



## **4<sup>th</sup> Portuguese Intercultural Cities Network Meeting**

Lisbon, Salão Nobre dos Paços do Concelho, June 8, 2015

(SUMMARY)

### **Framework**

#### **Opening**

The need to resume previous work developed within the framework of the Portuguese Intercultural City Network (RPCI) and make it more visible was underlined. An initial round of presentations followed.

#### **Agenda**

1. State of the art in each municipality from the perspective of interculturality and migrant integration policies;
2. Legal format of the RPCI for the future;
3. Plan of action development;
4. Articulation with the High Commissioner for Migrations.

#### **Brief historical reconstitution of the RPCI**

The Council of Europe (CoE) created in 2008, European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, the European Network of Intercultural Cities (ICC), currently integrating 60 cities. Several Portuguese cities demonstrated their interest in joining to the ICC. More than accepting new member cities, the CoE has been trying to promote the creation of national networks (besides the Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, Norway and Ukrainian networks have already been created). Lisbon municipality was invited to lead the creation of the Portuguese network. Following that invitation, Lisbon organized a first meeting to present and prepare the launch of the RPCI, on September 18, 2012 – within the framework of the “Intercultural paths to urban safety: how citizens and cities can benefit?” event, co-organized by the CoE (ICC) and the Lisbon City Council (CML) at the Lisbon Municipality Police facilities – in which 8 out of 10 Portuguese cities that were invited attended, namely: Amadora, Beja, Cascais, Coimbra, Lisboa, Loures, Santa Maria da Feira and Setúbal, in addition to representatives of the CoE and the ACM. On

February 20, 2013, at the Lisbon Ismaili Centre, the second RPCI meeting took place. The meeting had participants coming from the ACM, the RPCI, the Spanish Intercultural City Network, CoE and City Councils (Amadora, Beja, Cascais, Coimbra, Lisboa, Loures, Oeiras, Portimão, Santa Maria da Feira and Setúbal). Eight municipalities signed agreements formalizing their link to the RPCI. On March 20 and 21, Cascais City Council hosted the third RPCI meeting, in which the following themes were highlighted: i) European framework: the work of municipalities with civil society at the European level; ii) how Cascais interacts with communities that are present in its territory; iii) experiences told by representatives of communities and associations located in Cascais; iv) good practices of RPCI municipalities; v) structuring good practice tool kit on civil society interaction. In 2014, the priority was the creation of the RPCI statutes and definition of a legal framework, allowing it to assume solid commitments towards the municipalities involved and apply for funding.

## **1. State of the art in each municipality from the perspective of interculturality and migrant integration policies**

### **Lisbon**

The Municipal Plan for Migrant Integration (2015-2017) is currently being developed, illustrating a municipal dynamic oriented towards the interculturality issue, as the Municipal Forum for Interculturality, the TODOS festival, here with the fundamental role played by the Lisbon Crossroad of Worlds Office, the DELI project, as well as the recent application for a project about immigrant health clearly demonstrate.

### **Amadora**

The attempt to reorganize the RPCI is important - what do we want from the Portuguese network in order to explore chances and opportunities at the European level? We became involved in the network since the beginning and have now an outdated index. Amadora is a council characterized by its great diversity and significant expression of foreign population. For 6 years intercultural mediators have been working in the area of migrant support. More recently, we have associated ourselves to an ACM programme (migrant mentoring) and participated in the C4i campaign (crucial to reach out to people), seeking to understand what citizens of Amadora think about migrants. The anti-

rumors campaign, oriented towards school environments, centred in the voice of migrants themselves, allowed us to speak about issues that were previously invisible. All these projects make sense, if articulated in a wider space. We believe the RPCI can provide that space. It is crucial to have more integration, in order for results to be more effective. The statutes proposed inspired by the healthy cities network are well devised.

## **Beja**

We participate in the RPCI because, although not having an expressive migrant community, we develop a proximity work near the gipsy community. Since interculturality goes way beyond migrants and minorities, we thought participating in the RPCI could bring about important added value to our work. We don't have Municipal Plan for Migrant Integration, we have a Local Centre for Integration, a consortium of the Programa Escolhas, a Migrant Solidarity association, and until recently the Immigration and Borders Service was a partner, in sum, all local support policies to migrants go through structures that are well articulated with the Beja City Council within the working group for minorities and migrants of the Social Network. Beja also integrates the second phase of ROMED programme. All in all, the integration made available by a more dynamic RPCI makes perfect sense and can become a relevant added value for the municipality.

## **Cascais**

The question of interculturality has always been a concern for Cascais, council with great diversity and a significant weight of foreign population. From 1995 onwards, with the Rehousing Special Plan, we became aware of this reality and, since then, either with the Local Integration Centre, or with local mediators, we never gave up working on integration matters of interculturality in the area of local social development. We are now finalizing the Municipal Plan for Migrant Integration, instrument that seeks to integrate several of the actions that have been made and has the capacity to provide answers to daily needs. Regarding the RPCI, two remarks: i) it is necessary to improve communication, to create channels for this purpose since we haven't had any knowledge on what has been happening; ii) the RPCI exists side by side with the Network of Cities Friend of Migrants and Diversity (RMAD). As Portugal is a small country, perhaps it makes

sense to look for more articulation and communication between both networks in the future.

### **Loures**

Highly diverse council with expressive foreign population. Probably it is the most religiously diverse municipality. The Municipal Plan for Migrant Integration is currently being finalized, there is intercultural mediation in public services and within the C4i project a strong connection to local media was created in order to change the perception of Loures citizens in relation to migrant population. The intervention in Quinta do Mocho has been particularly relevant, with the creation of an urban art gallery that seeks to change the negative image of the neighbourhood. The index is almost completed, just waiting for further clarification regarding the RPCI future. It is important to improve communication, and we are committed and available to work.

### **Portimão**

Concerns with interculturality go back to 2007. We applied to a Local Centre of Immigrant Integration and were able to implement several measures and social policies in favour of migrants. Today, we have lost the Centre and our concern is to develop strategies with the aim of consolidating migration issues. We are at the final stages of our Municipal Plan for Migrant Integration. Portimão has everything to gain from participating in the RPCI. This network will allow a stronger consolidation of policies and improvements in terms of its implementation process.

### **Santa Maria da Feira**

Migrant population does not have relevant expression in the council. However, we have been conducting an important work at the level of community integration. Two years ago, we made an important work near gipsy population, in addition to projects near prison population. Additionally, it is important to highlight the fact that we are present in several partnerships with the goal of sharing experiences in the cultural field, promoting the internationalization and promotion of artists trained in the council.

## **Setúbal**

This attempt to reanimate the RPCI is crucial. To Setúbal, what is relevant is to acknowledge: i) what is the purpose of being or not in this network?; ii) what do we want this network to be? The RPCI needs to improve communication and dissemination of information, in addition to a better clarification regarding the existence of two networks. We are available to be active in the network but it is necessary to clarify the path that we want to take. How can this network affirm its difference regarding others? This is a key interrogation. We are confident that this act of reanimation will succeed and that we will have a strong network able to boost the work made by municipalities around intercultural issues.

## **ACM**

The position of the ACM regarding the RPCI was defined during the 2<sup>nd</sup> RPCI meeting. In order to clarify questions raised by Cascais and Setúbal, Paula Moura argued that the initial proposal of the ACM, made in 2012, was that the national network should be based on the Local Integration Centres Network, adapting the index used to the Portuguese reality. Surprisingly, we were invited to the RPCI without any reply about this proposal. Thus, we have decided to participate as observers, continuing to do what we are competent in doing. We have adapted the index providing guidance to municipalities in its filling, elaborating diagnostics and defining measures. What we want to know is up to what extent can the ACM contribute for the RPCI, in a time when our own network already includes 95 municipalities.

## **2. Legal format of the RPCI to the near future**

### **Lisboa**

The challenge raised is the recovery and reconstruction of the RPCI. If we want to organize ourselves, we need to define what we want to do. The articulation with the CoE makes our work easier, in the sense that it frames, gives perspective and allows comparability to other cities. Furthermore, projects launched by the CoE are based in good practices and validated in various contexts. For the RPCI to move forward it is necessary to have more responsibility from municipalities, and is not enough to have a new CoE coordinator. It is necessary to define common projects and to have a more substantive degree of formalization.

## **Cascais**

We agree with formalizing the network. It is necessary to have a more consistent conceptual alignment, given the existence of various approaches in relation to the underlying theme of the RPCI. It is necessary to have a closer relationship with the coordinator and a more dynamic RPCI.

## **Loures**

The principles are already defined and were accepted by eight municipalities when they signed the agreement. We should not go back. We do believe it is necessary to formalize the RPCI. The network will allow us to deepen practices and reflections, evaluate possibilities and project future developments. Besides what is written in the statutes it is necessary to have a municipality that coordinates RPCI activities. Loures is available to assume this role of coordination at a first stage, if we all agree on this, naturally.

## **Setúbal**

A question of principle needs to be clear: this is a network of municipalities which in its genesis have the intention of municipalities getting together and make a shared path. It is important to formalize the RPCI. This network makes sense, a space to promote work developed, but it needs a strategic vision. The question of widening the network is particularly important and should not be hard to achieve. From the moment one decides to move forward, it is necessary to organize an initiative demonstrating the revitalization of the RPCI.

## **Lisboa**

Intervention made were in the sense of moving towards the network formalization, in a logic of municipalities association, thinking about common projects. It is necessary to analyse the statutes, define a timetable for our meetings and choose who will be in charge of carrying out work towards next meeting.

## **Amadora**

It is necessary to think about the best way to face the challenge of this network enlargement. On the other hand, it is also necessary to have enough people for the social bodies, as a fiscal board still seems to be missing.

### **3. Plan of action development**

#### **CoE**

We suggest a meeting for the first fortnight of November. It is also necessary that all municipalities actively participate in the CoE newsletter and, ideally, bilateral meetings with each one of the members of the RPCI should take place (in a near future).

#### **Lisboa**

Next coordinators meeting of the ICC will take place on September 14/15 and due to that perhaps we should anticipate the RPCI meeting. I subscribe the need to collaborate with the CoE newsletter.

#### **Loures**

Loures has sent communications for the newsletter due to its direct connection to the CoE (C4i project). In Portugal, there is no network. Nobody knows what other cities are doing, nobody centralizes information and disseminates it. It is possible to have the meeting at the beginning of September. We will work with that goal in mind together with André Carmo. We believe the next meeting should contemplate the following aspects: i) evaluation of the statutes, with the participation of more municipalities; ii) "fill" the different social bodies foreseen in the statutes.

#### **Lisboa**

Until June 29 all cities present will send suggestions of other municipalities to invite by Loures, whenever possible doing some intermediation. Lisbon will refine the RPCI statutes, sending them afterwards for each municipality to evaluate. Moreover, proposals for the action plan should also be send to Loures.

### **List of participants**

#### **RPCI Members**

Amadora: Cristina Farinha (Education and Social Action Deputy-Mayor);

Beja: Sara Serrano (Social Development Office) and Maria Manuel Coelho (Social Area);

Cascais: Isabel Pinto Gonçalves (Housing and Social Development Department Director), Sandra Henriques (Social Intervention Chief of Division) and Helena Bonzinho (Social Action public official);

Lisboa: João Afonso (Social Rights Deputy mayor), Manuela Júdice (GLEM Director) and Miguel Graça (Social Rights Deputy Mayor advisor);

Loures: Maria Eugénia Coelho (Social Cohesion and Housing Deputy Mayor), Rui Monteiro (Social Cohesion and Housing deputy mayor advisor) and João Paulo Simões (Social Cohesion and Housing deputy mayor advisor);

Santa Maria da Feira: Daniel Vilar (Culture Deputy mayor representative);

Setúbal: Pedro Pina (Culture Deputy mayor) and Conceição Loureiro (Social inclusion chief of division).

### **Observers**

Portimão: Ana Fazenda (Deputy Mayor)

ACM: Paula Moura (Local Policies support office)

RPCI coordinator: André Carmo