



**1<sup>st</sup> Portuguese Intercultural Cities Network Workshop (RPCI)**  
**“The question of refugees”**

Bobadela, Auditório Ângelo Vidal d'Almeida Ribeiro (CPR), January 25, 2016  
(SUMMARY)

**Framework**

André Carmo (RPCI) opened the workshop, greeting all participants and addressing three different subjects: i) relationship with the ACM; ii) contributions that were sent for the 1<sup>st</sup> RPCI workshop; iii) recommendations proposed at the ICC Meeting in Neuchatel.

First, the RPCI members were informed that in January 14 a meeting with the ACM took place and Cláudia Pires (Local Policies Support Office coordinator) replaced Paula Moura as contact point near the RPCI. In that meeting, the general guidelines of the RPCI Plan of Activities for 2016 were presented, and the need to find convergences and complementarities between the RPCI and the Network of Municipalities Friends of Immigrants and Diversity (RMAD) was highlighted. Cláudia Pires proved receptive to more involvement, although she emphasized the need to have a better definition of the RPCI, in order to clarify its position regarding the RMAD and the ACM's role as an observer. There was agreement on the need to keep the dialogue going on, specially after the RPCI's formalization as municipality association. Finally, the importance of C4i and DELI projects as sources of inspiration for the RPCI activity in 2016 was also pointed out.

Second, the contributions sent by Beja, Cascais and Portimão were put forth, and assembled in two large groups: integration and communication. In the first case, questions were raised about: i) the kind of relations one needs to establish between municipalities and the Refuges Support Platform (PAR), namely in the case refugees are not able to become autonomous after an initial period of two years; ii) how to conceive an effective local support network; iii) how to implement processes of integration that respect the cultural specificities of refugees; iv) how to raise awareness of employers to refugee integration, adapting their training to other labour areas and enabling them adequate

training. Regarding communication, the questions were focused on: i) how to deal with language as an obstacle to integration (either at the socio-professional level, or in school contexts in the case of children and the youth); ii) fighting stigma associated to refugees; iii) communicating the local level reception process and what can be the role of the RPCI in this process.

Third, some recommendations produced in a ICC seminar that took place in October 2015, in Neuchatel – Unlocking the potential of refugees and asylum seekers: intercultural approaches to integration – namely: i) including integration measures in a wider strategy to promote equality (Lisbon is a reference in this matter); ii) responsiveness – involvement with refugees should initiate immediately after their arrival, specially when they are excluded of public promotion integration programs; iii) information – work with refugees to acknowledge the kind of information they need and how can it be disseminated more effectively (combining traditional media with web-based media); iv) communication – devise communication strategies that emphasize the positive contributions of refugees for society and economy, at the same time myths are destroyed (C4i project is a reference); v) empowerment – use participatory processes when drawing and implementing refugees integration measures, strengthening confidence and stimulating participation; vi) research – understand refugees contribution for host societies and negative externalities of incoherent public policies.

Afterwards, Mónica Farinha (legal coordinator, CPR) framed the problematic under discussion. Starting out by identifying war situations and social and political instability as main causes of the refugee crisis currently taking place in Europe, she underlined existing legal solutions, namely: i) replacement programs; ii) re-installment programs; iii) family reunification procedures; iv) student visa programs. Regardless of the adopted solution, its articulation with human rights and the dignity of all people involved was stressed. (Intervention followed by a short Q&A period).

After the first part of the workshop was completed, participants were asked to make two different work groups, to have a deeper and more dynamic discussion.

## Work group 1

Focused on the evaluation of existing possibilities to draw and implement an anti-rumour campaign. Loures and Amadora share some of their reflections about the development of C4i project in their territories, with that previous experience being important to clarify some aspects (e.g. rumours “mapping”, actors to involve in the process, importance of public figures to promote the initiative, etc.). If materialized, the anti-rumour campaign should not be circumscribed to refugees only, and it should adopt a wider perspective that also includes the dimensions of immigration and interculturality. In this sense, April was chosen as a reference month to organize a new RPCI workshop entirely dedicated to conceive an anti-rumour campaign, with the presence of Dani Torres and Gemma Pinyol, pioneers in the implementation of this kind of campaign in the city of Barcelona. Lisbon showed available to ensure the conception of a marketing and communication strategy giving the campaign aesthetic and communicational uniformity, with the need to effectively dynamize social networks also being considered relevant. The fact that the campaign should be conceived with a previously defined time-line was also stressed. To initiate the process of development of the campaign, RPCI members were requested to send contents – facts and informations – considered useful and relevant. Regarding the campaign goals, they were fundamentally two: I) raise awareness of society for this problem; ii) “charm” other municipalities that are dealing with the same issues for the RPCI.

## Work group 2

Was focused on the integration processes of refugees and discussed the following ideas: i) the importance of always complementing any integration actions with robust disclosure campaigns; ii) the need to reinforce the role of the National Association of Municipalities in these processes, being important to communicate the ANM current concerns of RPCI member municipalities; iii) the possible implementation in each RPCI member municipality of translation services, Portuguese language learning and competence validation, in a way that is susceptible of sharing with all others; iv) the evaluation of possibilities to create positive discrimination measures, given the specificities and differences of people that will be welcomed in the Portuguese society.

## Other information

- The 6<sup>th</sup> RPCI meeting will take place in March 3, 2016, in Santa Maria da Feira;
- The 7<sup>th</sup> RPCI meeting will take place in June, in Portimão;
- In April, a 2<sup>nd</sup> RPCI workshop will be held to support the conception of an anti-rumour campaign;
- During May, the Interculturality Week will take place in Portimão;
- Braga communicated their decision to become an RPCI member and lamented not being able to have been present in this workshop.

# LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

## REGISTO DE PRESENCAS 1º Workshop RP/CI - "A questão dos refugiados" (25/01/2016), Auditório CPR, Bobadela

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