 – is not always calculated using the same criteria. In 2001 we have the number of SPs issued that year; between 2002 and 2004 we have the cumulative number of SPs since 2001; in 2005, the Foreigners and Borders Service (SEF) database gives us only the renewed SPs that year and in 2006 it again concerns total SPs. Stay permits in 2006 have decreased due to the fact that they were initially valid for a year and renewable up to a maximum of five years. Having been issued for the first time in 2001, a large number of these permits ended in 2006, at which point they could be converted into a residence permit. Furthermore, long-term residents started to be included in these databases only after 2005. Residence permit data are, on the other hand, always presented in the same way. Figure 2 refers to a calculation of all types of permits each year.

Other registered developments during these years are not as significant. From 2005 to 2006 minor falls in numbers were recorded, such as regarding citizens from Cape Verde, Angola, São Tomé or Moldova, but the total growth during the period in reference is still considerable, especially among Cape Verdeans and, as mentioned above, among Brazilians, who represent the more visible increase.

Naturalisation is another important aspect that has undergone a significant evolution over the years, and where major changes occurred with the most recent nationality law of December 2006. According to official data provided by the Ministry of Justice (where nationality applications have been processed since 2006), between the implementation of the new law and the end of November 2007, a total of 35,347 nationality requests were registered, of which 14,446 were approved, 205 denied and around 18,000 still pending. Of the 14,446 favourable processes, Portuguese nationality has already been formally issued to 10,686 individuals. The majority of the requests came from Cape Verdeans, followed by Brazilian, Angolan and Guinean citizens (around 50%).⁴

As illustrated above, Portugal has become an immigrant country mostly over the last two decades, making second generation or immigrant descendent issues an important aspect concerning migration in the country. Though there are no official extensive data on immigrant descendents, it is known that children of immigrants from Portuguese-speaking African countries are so far the only example of a fully constituted generation of descendents, as concerns volume and shape. The group includes tens of thousands of individuals, not only children between 0-14 years old, but also several young people from 15 to 29 years old, part of whom have already had their own children born in the country. The number of descendents started to gain significant expression also within other populations, but their time of residence has not been long enough for most of those children to have already reached adolescence. African immigrant descendents

⁴ See <http://www.acime.gov.pt/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=2125>



therefore represent the first “second generation” making the transition to adulthood in Portuguese society (Machado and Matias, 2006).

1. Legal Framework for Immigration

As a result of the relatively recent immigration history in Portugal – described in the previous section – and the important developments of the last decades, the first national legal directive that regulates migratory flows dates from September 1981 (Decree-Law no. 264-B/81, of 3 September). With the increase of immigration inflows and the existence of a strong contingent of irregular migrants in the country, a first extraordinary legalisation process took place in 1992. Decree-Law no. 212/92 of 12 October established the channel for this regularisation, with 39,000 immigrants benefiting from it. A new immigration law was implemented one year later, following Portugal's entry into the former European Economic Community in 1986 and later adherence to the Schengen Agreement. Law no. 59/93 of 3 March establishes the respective amendments to the legislation in order to comply with the freedom of movements within Member-States.

In 1996 there was a second extraordinary legalisation process (enshrined in Law no. 17/96 of 24 May) which made it possible for approximately 35,000 immigrants to have their situation regularised. In 1998, Decree-Law no. 244/98 of 8 August brought in new changes in legislation concerning the entry, stay and departure of foreigners. This mainly extended the diversity in types of visas and simultaneously multiplied the working visa into four different subtypes.

It was with Decree-Law no. 4/2001 of 10 January that the “stay permit” was created as a legal instrument that, as an alternative to the repeated extraordinary regularisation processes, effectively allowed the regularisation of a large number of immigrants. It is a working visa issued in Portuguese territory, thus avoiding the need for immigrants to go back to their own countries in order to request a working visa. As already mentioned in the previous section, it was annually renewed up to a limit of five years, after which residence permits were assigned.

The new immigration law implemented in 2003 (DL no. 34/2003 of 25 February, regulated by DR no. 6/2004 of 26 April) revokes the stay permit regime on the premise that: “Illegal immigration flows not only have not diminished but have actually

considerably increased under this flexible legislation, thus exacerbating the precariousness of migrant reception and integration” (DL 34/2003). The Law regulates the admission of third-country nationals (concerning those who intend to engage in salaried work) according to the annual forecast of employment opportunities undertaken by the Portuguese State. The Decree that regulates this Law (dating from April 2004) created nevertheless the possibility for a large number of regularisations, namely of those migrants who had legally entered Portugal before 12 March 2003, who were integrated in the labour market.

The bilateral agreement signed by Portugal and Brazil on 11 June 2003 also played an important role on the regularisation of a large number of Brazilian immigrants in Portugal. Under this agreement, a citizen from each of these countries living in the other at the time of the signing of the agreement is considered admissible for a visa request to the Consulate.

The most recent immigration law was implemented in 2007 (Law no. 23/2007 of 4 July, regulated by DL no. 368/2007 of 5 November), with the purpose of creating “a model of organisation and procedures that serves immigrants, the private sector, the economy and social development, and that fully corresponds to a modern and efficient administration” (DL no. 368/2007). Documents required for obtaining or renewing visas were therefore reduced, as well as the creation of more efficient channels to facilitate information exchange between services.

Among other changes introduced by this new law, one of the main amendments is the creation of a single visa for residence purposes, aiming at reducing the inequality inherent to the previously existing legal status. This single residence permit can be issued for employed, self-employed, research or highly-skilled activities, as well as for study, professional training, volunteer activities or family reunification and also for victims of trafficking in human beings or of assisting undocumented immigration, as well as for long-term residents of another Member-State.

Moreover, a specific article of this law (article 88, no. 2) again provides the opportunity for a number of undocumented migrants to get their situation regularised. Though it

does not consist of an extraordinary regularisation process, it has been having some effect. Some of those who have legally entered the country, are registered and regularised in the Social Security system and hold a recognised employment contract or proved labour relationship may benefit from the exception of not being compelled to hold a valid residence visa, which would normally be required for the issuance of a residence permit. The decision is made on foot of an interview with the Foreigners and Borders Service (SEF), taking the significance of personal or professional reasons stated into consideration. Table 4 presents a summary of the main legal directives that underpin the evolution of policies to regulate migratory flows in Portugal.

Table 4: Legal framework for immigration: main legal directives

DATE	LEGAL DIRECTIVES
1981	Decree-Law no. 264-B/81 of 3 September Regulates entry, stay and departure of foreigners in Portugal
1992	Decree-Law no. 212/92 of 12 October First extraordinary regularization process of immigrants in irregular situation
1993	Law no. 59/93 of 3 March Establishes the new juridical regime regulating entry, stay and departure of foreigners in Portugal
1996	Law no. 17/96 of 24 May Second extraordinary regularisation process of immigrants in an irregular situation
1998	Decree-Law no. 244/98 of 8 August New regulation of entry, stay and departure of foreigners in Portugal
2001	Decree-Law no. 4/2001 of 10 January New regulation of entry, stay and departure of foreigners in Portugal, with the creation of the “stay permit” legal status
2003	Decree-Law no. 34/2003 of 25 February New regulation of entry, stay and departure of foreigners in Portugal, with the revocation of the “stay permit” legal status
	Bilateral agreement between Portugal and Brazil, 11 June
2004	Regulatory-Decree no. 6/2004 of 26 April New regulation of entry, stay and departure of foreigners in Portugal, with the introduction of Article 71 (regularisation for specific cases of immigrants having legally entered Portugal before 12 March 2003)
2007	Law no. 23/2007 of 4 July, regulated by Decree-Law no. 368/2007 of 5 November Establishes the new legal regime regulating entry, stay and departure of foreigners in Portugal

2. Identification of Integration Support Services

2.1 Official Integration Policy

The beginning of official integration policy in Portugal dates back to January 1996, when the role of the High Commissioner for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities was created, within the legal framework of the 15th Constitutional Government. Having operated with the support of a small staff until November 2002, this individual post was then enlarged and transformed into an interdepartmental support and consultative body for the Government. This institutional development took into account the new challenges arising from the growth in immigration flows, on the one hand, and the settlement of older immigrant groups – where immigrant descendents started to become more visible as well – on the other. In the Decree-Law that established this new body – the then-named High Commission for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities (ACIME – “*Alto Comissariado para a Imigração e Minorias Étnicas*”) –, its mission is defined as “promoting immigrants’ and ethnic minorities’ integration into Portuguese society, assuring the participation and cooperation of representative immigrant associations, social partners and welfare bodies in policy definition regarding social insertion and the fight against exclusion, as well as examining the application of legal instruments to prevent and outlaw discrimination while exercising one’s rights on the basis of race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin” (Art.1, no. 2, DL 251/2002).

Under this legal framework, the Consultative Council for Immigration Affairs (COCAI – “*Conselho Consultivo para os Assuntos da Imigração*”), which had been created in February 1998, became part of ACIME. It aims mainly to promote consultation and dialogue with public and civil society organisations representing migrants in Portugal, or operating in this area.

In February 2005 a new change in the legal framework of ACIME resulted in institutional consolidation, reinforcing its powers of intervention and political weight. It is within this Decree-Law that the National Immigrant Support Centres (CNAIs), created in 2004, consolidated the definition of their role as part of the reception and integration policies established by the Portuguese Government.

The legal framework of ACIME changed again with Decree-Law no. 167/2007, which transformed it into a Public Institute integrated within the indirect State Administration, with administrative autonomy, thereafter named the High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural dialogue (ACIDI – “*Alto Comissariado para a Imigração e Diálogo Intercultural*”). The Central Administration’s Restructuring Programme and the main goals established by the 17th Constitutional Government’s Programme, as concerns the modernisation of administration the improvement of services is also on the basis of this latest change.

The Decree-Law allowed the Government to centralise in a single Public Institute the widespread competencies of different bodies, engaging specialised human resources in a single response to common challenges. As the new designation indicates, promoting intercultural and inter-religious dialogue is part of this institute’s defined priorities.

The latest Council of Ministers resolution (no. 63-A/2007, 3 May) represents the most recent development concerning migrant integration policies in Portugal. While confirming the positive development of these policies over the last years, the Government was able to define, with this new political programme, a set of concrete commitments that aimed at overcoming the then lack of a comprehensive, integrated and extensive plan on the one hand, and guaranteeing the State’s role as a primary partner in immigrant integration, on the other.

Assuming both a sectoral and cross-cutting approach, specific areas of intervention of different Ministries were identified in order to establish joined-up and convergent political action. Racism, discrimination, equality and citizenship are therefore some of the cross-cutting aspects covered in the new Plan for Immigrant Integration, resulting from the aforementioned resolution of the Council of Ministers. Civil society organisations also contributed to the definition of the 122 measures covered in the plan, through participation in the Consultative Council for Immigrant Affairs (COCAI), where the plan was discussed before the final version was approved. The 122 measures are distributed in twenty areas (see Table 5), and include a definition of specific indicators and measurable targets to achieve these indicators, as well as the Government agencies responsible for each measure. Indicators, targets and responsible organisations

are extremely important aspects of this plan, consensually representing a significant improvement in the definition of integration policies, since defining measurable policies enables continuous monitoring and evaluation.

Table 5: Plan for Immigrants' Integration 2007 – Intervention Areas and Measures

AREAS	MEASURES
1. Immigrant reception	1. To consolidate the National Immigrant Support Centres 2. To consolidate and enlarge the Local Immigrant Support Centres network 3. To consolidate the national network of immigrant information 4. To improve the quality of services provided by the Foreigners and Borders Service
2. Employment and professional training	5. Specific training for Employment Centre staff 6. To facilitate access to university for students who have attended university abroad and simplify qualifications and skills accreditation 7. Campaigns to raise awareness on safety at work for migrant workers 8. To reinforce the labour inspectorate and the application of sanctions on employers using an undocumented migrant workforce 9. To reinforce legal obedience concerning social security and financial obligations 10. To promote employers' social responsibility 11. To promote training and support for job creation in order to facilitate migrants' insertion in the labour market 12. To promote immigrant unionisation 13. To promote immigrant entrepreneurship
3. Housing	14. To promote social housing through the intervention of local authorities 15. To develop partnerships with NGOs and immigrant associations for new solutions in social housing 16. To create housing support offices 17. To improve rental support mechanisms 18. Campaigns to raise awareness within the banking system to improve credit opportunities 19. To conclude the ongoing Special Plan for Re-housing (PER programme) ⁵ 20. To reinforce alternative solutions for housing 21. To demand obedience to duties by the beneficiaries of the re-housing programme
4. Health	22. Training sessions for migrants in order to minimise lack of information 23. To promote migrants' access to health services 24. To specifically promote irregular migrants' access to health services 25. To integrate Portuguese hospitals into the European network "Migrant-Friendly Hospitals" 26. Intercultural training for health services staff 27. Professional integration of migrants with degrees in medicine 28. To develop a programme of socio-cultural mediation in hospitals and health centres 29. To develop partnerships between NGOs and the National Health Service for promotion of migrants' access to health 30. To disseminate, within consulates, conditions of access to healthcare in Portugal
5. Education	31. Teacher training in interculturalism 32. To promote a balanced composition of classes

⁵ For more information on this programme, see section 2.1.4 of this report.

	<p>33. Adjustment of reception strategies for students to immigrant descendents' needs</p> <p>34. To promote migrant families' involvement in schools</p> <p>35. Involvement of socio-cultural mediators in schools</p> <p>36. To promote the teacher's role in welcoming and integrating immigrant descendents</p> <p>37. Intercultural didactic material for schools</p> <p>38. To reinforce the responsive capacity of Education Offices at the National Immigrant Support Centres</p> <p>39. To reinforce information for migrant families on the Portuguese education system</p> <p>40. Recognition and validation of migrants' competences</p> <p>41. Immigrant associations' cooperation in promoting access to education for all children of immigrant origin</p> <p>42. To reinforce training and research in intercultural education</p> <p>43. To improve quantitative and qualitative data on cultural diversity at schools</p> <p>44. To promote the reception of foreign students</p> <p>45. To issue an information handbook to foreign students</p> <p>46. To promote academic education and dissemination as an agent for social integration</p>
6. Solidarity and Social Security	<p>47. To prioritise lacking Social Security conventions with countries of origin</p> <p>48. To safeguard migrant workers' acquired rights from their contribution to the Social Security System</p> <p>49. Humanitarian aid for extreme poverty situations among migrants</p> <p>50. Specific training for Social Security staff</p>
7. Culture and language	<p>51. "Portugal Acolhe" programme⁶</p> <p>52. To promote Portuguese language teaching</p> <p>53. Cooperation with civil society organisations</p> <p>54. Investment in Technical Portuguese training courses</p> <p>55. Creation and dissemination of didactic material in a multilingual context</p> <p>56. To reinforce initial and ongoing training for educators</p> <p>57. General training in interculturalism</p> <p>58. To reinforce the expression of cultural diversity in all cultural domains and activities</p> <p>59. To support initiatives promoting intercultural dialogue and multiculturalism</p>
8. Justice	<p>60. To support migrants' access to justice</p> <p>61. To support mediation between migrant victims and security and justice institutions</p> <p>62. Access to alternative ways of resolving legal cases</p> <p>63. To reinforce the role of the Legal Advisory Services at the National Immigrant Support Centres and of the SOS Immigrant Telephone Line</p> <p>64. To guarantee translation and interpretation services in the judicial system</p> <p>65. To evaluate possible distortions in the application of justice to foreigners</p> <p>66. To promote the Consulates' active role in supporting offenders</p> <p>67. Cooperation between the Prison System and the Foreigners and Borders Service</p> <p>68. To promote training and education for immigrant prisoners</p> <p>69. To prevent recidivism among immigrant descendents under the justice system</p> <p>70. To accelerate and improve the work developed by the registry and notary area</p>
9. Information society	<p>71. To reinforce digital inclusion initiatives for the migrant population ("Programa Escolhas")⁷</p>

⁶ For more information on this programme, see section 2.2.2 of this report.

⁷ Ibid.

	72. To organise actions for immigrants within the “Internet Spaces Network”
10. Sports	73. To promote and simplify migrants’ access to sports activity, making it equal to national citizens’ access conditions 74. To reinforce the provision of sports in problematic social and urban contexts 75. To overcome and eradicate discrimination and racism in sports 76. Dissemination of ‘success stories’ of migrant sportsmen and women 77. To promote sports as an agent for tolerance and intercultural dialogue
11. Immigrant descendents	78. To reinforce school integration and fight against lack of success and dropout rates 79. To combat spatial segregation 80. To combat the social exclusion of immigrant descendents 81. Access to professional training and employment 82. To promote civic participation 83. Campaigns to raise awareness on immigrant descendents’ integration 84. To reinforce academic knowledge on immigrant descendents
12. Family reunion	85. De-bureaucratisation and acceleration of family reunification processes and reinforcement of the consulate network
13. Racism and discrimination	86. Effective equal employment opportunities, by fighting all forms of ethnic discrimination 87. To combat discrimination and racism in access to housing 88. Dissemination and training in combating racism and racial discrimination 89. To promote research studies on discrimination in schools, housing and the labour market 90. To reinforce support for victims of racial and discriminatory acts 91. Legislative changes that reinforce the intervention capacity of the Commission for Equality and Against Racial Discrimination
14. Religious freedom	92. To consolidate religious freedoms 93. Specific training for professionals in key sectors
15. Immigrant associativism	94. To promote immigrant associative activity within immigrant communities 95. To promote the participation of immigrant associations in reception and integration policies 96. To support the recognition of immigrant associations’ representativeness 97. To support management of associations’ projects concerning immigrant integration 98. To provide resources for immigrant associations’ operational capacity 99. Training opportunities for association leaders 100. Inter-association network
16. Media	101. To promote the development of self-regulation mechanisms in the media 102. To promote cultural diversity in the media
17. Relations with origin countries	103. More efficient financial systems for transferring remittances 104. To improve available information in origin countries 105. To promote foreign students’ connection with origin countries 106. Supporting return and circular migration 107. Supporting immigrant associations’ involvement in the development of origin countries 108. To reinforce the Consulate network
18. Access to citizenship and political rights	109. Campaign to raise awareness of the new nationality law and creation of support network for the operation nationality acquisition processes 110. Campaigns to raise awareness of the new immigration law 111. To promote registration of all immigrants eligible for participation in local elections 112. To promote a research study and subsequent public discussion on long-term residents’ political participation 113. Information campaigns on immigrants’ rights and duties

19. Gender	114. To fight against migrant women's vulnerability 115. Information campaigns on migrant women's rights and duties 116. To promote migrant women's employment and entrepreneurship, namely through access to education and professional training 117. To promote women's participation in society and in associative movements on the protection of their rights 118. To reinforce scientific knowledge on gender and migration
20. Trafficking in human beings	119. To reinforce legal protection and legal support for victims 120. To create shelters for victims 121. To create an Observatory on Trafficking in Human Beings 122. To develop more efficient strategies for fighting trafficking in human beings

Source: *Plan for Immigrants' Integration*, 2007.

In the Decree that regulates the present legal regime concerning the entry, stay and departure of foreigners – dating from November 2007 – integration is also defined as one of the priorities, as had already been the case for previous immigration laws in Portugal: “There is an attempt to give expression to an adjusted immigration policy that promotes legal migration channels and discourages the use of illegal channels, associated with a coherent integration policy for the immigrant community in our country. Immigration is therefore seen not only as factor in economic development, but also as a relevant agent of social and cultural enrichment for Portugal” (DR no. 84/2007). Legal status for long-term residents is also regulated by this Law, granted after five years of legal residence in the country. This implies not only an extended set of rights, but also the possibility to circulate within the European Union area. As concerns residence permit holders, article 83 of the Immigration Law no. 23/2007 defines the following rights:

- ✓ Education and learning;
- ✓ Professional activity as employed person;
- ✓ Professional activity as self-employed person;
- ✓ Professional orientation, training, upgrading and enhancement;
- ✓ Access to health;
- ✓ Access to law and courts.

Equal treatment is also guaranteed in this law regarding social security, financial benefits, unionisation, the recognition of professional certificates and access to goods and services. Taking these principles into account, a number of the aforementioned twenty intervention areas of the *Plan for Immigrant Integration* deserve particular attention.

2.1.1. Health

Starting with health and education, these are both rights that assist migrants and their children independently of their legal situation. The Ministry of Health Normative Order no. 25 360 of 2001 states that: “All citizens have the right to health and the duty to protect it. An immigrant living in national territory who feels ill or needs medical assistance has therefore the right to be assisted in a health centre or hospital (in case of emergency), and these services cannot refuse to assist him/her because of nationality, lack of economic means, irregular situation or any other reason” (ACIDI, 2007-2008).

Though all medical expenses have to be supported by the patient, exceptions legally refer to cases of danger to public health, children under twelve years of age, pregnant women and mothers in the first eight weeks after birth, women at family planning appointments, the unemployed registered at the Employment Centre and their dependants, as well as people in deprived circumstances or with chronic diseases. Foreigners not contributing to social security can also be discharged from payment in most of these cases.

In order to guarantee access to healthcare (as well as to education) to underage foreign citizens in an irregular situation, in 2004 the former High Commission for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities initiated a national registration of these children, in cooperation with the competent Public Administration services (Decree-Law no. 67/2004 of 25 March). In addition, a number of special agreements and conventions have been signed, offering privileges for medical assistance to citizens of Portuguese-speaking countries. The law provides for the right for some foreign citizens to travel to Portugal in order to receive medical assistance.

2.1.2. Education

The right to education is established in Decree-Law no. 34/2003 of 25 February: “All children, independently of the situation regarding the law of their host country, have the right to education and therefore the right to attend school and make use of all benefits like any other child. All non-regularised foreign minors whose age is below the minimum officially recognised by law to independently sign an employment contract, and who are economically dependent on their family household, have access to education under the same conditions as national minors in their situation” (ACIDI, 2007-2008).

One of the first political measures concerning migrant integration in Portugal is connected to the education area and dates from 1991, when the “*Entreculturas*” Secretariat was created under the Ministry of Education, with the purpose of pedagogically responding to the new challenges shaped by growing ethnic and cultural diversity at schools. The need to promote a more effective equality of opportunities concerning access to school and educational success was then identified, within three main axes: 1) To expand knowledge of multicultural realities at schools, through the “*Entreculturas*” database; 2) To promote research and intervention projects at schools; 3) To cooperate in the production and dissemination of targeted actions on intercultural education, such as support for publications and didactic material for training. Since March 2004, the “*Entreculturas*” Secretariat has been part of the High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue (at that time the High Commission for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities), which enlarged its area of intervention and brought added-value to the High Commission itself, through the creation of the Education and Training Office.

2.1.3. Employment

With the new Immigration Law no. 23/2007 of 4 July and the simplification it introduced in categories of visas, and apart from a number of exceptional cases,

foreigners with residence permits, whether having entered the country with a residence visa or through family reunification, are entitled to work in Portugal. This has not always been the case for family reunification situations. Immigrants are presently entitled to work in Portugal if they enter the country with a residence visa or a temporary stay visa for temporary jobs. The creation of a single residence permit also reduces inequality in, for example, access to self-employment activities, which those citizens holding stay permits under the previous legal regime were not entitled to.

Visas are conferred on foreign citizens with an employment contract or valid employment agreement, depending on annually defined workforce needs. The Institute for Employment and Professional Training maintains an updated public information system where all job offers not filled by nationals of Member-States, of the European Economic Area, of Third Countries benefiting from a free circulation agreement with the European Union or nationals of Third Countries legally living in Portugal – are published. These offers are distributed to Embassies and Consulates, under the Institute's own initiative or by request of employers or associations represented at the Consultative Council. A Council of Ministers resolution defining an indicative overall contingent of employment opportunities presumably not filled by the aforementioned workers is annually approved. Particular activity sectors can be excluded if the labour market context at that moment indicates no workforce needs (Law no. 23/2007 of 4 July).

2.1.4. Housing

Specific housing support measures for immigrants do not exist in Portugal. The main improvement concerning this area of intervention dates from 1993, when immigrants started to benefit from the Special Plan for Re-housing (PER programme), created that year with the purpose of re-accommodating residents of slum neighbourhoods of Lisbon and Porto. This was until 1993 the Decree-Law of November 1976 (DL no. 796/76) limited access to public housing to national citizens. This programme benefited and is

still benefiting a significant number of immigrants living in Portugal and their descendents, namely from Portuguese-speaking African countries.

More recently, the Institute for Housing and Urban Rehabilitation – a public agency that is part of indirect State administration, whose mission is to ensure the implementation of Government policies in this field – is putting two programmes into practice, which indirectly also benefit migrants: “*Prohabita*” – a financial support programme in access to housing, targeting families with serious economic disadvantages – and “*Porta 65*” – a programme for financial support in renting opportunities, targeting young people.⁸

2.1.5. Access to nationality

Access to Portuguese nationality has also undergone recent developments, with the new law of April 2006 reinforcing the *ius solis* criterion, though maintaining its basis on the *ius sanguinis* principle. *Ius solis* regulated Portuguese law until 1981 (Law no. 2098/59 of 29 July), when the new Law no. 37/81 of 3 October – later replaced by Law no. 25/94 of 19 August, DL no. 322-A/2001 of 14 December, DL no. 194/2003 of 23 August and Organic Law no. 1/2004 of 15 January – produced a great change in the definition of citizenship principles, by allowing nationality acquisition by birth only to children of a Portuguese mother and/or father.

The key changes introduced by the recent Law no. 2/2006, regulated in December of the same year, mainly benefit immigrant descendents:

- ✓ Nationality of origin is granted to third-generation immigrants (born in Portugal, children of foreigners also born in Portugal);
- ✓ Nationality of origin is also granted to second-generation immigrants (born in Portugal, children of foreigners), when at least one of the parents has lived legally in Portugal for 5 years;

⁸ Though a number of contestations have been very recently taking place in the public sphere, which mainly argue for the reduction of financial support and the subsidisation period, as well as limitations regarding conditions of access to the Programme “*Porta 65*”.

- ✓ Nationality by naturalisation is granted to second-generation minors (children born in Portugal) whose parents have been in a legal situation for five years or who concluded basic education in national territory;
- ✓ Nationality by naturalisation can be granted to second-generation immigrants (born in Portugal) when they reach majority, as long as they have stayed in Portugal for the last ten years, even if it was in an irregular situation.

Moreover, with this new Law, the Foreigners and Borders Service (SEF) transferred its competence on naturalisation processes to the Ministry of Justice and bureaucracy was reduced. Also, civil union with a Portuguese partner, if legally recognised, was rendered equivalent to marriage for naturalisation purposes, and there is no longer discrimination in terms of origin country. Portuguese citizenship can therefore be acquired by any immigrant who is:

- ✓ Married or living in civil union with a Portuguese partner for at least three years;
- ✓ Living legally in Portugal for at least six years.

Finally, migrants can have dual nationality in Portugal, which is considered to be best practice concerning access to nationality in Europe. As has already been demonstrated in this report, the new Nationality Law significantly increased the number of nationality requests and approved processes.

2.1.6. Language

Language is not part of compulsory measures for immigrant reception and integration. However, there has been a political concern with this particular and essential component for the integration process. The *Plan for Immigrant Integration* distinguishes nine measures under “culture and language”, which mainly relate to the increase of Portuguese training courses, production of multilingual didactic material or training in interculturalism (see table 5). At State level, the Institute for Employment and Professional Training promotes a language and citizenship programme – “*Portugal*

Acolhe” – (see section 2.2.3.) and the Ministry of Education is responsible for assessing Portuguese knowledge for naturalisation purposes.

2.1.7. Family reunification

Portuguese legislation concerning family reunification has been improving over the years, through an increase of associated rights and the simplification of the process. Until 2003, foreign citizens coming to Portugal under the family reunion process were not entitled to work in the country. Under the present legal framework, the simplification of the legal status gives all citizens with a residence permit the right to family reunification, independently of the type of permit and of the duration of stay, which corresponds to the main change introduced in the new Law.

Other changes consist of an immediate visa endorsement for family members living abroad, in case of approval of the process, and of the extension of the family reunification regulation to civil unions. Family members who qualify under family reunification are: 1) Partners; 2) Children (if minors or with a disability) under one or both members of the couple’s charge; 3) Adopted minors; 4) Children who have reached majority but are single, studying in Portugal and under one or both members of the couple’s charge; 5) Parents, if under the applicant’s charge or of his/her partner; 6) Brothers or sisters, if minors and under the applicant’s charge.

2.1.8. Solidarity and Social Security

Foreign citizens with legal residence in Portugal have the right to benefit from social allowances (such as the Social Income for Insertion – for individuals and families with serious economic needs – or unemployment subsidy) in equal circumstances with any Portuguese citizen.

2.1.9. Political participation

Migrants' political participation has undergone the most recent developments as concerns policy debate. In September 2007, an extraordinary meeting of the Consultative Council for Immigrant Affairs (COCAI) took place at the National Parliament, where the need for an adjustment to article 15 of the Portuguese Constitution was discussed in the presence of the political parties with parliamentary representation. As can be seen in the Constitution, migrants' political rights have so far been based on reciprocity: "1. Foreigners and stateless people living in Portugal benefit from the same rights and fulfil the same duties as Portuguese citizens; 2. The exception to the previous point is political rights, public non-technical service and rights and duties reserved by Constitution and Law for Portuguese citizens; 3. Rights not granted to foreigners are nevertheless recognised in terms of law and in conditions of reciprocity with citizens of Portuguese-speaking countries with permanent residence in Portugal, except access to the position of President of the Republic, President of the Parliament, Prime-Minister, President of the Supreme Courts and service in Armed Forces and diplomatic corps; 4. The law can provide foreigners living in national territory, in conditions of reciprocity, active and passive electoral capacity for local authority elections; 5. The law can still provide Member-State citizens living in Portugal, in conditions of reciprocity, the right to elect and be elected as deputies for the European Parliament".

As a consequence, political rights offered to resident foreigners presently vary according to nationalities. Citizens from Argentina, Chile, Estonia, Israel, Norway, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela can vote in local elections after three years of legal residence in Portugal. Cape Verdeans and Brazilians, as citizens of Portuguese-speaking countries, can vote after two years of residence. Brazilian citizens can also apply for the status of equality of political rights after three years and vote in presidential, legislative and autonomous elections. In addition to participation in local elections, citizens from Cape Verde and Brazil can be elected for local authority organisations after four years of legal residence in Portugal, and those from Uruguay and Peru after five years (as well

as all European Union citizens). European Union citizens in Portugal can vote in local authority elections and for the European Parliament.

At a recent COCAI meeting of September 2007, civil society organisations, immigrant representatives and political parties agreed on the need to revise this particular aspect of reciprocity, which ends up discriminating against some of the most numerically significant migrant communities in terms of rights to vote. A possible extension of these rights to other elections apart from local ones was also raised by some participants at the meeting, and though they did not reach the same straightforward consensus, the discussion was seen as a first important step towards the enhancement of political rights.

2.1.10. Anti-racism and discrimination

Law no. 134/99 of 28 August and Decree-Law no. 111/2000 of 4 July represent legal directives created to prevent and prohibit racial discrimination under all forms and to sanction the practice of any act violating fundamental rights or refusing or restricting the exercise of economic, social or cultural rights based on race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin. The Commission for Equality and Against Racial Discrimination is an independent body created in 1999 under the above-mentioned law. Following ACIDI's mission, it started functioning under ACIDI's structure and coordination in 2002 (at that time ACIME), under Decree-Law no. 251/2002 of 22 November. Government and Parliament representatives, immigrant associations, anti-racist organisations, trade unions, employers' associations and organisations acting for the protection of human rights can be listed as some of the Commission's members.

2.2 Integration Support Services

As a complement to the ten main general guidelines governing ACIDI's *Plan of Activities* for the period 2005-2008, and with regard to policies concerning immigrant reception and integration, there is a reference to the need to "simplify bureaucracy in the

relationship between immigrants and the State”. Based on that principle, a goal to “simplify formal requirements and improving the quality of services rendered, and thus transform the State into the immigrant’s main ally in integration” was set (ACIME, 2005-2008). At State level, the National and Local Immigrant Support Centres – which will be described in more detail in the following sections – represent the main integration service providers, in such different areas as employment, housing, legal and social support, family reunification, health, education, regularisation or visa renewal.

Apart from these centres, State services under different Ministries also target immigrants – though not as distinct beneficiaries – as can be seen in the subsequent description, which identifies the main actors – whether public, non-Governmental or private sector – in the area of immigrant integration.⁹

2.2.1. Health

All immigrants and their children have the right to be assisted in hospitals or health centres, independently of the legal situation (see section 2.1.1.). In order to promote migrants’ access to these services and to minimise lack of information on their rights, an information brochure has been produced and updated each year by ACIDI and the Health Administration. Also at State level, the Health Support Office located at the National Immigrant Support Centres of Lisbon and Porto provides information and advice to migrants, though no medical assistance is offered there. Moreover, training in diversity management and migrants’ rights for health staff has already been promoted by the mediators working at this office in Lisbon.

In December 2007, a cooperation agreement between ACIDI and the Social Security Institute was signed for the creation of a support programme to foreign patients. This

⁹ In December 2007 a map of Portuguese good practices in immigrant reception and integration was published. It results from a project developed by IOM and ACIDI, financed by the Luso-American Foundation, where 243 initiatives were collected in different areas, such as information, culture, education, employment, health, housing, legal support or finance. Though they are not responses evaluated as best practices, but rather collate those which have taken the initiative of filling in the required questionnaire, they consist of a good inventory of existing integration support services in the country (OIM/ACIDI, 2007).

programme aims at offering temporary shelter and financial support to foreign patients coming from Portuguese-speaking African countries, during their stay in Portugal for treatment purposes.

As concerns the non-Governmental sector, the association PROSAUDESC (association of health, environment and socio-cultural development promoters) – which has signed a protocol with the National Health Service – has been actively involved in health and migration matters. It provides family support, first aid and training and civic education along with organising information campaigns and leisure activities or participating in seminars. Immigrants have been the main target group of PROSAUDESC's intervention, as it is an association composed of health professionals from Portuguese-speaking African countries who started working in a community intervention project in a slum neighbourhood in the region of Lisbon.

The association AJPAS (*“Associação de Jovens Promotores da Amadora Saudável”* – Young Promoters of a Healthy Amadora) also develops community intervention projects in Amadora (a municipality on the outskirts of Lisbon), in areas such as HIV prevention, training and information campaigns, medical and psycho-social support – through different partnerships established with other organisations, such as Lisbon's Region Health Administration or local health centres. As another example of NGO support services in this area, the Portuguese Jesuit Refugee Service offers medical assistance through the volunteer work of medical doctors and helps in providing medication. “Doctors of the World – Portugal” represents another NGO working for immigrants' access to health and respect for their rights, through the development of different intervention projects with this population. The project EPIMIGRA – Centre for Epidemiological Study of Transmitted Diseases in Migrant Populations (under the Institute of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine – New University of Lisbon) – offers healthcare services to immigrants and works on prevention and counselling.

Moreover, various State health services linked to hospitals or health centres have been developing specific projects targeting the immigrant population, such as the integration of immigrant health professionals in the National Health Service (in cooperation with the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and the Portuguese Jesuit Refugee Service),

psychiatric assistance to migrants (Miguel Bombarda Hospital in Lisbon) or adjustment of services support to the migrant population (see OIM/ACIDI, 2007: 149-158). Finally, the “Immigration and Health Group” has been created as a national network of experts and professionals who are interested in the field, aiming at promoting information and the exchange of experiences in order to improve migrants’ access to health.

As can be seen in the *Plan for Immigrant Integration* of 2007, though several initiatives pursuing the defined measures are already taking place (such as the development of partnerships between NGOs and the National Health Service) a number of other actions are planned at political level, such as integrating Portuguese hospitals into the European “Migrant-Friendly Hospitals” network and developing a programme of socio-cultural mediation in hospitals and health centres (see table 5).

2.2.2. Education

The Education Support Office at the National Immigrant Support Centre in Lisbon – part of the Ministry of Education of Lisbon’s region – offers information and support for the integration of immigrants’ children at school. On the other hand, since there is no representative support in recognition of certificates and skills of immigrants¹⁰, this office also provides advice in this field whenever requested. Moreover, the “*Entreculturas*” Secretariat (see section 2.1.2.) is responsible for education and training programmes aiming at promoting access to school and educational success in equal conditions. Finally, the “*Programa Escolhas*” (a programme under the High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue that aims at promoting the social integration of young people from vulnerable socio-economic contexts, namely immigrant descendents and ethnic minorities) also develops a significant number of projects at schools.

¹⁰ The specific existing programme for recognition of diplomas concerns only doctors and nurses (Gulbenkian Foundation and Portuguese Jesuit Refugee Service’s programme).

2.2.3. Language

As concerns Portuguese language courses for foreigners, the “*Portugal Acolhe*” programme has worked since 2001 under the Institute for Employment and Professional Training. It consists of continuous free-of-charge training which aims at facilitating immigrants’ access to a set of competences and knowledge considered to be indispensable to their integration, namely professional integration. It is composed of Portuguese Language and Citizenship modules. The National Immigrant Support Centre in Lisbon has also provided free Portuguese courses since March 2007, but a larger range of these are offered by public schools, municipalities or non-Governmental organisations and associations (see OIM/ACIDI, 2007: 108-126).

2.2.4. Employment

As concerns employment, the Portuguese Institute for Employment and Professional Training (IEFP) offers a wide range of programmes for disadvantaged people, namely connected with vocational training, internships or occupational programmes for unemployed or long-term unemployed, young people with low qualifications or beneficiaries of the Social Income for Insertion. Though these programmes are not particularly targeting immigrants, foreigners can benefit from them like any other citizen, if they are in a regular situation.

The website <http://www.netemprego.imigrante.gov.pt/IEFP/estrangeiros/index.jsp> was recently created by IEFP following the new immigration law, aiming at disseminating job offers for new admissions. Targeting immigrants in the pre-migration period, through this website it is possible for candidates to apply for a job, be selected and ask for residence visas for subordinated work or temporary stay visas for seasonal jobs. This measure has therefore the purpose of acting as a mechanism for promoting legal migration.

In addition, Units for Insertion into Active Life (UNIVA – “*Unidade de Inserção na Vida Activa*”) are job centres run by the Institute for Employment and Professional Training, designed to promote professional integration or reintegration. Working as

partnership between job centres and schools, professional training centres, associations or local authorities, these units provide information, development of job-seeking skills, dissemination of job and training offers, integration in professional internships or labour market and follow-up.

In March 2007 the “Immigrant UNIVA Network” was created, in order to respond to immigrants’ specific needs. It presently involves 24 civil society organisations around the country, most of them immigrant associations or organisations that are located in settings with significant weight of immigrant population (with many of them also running Local Immigrant Integration Support Centres or developing projects under “*Programa Escolhas*”)¹¹. The National Immigrant Support Centres of Lisbon and Porto also include UNIVAs in the services they provide.

As for the private sector, the Temporary Job Agency “Lusotemp” can be highlighted as an example of immigrant integration. Having a significant number of immigrant employees, it has created a Local Immigrant Integration Support Centre (“*Ponto*

¹¹ The 24 organizations that are part of the “Immigrant UNIVA Network” are the following:

- *AGUINENSO – Associação Guineense de Solidariedade Social*
- *AMIGRANTE – Associação de Apoio ao Cidadão Migrante*
- *Associação de Jardins-Escola João de Deus*
- *Associação dos Africanos do Concelho de Vila Franca de Xira*
- *Associação Espaço Jovem*
- *Associação Luso-Caboverdiana de Sintra*
- *Associação Melhoramentos Recreativo do Talude*
- *Associação Sócio-Cultural da Quinta da Serra*
- *Associação Unida e Cultural da Quinta do Mocho*
- *CAPELA – Centro de Apoio à População Emigrante de Leste e Amigos*
- *Casa do Brasil de Lisboa*
- *Centro de Formação de Associações de Escolas de Almada Ocidental – Proformar*
- *Centro Social e Paroquial de Vera Cruz*
- *Cooperativa de Habitação e Construção Económica de Manteigadas*
- *Cruz Vermelha Portuguesa de Vila Real de Santo António*
- *Fábrica da Igreja Nossa Senhora da Conceição*
- *Geração Adolescer - Associação Integração Psicosocial de Crianças e Jovens*
- *Inovinter - Centro de Formação e de Inovação Tecnológica*
- *ISU - Instituto de Solidariedade e Cooperação Universitária*
- *JRS Portugal - Serviço Jesuíta aos Refugiados*
- *KHAPAZ - Associação Cultural*
- *PROACT - Unidade de Investigação e Apoio Técnico ao Desenvolvimento Local, à Valorização do Ambiente e à Luta contra a Exclusão Social*
- *SEIVA - Associação de Desenvolvimento ao Serviço da Vida*
- *Solidariedade Imigrante – Associação para a Defesa dos Direitos dos Imigrantes*

Imigrante”) – one of the few partnerships between ACIDI and the private sector to this effect – and included an EQUAL-funded project, also in partnership with ACIDI and three associations, aiming at preventing racism and xenophobia and promoting immigrants’ and ethnic minorities’ participation in the labour market.

The National Immigrant Support Centre in Lisbon operates an Entrepreneurship Support Office since October 2006, resulting from a protocol with the National Association for the Right to Credit. This association works in partnership with three national banks – *Millennium BCP*, *Banco Espírito Santo* and *Caixa Geral de Depósitos* – for microcredit opportunities. The Entrepreneurship Support Office at the National Immigrant Support Centre, as well as other microcredit offices for immigrants (namely the one linked to the Jesuit Refugee Service in Portugal) have *Caixa Geral de Depósitos* as the associated banking agency. This is a State-owned financial institution, though its operations are based on the legislation regulating the private sector.

2.2.5. Housing

Support in finding a house can be obtained at the National Immigrant Support Centre in Lisbon, where a list of housing offers is provided and advice is given concerning available mechanisms of financial support. Some associations, such as the Jesuit Refugee Service, also provide this kind of help, by making the first contact with the landlord and helping to overcome recurrent language obstacles.

2.2.6. Border police and other services that regulate immigration status

The Foreigners and Borders Service (SEF) is the entity regulating immigration status. Its inclusion in the National Immigrant Support Centres of Lisbon and Porto since 2004 aims at facilitating immigrants’ access to these services, by concentrating other offices that are needed for visa renewal (Social Security and Labour General Inspectorate) – as well as other support services – in the same structure (see section 2.4.1.). In addition, improving the quality of the services provided by the SEF is part of the defined

measures in the *Plan for Immigrant Integration* of 2007 (see table 5) and the use of socio-cultural mediators in its services is already part of this entity's modernisation and stronger involvement in the effective integration of immigrants (see section 2.4.2.).

2.2.7. Justice

Supporting migrants' access to justice is one of the outlined actions in the *Plan for Immigrant Integration* of 2007. In addition to legal advice (which will be discussed in the following section), translation and interpretation in the judicial system are part of the services provided by ACIDI concerning migrant integration. The Telephone Translation Service – operating since 2006 – provides the necessary instruments for a simultaneous conversation between the professional of the institution who requests the service, the translator and the immigrant, in a conference call format. Police services and Courts are some of this service's main users (as well as hospitals, health centres, Local Immigrant Integration Support Centres, associations or a small number of private entities), in this way minimising the language barrier.

The other important service concerning justice is nationality. Having been transferred to the Ministry of Justice's competencies, the bureaucracy of the naturalisation processes, as well as the time taken to conclude the process, have been reduced. The inclusion of the Central Registry Office at the National Immigrant Support Centres of Lisbon (in 2006) and Porto (in 2007) is also part of the promotion of immigrant integration, as a way of facilitating immigrants' access to these services, as has been pointed out concerning the Foreigners and Borders Service.

2.2.8. Legal advice

Legal advice is provided at the National Immigrant Support Centres of Lisbon and Porto through a specialised office, and at the Local Immigrant Integration Support Centres and at non-Governmental level through various associations (see OIM/ACIDI, 2007: 174-177). The latter sometimes provide the services of volunteer lawyers, who are often

linked to the community the association represents. The SOS Immigrant telephone line also provides advice in this area, and the reinforcement of the responses to requests at the National Immigrant Support Centres or at the telephone line is one of the *Plan for Immigrant Integration's* goals.

2.2.9. Social welfare and humanitarian assistance

In a similar way to legal support, specialised social support to immigrants is offered at the National Immigrant Support Centres of Lisbon and Porto, at the Local Immigrant Integration Support Centres and through a number of immigrant associations. Social responses are however most often found through the regular mechanisms of social security and other social institutions (such as the “*Santa Casa da Misericórdia*” in Lisbon – a Social Institution of Administrative Public Utility), since these possess the financial and legal means for this kind of assistance.

Foreigners in an irregular situation represent the most problematic scenario in this area, for no official social response can be offered to them. Some organisations manage to provide food and other supplies, as well as support to homeless people through the use of local social networks, such as the CAIS association, AMI (International Medical Assistance), the Portuguese Red Cross, “*Comunidade Vida e Paz*”, “*Banco Alimentar contra a Fome*” (Food Bank), “*Obra Católica Portuguesa de Migrações*” (Portuguese Catholic Migration Works) or the Portuguese Caritas (see OIM/ACIDI, 2007: 163-169).

Though shelters for homeless people are scarce, the temporary shelter “*Centro Pedro Arrupe*” is an example of a specific response designed for immigrant homeless people, operating since May 2006 in Lisbon. It results from a project developed by the Portuguese Jesuit Refugee Service, in cooperation with ACIDI, the Municipality of Lisbon, Institute of Social Security, Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa, International Organization for Migration and Sisters of Saint Vincent de Paul.

2.2.10. Cultural activities

At State level, the weekly television programme “*Nós*”¹² – under ACIDI’s responsibility – contributes to publicising immigrant cultures. In addition, some of the Local Immigrant Integration Support Centres (resulting from a partnership between ACIDI and local authorities, NGOs or associations) promote different cultural activities involving immigrants, such as intercultural festivities related to traditional culture dissemination (like dancing, music or food), sports or parades.

As can be seen on the map of Portuguese good practices in migrants’ reception and integration (OIM/ACIDI, 2007) a significant number of municipalities are also involved in the promotion of such activities, and two of them were recently awarded the prize for the best local authority practices in immigrant integration, promoted by the “*Plataforma Imigração*”¹³ (Seixal and Loures municipalities – and Amadora, with an honourable mention) – though these do not only concern intercultural activities but also other fields of intervention. At non-Governmental level, in addition to those activities promoted by the associations that represent a Local Immigrant Integration Support Centre, many other associations develop a wide range of cultural activities (see OIM/ACIDI, 2007: 75-102), mostly aiming at promoting intercultural dialogue or disseminating the cultural practices of the community they represent.

2.2.11. Support for immigrant associations

Within the High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue, an office operates that is exclusively designed for the recognition and support (both technical and financial) of immigrant associations. The Technical Support Office for Immigrant Associations was created in 2004, aiming at promoting immigrant associative activity (which is one of ACIDI’s main principles and is also part of the *Plan for Immigrant*

¹² Meaning “us”.

¹³ This is a platform for immigrant reception and integration in Portugal, composed of different foundations (with the Gulbenkian Foundation as the lead constituent), and other institutions or civil society organisations that have been promoting and supporting research or other activities on immigration issues.

Integration of 2007 – see table 5). Material support is given mainly through IT equipment, internet access and providing room for meetings. The technical staff, on the other hand, assist in monitoring and participating in projects carried out on the ground by the immigrant associations, providing training opportunities for association leaders and representing ACIDI at the promoted events, such as conferences, seminars, cultural events, work meetings or festivities, seeking to work in proximity and contributing to the recognition and visibility of the associations' work. This office also helps with the process of requesting ACIDI's recognition as an immigrant association and respective funding and, on the other hand, it seeks to guarantee the correct usage of allocated funds.¹⁴

2.2.12. Political Participation

Immigrants who are allowed to vote (see section 2.1.9.) should take care of electoral registration in the respective civil parish of residence, in the same way as national citizens. The need to encourage immigrants' political participation (namely through exercising the vote) has been a matter of concern for different associations, discussed at the last meeting of the Platform of Representative Structures of Immigrant Communities in Portugal (PERCIP – "*Plataforma das Estruturas Representativas das Comunidades Imigrantes em Portugal*") in April 2007, where the associations represented¹⁵ agreed that they should contribute to this encouragement towards the migrant populations they represent.

At State level, the new *Plan for Immigrant Integration* has information campaigns on immigrants' rights and duties and promotion of immigrants' electoral registration as part of its defined measures (see table 5), namely through information brochures. In 2003, a partnership between ACIDI and the immigrant association "*Morabeza*" had

¹⁴ The more than one hundred associations recognised by ACIDI can be consulted at http://www.acime.gov.pt/docs/Assoc/dados_AI_15-07-07.xls. Additionally, the list of councillors represented at the COCAI (Consultative Council for Immigration Affairs) who stand for immigrant associations – and are thus consulted in policy definition – can be found at <http://www.aimigrantes.org/content/pdf/Contactos%20dos%20Concelheiros%20do%20COCAI.pdf>.

¹⁵ See <http://www.aimigrantes.org/percip.aspx>

already been created in order to develop an information campaign under the theme “Local Vote, Local Citizenship – Capacitating and Electoral Registration of the Foreign Community in Portugal”.

The extraordinary COCAI meeting of September 2007 at the National Parliament involving civil society organisations, immigrant representatives and political parties (see section 2.1.9.) must also be highlighted as an important step towards the development of integration support measures.

2.2.13. Anti-racism and discrimination

The Commission for Equality and Against Racial Discrimination, working under the coordination of the High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue, is the main service provider in this area. By involving civil society organisations and employers’ organisations as its members, it represents a broad independent organ, though with limited financial and human resources.

As examples of other initiatives promoted by the High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue on prevention and combating racism and discrimination, the following can be highlighted:

- ✓ Creation of the award: “Immigration and Ethnic Minorities: Journalism for Tolerance”;
- ✓ Creation of the national contest “My School Against Discrimination” in cooperation with the Ministry of Education;
- ✓ The organisation of seminars and conferences;
- ✓ Information campaigns;
- ✓ Publications;
- ✓ Weekly television programme “*Nós*”;
- ✓ Cooperation with immigrant associations and Public Services in different initiatives in this area (e.g.: information campaign in partnership with the

immigrant association “*Morabeza*” for promoting the electoral participation of immigrants in local elections; cooperation with the Foreigners and Borders Service in the training course on human rights, targeting its staff);

- ✓ Creation of a “Support Unit for Immigrant Victims and of Racial or Ethnical Discrimination” (UAVIDRE), in partnership with the Portuguese Association for Victim Support (APAV)¹⁶.

In addition, anti-racist organisations represented on the Commission also develop independent work in this field, namely the association SOS Racism, which is one of the most visible in the country. Apart from information campaigns at schools and neighbourhoods with significant immigrant populations, the association promotes seminars and debates, provides legal support and develops specific projects with national and international partnerships – mostly in the field of education. Moreover, Portugal has had since 2001 a National Focal Point¹⁷ related to the European Network on Racism and Xenophobia (RAXEN), developed under the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC).

2.3 Joined-up Government and Partnerships

In the Decree-Law no. 251/2002 of 22 November, which created the former High Commission for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities, one of the defined goals was to “ensure the participation and cooperation of representative immigrant associations, social partners and welfare bodies in the definition of integration policies and combating exclusion”. This partnership between Government and non-Government actors had already been operating since 1998, with the establishment of the Consultative Council for Immigration Affairs (COCAI) – Decree Law No. 39/98, of 27 February – but it was not until 2002 that this body was included in ACIDI’s structure. COCAI is composed of the following members:

¹⁶ UAVIDRE stands for the Portuguese designation “*Unidade de Apoio à Vitima Imigrante e de Discriminação Racial ou Étnica*” and APAV for “*Associação Portuguesa de Apoio à Vítima*”.

¹⁷ NÚMENA – a research centre in social sciences – is the Portuguese Focal Point of RAXEN.

-
- ✓ *The High Commissioner, who chairs it;*
 - ✓ *One representative of each immigrant community from Portuguese-speaking countries;*
 - ✓ *One representative of each of the three largest immigrant communities not included in the previous group;*
 - ✓ *One representative of Private Social Solidarity Institutions;*
 - ✓ *Two representatives of institutions that work with immigrants;*
 - ✓ *Two representatives of employers' associations;*
 - ✓ *Two Trade Union representatives based at the Economic Social Council;*
 - ✓ *Two citizens of recognised merit;*
 - ✓ *One representative of the Government responsible for emigration and Portuguese communities;*
 - ✓ *One representative of each of the following Ministries:*
 - *Ministry of Economy and Innovation, Ministry of Internal Administration, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Employment and Social Security.*
 - ✓ *One representative of the Regional Government of the Azores;*
 - ✓ *One representative of the Regional Government of Madeira;*
 - ✓ *One representative of the National Association of Municipalities.*

Within the same Decree-Law of November 2002, integration issues were to be addressed “namely through provision of support and service points for immigrants to be located in Lisbon and Porto and possibly in other locations within the country, framed within cooperation agreements to be entered into with Municipalities – thus preventing that each legislative cycle is faced with a functional void, by providing a solution that ensures continuity” (Decree-Law no. 251/2002). The National Immigrant Support

Centres in Lisbon and Porto and the Local Immigrant Integration Support Centres¹⁸ spread around the country were created with this purpose.

The local centres have a focus on local intervention, resulting from partnerships established between ACIDI and municipalities or civil society organisations (mainly immigrant associations or NGOs) and the total number of CLAIIs is 78 in the country at the present time. CLAIIs are distributed among Portugal's different regions and represent a good example of local/regional partnerships, as most of them have gone beyond the signed protocol with ACIDI and established local partnerships at different levels, often with local authority institutions, Chambers of Commerce, employers', health or educational organisations and other associations or NGOs.

At national level, the CNAIs represent the best example of joined-up Government, since they include Government agencies that are related to immigration issues (see table 7) and support offices in different areas under ACIDI's responsibility. Furthermore, these centres result from a partnership not only between ACIDI and other Government agencies, but also with different immigrant associations or NGOs working in the field, which allocate socio-cultural mediators, as immigrant community representatives, to work at the CNAIs. As a one-stop-shop model for immigrant integration in Portugal, these centres will be further described in the next section.

Finally, the aforementioned Commission for Equality and Against Racial Discrimination also exemplifies a partnership between Governmental and non-Governmental institutions, that contributes to supporting immigrant integration (see sections 2.1.10. and 2.2.13).

¹⁸ Hereafter referred to as CNAIs and CLAIIs as for "*Centros Nacionais de Apoio ao Imigrante*" and "*Centros Locais de Apoio à Integração de Imigrantes*". The latter were transformed from Local Immigrant Support Centres into Local Immigrant Integration Support Centres in 2006, pursuing the goal of providing a more efficient contribution to immigrants' integration through the promotion of different activities.

2.4 One-Stop-Shop Models

2.4.1. Existing One-Stop-Shop models for immigrant integration

Among the priorities set out by the former High Commission for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities within the framework of the broad activity guidelines for immigrants' reception and integration, as defined by Portugal's Fifteenth Constitutional Government, the following goal is stated: "To create a user-friendly interface between immigrants and the State's Central Administration offices that is capable of providing integrated solutions to immigrants, through National Immigrant Support Centres" (ACIME, 2002-2005).

The integration of these centres within the legal framework was consolidated under Decree-Law no. 27/2005 of 4 February, where Article 4-A governs their functions. The following stipulations are highlighted, among the various paragraphs governing the role of CNAI offices:

- Immigrant Support Centres are organic units charged with receiving, advising and assisting immigrant citizens, and shall be geared towards facilitating interaction between those users and the various Government agency offices;
- CNAI offices shall offer a range of services of public interest with quality and speed of service, at convenient and comfortable locations, based on partnership and cooperation agreements to be established between the High Commission and the various services within the Public Administration sector, and ancillary public and private entities, which are to be specifically tailored to serve the immigrant population in Portugal;
- CNAI office operations shall be provided through a nuclear structure and socio-cultural mediator personnel, to be recruited subject to the terms and conditions enacted by Law no. 105/2001 of 31 August;¹⁹

¹⁹ The normative framework regarding the socio-cultural mediators' role will be specified in the following section.

- The working relationship between the High Commission and the public and private partner institutions participating in the CNAI structure shall be regulated by cooperation agreements, which shall specify which services are to be provided by each partner institution, and their respective terms and conditions for participating in those partnerships.

The first phase that led to the introduction of the National Immigrant Support Centres in Lisbon and Porto was a needs survey, where services' dispersion and lack of integration were revealed as one of the major reasons why some immigrants gave up on completing the processes for legalising their status. On the other hand, complexity in having to interact with various public services also proved to represent a stumbling block to social integration, given poor coordination among those same services, wide diversity in their modus operandi and procedures, and incompatible office hours.

To that effect, the CNAI project drew on the already existing model used by Portugal's one-stop-shop for the general population – the “Citizen Shop” network – which has been rather successful in addressing the shortcomings of widely dispersed Public Administration services. However, the specificities of the situations leading immigrants to require certain Government agency services, together with possible cultural aloofness and language difficulties, seemed to result in the insufficient capacity of the Citizen Shops of fully addressing the immigrants' particular requirements.

CNAI offices have been trying to overcome these shortcomings by addressing users' needs in a similar manner while focusing solely on immigrants. During the project's inception stage, preliminary meetings took place with the Citizen Shop Management Institute, which acted in a consulting capacity, followed by a process of discussions with the various institutions involved in the project.

The following table presents the main objectives and implemented actions for the development of the CNAI model.

Table 6: CNAI implementation: actions developed vis-à-vis defined goals

OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS
To provide integrated solutions to the problems faced by immigrant citizens, by providing all the services required to meet their needs, at a single point.	Identifying needs; Inviting key Government organisations involved in immigration issues to participate; Bringing in other immigrant support services, dependent on ACIDI, into a single unit; Introducing a common IT platform for all services, allowing for standard data capturing, document issuing, and communications among the various services.
To focus on the particular requirements of immigrants, by trying to minimise the time they take to legalise their situation.	Training specialised staff to sort the various immigrant requirements in order to better route users (by evaluating their queries and issues and verifying their documentation beforehand), thus contributing to speeding up the required procedures.
To narrow the gap between Public Administration services and immigrant citizens, namely by introducing socio-cultural mediators, and fostering cultural, language-orientated and emotional involvement among the staff.	Contacting immigrant associations and NGOs with a view to entering into cooperation agreements with them, and with a view to recruiting socio-cultural mediators; Training mediators.
To foster the adoption of a new attitude to public service, thereby creating a pleasant and dynamic environment.	Implementing a common service point prioritising close contact between the various services, as well as between those and CNAI management.

Source: Abranches, M. (2006), "Evaluation of National Immigrant Support Centres", IOM.

In order to meet those objectives, the former High Commission for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities attempted to coordinate the various Public Administration services involved in immigration issues and to obtain their cooperation, having also introduced other services under ACIDI's responsibility, aiming at supporting the above in areas where the existing structures fail to adequately address those issues (see table 7).

The first development phase of the CNAI project took place between September and December 2002, during which time the best solutions were analysed and discussions with the invited institutions took place. As concerns premises, the occupation of the former facilities of a Secondary School in Lisbon, which was in the process of closing down and could be made available by the Ministry of Education, was successfully negotiated for the Lisbon premises. As concerns Porto, a listing of buildings for rent

was compiled and the premises that the Porto CNAI office has occupied to date were selected. The property belongs to INESC (Portugal's Systems Engineering and Computers Institute) and was structurally and technically considered the most adequate for the operational requirements of a National Immigrant Support Centre.

In Lisbon, the headquarters of ACIDI itself are also located in the same premises, and obvious benefits arise from the close proximity of all services that address interrelated issues.²⁰

Between January 2003 and March 2004, the model entered implementation stage. Negotiations took place with the various institutions participating in the project, leading to the signature of various cooperation agreements between the latter and ACIDI. The Lisbon CNAI opened its doors on 16 March 2004 and Porto CNAI opened on 23 March that same year. Currently, the National Immigrant Support Centres offer the following services:²¹

Table 7: Services provided at the CNAI

GOVERNMENT SERVICES	ACIDI SUPPORT SERVICES
Foreigners and Borders Service	Immigrant Legal Support Office
Social Security	Unit for Insertion into Active Life – Job Centre
Labour General Inspectorate	Entrepreneurship Support Office
Central Registry Office (Ministry of Justice)	Family Reunification Support Office
Ministry of Education	Housing Support Office
Ministry of Health	Social Support Office

²⁰ Aiming at improving and enlarging these premises, a construction work has resulted in the temporary displacement of ACIDI's team to another location, though geographically close to the CNAI (in the same neighbourhood).

²¹ The Ministry of Education, Entrepreneurship and Housing Support Offices are currently not represented at the Porto CNAI.

In addition to these services, a referral team is also on hand. In Lisbon, given the high number of daily enquiries from users, the referral task is subdivided into a) a pre-sorting stage (where the particular situation of each immigrant waiting is pre-diagnosed, and service tickets are distributed to service-users for other sorting offices or directly to the relevant service, depending on each particular instance); and b) Reception and Sorting Offices – where, following an assessment of each enquiry, a digital file is opened on each user, the user’s documentation is verified, and officers then adequately route users within the CNAI structure by issuing them with service tickets for the relevant service. Each service ticket bears a specific letter. In addition, the Lisbon CNAI provides an enquiries and assistance counter, which can also be accessed with a service ticket.

2.4.2. Socio-cultural mediators

The figure of the socio-cultural mediator is established in Portuguese Law no. 105/2001 of 31 August 2001. Socio-cultural mediators operate on behalf of the integration of immigrants and ethnic minorities, from the perspective of intercultural dialogue and the reinforcement of social cohesion. Their tasks are to be performed at schools, Social Security institutions, Foreigners and Borders Service, Institute for Social Reinsertion, local authorities and public services or entities where their role becomes necessary. Socio-cultural mediators’ competences and duties are defined as follows by law:

- a) To promote intercultural dialogue by stimulating respect and deeper mutual knowledge of cultural diversity and social inclusion;
- b) To cooperate in the prevention and resolution of socio-cultural conflicts and in the definition of social intervention strategies;
- c) To actively cooperate with all actors in social and educational intervention processes;
- d) To facilitate communication between service officers and users of different cultural origins;

- e) To assist users in their relations with public and private services and respective professionals;
- f) To promote the inclusion of citizens from different social and cultural origins, in equality of circumstances;
- g) To respect the confidentiality of all information related to families and populations within their activities.

Administratively, the figure of the socio-cultural mediator is guaranteed through a protocol signed by the State or local authorities on the one hand, and associations, cooperatives or outsourcing companies – created by immigrants or differentiated ethnic groups – on the other hand. The State or local authority ensures the necessary financial resources, in order to guarantee the continuity and stability of the mediators' job, following the principle of establishing a linkage between socially excluded populations and institutions that work with them. When this type of legal regime is not applicable – due to the inexistence of these sorts of entities – an individual employment contract or outsourcing contract can also be directly signed, under the general regime of the Public Administration.

Socio-cultural mediators should preferably be immigrants themselves, revealing mediation competences and knowledge of the socio-cultural characteristics of the target communities. Under the same law, socio-cultural mediators must attend training courses, both with generic contents on intercultural dialogue promotion and particular modules related to the specificity of each community. Special protocols should therefore be created with the Institute for Employment and Professional Training and other accredited entities, in order to promote training courses that provide equivalence to the ninth year of schooling and confer professional qualifications, in this way accrediting trainees to a superior educational level than the one held before.

However, socio-cultural mediators already operated before the definition of their legal status under this law. From 1996 onwards a number of legislative documents, mainly regarding the educational area, have contributed to the recognition of socio-cultural mediation in Portugal. Joint Resolution no. 147/96 of 8 July is the first document

mentioning the possibility of making use of socio-cultural mediators for *Priority Intervention Educational Territories*, followed by Resolution no. 304/98 of 24 April, which determines the use of socio-cultural mediators in programmes for leisure time activities at schools.

In 1999, Resolution no. 942/99 of 3 November approved the Education/Employment Programme, which adjusts mediators' situation in order to ensure continuity, by regulating their income, monitoring and performance evaluation. Professional categorisation is nevertheless still lacking, which contributes to perpetuating the transitory nature of socio-cultural mediators' situation.

A joint resolution in 2000 (no. 1165/2000 of 18 December) – involving the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Employment and Social Solidarity – classified the use of socio-cultural mediators at schools as an extremely positive intervention for the reinforcement of the relationship between families and schools, intercultural dialogue, educational success and for the decrease of early dropout rates. The working group created under this resolution nominated a representative of ACIDI for its coordination and technical support.

Also before the creation of the National Immigrant Support Centres in 2004, described above, the SOS Immigrant Telephone Line was actually the first service for immigrant integration under ACIDI's responsibility to make use of mediators. It has been operating since 2003, firstly providing answers in three official languages (Portuguese, English and Russian) and later extended to French, Guinean and Cape Verdean Creole, Spanish, Ukrainian, Romanian and Belorussian.

The National Immigrant Support Centres made use of the figure of the socio-cultural mediator through the establishment of protocols with different immigrant associations or other civil society organisations that include migrants as part of their target-groups. In the case of these centres, mediators not only contribute to creating proximity with the immigrant and to help in cases of difficulties in communication by speaking most of the

migrants' origin languages,²² but they also help to attenuate the long time that Public Administration services take to manage certain processes, often due to a shortage in human resources. Mediators thus frequently shift between offices inside the centre, according to specific needs, sometimes also helping in Government agency offices. In addition, the sorting phase operated by the mediators, where all documentation is checked, greatly contributes to facilitating adequate routing to the appropriate service.

As concerns the status of socio-cultural mediators, it is nevertheless important to note that certain shortcomings are evidenced in that status itself. Although their role adds value at various levels, the fact that it is established under cooperation agreements between ACIDI and immigrant associations or NGOs leads mediators to feel that the context in which they are contractually hired (by the respective associations or NGOs)²³ and the context in which they carry out their professional functions become divorced from one another. This is because, in some instances, they do not particularly relate to the association from which they depend hierarchically, not to mention the lack of stability and definition concerning their career path.

Additionally, though by definition socio-cultural mediators should be immigrants themselves or represent a community of immigrants, this is not always the case, as they are sometimes linked to these communities' organisations only in administrative terms. Some associations also express similar constraints, pointing out that working at CNAI ends up being a mediator's full-time job and that there are no benefits for the association. Instead, some associations would like to be able to make use of the experience and knowledge gained by their mediators in order to benefit from the cooperation agreement as well.

According to some of the associations that allocate mediators within the protocol with ACIDI, an administrative constraint also arises from this protocol, related to the Portuguese general labour legislation which limits the number of employment contracts

²² Portuguese, English, French, Creole, Ukrainian, Romanian, Moldovan, Russian and Chinese are the languages presently spoken at the CNAI in Lisbon.

²³ The current cooperation agreement between the organisations attributes the ultimate decision-making powers on recruitment to ACIDI, namely to CNAI management, who interview and select candidates.

an organisation can have with the same employee. Not having the structural means to integrate these mediators into their permanent staff, these associations have already faced the need to cease some of these contracts and a number of mediators have been confronted with this difficulty, which in some cases has implied a period without work or a change of employer organisation.

It is, however, necessary to highlight that, despite those constraints, the recognition of the great relevance of mediators in the National Immigrant Support Centres remains unquestionable, insofar as they provide personalised assistance to users and promote enhanced cooperation among institutions, as already discussed. Moreover, the survey applied to CNAI users under IOM's evaluation study in 2007/2008 led to the same conclusion on their merit. In fact, a large number of the 700 immigrants surveyed considered that being assisted by socio-cultural mediators facilitated communication and increased confidence (43.2%), though the majority declared that mediation does not make a difference (55.4%).²⁴

The fact that language and cultural differences do not represent a significant percentage of the main difficulties felt by immigrants at the CNAI (5.9% in Lisbon and 5.3% in Porto) may also point to the added-value of the socio-cultural mediators. It can also be suggested that confidence and cultural proximity may play a more important role than language in the Portuguese case, since almost all respondents in both IOM's evaluation studies (undertaken in 2006 and in 2007/2008) indicated that they are assisted in Portuguese in most instances (more than 90%). The exception are Indian citizens, who, being one of the fifteen main nationalities of CNAI users, reveal stronger linguistic difficulties (51.6% of the immigrants surveyed who declared that they had faced this kind of obstacle were Indians – 16 of 39 individuals), which is linked to the fact that there are still no socio-cultural mediators who speak Indian languages at the CNAI.

Following this successful experience at the National Immigrant Support Centres, the Foreigners and Borders Service began to make use of socio-cultural mediators in

²⁴ In the previous IOM evaluation study (2006), however, the percentage of those who pointed out the importance of the mediator's role for communication and confidence purposes was higher (63.1%) – out of a total of 300 immigrants interviewed at the Lisbon and Porto CNAIs – as against only 36.2% who stated the irrelevance of that role.

October 2006. Improving support provided and access to services is on the basis of the protocols established between Foreigners and Borders Service branches and a number of immigrant associations and NGOs. Socio-cultural mediators' functions comprise reception, sorting, providing support and information, setting appointments and redirecting foreign citizens at the central and regional services of this Public Institution. Initial and on-going training of mediators is the institution's responsibility, as well as co-financing the administrative costs supported by each association - which are also ACIDI's responsibilities concerning the mediators working at the CNAI.

2.4.3. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Government integration services

The shared IT system used at the National Immigrant Support Centres deserves particular mention, since it is considered to be one of the innovative features which best contributes to improving the quality of the work. At the Lisbon CNAI office, digitising the documents brought in by immigrants facilitates and speeds up procedures, especially with regard to the requirements of the Foreigners and Border Service office. This agency is one of the services receiving the largest number of enquiries every day on account of visa renewals, since visa renewals represent the immigrants' major service requirement from CNAI offices.

According to the Assistant Inspector coordinating the Foreigners and Borders Services at the Lisbon CNAI office in 2006, ACIDI's human resources, their sorting of user requirements, and the digitising of the immigrants' documentation have all greatly contributed to enhancing the Foreigners and Borders Service office's productivity, which, ultimately, can only benefit the immigrants. Sharing an IT system at the CNAI provides a digital process with relevant information concerning each immigrant, to which all institutions and offices have access. In addition, the fact that the SOS Immigrant Telephone Line shares the same system also allows migrants to call and ask for information regarding their own processes. Government agencies working at the

CNAI have not only access to this shared system but also to their own specific databases at national or regional level, which only they can access.

Furthermore, an immigrant card was created in 2007, resulting from the registry of all legal migrants at the National Immigrant Support Centres. All these immigrants have the right to this card, which allows them to benefit from every service provided at the CNAI, free-of-charge, and also set appointments through the SOS Immigrant Telephone Line in order to have a faster access to services. An SMS is sent to the immigrant's mobile phone the day before the appointment with the aim of reminding them of the appointed date and time. Finally, further partnerships are expected to be created, enabling migrants to benefit from other services with this card, such as discounts on travel or money transfers.

3 Immigrants' Experiences of Government Services

Public services' opening hours are considered to be the first obstacle that immigrants face regarding accessibility. The fact that these schedules coincide with a migrant's working day often forces them to lose working hours and the respective wages. Though the National Immigrant Support Centres manage to overcome the difficulty of service dispersal, working hours are similar to those practiced in other office settings (8:30am – 4:30pm). However, this does not seem to correspond to a significant obstacle for the immigrants interviewed at the Lisbon and Porto CNAIs. Out of a total of 604 answers, the majority – 442 individuals, which corresponds to 73.2% – did not indicate opening hours as one of the three main difficulties. The total of those who consider opening hours accessible and very accessible corresponded to 64.3%.

Nevertheless, almost all of the 271 individuals who evaluate this aspect as not very accessible or totally inaccessible (26.8%) would like the CNAI to be opened on Saturdays as well (98.5%). Furthermore, centring the analysis on the total of responses and not on the total of interviewed individuals, opening hours correspond to the fourth main difficulty in Lisbon and the third in Porto, out of a total of ten difficulties (see table 8). Some of the people interviewed at agency director level also consider that in some cases the offices at the Citizen Shops reveal higher demand due to the greater accessibility concerning opening hours.²⁵

As concerns language and communication difficulties, these are mainly felt by newly arrived migrants, usually from non-Portuguese-speaking countries. However, according to the president of the Cape Verdean Association in Lisbon – representing one of the oldest migrant communities in the country – several Cape Verdean citizens (though coming from a Portuguese-speaking country) also experienced these sorts of obstacles and many misinterpretations occurred at the first stage of the settlement, which can have serious consequences, when concerning for example the health sector.

In addition, the question of incoherent information that migrants often declare to experience is sometimes linked to difficulties concerning language and capacity for communication. However, the staff's lack of knowledge and sensitivity regarding

²⁵ Only services that are part of the Citizen Shops operate with extended opening hours (8:30am – 7:30pm from Monday to Friday and 9:30am – 3pm on Saturdays) at the present time.

cultural differences is also one of the main causes for unsuccessful support by services, according to the immigrant associations contacted.

If we take the example of the National Immigrant Support Centres into consideration, it is possible to observe that language understanding and cultural differences do not represent a significant percentage of difficulties experienced, as previously analysed in this report, which can be related to the presence of socio-cultural mediators at these centres. Correspondingly, this presence represents better communication and added confidence to a high number of the migrants interviewed (see section 2.4.2.). On the other hand, waiting times were the most significant difficulty felt by CNAI users in 2007/2008 (see table 8).

Table 8: Main difficulties experienced by interviewees²⁶

DIFFICULTIES	LISBON CNAI		PORTO CNAI	
	<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>%</i>
Language understanding	36	4.6	3	1.1
Cultural differences	10	1.3	11	4.2
Relations with personnel	4	0.5	1	0.4
Office hours	112	14.3	50	18.9
Waiting times	309	39.4	93	35.2
Lack of necessary services	12	1.5	7	2.7
Distance to residence or workplace	121	15.4	7	2.7
Operational features/ complexity of procedures	15	1.9	31	11.7
Complexity of procedures and bureaucracy	166	21.1	61	23.1

Source: Evaluation of National Immigrant Support Centres, IOM (forthcoming, 2008).

A qualitative analysis of the complaints book available at the National Immigrant Support Centres can also offer an idea of migrants' main difficulties concerning access to the services. It is interesting to note that some of the most recurrent complaints relate not only to specific services but also to more general aspects such as the complexity of procedures, excess of required documentation, frequent alterations in requisites, delay in the conclusion of processes or difficulties in getting information about the situation of the process and high fees for obtaining or renewing a visa.

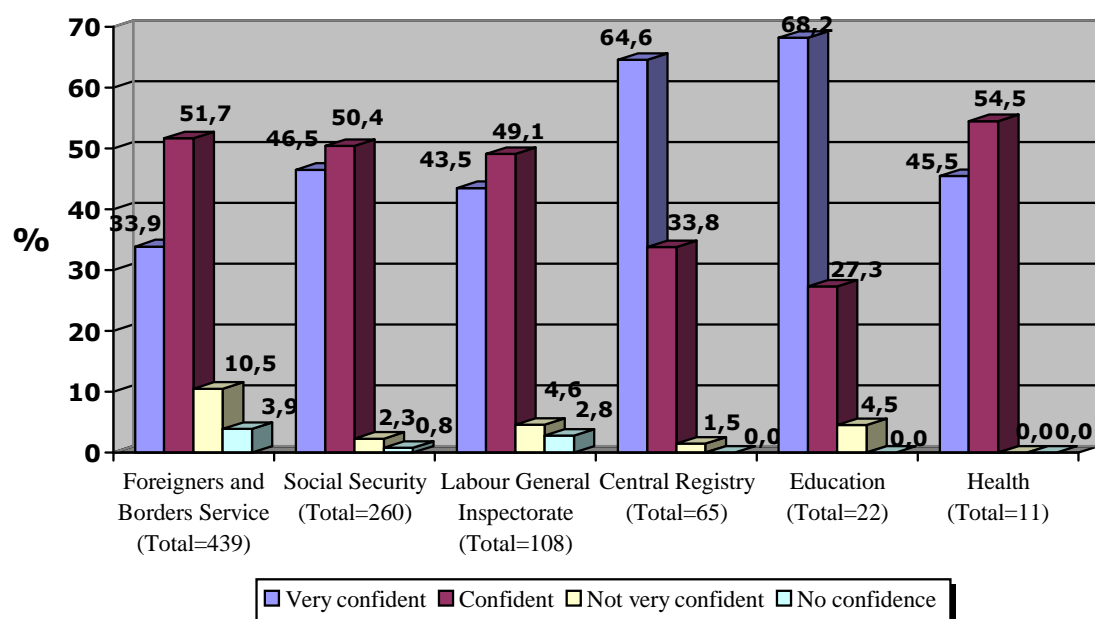
²⁶ Percentage of responses selected for each type of difficulty, from a total of 785 responses in Lisbon and 264 in Porto. Immigrants were asked to select their three main difficulties from the list. 600 surveys were applied in the Lisbon CNAI and 100 in the Porto CNAI.

In this respect, the fine that has to be paid when the closing date for visa renewal is expired is also a reason for a number of complaints, since migrants feel that unclear or incorrect information provided regarding documentation or requisites is often the reason for this delay.

In this sense, incoherence of information provided by the various organisations is also a recurrent complaint, mainly as regards documentation required by the Foreigners and Borders Service, Social Security and Labour General Inspectorate. Though we should also take the interference of language and communication difficulties into account regarding incoherence of information, according to the immigrant associations contacted, lack of information in some services – where civil parishes are frequently mentioned as an example – as well as differences in procedures within the same institution that actually occur, or the feeling of “ping-pong” games between institutions, also contribute to migrants distrust in Government services. As the president of the “*Casa do Brasil*” association exemplifies, migrants feel a strong pressure – as if being forced to undergo a test – when having to take care of their visa renewal.

However, if we use the responses given by the 700 surveyed immigrants at Lisbon and Porto’s CNAI in 2007/2008 as an indicator of migrants’ degree of trust in public services, concerning the four main Government services that they have to deal with (Foreigners and Borders Service, Social Security, Labour General Inspectorate and Central Registry Office), as well as the delegations of the Ministry of Education (only in Lisbon) and Ministry of Health, we observe that the majority actually declares to be confident or very confident in the office’s ability to resolve their situations (see figure 3).

Figure 3: Degree of users' confidence in the office's ability to resolve their situations (%)



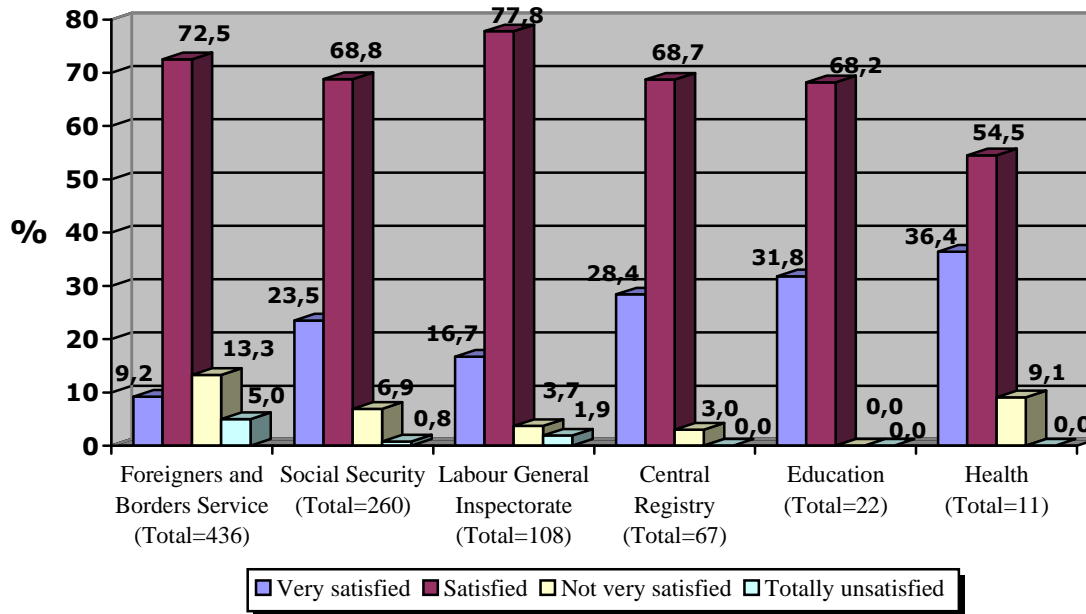
Source: Evaluation of National Immigrant Support Centres, IOM (forthcoming, 2008).

In this respect, it is important to mention the perspective that some associations share, that a place like the CNAI – where migrants meet each other and are able to discuss their own experiences amongst themselves – might help attenuate the feeling of disorientation and, consequently, of distrust.²⁷

As an indicator of migrants' satisfaction with respect for the user, we can also use the responses given by the 700 immigrants surveyed at the Lisbon and Porto CNAIs in 2007/2008, regarding the degree of satisfaction with these services' friendliness. As it is possible to observe, there is a majority of satisfied users, followed by the very satisfied ones (see figure 4).

²⁷ Though another viewpoint is sometimes also raised, concerning the creation of segregated services by the CNAI in a long-term perspective, therefore being more applicable and significant for newcomers.

Figure 4: Degree of satisfaction with services' friendliness (%)



Source: Evaluation of National Immigrant Support Centres, IOM (forthcoming, 2008).

Waiting times are the primary difficulty according to the results of the questionnaire and the most repeated aspect in the complaints book, along with the long time it takes to conclude visa and nationality processes. As concerns nationality in particular, one of the main difficulties in the process concerns migrants with disabilities or who cannot read and write, due to the need to test Portuguese language knowledge through a written exam. The time that migrants have to wait for taking the Portuguese language test is also too extensive, according to some of the member associations of the COCAI, which contributes to the lengthening of the process.

Difficulties in filling in documentation (often related to the language obstacle) are also experienced by immigrants in relation to Government services. In the CNAI complaint book, having one officer helping with this issue – as some immigrant associations have – is a declared need, as well as being one of the immigrant associations' suggestions to improve those services.

As concerns racism and discrimination, some of the main experiences occur in the health and education sector. Though these areas (see sections 2.1.1. and 2.1.2.; 2.2.1. and 2.2.2.) correspond to immigrants' rights independently of the legal status, lack of information among professionals in these fields is often a reality, and refusals to provide

medical assistance or children's registration at schools are frequently registered in cases of irregular migrants. When immigrant associations (or the Health and Education offices at the National Immigrant Support Centre) receive these cases, they contact the respective service in order to clarify the situation.

The employment sector reveals other examples of exploitation experiences. Although employers being fined when making use of illegal work, not paying foreign workers' wages or not making their welfare and tax contributions, migrants' vulnerable situations often discourage them from presenting formal complaints. According to some immigrant associations, the area of labour conflicts is not covered enough by Public Services targeting the migrant population. In addition to the reinforcement of supervision, a panel of volunteer lawyers should be provided by the State, since many immigrants have difficulties in accessing legal support from social security, as this public assistance depends on tax declarations from the previous year, which does not always correspond to present income.

Still related to education, difficulty in the recognition of diplomas is a recurrent experience among migrants, mainly due to the complexity of the process and how time-consuming it is, in spite of the priority given to this field of intervention by the Government.²⁸ Another example of inequality presented by the immigrant associations contacted is State financial support to university studies in cases of low-income families, which can only be provided to national or Member-State citizens or foreign students from countries with which Portugal has a special cooperation agreement in this field.

Finally, as concerns immigrant associations, despite the importance of their role and the need to involve them in the definition of immigration and integration policies, highlighted both in the *Plan for Immigrant Integration* and in ACIDI's *Plan of Activities* for 2005-2008, some difficulties are also experienced in this field. Though ACIDI's Technical Support Office for Immigrant Associations offers support for the recognition process (see section 2.2.11.), this recognition is given provided that the

²⁸ The Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) published in 2007, though placing Portugal at the 2nd place concerning the best practices on immigrants' integration policies (by comparing 28 countries – 25 Member-States, Canada, Norway and Switzerland) also states that “these procedures often are too long, expensive and heavily bureaucratic” in Portugal (Niessen et al., 2007: 148).

association meets the conditions foreseen in the law, has a minimum 100 members,²⁹ and can meet a number of other outlined requirements. According to several organisations, the number of members should not count as a requirement, since many small local associations in specific territorial contexts (namely in the interior regions) play an important role for immigrant communities and integration, but do not have the defined number of members, and therefore do not receive any financial support.

²⁹ If their intervention is at local level. Associations that conduct activities at regional level must have a minimum of 500 members, and for national level associations 1,000 members are required.

4 Discussion

4.1. Financial and human resources

By readjusting ACIDI's legal framework, Decree-Law no. 27/2005 integrates the National Immigrant Support Centres into ACIDI's structure, defining them as organic units of reception, information and front-line service to immigrant citizens. Within the plan for Public Administration modernisation, in October 2006 ACIDI was integrated into the State's indirect administration and transformed into a Public Institute, reinforcing the CNAIs and CLAIs as part of its activities.

In order to implement the actions defined as priorities, in 2006 ACIDI allocated 78% of its total budget (€3.7 million) to variable costs, where the implementation and sustainability of the CNAIs and CLAIs are included. ACIDI's fixed costs represented only 22% of the total budget in 2006 (approximately €1.07 million), which evidences the priority given by ACIDI to its activities (integrated in the variable costs), even after the general budget reduction that occurred between 2005 and 2006, due to the national policy of a cutback in public expenses (ACIME, 2005-2006). Furthermore, out of the variable costs total for 2006, an allocation of 37.6% (corresponding to €2.18 million), was endorsed for addressing immigrant reception and integration, where the National Immigrant Support Centres play a most significant role.

As concerns human resources, civil servants who operate at the National Immigrant Support Centres in Lisbon and Porto are under the responsibility of each Government agency. In this way, each Regional Directorate decides how many staff members to allocate and how to distribute them between the different delegations. This has actually been one of the constraints felt by Government agencies that take part in this partnership, which is due to a more general shortage of personnel. However, on the other hand, socio-cultural mediators are sometimes reallocated to render assistance to other staff at the CNAI whenever possible and necessary. This has been the case at the Labour General Inspectorate at the Lisbon CNAI, to which a number of mediators were made available in order to reinforce the team, making it possible for a significant processing backlog to be brought up-to-date. This instance also contributes to

illustrating the importance of the partnership in helping to overcome a number of common constraints.

Socio-cultural mediators working at the National Immigrant Support Centres, on the other hand, have individual contracts with immigrant associations, as previously described. The mediators' income is covered by the amount transferred by ACIDI to the associations, established in the protocol between the two organisations, which varies according to the number of mediators each association has under this protocol, as well as with the respective professional category (levels 1, 2 or 3 apply to the categories of *mediators*, *shift managers* and *coordinators*). Budget reallocation costs to the associations therefore vary between €1,208 and €2,10 per month per mediator, depending on the respective level and category. This amount should cover the mediator's income as well as meal subsidy and contribution to social security. 21 associations in Lisbon and 5 in Porto presently have a protocol with ACIDI under this framework.³⁰

³⁰ Lisbon:

AGUIPA – Associação Guineense e Povos Amigos
AJPAS – Associação de Jovens Promotores da Amadora Saudável
Associação de Apoio ao Estudante Africano
Associação CAIS
Associação Caboverdiana
Associação Khapaz
Associação Luso-Caboverdiana de Sintra
Associação Melhoramentos Recreativo do Talude
Associação Olho Vivo
Associação Solidariedade Imigrante
Associação de Solidariedade Social do Alto da Cova da Moura
Associação Unidos de Cabo Verde
Casa do Brasil de Lisboa
Centro Cultural Moldavo
EDISNTVO – Associação de Imigrantes dos Países de leste
GTP7 – Associação Grupo de Trabalho do Projecto dos Sete
ISU – Instituto de Solidariedade e Cooperação Universitária
Leigos para o Desenvolvimento
MEDIAR – Associação Nacional de Mediação Sócio-cultural
PROSAUDESC – Associação de Promotores de Saúde, Ambiente e Desenvolvimento Sócio-Cultural
Serviço Jesuíta aos Refugiados – Portugal

Porto:

AACILUS – Associação de Apoio Social à Imigração das Comunidades do Sul
AFAGOS – Associação de Formação e Apoio Gondomar Social
Associação Caboverdiana do Norte de Portugal

In addition, €500 or €1,190 is transferred by ACIDI to civil society organisations that run Local Immigrant Integration Support Centres (31 in the country at the present time, since the 43 that are placed within local authorities do not receive ACIDI's financial support), depending on the kind of protocol, which refer to different numbers of opening hours – 25 or 40 hours. This has been noted as insufficient to cover the mediators' income and other expenses, according to most of these organisations. There has therefore recently been an effort, advocated by ACIDI, to reinforce this budget. However, it especially targets those associations with the first kind of protocol, which will in future receive €750, whilst the amount concerning the second protocol will only be adjusted to €1,200.

Furthermore, within the promotion of close cooperation between State and civil society, 38% of ACIDI's overall budget was allocated to civil society organisations that run activities with the migrant population in 2006 (around €1.8 million). Financial support is provided by ACIDI to the recognised associations that apply, with a maximum amount of €15,000, €25,000 and €35,000 to associations with a local, regional or national level of intervention, respectively. It can be granted to annually planned activities as a whole or to once-off activities, in which case there is a limit of three applications per year. Financial support cannot exceed 70% of the association's total budget for programmes, projects or activities. Between September 2005 and December 2006, forty immigrant associations received financial support (representing a total amount of €495,705.50) and more than 100 associations are presently recognised by ACIDI.

Finally, ACIDI's expenses for goods and services corresponded to 37% of the total budget in 2006 (approximately €1.7 million), which is partly used for the maintenance of the National and Local Immigrant Support Centres.

Taking advantage of the new *National Strategic Framework of Reference* – which establishes the Structural and Cohesion Funding for all National Operational

Programmes between 2007-2013 – ACIDI has been reviewing its budget and will apply for new funding, in order to cope with the current challenges and continue promoting suitable responses, taking into account both limitations and needs at the same time.

4.2. Implications for immigrants’ perception of the receiving State

Immigrants’ satisfaction with the quality of the front-line service at the CNAI is significantly positive, as was already shown in the previous section, and as can be confirmed in the following tables, which present the average of answers concerning all offices at the National Immigrant Support Centres. In fact, those who are satisfied and very satisfied with friendliness, capacity for understanding and with the clarity of the information/advice or assistance rendered correspond to almost the totality of the 700 interviewed individuals (see tables 9-11).

Table 9: Immigrants’ satisfaction with services’ friendliness at the CNAI

	CNAI Lisbon		CNAI Porto	
	N	%	N	%
Very satisfied	309	51.5	54	54.0
Satisfied	285	47.5	40	40.0
Not very satisfied	6	1.0	6	6.0
Totally unsatisfied				
TOTAL	600	100.0	100	100.0

Source: Evaluation of National Immigrant Support Centres, IOM (forthcoming, 2008).

Table 10: Immigrants' satisfaction with the services' capacity for understanding at the CNAI

	CNAI Lisbon		CNAI Porto	
	N	%	N	%
Very satisfied	276	46.0	52	52.0
Satisfied	319	53.2	42	42.0
Not very satisfied	5	0.8	6	6.0
Totally unsatisfied	–	–	–	–
TOTAL	600	100.0	100	100.0

Source: Evaluation of National Immigrant Support Centres, IOM (forthcoming, 2008).

Table 11: Immigrants' satisfaction with clarity of the information/advice or assistance provided at the CNAI

	CNAI Lisbon		CNAI Porto	
	N	%	N	%
Very satisfied	314	52.8	30	30.0
Satisfied	266	44.7	43	43.0
Not very satisfied	14	2.4	24	24.0
Totally unsatisfied	1	0.2	3	3.0
TOTAL	600	100.0	100	100.0

Source: Evaluation of National Immigrant Support Centres, IOM (forthcoming, 2008).

Moreover, when compared with the services provided in other branches of the same institutions, the quality is higher at the CNAI for 65% of the immigrants surveyed in Lisbon and for 88.4% in Porto. Effectiveness in resolving issues is also better evaluated at the National Immigrant Support Centres by 64.9% of the interviewed users of the Lisbon CNAI and by 85.9% in Porto, when compared with other branches of the same institutions.

In addition to the integrated responses, and taking into account the previously exposed data, it is also important to consider the role played by socio-cultural mediators in immigrants' positive perception of the services.

4.3. Implications for Government services

In the underlying premises of the project for the implementation of National Immigrant Support Centres, and in addition to the intention of providing an integrated response to immigrants' needs as final users of its services, it was equally stated that benefits were expected to accrue to the partner agencies institutions. Among these expected benefits, it is possible to highlight the following:

- Speeding up resolution of immigrant applications, as a result of enhanced interaction and mutual assistance between institutions;
- Facilitating circulation and communications between institutions;
- Sharing of concerns and more efficient follow-up on immigrant applications;
- Developing team spirit.

As concerns cooperation among the various agencies and institutions, and considering that at CNAI offices, the staff of the various institutions – both technical and administrative – work together, positive results are visible. These arise not only out of effective interaction and mutual assistance between institutions, but also out of interaction between the institutions and the immigrant support offices dependent on ACIDI. Benefits arise therefore from the close proximity of the various actors – since it allows for the sharing of information effectively and on an on-going basis directly at ground level.

Benefits are also produced by the introduction of mediators, in all their various capacities (namely sorting tasks, translation, and reinforcing the staff complement of the Government agencies in order to catch up on backlogs), clearly illustrate the success of this partnership in addressing its first objective of reaping benefits for the partner institutions, namely those deriving from speedier resolution of immigrant applications. The Central Registry Office at the Lisbon CNAI – the most recent Government agency to join the partnership – stands as a good example of efficacy and success, since it is already the most important local office of this institution in relation to the number of nationality requests, presently corresponding to more than 40% of the total applications.

In addition, joint efforts highlight that team spirit is alive and well at CNAI offices, where the sharing of concerns allows, in fact, for more efficient follow-up on immigrant applications and issues. The majority of the socio-cultural mediators and civil servants at the Lisbon and Porto CNAIs who answered a questionnaire on satisfaction at work are satisfied with the working environment, coordination between services and the leaders' support. 67.1% out of 76 position their overall satisfaction degree between 4 and 5 in a scale from 1 (totally unsatisfied) to 5 (totally satisfied).

However, at Regional Directorate level, it is considered that liaison at ground level is having a more immediate impact than coordination at higher institutional levels, even if projects such as the National Immigrant Support Centres definitely contribute to dispelling a widespread perception of institutional isolation, and they are to be considered as an innovative initiative and an example to emulate.

4.4. Implications for overall integration outcomes

The results of IOM's external evaluation of the National Immigrant Support Centres, as a One-Stop-Shop model in Portugal targeting the immigrant population, allow us to corroborate these centres' important contribution and their positive impact on immigrants' lives. Almost all the immigrants surveyed at the Lisbon and Porto CNAIs in 2007/2008 (700 in total) confirm the important role played by these centres in facilitating their lives, either for reception purposes during the initial migration period, or at a later stage of their migratory trajectories. 96.7% in Lisbon and 94.5% in Porto consider that the CNAI fairly and extremely contributes in this direction during the reception period, while 97.7% and 93.8% – in Lisbon and Porto – give the same answer as concerns the later stage (see tables 12 and 13).

Table 12: CNAI contribution to facilitating immigrants' reception period, according to the users

	CNAI Lisbon		CNAI Porto	
	N	%	N	%
Extremely	264	45.2	61	67.8
Fairly	301	51.5	24	26.7
Little	15	2.6	3	3.3
Nothing	14	0.7	2	2.2
TOTAL	584	100.0	90	100.0

Source: Evaluation of National Immigrant Support Centres, IOM (forthcoming, 2008).

Table 13: CNAI contribution to facilitating immigrants' lives in continuity, according to the users

	CNAI Lisbon		CNAI Porto	
	N	%	N	%
Extremely	271	46.2	67	69.1
Fairly	302	51.5	24	24.7
Little	9	1.5	5	5.2
Nothing	4	0.7	1	1.0
TOTAL	586	100.0	97	100.0

Source: Evaluation of National Immigrant Support Centres, IOM (forthcoming, 2008).

Following the same trend, with the exception of sixteen individuals in Lisbon and two in Porto, all the immigrants surveyed who answered the question related to future intentions stated their preference for carrying on using CNAI services rather than looking for support in other settings (97.3% in Lisbon and 97.8% in Porto). Furthermore, 97.5% in Lisbon and 98% in Porto would recommend the CNAI's services to other people. Emphasising this importance of the CNAIs also to longer-term residents in the country, nationality and family reunification issues are some of the main support services used at the CNAI - which usually relate to more established migration stages.

The promotion of integrated responses can therefore be seen as an important contribution for immigrant reception and integration, following a holistic approach to the migratory phenomenon.

5 Recommendations

The main recommendations for the improvement of the National Immigrant Support Centres in Portugal, which represent the existing One-stop-Shop model targeting the immigrant population in the country, may be summarized as follows:

Fields of intervention

1. Given that the recognition of higher educational diplomas is one of the main difficulties felt by immigrants and a priority for intervention defined at State level, the National Immigrant Support Centres could promote assistance in this area, whether through direct support, or through cooperation with universities to that effect.
2. Though the Immigrant Legal Support Office at the CNAI provides counselling in this field, the expansion of this office's competences is suggested, since effective access to legal protection and legal representation is also one of immigrants' main needs, often linked to labour conflict situations.
3. The de-bureaucratisation of procedures is a State priority and one of the principles established by ACIDI's *Plan of Activities*. It should therefore be promoted by procedures such as direct consultation of the criminal registry by the Foreigners and Borders Service, as well as tax and social security declarations, as long as they are properly authorised by the applicant. In this way, immigrants' needs for financial or criminal registry services would be resolved.

Functioning of the CNAI – immigrant perspective

4. To reduce waiting times (*the very recently introduced possibility for making appointments at the required offices through the telephone line might work as a positive response for this obstacle*).
5. To guarantee front-line service in all immigrant languages (Indian languages are presently lacking at the CNAI, though immigrants from India and Pakistan are among the top-fifteen nationalities of CNAI users).

6. To promote dissemination and information campaigns, especially as concerns the various services that are provided at the CNAI, as well as dissemination of main principles and objectives for which these centres were created, since immigrants often associate the CNAI with the Foreigners and Borders Services only, demonstrating a certain level of apprehension and tension when using these services for the first time.
7. To create a more intercultural and dynamic environment at the National Immigrant Support Centres, by involving immigrant associations – which though having a protocol with ACIDI and allocating socio-cultural mediators to work at the CNAI, often have little participation or even little knowledge of the work developed there. Other cultural associations or civil society organisations that work in the field could also be involved, in order to promote immigrant cultural exchange and the dissemination of immigrant artists' work. This would also help to respond to the issue of segregation at the CNAI, as it would improve mainstreaming.

Functioning of the CNAI – organisational perspective

8. To reinforce the network operation of all ACIDI's immigrant support services (namely between the National and all the Local Immigrant Integration Support Centres), ensuring more effective communication and facilitating immediate access to information, which could greatly enhance the partnership.
9. To contribute to the definition of the socio-cultural mediator as a professional category, since the ambiguity in this definition and the consequent inexistence of a professional career path, together with uncertainty as regards professional future, leads to the frequent transitory nature of this job.
10. Although closer proximity at ground level facilitates the sharing of information on account of the ease in establishing informal channels, and, sometimes, through mediation provided by the management of the CNAI offices, the lack of a forum for discussion of procedures among the various institutions at the level of the CNAI structure is being felt by some of the staff, insofar as such a measure could work as a strategy to overcome those difficulties.

11. It would also be of interest to establish more systematic and regular contacts involving the various institutions at regional level, or even at national level, to thereby overcome a number of obstacles with practical impacts - as the discrimination that is still experienced in the health sector illustrates, sometimes linked to lack of information among the professionals in the field. This could help in overcoming the difficulties felt by each institution in intervening with specific reference to immigration processing requirements, since it is an area requiring a joint approach by the various governmental agencies which must, consequently, act in a concerted manner.

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Associations Interviewed:

AFAGOS – Associação de Formação e Apoio Gondomar Social

AGUIPA – Associação Guineense e Povos Amigos

Associação Caboverdiana

Associação Caboverdiana do Norte de Portugal

Associação Olho Vivo

Associação Solidariedade Imigrante

Associação de Solidariedade Social do Alto da Cova da Moura

Casa do Brasil de Lisboa

Centro Cultural Moldavo

EDINSTVO – Associação de Imigrantes dos Países de leste

Serviço Jesuíta aos Refugiados – Portugal

Associations running Local Immigrant Integration Support Centres (CLAIIs):

CLAII Amarante – Centro Pastoral de Amarante

CLAII Braga – Cruz Vermelha Portuguesa

CLAII Leiria – Associação AMIgrante

CLAII Sines – Associação Caboverdiana de Sines