



PRESENTATION OF SPAIN AT THE ROUND TABLE OF THE SEMINAR "THE LINGUISTIC INTEGRATION OF ADULT MIGRANTS", ORGANISED BY THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE (LANGUAGE POLICY DIVISION AND MIGRATION DIVISION), STRASBOURG, THE 26<sup>TH</sup>-27<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2008

I will make a presentation to give you the frame at national level concerning the distribution of competencies on immigrants integration policies between the National Government and the Regional Governments. Then, my colleague of the Generalitat of Catalunya will make a presentation related to her Autonomous Community; it is one of the Spanish regions with a co-official language: the Catalan.

Spain is a very decentralized country in which most of the competencies concerning education, employment, social services, health, housing, etc, were transferred to the Autonomous Communities (Regions) many years ago. In this sense, most of them have the right not only to arrange and provide the concerned public services but also to legislate, be in the frame of a national basic Law or as an Autonomus Law that arises from an exclusive competency recognized in its Autonomous Statut.

In general terms, immigration, aliens, asylum seekers, refugees and naturalization procedures are a competency of the National Government. On the other hand, social integration policies for immigrants are developed and provided mostly by Regional governments and Local Councils (these latter in an increasing way)

As a general statement I would say that concerning language knowledge for migrants to access to Spain, there is no minimum language learning requirements. Our policy doesn't imply neither compulsory courses nor compulsory tests.

More specifically, although the access to a working or residence permit does not require the knowledge of Spanish or other official languages (some regions), our immigration policy is strongly linked to the Labour Market Needs. In this sense, language learning is encouraged and supported by the government as this will improve labour opportunities and social integration, in fact employers which intend to hire workers through the "yearly quota" approved by the National Government, may be awarded with funds to implement occupational and language courses in the countries of origin. These courses are different in terms of contents, number of hours, methodology and so on.

Concerning the access to the Spanish nationality by residence cause, migrants have to prove, among other legal requirements, a sufficient degree of integration in the Spanish society as well as the knowledge of the Spanish language or other official languages. These requirements must be proved through any proof legally admitted,



and specifically an interview of the migrant with the government officials in charge of these issues is carried out to test the language knowledge and the degree of adaptation to the host society. But no standardised tests are used.

Finally, concerning social integration measures for migrants, once they are in the country, language learning programmes are being carried out within introductory programmes to the host society (citizenship courses) or Integral Reception Programmes by most of the Regional Governments (Immigration/Integration Departments), but with different standards and not forming part of an homogenous pack of training (information). These programmes are carried out on a voluntary basis, free of charge for migrants and supported by public bodies be at national, regional or local level.

In the context of Adults Education Centres (Education Departments of Regional Governments) there exist also courses for language learning as non-formal education with different standards. The Ministry of Education (national level) also supports this kind of courses funding local councils and NGOs in Ceuta and Melilla.

We, the D. G. for Immigrants Integration, make every year a call for grants in order to fund NGOs and other entities to develop this kind of courses and programmes (aprox. 20 mill €/year for about 170 entities). We also support the Regional Governments and Local Councils through the Fund in support of Reception, Integration and Reinforcement of Education (200 millions Euros/per year).

#### Challenges:

- Minimum standards of quality for training courses
- Official recognizement and accreditation of the courses

Miguel Angel Gil  
Head of Department  
Direction General of Immigrants Integration  
Secretariat of State for Immigration and Emigration  
Ministry of Labour and Immigration  
Spain