



## 6<sup>th</sup> Portuguese Intercultural Cities Network Meeting

Santa Maria da Feira, Europarque, March 2016

(SUMMARY)

### Creative Orchestra Show

The 6<sup>th</sup> RPCI Meeting was preceded by a musical show performed by the Creative Orchestra, a socio-educational project of arts and experiences initiated in February 2008, under the artistic direction of Aleksandar Caric, and promoted by the Santa Maria da Feira City Council: Social Action Division and Education Office.

### Creative Orchestra



### Opening Session

Emidio Sousa (Mayor of Santa Maria da Feira) welcomed all participants and made some general remarks about the economic dynamic of Santa Maria da Feira (SMF), namely, regarding the importance of manufacturing for its territorial development. More specifically, underlying the relevance of mid/high quality shoe production (SMF is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest Portuguese exporter) and cork

manufacturing (SMF represents 70% of national output), in addition to the export orientation of the secondary sector (SMF is among the 10 largest Portuguese exporters), strongly embedded in SMF territory. Being a municipality with around 140 000 inhabitants, nearly half of them work in the productive sector. On the other hand, this meeting takes place in Europarque, a venue that is not far from Lisbon and is currently undergoing a revitalization process.

### Opening Session



Afterwards, André Carmo (RPCI), greeted all participants, thanking the Mayor of SMF and the local team responsible for the organization of the meeting. He considered important to adopt a decentralized approach, covering all national territory, valorizing the diversity of geographical, social and cultural contexts. He also thanked the presence of Oliver Freeman (ICC), sharing some reflections about the relations between migrations and development, an irrefutable aspect of contemporary societies and strategic thinking about their future, specially today, when Europe is facing a challenge to its own capacity to assert itself as political project that promotes citizenship and the defence of human rights.

He also highlighted the presence of most RPCI member municipalities, in a valuable effort to give continuity to the process of consolidation and development of the network. Next, some additional remarks were made about

the RPCI, considering that there were some observant participants. The Council of Europe created a Network of Intercultural Cities that, currently, includes 93 cities from all over the world (with different levels of engagement). Lisbon joined that network nearly a decade ago. Afterwards, some countries, including Portugal, decided to create national networks. Nowadays, there are five national networks (Italy, Norway, Spain, Ukraine and Portugal). In 2012, the RPCI was created, and today integrates eight municipalities – Amadora, Beja, Cascais, Coimbra, Lisboa, Loures, Santa Maria da Feira and Setúbal – although other have already expressed their interest in joining, namely, Portimão, Braga and Sintra. More than having a large number of municipalities, what matters is to have municipalities that are committed to its general principles and have the capacity to push forward an intercultural agenda.

For 2016, the RPCI goals are: i) consolidate the work made until now, filling the gaps that were identified; ii) promote new activities by its members; iii) update the information of each member, improving its dissemination and giving more visibility to the RPCI.

RPCI meetings are important moments as they help us to create a solid and sustainable dynamic of development, in addition to deepen the relationships between members. Finally, André Carmo expressed wishes of a very successful meeting, one that could represent a significant progress in the path that the RPCI collectively proposed to take.

## **Migrations and Development Conference**

Oliver Freeman (ICC) started out his intervention saying that he was positively surprised by the political approach of SMF regarding interculturality, namely: i) its focus in the diaspora as local development factor; ii) the concomitant relevance ascribed to migrations and not just immigration, thus adopting a relational perspective more adequate to the migratory dynamics of contemporary world.

He continued highlighting the importance of choosing the right tool to communicate in a context of increasing diversity (e.g. ethnic, cultural, social, political), due to globalization and higher mobility. After that, using statistical information to support his argument, he mentioned that the Portuguese reality

has also become simultaneously more diversified and more connected. In his view, diversity can be seen as a threat or an opportunity and, up to a certain extent, the capacity to communicate determines the adopted view.

### **Migrations and Development, Oliver Freeman**



The existence of an inclusive environment is highly favourable from the point of view of innovation (social, cultural, organizational, etc.), as it often translates in competitive advantages. In the Portuguese case, at the national scale, diversity translates into the existence of three major assets: i) growing migrant population; ii) long migratory experience; iii) large dimension diaspora; that benefit from the existence of a highly proactive national policy of integration that helps to explain positive attitudes towards immigrants, before and during the economic crisis, as well as the absence of any xenophobic and racists extreme-right political parties. At the local level, two main assets were identified - a larger proportion of immigrants and the relatively close proximity of local authorities to residents - and an essential tool - the capacity these authorities have to promote positive interactions among the local population.

Besides this multi-scalar reading, the need to adopt a careful orientation in terms of intercultural management in order to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts that may compromise the translation of diversity in advantages for territorial development was also focused. Among the aspects considered important in

configuring this orientation, Oliver Freeman, pointed out the following: i) political commitment towards diversity; ii) open and international perspective; iii) intercultural competent local administration; iv) use of mediation and conflict resolution; v) housing policy that promotes diversity at the neighbourhood level; vi) cultural policy that positively emphasizes minority cultures; vii) existence of an office dedicated to migrant needs; viii) existence of an agency oriented to welcome new inhabitants; ix) organization of a business structure that promotes labour market diversity and non-discrimination.

Migrations are important for Portugal for a number of reasons, namely: i) demographic balance – sharp decline of natality created what some call the Japanese problem of Portugal; ii) remittances – in 2013, remittances reached up to 3.000 million Euros, making them an important economic resource for national development; iii) business development – regarding the importance of diversity competitive advantages (e.g. context understanding, new markets, talent recruitment, heterogeneity as factor of creativity); iv) innovation – as the presence and active social participation of immigrants can open new political and entrepreneurial possibilities. However, for these advantages to materialize, the existence of a number of previous conditions that immigrants should have is necessary, namely: i) legal status; ii) formal labour market inclusion; iii) high quality education; iv) native language competences; v) strong connections to countries of origin. The social, economic and territorial development of Portugal, both at the national as well as the local scale, requires Portuguese society being able to capitalize the multiple advantages of diversity.

## **Economic Diplomacy and Feira's Diaspora**

Emidio Sousa (SMF) started out by saying that culture is also economy, the motto for his ulterior reflection. Often using examples coming from the shoe industry, the importance of sociocultural features to gain competitive advantages of economic and entrepreneurial nature was emphasized. On the other hand, he underlined the investment on excellence made by industrial entrepreneurs of SMF. Around 15 years ago, the shoe sector was highly threatened by the competition of markets with a cheaper workforce. Today, it competes with Italy at the level of quality, although branding continues to distinguish shoes from both countries. Afterwards, the importance of diaspora was stressed as an

opportunity. In this regard, the challenge to create the “Portuguese in the World” status was put forth. The diaspora is a resource that cannot be wasted.

### **Economic Diplomacy and Feira's Diaspora, Emidio Sousa**



The existence of several projects in SMF was also pointed out. Despite the modest figures of immigrant population there is an important strategy based on the following aspects: i) promotion of Portuguese language and citizenship learning; ii) support immigrant inclusion in the labour market; iii) legal support; iv) recognition of qualifications and diplomas; v) local community awareness towards the immigration phenomena, diversity of sociocultural practices, and dinamization of various actions in close collaboration to immigrant associations.

Created in 2002, the Sunrise project (Integration of Eastern Europe Immigrants) was developed by SMF in conjunction to Melhor Viver and Pelo Prazer de Viver Associations, the Shoe Technological Centre and by CEI - Industrial Equipment Company. Besides offering technical and technological training related to different functions played by Eastern European immigrants in shoe factories the project also looked at social, cultural and religious support. If, on the one hand, immigrants contributed for the economic development of Santa Maria da Feira, on the other, the various responses available contributed for the good integration of these citizens.

Nowadays, SMF has two kinds of immigrants: those that are behind large entrepreneurial firms providing jobs for the local workforce and those that are looking for labour market integration themselves. Due to the fact that they master both the language of target markets and the Portuguese language, the latter establish the connection of firms to those markets. However, there are also immigrants that, due to the lack of material, social or cultural resources, search local authorities for a better integration in local communities.

The Office for Economic and Entrepreneurial Development (GDEE), in turn, provides individual support services assured by specialized staff in defining entrepreneurial profiles, evaluating sustainability and viability of business ideas and financial possibilities. Immigrants helped by the GDEE benefit from market studies, communication and marketing plans and are supported by a local communication partner that promotes the dissemination of businesses. It also covers legal support to business and, in articulation with training partners, promotes the dinamization of training in entrepreneurship, management, accountant, communication and marketing. Citizens using this service create their own jobs or are inserted into capabilities/competence acquisition programs.

Coming back to the idea of economic diplomacy, the fact that Emidio Sousa plays the role of economic and entrepreneurial ambassador of SMF every time he goes abroad (ex: Mozambique, South Africa, Switzerland) was underlined, this role being rewarded with the development of various entrepreneurial initiatives and projects. Additionally, SMF has also carried out the Embaixadorias initiative, welcoming ambassadors from all over the world (e.g. Mexico, Japan, Russia), seeking to create business opportunities. Economic diplomacy may be a world of opportunities for SMF firms.

Finally, two ideas currently under development were also addressed, namely: i) the bizfeira platform ([www.bizfeira.com](http://www.bizfeira.com)) - an international business platform soon to complete two years of existence with the goal of promoting SMF firms linkages to the world, mainly the business diaspora, now with 1070 registered firms (30 foreign ones), and permanent visualizations made by people connected to the diaspora and qualified workers from all over the world; ii) Europarque - with the goal of transforming what is now a centre of congresses into an

international business centre, strengthening the connections to diaspora and privileging, in a first stage, countries of Portuguese language.

To conclude, Emidio Sousa said he always looked at the world of diversity, and the interculturality of cities from an economic point of view (connected to life, well-being and employment, the latter being a fundamental condition for quality of life, widening choices and opportunities). Employment is the fundamental factor for happiness and well-being of people. To SMF, emigrants are their natural ambassadors all over the world. They know it and we seek to cultivate it.

### **Good Practices Panel by RPCI Municipalities**

Amadora - “Don't feed the rumor” campaign. Resorting to a short video to present “Don't feed the rumor”, Cristina Farinha shared with the audience some relevant data on its development and implementation, as well as a reflection about the reasons that made Amadora accept the challenge of fighting rumours and joining a project that is having a highly positive evaluation.

Braga - Challenges: the Municipality of Braga. Cristina Palhares, presented what is currently being made in the field of interculturality, highlighting the way this theme runs through a wide and diversified array of activities (ex: Communities Day, Interknowledge Museum, Cultural Concert) taking place in Braga.

Cascais - the construction of the Municipal Plan for Immigrant Integration (MPII) as intercultural experience. Helena Bonzinho described the process of creating and implementing the MPII, mentioning aspects such as its conceptual basis and underlying strategy, based on the diversity of the promoters team and a data collection process involving several civil society actors.



## Good Practices Panel by RPCI Municipalities



Lisbon - International Day of Mother Language. Manuel Júdice, sought to historically and geographically frame a recent initiative in the city of Lisbon, focused on three European languages (German, Galician and Italian) and three non-european ones (Arabic, Bengali and Chinese), in which several cultural activities were developed with the participation of many associations and schools.

Loures - Public Art Gallery, Quinta do Mocho. Maria Eugénia Coelho shared an initiative of socio-territorial transformation through arts which, involving local actors (local authorities, associations and inhabitants) in conjunction with urban artists from all over the world, sought to fight the stigma that marks the Quinta do Mocho neighbourhood since its origin, at the same time its urban re-qualification and community (re)development was carried out.

### **Discussion of the Portuguese Intercultural Cities Network constitution into an Association of Municipalities**

André Carmo (RPCI) launched the debate starting out by underlining the fact that the statutes proposal triggering the discussion was elaborated and discussed before its entrance in the RPCI as coordinator. The proposal elaborated by the

Lisbon municipality, sought, through its transformation into an association of municipalities, to provide the RPCI with a better capacity to self-finance. If successful, future applications to funding, would allow the RPCI a better capacity to materialize its action plan and, eventually, leverage the development of new activities and projects. Attention was also drawn for the notion that current expenses would be under the responsibility of the network's direction. Notwithstanding, since the beginning, the question of RPCI's funding was controversial and considered by some members an insurmountable obstacle. Furthermore, the need to have a sufficient number of municipalities to insure the functioning of its social bodies – general assembly, board and financial council – was also problematic. Lisbon and Loures also expressed availability to assure the network's direction during its first term.

João Afonso (Lisbon) stated that the informal nature of the RPCI can be preserved, but it would be important to achieve a more consistent degree of institutionalization, providing a different political weight to the RPCI. He also restated the availability of Lisbon to assure the RPCI coordination.

Emidio Sousa (SMF) expressed some reserves concerning the RPCI's transformation into an association of municipalities. Due to the complexity (logistic, organizational, etc.) and slowness of the process, he would prefer the adoption of a more flexible configuration, eventually as an intercultural sector within the National Association of Municipalities.

Oliver Freeman (ICC) underlined that the RPCI can maintain its informal character, as network of municipalities working in the scope of a shared theme. Eventually, in the future, it can transform itself into a network with a more formal nature. However, it is important to be aware that many European calls require candidates to have not only some degree of formalization, but also to have it for some time (3 months, 6 months, or a year), in order to be successful.

Maria Eugénia Coelho (Loures) defended that currently there are no conditions for the RPCI to become an association of municipalities. Furthermore, reiterated its availability to assume the direction when those conditions are met and underlined the need to continue the debate, deepen the reflection and further

mature ideas around this matter, without disregarding the development of planned activities.

André Carmo (RPCI) expressed his agreement with the general opinion that the formalization of the RPCI requires more reflection and maturing and it is important to continue debating the possibilities of a better formalization of the RPCI, without this preventing the development of its action plan for 2016.

## **Action Plan Monitorization**

André Carmo (RPCI) presented the current state of the art regarding the development of the RPCI's Action Plan for 2016. Regarding the three goals of the network, the current situation is as follows:

### **1.Consolidation**

1.1. Intercultural Cities Index. Loures is delayed in delivering the Index, but it should occur shortly. Amadora and Beja are updating their Index. Cascais is preparing the Index to be delivered in the 1<sup>st</sup> semester of 2016.

1.2. Expert visits. Loures will schedule a visit, immediately after delivering the Index. As for other cities, it is all dependent upon delivery of index and expert availability.

1.3. Cooperation with the ACM. A meeting with the ACM took place. After formalization of the RPCI as association of municipalities and/or initiating the anti-rumours campaign (as it can be an axis around which the collaboration of the ACM can be more easily defined), a new meeting will be scheduled.

1.4. Widening the RPCI. It is a process under development, Portimão, Braga and Sintra already expressed their will to integrate the RPCI. Coimbra is back and Setúbal, looks somehow asleep.

1.5. RPCI Meetings. The realization of four annual meetings, with a more formal character, interleaved with others of a more operative nature (workshops), is being implemented. It is also important to have meetings in all RPCI cities, covering the national territory. Therefore, the next meeting will take place next June in Portimão.

1.6. RPCI's formalization. See above Discussion of the Portuguese Intercultural Cities Network Constitution in Association of Municipalities.

### **2. New Activities**

2.1. RPCI Launch. Dependent upon 1.6.

2.2. C4i and DELI. Inspired by the C4i project, more specifically its anti-rumours campaign, a decision was made to conceive and implement an RPCI anti-rumours campaign. In May, the 2<sup>nd</sup> RPCI workshop will address this issue and count with the presence of Dani Torres and Gemma Pinyol, two experts that can help to develop a campaign that, obviously, directly benefits from the experience of Amadora and Loures.

2.3. Refugees reception. The 1<sup>st</sup> RPCI workshop focused on this issue, with some of the aforementioned decisions coming out of that discussion.

### 3. Communication

3.1. The ICC website was renewed, now being much more intuitive and accessible. The basic information about each RPCI city is updated, as well as the one concerning the RPCI as a whole.

3.2. ICC Newsletter. A new request was made for members to send information and news about activities, projects and experiences.

3.3. Local/regional media. It would be important that activities developed by the RPCI could be disseminated by each municipality in their official websites, but also through municipal/regional bulletins, and social networks.

## Closing session

André Carmo (RPCI) reiterated the acknowledgements to Santa Maria da Feira President and the colleagues that worked directly in the organization of the 6<sup>th</sup> RPCI Meeting – Cristina Ribeiro, Rosário Meneses, Roberto Carlos – as well as the staff that provided technical support throughout the meeting. He also remembered that the next RPCI meeting will take place in June, in Portimão, and expressed its full availability to provide any additional informations. Furthermore, observant municipalities were also informed that they would be contacted soon to follow.

Emidio Sousa (SMF) closed the meeting, thanking Oliver Freeman (ICC) and André Carmo (RPCI) for the work developed, highlighting the need not to postpone indefinitely the discussion about the formalization of the RPCI. He concluded with a message of hope and encouragement considering the network a great opportunity to push forward the intercultural agenda.

## **Annex I - Programme**

### **VI PORTUGUESE INTERCULTURAL CITIES NETWORK MEETING**

#### **Migrations and Development**

*March 3 2016*

**Venue: Europarque - Santa Maria da Feira**

#### **10h15-Creative Orchestra Show**

#### **10h30-Opening Session**

Emidio Sousa, Santa Maria da Feira Mayor

André Carmo, RPCI Coordinator

#### **10h40 -Migrations and Development Conference**

Oliver Freeman, European Intercultural Cities Network Consultant

#### **11h30-Economic Diplomacy and Feira's Diaspora**

Emídio Sousa, CMSMF Mayor

#### **12h00-Debate**

#### **12h30- Lunch**

#### **14h00-Good Practices by RPCI Municipalities**

**Amadora** - “Don't feed the rumour” campaign

**Braga** - Challenges: the Municipality of Braga

**Cascais** - the construction of the Municipal Plan for Immigrant Integration as intercultural experience

**Lisboa** – International Day of Mother Language

#### **16h00- Discussion of the Portuguese Intercultural Cities Network constitution into an Association of Municipalities**

#### **16h30-Action Plan Monitorization**

#### **17h00 -Closing session**

## Annex II - List of participants

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