Intercultural policies and intergroup relations

Case study: Lisbon, Portugal
About CLIP

In 2006, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, the city of Stuttgart and the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) established a ‘European network of cities for local integration policies for migrants’, henceforth known as CLIP. The network comprises a steering committee, a group of expert European research centres and a number of European cities. In the following two years, the cities of Vienna and Amsterdam joined the CLIP Steering Committee. The network is also supported by the Committee of the Regions (CoR) and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), and has formed a partnership with the European Network Against Racism (ENAR).

Through the medium of separate city reports (case studies) and workshops, the network enables local authorities to learn from each other and to deliver a more effective integration policy. The unique character of the CLIP network is that it organises a shared learning process between the participating cities, between the cities and a group of expert European research centres, as well as between policymakers at local and European level.

The CLIP network currently brings together more than 30 large and medium-sized cities from all regions of Europe: Amsterdam (NL), Antwerp (BE), Arnsberg (DE), Athens (EL), Barcelona (ES), Bologna (IT), Breda (NL), Budapest (HU), Copenhagen (DK), Dublin (IE), Frankfurt (DE), Helsinki (FI), Istanbul (TR), Izmir (TR), Kirklees (UK), Liège (BE), Lisbon (PT), Luxembourg (LU), L’Hospitalet (ES), Malmö (SE), Mataró (ES), Newport (UK), Prague (CZ), Strasbourg (FR), Stuttgart (DE), Sundsvall (SE), Tallinn (EE), Terrassa (ES), Turin (IT), Turku (FI), Valencia (ES), Vienna (AT), Wolverhampton (UK), Wrocław (PL), Zagreb (HR), Zeytinburnu (TR) and Zürich (CH).

The cities in the network are supported in their shared learning by a group of expert European research centres in:

- Bamberg, Germany (european forum for migration studies, efms);
- Vienna (Institute for Urban and Regional Research, ISR);
- Amsterdam (Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies, IMES);
- Turin (International and European Forum on Migration Research, FIERI);
- Wrocław (Institute of International Studies);
- Swansea, Wales (Centre for Migration Policy Research, CMPR).

There are four research modules in total. The first module was on housing – segregation, access to, quality and affordability for migrants – which has been identified as a major issue impacting on migrants’ integration into their host society. The second module examined equality and diversity policies in relation to employment within city administrations and in the provision of services. The focus of the third module is intercultural policies and intergroup relations. The final module (2009–2010) will look at ethnic entrepreneurship.

The case studies on intercultural policies were carried out in 2009.

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1 See also http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/populationandsociety/clip.htm.
Acknowledgements

The researchers at FIERI in Turin are responsible for this report on Lisbon.

The author wishes to thank Dina Moreira, Head of the Studies and Planning Division of the Department of Social Affairs of the Municipality of Lisbon, for her commitment to this project. She also wishes to pay tribute to Ana Fortes of the same division for all her efforts in organising visits, providing information and answering questions, as well as to Marisa Mateus and Ana Cosme for their friendly welcome and support during the field work in Lisbon. The author is also grateful to Viviana Premazzi, a FIERI researcher, for her help in translating documents from Portuguese.

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Introduction

This module of CLIP deals with phenomena of urban life that are related to the multinational, multiethnic and multireligious structures of urban populations, which challenge the ability of municipalities to establish or maintain peaceful relations among the different segments of the population. Thus, the main subjects of this study are intercultural and interreligious dialogue and intergroup relations (Heckman, 2008). After a brief overview of Portugal’s migratory history and national policies, the report analyses the characteristics of the migrant population in Lisbon, paying special attention to its ethnic and religious structure. The chapter on ‘Local intercultural policies towards Muslim communities’, which constitutes the bulk of the study, concerns the municipality’s approach and policies towards ethnic and religious minorities. The CLIP network has decided to devote particular attention to Muslim communities, due to the tensions between this religious minority and the majority population witnessed in several European cities throughout the 1990s and 2000s. Consequently, a large part of the study is devoted to analysing the Muslim community’s socioeconomic structure and organisations, as well as relations with local authorities. Finally, the concluding part of the study examines radicalisation processes both in the majority population and among ethnic and religious minorities. Interviewees drew attention to the absence of radicalisation processes in the city of Lisbon.

The first part of the study involved a review of existing literature and datasets. The second part involved primary research and comprised two main stages, the first of which was the gathering of information via the Common Reporting Scheme (CRS). This tool is used to access information from all municipalities involved in CLIP. It includes information on policy goals, the city’s concrete programmes and activities, the structure of relevant migrant communities and relationships with them. In the case of Lisbon, this was completed by the city’s Department of Social Affairs. The second aspect of the primary research was a field visit to Lisbon carried out by the author with the support of the Lisbon municipality. During this visit, interviews were conducted with key actors in the Lisbon municipality and governmental bodies with specific tasks in intercultural and interreligious dialogue. Interviews were also conducted with representatives of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), religious communities and ethnic associations (see the list of associations at the end of the report). Most of these interviews took place on the premises of religious minorities and associations, which meant that further information could be gathered through the method of field observation. Finally, before and during the field visit, relevant documents were gathered and analysed, such as those produced by the municipality, private foundations, governmental bodies, NGOs and other associations, in order to get a more in-depth insight into their activities.
**Background**

**Brief history of migration to Portugal**

Prior to the process of decolonisation in Africa, there was a relatively small number of foreigners in Portugal. In the 1970s emigration declined and immigration began to rise. This happened as a consequence of a range of factors, including the establishment of the democratic regime in 1974, the process of decolonisation, the internalisation and modernisation of the Portuguese economy and the commencement of European Union (EU) integration. Since the mid 1980s, Portugal, like the other countries of southern Europe, became a destination and transit country. Until the end of the 1990s, immigration was closely related to the country’s colonial past, its historical and cultural links and its main economic connections. Most immigrants came from PALOP (Portuguese-speaking African) countries: Angola, Cape Verde and Mozambique, or ethnic Indians from Brazil and Mozambique (Fonseca et al, 2002).

At the end of the 2000s, new waves of immigration came from Brazil and eastern Europe, mainly from Moldova, Romania, Russia and Ukraine. Nowadays, the Brazilians and Ukrainians are two of the largest immigrant groups in Portugal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>No. of foreigners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>73,975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Verde</td>
<td>68,163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>42,765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>33,705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea-Bissau</td>
<td>24,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>15,991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>12,405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>São Tomé and Príncipe</td>
<td>11,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>10,578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>6,136</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Elaboration of data from the National Institute of Statistics (INE) and the Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras (SEF)

Source: Fonseca et al, 2008

The immigration of people from eastern European countries to Portugal was seen as an unexpected change in Portuguese migratory patterns. This was because the main reasons presented in the literature to explain migration flows were absent, for example, post-colonial relations and strong historical, cultural or economic links on the one hand, and active policies like direct recruitment, state-sponsored migration and bilateral agreements on the other (Marques and Góis, 2007). Migrants from eastern Europe have posed new challenges, such as large volumes of undocumented foreigners and linguistic problems. However, since 2003 there has been a reduction in the number of foreign immigrants entering Portugal; this is a consequence of a substantial rise in the rate of unemployment among immigrants in Portugal which started in 2002 (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2006). Furthermore, some eastern European groups, primarily Ukrainians, are decreasing in number in Portugal due to return migration (Fonseca et al, 2008).

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2 Two major surveys, conducted by the research team of the Centre for Social Studies (Centro de Estudos Sociais) in 2002 and 2004, point out that migration from eastern Europe to Portugal has been determined by three main factors: the economic disparities between the two regions, the ongoing regularisation of immigrant workers in Portugal and an increase in demand for foreign workers in economic sectors such as construction and tourism during the second half of the 1990s and the early years of the new millennium.
Another feature of Portuguese immigration since the 1980s is the high proportion of undocumented migrants. This problem persists despite the five regularisations that have been undertaken up to this point. Although it is difficult to calculate the number of undocumented immigrants working in Portugal, they are estimated to represent almost 20% of total immigrants from non-EU countries (Fonseca et al, 2005).

In relation to the socioeconomic integration of migrants, those from China, India and PALOP countries – with the partial exception of people from Guinea-Bissau – are at a more advanced stage of the migratory process. This means that a smaller proportion of these immigrants are male pioneer workers, while a larger proportion have arrived through the process of family reunification. Conversely, eastern Europeans and Brazilians are less likely to enter the country on this basis, reflecting their recent arrival in the country and the growing importance of labour market demand as a pull factor for them. It is also the case that a great many of them are undocumented (Fonseca et al, 2005).

The majority of people from African countries have low-skilled and low-paid jobs, especially those working in the construction sector, personal services and cleaning companies. A high proportion of Asian people, mainly Chinese, Indians and Pakistanis, work in ethnic businesses, such as the retail trade and hospitality. Brazilians are distributed across professional, semi-skilled and low-skilled employment categories, but are most commonly found in tertiary employment. Eastern Europeans have an occupational profile similar to that of PALOP citizens, except that there is a higher proportion of eastern Europeans working in manufacturing. This is despite the fact that eastern Europeans have a much higher level of education and professional qualifications; even higher than that of the Portuguese population (Fonseca, 2008; Fonseca et al, 2005; Malheiros and Vala, 2004).

Despite having been in Portugal for a longer period of time, PALOP citizens seem to face more difficulties in the integration process than newcomers from eastern Europe. The Portuguese spoken by PALOP citizens differs from that spoken in Portugal. For this reason, young PALOP people do not benefit from specific listening comprehension classes and show more learning difficulties than eastern Europeans, Indians or Chinese. They are more likely to experience social exclusion and to be involved in socially deviant behaviour. In regard to residential patterns, PALOP immigrants are overrepresented in several socially deprived neighbourhoods, including public housing estates, shack settlements and clandestine housing on the periphery of Lisbon, while Brazilians and eastern European citizens show a more dispersed settlement pattern. Finally, some PALOP immigrants such as Angolans and Guineans face more problems in the field of labour market integration and, following the economic downturn in Portugal, seem to suffer significantly higher rates of unemployment than other immigrants (Fonseca et al, 2005 and 2008).

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3 Since the 1990s, there have been five regularisations: two extraordinary regularisation campaigns in 1992–1993 and 1996, a regularisation campaign based on employment between January and November 2001 and another two recent regularisations in 2003, after a special agreement between Portugal and Brazil, and in 2004 (Fonseca et al, at 2005, pp. 1–2).

4 In 2001, in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area (LMA), PALOP pupils showed a high rate of failure; for instance, 31.9% of PALOP pupils aged 10–14 years were still attending the first cycle of education which is aimed at those aged 6–10 years. Furthermore, the proportion of PALOP pupils attending secondary school was significantly lower than among Portuguese students and only 0.9% of PALOP pupils had actually graduated (Fonseca et al, 2008).

5 In the LMA, the PALOP groups represent the highest proportion of those living in shanty housing (9.3%), but also the highest percentage of population living in owner-occupied houses (53.9%). Nevertheless, despite the fact that this group benefited the most from the re-housing process, it is still the case that the largest proportion of their population lives in non-traditional housing (Fonseca et al, 2008).

6 However, Brazilians and eastern Europeans, together with Asians, are overrepresented when it comes to shared and over-crowded houses in the private rental market (Fonseca et al, 2008).
As far as religious affiliation is concerned, Brazilians and Cape Verdean immigrants are Catholic, those from eastern Europe are Orthodox Christians, while Muslims come mainly from Bangladesh, Guinea-Bissau, the Middle East, North Africa, Pakistan and Senegal. Those coming from Mozambique are either Muslim or Hindu. Unfortunately, data are not available on the population of each religious group in Lisbon.

National policy context

As in other southern European countries, immigration did not become a politically relevant subject in Portugal until the 1980s. Moreover, it is only since the 1990s that policies of immigration have been formulated and special bureaus have been developed (Machado, 1993). Nowadays, public debate is largely focused on the integration of the second generation, while concerns about first generation immigrants mainly concern access to the labour market and appropriate housing. This section focuses on national policies concerning intergroup relations and intercultural and interreligious dialogue.

In the past, Portuguese law gave preferential treatment to immigrants from Portuguese-speaking countries, reflecting the intense political, economic and sociocultural relations that exist between it and the former colonies. By thus increasing the rights of PALOP citizens, Portuguese policy reinforced the Portuguese-speaking transnational community. However, policies formulated since 2000 have gradually moved away from the preferential treatment of immigrants from PALOP countries, adopting a more universal approach to immigrant groups (Marques and Góis, 2007; Fonseca et al, 2005).

The prevalence of PALOP citizens among migrants has also affected the extent to which the government recognises cultural difference among immigrants. In this regard, Oliveira (2000) points out that in the discourse of the governmental elite, immigration has been discussed in terms of cultural affinity. Nonetheless, even if the ethnic categories that characterise multiculturalism are absent in Portuguese policy documents, an effort has been made to recognise immigrant associations as political partners, both at national and local level. Since the 1990s, this trend has also been favoured by an increasing awareness that some of the problems faced by immigrants, in terms of education, housing and employment, occur among specific ethnic groups (Esteves et al, 2005).

The first step towards the recognition of cultural differences was taken in 1991 with the establishment of the Coordinating Secretariat of Multicultural Education Projects (Entreculturas). This was transferred in 2004 from the Minister of Education to the High Commissioner for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities (ACIME). Its aim is to promote equal opportunities and intercultural education, and to help students develop the skills needed to live in a society characterised by increasing cultural diversity. However, as Fonseca et al (2002) point out, the fact that this first step took place in the field of education indicates a rather nationalistic approach, since the people who were able to benefit from it were either Portuguese or potentially Portuguese.

In 1996, the position of High Commissioner for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities (ACIME) was set up. In 2002, this was replaced by a more complex structure, entitled the High Commission for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities. In

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7 Until the 2005 law, PALOP and Brazilian citizens only needed six years of residence to obtain Portuguese citizenship, while foreigners from other countries needed 10 years. Other special rights (especially economic and political) to citizens from Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea, Angola, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe were granted through bilateral agreements (Fonseca et al, 2005).

8 See http://www.acidi.gov.pt
2007, this body changed its name a final time to the High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue (ACIDI), revealing the increasing importance of the issue of intercultural dialogue in Portugal. ACIDI is an inter-ministerial office, under the direct authority of the Prime Minister. ACIDI’s mission is as follows:

- to collaborate in defining, implementing and evaluating public policies for the integration of immigrants and ethnic minorities;
- to enhance dialogue between religions, cultures and ethnicities;
- to develop initiatives to combat xenophobia.

ACIDI works in collaboration with immigrant associations, members of ethnic minorities and NGOs. Furthermore, the Consultative Council for Immigration Affairs (Conselho Consultivo para os Assuntos da Imigração, COCAI) was set up in order to involve representatives from NGOs, immigrant associations, trade unions, employer organisations and the State Secretary of Portuguese Communities in the debate on immigration and integration policies. ACIDI also encompasses the National Immigrant Information System, the Immigration Observatory, the National Immigrant Assistance System (CNAI) and a nationwide network of Local Immigrant Assistance Centres (CLAI). CLAIs are local offices set up to welcome immigrants and provide them with information. They are managed by different local actors such as municipalities, immigrant associations, NGOs, parishes and private and non-profit organisations. ACIDI has also set up a national immigrants’ information network (Rede nacional de Informação ao Imigrante). It publishes a monthly newsletter (Boletim Informativo) and various brochures. It also manages a telephone helpline (SOS Imigrante) which is accessible in three languages (SEF, 2008b; Esteves, 2008; ECRI, 2007).

Despite an emphasis being placed on immigrants’ social and cultural identity, the law that governs the role of the ACIDI focuses on ‘the promotion of the knowledge and acceptance of Portuguese language, laws, and also the cultural and moral values of the Portuguese Nation, as conditions for complete integration’ (Article 2b, Decree Law No.251/2002 of 22 November 2002). Thus, the concept of integration as a basis for ACIDI’s work includes not only knowledge of the national language and respect for the law, but also the acceptance of the moral and cultural values of the nation. Indeed, Fonseca et al (2005) draw attention to a certain neo-assimilationist perspective that is subtly incorporated into the governmental regulatory documents. They also note certain signs of ‘governmentalisation’ regarding the structures that handle immigrant-related issues. Nevertheless, ACIDI and some of its initiatives have been referred to as examples of best practice in various European publications (Fonseca et al, 2008). Moreover, despite the fact that integration policies were introduced relatively late, the Migrant Integration Policy Index considered Portugal to be second best in the EU (and three non-EU countries) in terms of the quality of its legislation in this area (Niessen et al, 2007).

When it comes to handling issues of integration and cultural diversity among newcomers, Portugal does not have a pre-arrival introduction programme, or a strict or compulsory integration programme, as can be found in some northern European countries. However, in 2001 the Institute of Employment and Professional Training (IEFP) launched the

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9 The High Commission springs from the merger of: the High Commission for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities, the structure for technical support for the coordination of the Choice Programme, the Mission Structure for Dialogue with Religions and the Entreculturas Office. This move centralised competencies in the area of integration and intercultural dialogue that were previously scattered over various entities (SEF, 2008b).

10 Due to the growing diversity of immigrant communities in Portugal, a representative of each of the three largest non-CPLP (Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries) immigrant communities living in the country has also been included in the COCAI (Fonseca et al, 2008, p. 28).
initiative Portugal Hosts (Portugal Acolhe). The programme includes a welcome guide that is available in six languages, Portuguese language classes and a training module on citizenship practices all of which are free of charge and not compulsory. In addition to this programme, courses on the Portuguese language and citizenship have been promoted by immigrant associations, Catholic Church organisations and NGOs (Fonseca et al, 2005).

With regard to interreligious dialogue, in 2001 the growing number and size of non-Catholic religious denominations led to the adoption of a new Law on Religious Freedom (Law No. 16/2001 of 22 June 2001). This created a legislative framework for those religious groups that were established in the country for at least 30 years, as well as for those recognised internationally for a period of at least 60 years. The law provides qualifying religious groups with benefits previously reserved only for the Catholic Church; these include full tax exemption status, legal recognition of marriage and other rites, chaplain visits to prisons and hospitals, acknowledgement of traditional holidays and recognition of the rights of ministers. It allows each religion to negotiate its own concordat-style agreement with the government, although it does not guarantee the acceptance of any such agreements (US Department of State, 2008; Leitão, 2004). The Law of 2001 also established the Commission for Religious Freedom, an independent consultative body of the government and of the parliament devoted to the study of religious freedom, the provision of information on this subject and the formulation of proposals related to the Law on Religious Freedom.

In summary, although integration policy is quite a recent development in Portugal, it is fairly well developed. However, while recognition for cultural and religious differences has become increasingly important, it has been hindered by the large prevalence of PALOP citizens, who are characterised by their strong links with Portuguese society and their membership of the lusophone (Portuguese-speaking) community. Indeed, the approach taken towards various cultural and religious groups is still ambiguous and cannot be tied to a precise model.

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11 In this regard, if a ministry represents that person’s source of income, it is considered a professional activity and is valid for the purposes of renewing residence permits (Leitão, 2004).
Profile of Lisbon

Brief description of the city

The Lisbon Metropolitan Area (LMA) is the largest Portuguese metropolitan area. It comprises 18 municipalities and about 25% of Portuguese people live there. The LMA is also the economic and financial centre of Portugal (Fonseca et al, 2002).

The city of Lisbon is in the centre of the LMA and since the 1950s it has undergone a steady demographic growth. This is due to a series of successive migration inflows, namely domestic migration, the return home of Portuguese people living in the former colonies and, since the 1980s, foreign immigration. However, since the 1990s, the population within the municipality of Lisbon has declined significantly, decreasing by about 15% between 1991 and 2001; according to the 2001 census, the municipality of Lisbon has almost 565,000 inhabitants. During this time, other municipalities of the LMA experienced a population growth. This change is mostly due to economically active young people moving to the suburbs and has been reinforced both by the tertiarisation of the central areas and by the increase in housing prices in more central and prestigious areas. The size of the migrant population has also decreased: in 2001, the municipality of Sintra overtook Lisbon as the municipality in the LMA with the largest concentration of immigrants. Furthermore, at 3.3%, the proportion of immigrants in the population of Lisbon is substantially lower than the LMA average, which is 4.7% (Fonseca et al, 2008).

Over the last two decades, major changes in the social structure of Lisbon’s population have been linked to the widening of the income gap between social groups, and the emergence of a new type of poverty and social exclusion that is associated with unemployment, old age and ethnicity. Contributing factors include the restructuring of industrial output, changes in the professional and ethnic composition of the population and the major urban interventions that have taken place in the city of Lisbon. The diversification and segmentation of the labour market have led to an increase in unskilled jobs that are usually filled by migrants. Employment opportunities and security have become increasingly precarious, particularly in personal and domestic services and the building industry, where ethnic minorities are overrepresented (Malheiros and Vala, 2004; Fonseca and Esteves, 2002).

It is also relevant to note that since 2002, the city of Lisbon, like the rest of the country, has undergone an economic downturn, which may lead to these social and economic disparities being widened. In fact, immigrant groups seem to be the most vulnerable to the economic downturn, as they are facing increasing difficulties in finding jobs; this is reflected in the fact that they have a higher unemployment rate than indigenous Portuguese people (Fonseca et al, 2008).

City’s migrant population

The immigration history of Lisbon city generally reflects that of the whole of Portugal. On both levels, the predominance of PALOP citizens among immigrants has been challenged by the arrival of huge inflows of immigrants from eastern Europe, since the end of the 1990s. The result is that, alongside PALOP citizens, Ukrainians and Romanians comprise the biggest immigrant groups living in the city.

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12 In 2001, 55% of the total migrant population lived in the LMA.

13 In 2006, the unemployment rate for the population of men born in Portugal was 6.9% and for foreign-born men 8.2%, while for women it was 9.3% and 11.4% respectively (SOPEMI-OECD, 2008).
The most commonly practised religions in Lisbon are Islam, Hinduism and Orthodox Christianity. The first two boast a long history in Lisbon, linked to immigration from the former colonies, mainly Mozambique. A small proportion of Lisbon’s Hindu community – about 20% according to the Hindu community itself – is made up of new immigrants, who usually arrive as a result of marriage or family reunification, rather than for economic reasons. However, the level of inflow of Muslim migrants is still significant, especially from Guinea-Bissau. The Orthodox community existed in Portugal before immigrants began to arrive from eastern Europe, though it has grown as a consequence of this. Lastly, Sikhs, usually of Bangladeshi and Pakistani origin, represent a very recent minority; they speak little Portuguese and are characterised by a low rate of family reunification (Pereira Bastos and Pereira Bastos, 2006).

Regarding ethnic minority associations, those that are long established and well organised represent those from Brazil, Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau. Among eastern European organisations, Ukrainian ones are the most active; they seem to be mainly engaged in the preservation and promotion of their culture.

According to Fonseca et al (2002), it is possible to identify three stages in the development of immigrant associations in Lisbon.

- The first stage began in the mid 1970s, following the arrival of refugees from the former African colonies; associations were rather informal in nature and their main concern was to facilitate the hosting of immigrants of the same country of origin, solving day-to-day problems and promoting cultural activities typical of the country of origin.
- The early 1990s represented the major growth period in the number of associations; this was caused by the government’s recognition of migrant associations during the 1992–1993 regularisation process. Since then, ethnic minority associations widened their civic intervention area and increased their capacity to fight for the social and political rights of immigrants, often getting involved in the debate on immigrants’ rights.
- The establishment of ACIME in 1996 represented a crucial step in the consolidation process of immigrant associations, which has strengthened their role as partners of public and private institutions.

Short-term alliances with municipal authorities and participation in public programmes represent the main strategies used by ethnic minority associations, such as the Cape Verdean associations analysed by Beja Horta et al (2008), in order to capitalise public funds and increase their capacity to influence social policy-making. Despite this, the field visit for this study revealed that only a few ethnic minority associations are regarded by local authorities as being reliable partners. Perhaps as a result of this, ethnic minority organisations in Lisbon seem concerned with developing a more professional attitude. For instance, the training courses for leaders of ethnic communities launched by ACIDI, aimed at developing skills involved in formulating and managing projects and developing partnerships, have been well attended.

### Table 2: Main foreign nationalities living in Lisbon, 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>No. of foreigners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cape Verde</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>24,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>24,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea-Bissau</td>
<td>15,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>São Tomé and Príncipe</td>
<td>6,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>6,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>6,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>4,300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SEF, 2008a
by representatives of these associations. Indeed, it can be said that the professionalisation of associations can be regarded as the fourth phase of the development of immigrant associations, following on from the three phases mentioned above.

With regard to the activities promoted by ethnic minority associations and their contribution to the welfare of local immigrant communities, the field visit confirmed what Sardinha (2005) and Albuquerque et al (2000) pointed out. This is that the activities of ethnic minority associations are focused on three main areas.

- **Socioeconomic activities**: education for young people; support for the ageing population; training; healthcare; enhancement of neighbourhoods and support in the rehousing process, often in partnership with public institutions, foundations or NGOs; forging relationships between communities and local authorities.

- **Cultural activities**: promotion of cultural activities; consolidating a sense of belonging, based on identity affiliation and the preservation of cultural identity though music, dance and gastronomic events and mother-tongue language courses.

- **Political activities**: providing information on immigrants’ rights and representing immigrant communities in dialogue with local authorities and other partners.

Most of the cultural and social activities are carried on at neighbourhood level and special attention is given to the aforementioned difficulties in the integration of second generation immigrants.

There are fewer organisations representing minority religious groups than there are of those representing ethnic minorities. However, those that do exist tend to be older than ethnic minority organisations. They also promote social activities, such as training courses and blood donation campaigns, as well as initiatives aimed at assisting people living in poverty. They also run mother-tongue language courses, mainly for the new generations, in order to promote the cultures they represent. Finally, they are particularly active in fostering interreligious dialogue, establishing joint platforms and associations and involving all religious leaders and local authorities in public ceremonies; this will be described in further detail later.

The municipality of Lisbon recognises ethnic minority and religious organisations and provides logistical and economic support for their activities, if required.

### City’s Muslim population and its characteristics

Most of the Muslims in Portugal live in the LMA. However, there are no detailed data available on the Muslim population in Lisbon. According to the leaders of the Islamic Community of Lisbon (Comunidade Islâmica de Lisboa), it comprises about 35,000 people, with the second and third generations representing more than half of the whole community. Men and women are more or less represented equally.

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14 This initiative was developed by GATA (Support Office for Immigrant Associations), a branch of ACIDI. It supports the creation and development of immigrant associations, granting logistical support, namely training for their leaders and financial support for their activities (see ACIDI, 2009).
As far as the Muslim population is concerned, the ‘new Islamic presence’ should be distinguished from the traditional one (Leitão, 2004; Tiesler, 2000). Traditionally, the Islamic Community of Lisbon comprised mainly Portuguese citizens of Indian and Indian-Mozambican origin, most of whom already lived in Lisbon before the independence of the Portuguese African colonies. They belong to the middle/upper classes and work mainly in the commercial and banking sectors, distinguishing themselves from the rest of PALOP immigrants. The new Islamic presence comes mainly from Central Africa, especially from Guinea-Bissau; interviewees estimated that those from Guinea-Bissau comprised around 50 to 60% of the Muslim community. Others came from Guinea-Conakry, the Ivory Coast and Senegal. Those migrants from North Africa, mainly Morocco and Algeria, constitute a minority of around 6% of the Muslim community, according to the interviewees. Lastly, a small proportion of the Muslim minority comes from Pakistan and Bangladesh.

In terms of socioeconomic status, the initial Muslim community was always fairly wealthy. However, the situation has changed with the expansion of this community and the increase in the number of countries of origin. Nina Tiesler (2000) estimates that nearly one third of Muslims living in Lisbon are poor; most of these are African minorities and newcomers. Indeed, it is evident that a large proportion of this religious minority face problems in the areas of housing and employment. These data were confirmed by the Islamic Community of Lisbon, which pointed out that Guineans, who constitute the majority of the Islamic community, are mostly employed in the construction sector, with an average monthly income of around €600.

In analysing the Muslim population, it is important to distinguish between the two main Muslim communities living in Lisbon: the Sunnites and the Shiites, or the Ismailis. The former is the larger community and is represented by the Islamic Community of Lisbon; this is the first Muslim association in Portugal, established by the Indian-Mozambican minority in 1968 which initially comprised 25 to 30 members. To this day, its most important members are still Indian-Mozambican; nowadays, however, its composition is not homogeneous and includes migrants from Arab countries, North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa and southeast Asia. No internal conflicts are apparent, with the exception of the battle for the presidency of the association in the mid 1980s.

The Islamic Community of Lisbon manages the Central Mosque of Lisbon. The construction of the mosque commenced in 1979 on the land given in leasehold for a period of 99 years by the municipality, and continued until its inauguration in 1985 (Leitão, 2004). While the mosque’s statute sets out that its president should be a Sunnite, the mosque is open to all Muslims, who usually use its facilities for funerals and other relevant celebrations. A member of the Ismaili community was among the founders of the Islamic Community of Lisbon.

There are organisations outside of Lisbon representing Muslim communities. However, due to the absence of a federal body for these groups, the Islamic Community of Lisbon plays a central role, often representing the whole Portuguese Muslim minority. This role is due to the large size of the association. It probably also relates to the fact that the association’s most powerful members arrived in Portugal in the 1950s and 1960s and belong to the upper socioeconomic classes. These members have the intellectual and social resources as well as the diplomatic and political relations necessary to establish a religious and cultural infrastructure and to mediate with political authorities (Tiesler, 2000).

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15 Muslims left Mozambique as a consequence of the Africanisation process and, later, due to the civil war.
16 The first mosque was built in 1982 in Laranjeiro, the second in 1983 in Odivelas.
The Ismaili community, mostly of Indian-Mozambican origin, is much smaller than the Sunnite one; however, there is a larger population of Ismailis in Lisbon than in most European cities – they are also quite numerous in Canada, Spain, the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US). The Ismailis seem to be very well integrated. This successful integration has probably been facilitated by various factors. Firstly, the community is characterised by a high level of education and professional jobs. Secondly, the migration of Ismailis is a diaspora: they have no homeland. Lastly, while the first basic principle introduced by Aga Khan was religious duty to Islam and the imam, the second was loyalty to the country of residence and any government responsible for the safety and welfare of the community (Tiesler, 2000). It is likely that this principle helped to prevent conflicts or tensions with host populations. At the same time, it has given rise to the Ismaili community’s strong commitment to social and cultural activities, since these obligations should be discharged not by passive affirmation but through responsible engagement and active commitment to upholding national integrity and contributing to peaceful development.

The Ismaili community has two foundations in Lisbon, the Focus Foundation and the Aga Khan Foundation which is the biggest of the two and part of the Aga Khan Development Network. According to section 4 of the statute of the Aga Khan Foundation, it has ‘philanthropic, charitable, scientific, sporting, religious, literary, cultural and educational objectives’ as well as objectives in the field of health. These objectives must be followed in Portugal and in any other part of the world regardless of race, religious or political belief. It received substantial support from His Highness Shah Karim Al-Husseini Aga Khan, while according to interviewees, the main contribution of the Lisbon Ismaili community seems to consist of voluntary work. The Aga Khan Foundation runs various projects in partnership with the Lisbon municipality and other relevant local actors.

The Islamic Community of Lisbon is also engaged in social initiatives, although it cannot rely on the economic and human resources of a private foundation for this purpose. Its main activities, which are provided for the benefit of all, and not just the Muslim community, include an annual charity lunch for poor people, blood donation campaigns and the distribution of clothes. The association does not receive any support from the municipality for these activities; it has never asked for such support. The only assistance it does receive is logistical support from the civil parishes.

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17 The Ismailis constitute the second largest Shia community after the Twelvers in the Muslim world and are now spread throughout more than 20 countries in Asia, Africa, Europe and North America.

18 Because of political developments in Iran in the late 1830s and early 1840s, the 46th Imam, Aga Hasan Ali Shah (the first imam to bear the title of Aga Khan), emigrated to the Indian subcontinent, where he settled. This development had an uplifting effect on the community in India and on the religious and communal life of the whole Ismaili world. In the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries, Ismailis from the Indian subcontinent migrated to East Africa in significant numbers. In the 20th century, numerous institutions for social and economic development were established on the Indian subcontinent and in East Africa.

19 In medieval times, Ismailis twice established states of their own and for a relatively long period they played an important part in the history of the Muslim world. During the second century of their history, the Ismailis founded the first Shia caliphate under the Fatimid caliph-imams. Later, after a schism that split Ismailism into two major branches – Nizari and Mustalian – the Nizari leaders succeeded in founding a cohesive state, with scattered territories stretching from eastern Persia to Syria. The Nizari state collapsed under the onslaught of the all-conquering Mongols. Thereafter, the Ismailis never regained political prominence, surviving in many lands as a minor Shia Muslim sect.

20 In 1986, he promulgated a Constitution that, for the first time, brought the social governance of the world wide Ismaili community into a single structure with built-in flexibility to account for the different circumstances of different regions.

21 They were recognised and approved by Decree Law No. 27/1996.

explained previously, support provided at neighbourhood level plays a crucial role in facilitating the social activities of ethnic and religious associations. Furthermore, the Central Mosque represents a point of reference for Muslim newcomers and a support structure for the poorest members of the community, thanks to the Islamic charity system of zakāt (which means ‘alms giving’ and involves giving a small percentage of one’s possessions or surplus wealth to charity).

Finally, it is interesting to note that there are no Muslim student associations or women’s organisations in Lisbon, probably because of the small size of these populations (Tiesler, 2000). It can be concluded that the Muslim community represents a rather centralised structure with few offshoots. This minimises the number of bodies that the local authorities have to deal with and may thus simplify the process of establishing fruitful dialogue.

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23 Other relevant Muslim associations, although marginal compared with the Islamic Community of Lisbon, are the association of Muslims from Guinea-Bissau, the Islamic Community Living in Portugal and the Islamic Centre of Bangladesh. However, there are not many of these associations, since many Muslims seem to join non-denominational associations.
Local intercultural policies in general

General approach and responsibility for relations with ethnic and religious organisations

Local authorities have a significant role to play in promoting the integration of immigrants, because they deal directly with addressing people’s social needs. However, the extent to which local authorities can do so is limited by the amount of resources available, especially when considered alongside the number of immigrants living in Lisbon and their wide range of needs (Esteves et al, 2005). In the Department of Social Affairs of the Lisbon municipality, which is responsible for integration matters as well as intercultural dialogue, there are only a few civil servants exclusively dedicated to these issues: just three out of five civil servants working on immigration are devoted solely to this issue and two of these three persons work also at the front office of the CLAI which is also managed by the department. There is a similar shortage of economic resources: in 2009, the budget for intercultural policies was around only €50,000. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that other municipal departments, such as the Departments of Culture, Education, Sports and Housing also fund and promote activities that involve ethnic minorities and immigrants, thus fostering intercultural dialogue.

Despite this, the municipality has promoted intercultural initiatives since the 1990s and can therefore be regarded as a pioneer in this field, even if the new approach developed in that period was influenced by changes occurring at national level (Fonseca et al, 2002). In fact, Lisbon municipality was among the first Portuguese municipalities to formally recognise ethnic minorities and their specific needs and demands; in 1993, it set up the Municipal Council of Migrant Communities and Ethnic Minorities, a consultative council that includes representatives of the bigger ethnic minority associations.

Nevertheless, these steps are a far cry from the multicultural and intercultural models adopted in many cities of northern Europe. Indeed, at local level, policies aimed at supporting migrant associations are still weak (Beja Horta et al, 2008); they are also influenced by national policies such as the National Immigrant Integration Plan and National Action Plan for Social Inclusion (both for the period 2008–2010). The municipality itself states that, with the exception of the aforementioned consultative council on minority ethnic associations, it does ‘not have an explicit policy aimed at improving intercultural relations’ (cited from the Common Reporting Scheme (CRS)). Neither does it have a clear policy regarding the provision of economic support for these organisations, as will be illustrated later.

The impression one gathers is that the local authorities sway between recognising cultural diversities and placing an emphasis on similarities, fearing that an emphasis on differences might easily develop into discrimination. The result is a lack of a clear approach. In this regard, it is important to remember that the idea of collective belonging to a cohesive lusophone community is rooted both in the minds of immigrants from Portuguese-speaking countries and in the local authorities. In this context, the integration of ethnic minorities into mainstream institutions is regarded as a positive process by the municipality and the ethnic minorities. Indeed, the city council has already engaged members from ethnic minority backgrounds.24

Finally, it is worth highlighting the point that while intercultural dialogue is mainly managed by the Department of Social Affairs, interreligious dialogue is the responsibility of the city council, even the mayor, who attends important celebrations promoted by religious organisations or invites them to public events. For example, the mayor attended the 40th anniversary celebration of the Islamic community. In 2008, he invited different religious organisations to lunch at Mitra Palace and, on another occasion, he launched a memorial in memory of the Jewish massacre that took place in Lisbon in 1506. The intercultural and interreligious dialogues are developing quite separately; moreover, in both public discourse and local policies, ethnicity seems to prevail over religion.

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24 The right to participate in local elections was established by Law No. 56/1996, but the active electoral rights are given respecting the reciprocity principle. In any case, a relevant part of the oldest minorities has acquired Portuguese nationality, therefore it has the same political rights of the majority population.
Issues, demands and interests

Recent trends in immigration led to a substantial number of ethnic minority associations focusing on issues such as immigration policies, citizenship rights and social integration, rather than cultural issues (Beja Horta et al, 2008). Concerning the cultural domain, ethnic minority communities, especially those of PALOP origin, do not seem to perceive any conflict between their cultural identity and that of the indigenous Portuguese. This does not always occur in European countries with migration flows from former colonies. According to some immigrant interviewees, this seems to be linked to the common language and the strong relations established between former colonies and the Portuguese people who settled there; as one interviewee noted, they were ‘the only ones that generated a new race: the mulatto’. In contrast, the more recent communities that do not belong to the lusophone community, Ukrainians in particular, are concerned with emphasising the distinctive aspects of their cultural identity.

The mild and relatively new nature of cultural demands, especially from PALOP immigrants, is also reflected in the difficulty experienced by ethnic minority organisations in preparing funding proposals to present to the municipality regarding cultural activities. For example, when the Department of Social Affairs recently asked associations involved in the aforementioned consultative council of ethnic minorities to submit proposals for the council’s intercultural activities, it received none.

Lastly, several associations have asked the municipality to provide them with premises. Such requests are forwarded to the Municipal Enterprise for the Management of Lisbon Municipal Neighborhoods (Empresa Municipal de Gestão dos Bairros Municipais de Lisboa, GEBALIS), which is the public enterprise responsible for council buildings. However, associations often refuse the solutions that are offered to them since they are usually located in neighbourhoods dominated by council housing on the outskirts of Lisbon. Premises in the city centre would certainly make associations’ initiatives more visible and accessible to the local population. However, the municipality itself seems to have problems obtaining suitable offices in the city centre.

No relevant issues concerning religious minorities came to light during the field visit. In fact, no proposals or demands that are purely faith related have been made to the municipality. Muslims cited some unmet religious needs during interviews, such as the availability of halal food and space to pray in public places. However, up until now, they have not made any requests to the local administration concerning these matters. Sikhs have stated that they do not have any special requests concerning, for instance, the religious duty of wearing a knife or the turban since, in their experience, these behaviours have never been forbidden or constrained, despite the fact that they are not formally recognised as rights connected to religious freedom. Hindus ask only for better public transport connecting the Hindu temple with the rest of the city. Indeed, it should be noted that needs regarding places of worship were met in the past, with the municipality providing sites for both Muslim and Hindu places of worship. Orthodox Christians who recently arrived from eastern Europe are currently using Catholic churches.

Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims accord greater importance to the need to improve courses in their original languages and culture, especially for new generations. They promote cultural, gastronomic and sporting events in order to bring people together and overcome prejudice. They mainly ask the municipality for logistical assistance, such as support with accessing venues and facilities or infrastructural issues, to enable them to meet these needs independently. In addition to this, the Hindu community also requested teachers from India. Indeed the religious communities seem to be aware that the municipality has difficulty in providing substantial financial support to ethnic and religious associations, although it can provide logistical assistance. In fact, the municipality has provided logistical support to various organisations, but mainly for public events.
Forms of dialogue

Intercultural dialogue

As already highlighted, the municipality of Lisbon supports ethnic minority associations; however, this is not an easy task for the Department of Social Affairs. The budgetary constraints caused by the economic recession have led to a substantial reduction in expenditure and in 2009 the budget for financing associations’ activities was only about €25,000. Indeed, the associations’ income mainly comes from membership fees and funding from the central government, mostly through ACIDI, while the main support provided by the Lisbon municipality consists of logistical assistance in organising public events.

Fonseca et al (2002) identify two different approaches adopted by the municipalities of the LMA regarding their liaisons with ethnic minority communities and organisations:

- the relationship between local government and immigrant communities is institutionalised through consultative councils or specific internal municipal bodies that frequently work with and listen to the associations;
- the relationship is based on an attitude of equal treatment of all citizens, independently of their ethnic, social or religious origin, although the ethnic and cultural diversity of migrant communities is recognised.

The municipality of Lisbon (as well as Amadora, Loures and Sintra) fits the first category. In 1993, it set up the Municipal Council of Migrant Communities and Ethnic Minorities, with the aim of facilitating the development of migrant communities and the participation of ethnic minority associations in activities for the promotion of cultural diversity. According to Fonseca et al (2002), the personal attitudes of local political leaders play a role in the establishment of this kind of consultative body. Indeed, in Lisbon the council’s activities ended with the change in the political majority at the beginning of the new millennium, and only resumed in November 2007, after the election of the new Mayor, Antonio Costa (former Minister for Home Affairs).

After its re-establishment, the Municipal Council of Migrant Communities and Ethnic Minorities changed its name to the Municipal Council for Interculturalism and Citizenship (CMIC), stressing the increasing centrality of the intercultural issue. The CMIC is a local consultative structure headed by the Social Affairs deputy and includes representatives of locally recognised associations. Its main goal is to guarantee the participation of migrants, Roma people and other citizens with a diverse cultural identity in the formulation of policies that address them. Recently, the CMIC established a new internal body, the Municipal Forum of Interculturality (Fórum Municipal da Interculturalidade, FMINT). FMINT is open to individuals, as well as public and private organisations, and aims to promote and foster collective thinking regarding local integration policies, thus promoting good methods of intervention in this area. In particular, thematic working groups have the task of implementing strategic measures and policies for integration, and enhancing intercultural dialogue in the city of Lisbon.

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25 In 2005, for instance, it was higher, at €63,555.
26 In 1994, Amadora municipality established the Municipal Council of Ethnic Communities and Immigrants, functioning as a consultative agency to promote the participation of ethnic minority communities in defining policies. In Loures, municipal support is given to the Agency for Religious and Social Issues set up in 1993, which provides logistical and financial means to associations developing social and cultural projects. In Sintra, the Agency to Support Minorities was established in 1999 in order to work in close cooperation with NGOs and the Catholic Church.
27 More precisely, the actions of the forum should be: a) to contribute to the debate on the local strategies of social, cultural and housing interventions though research, studies, dissemination and debates; b) to further knowledge about immigrants, Roma people and other groups and communities representative of cultural diversity through practical work in the area of human and social sciences; c) to formulate proposed measures and programmes in the area of social intervention with the Social Network of Lisbon (Rede Social), the central and local administrations and public and private entities, promoting information and training and intercultural and interreligious education; d) to combat stigmatisation and stereotypes concerning migrants and ethnic minorities.
Since 2007, besides the establishment of FMINT, CMIC activity has concerned:

- the organisation of events for the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue in 2008;
- the drawing up of a new regulation for its operation.\(^{28}\)

The new regulation sets out that the number of CMIC members should increase from nine to 17 associations.\(^{29}\) The CMIC’s members are not elected by ethnic minority communities, but are appointed; in 1993, this was done by the municipality and afterwards by the current members and president of the council. The members are selected according to their relevance: for each of the largest ethnic minority communities living in Lisbon, the most relevant associations are selected. Other associations can attend the meetings, although without the right to vote.

The associations involved in the CMIC do not seem very active. Despite having only about four meetings a year, the associations do not attend them regularly. Furthermore, as noted earlier, the associations have not answered the CMIC’s call for proposals. This low involvement of associations in the CMIC’s activities could be due to its limited impact on local integration and intercultural policies. Indeed, while some associations interviewed pointed out the CMIC’s useful role in expressing the needs of ethnic minority communities, others felt it had a limited impact. However, it is important to note that the CMIC was only set up in 2008 and during the first year its activity concerned mainly formal matters, such as drawing up the new regulation and increasing its number of members. According to the municipality, the irregular level of involvement of associations can be explained by two main factors:

- the interruption in the CMIC’s activity, which lasted for some years, undermined the associations’ trust in this instrument of participation;
- the associations have a weak organisational structure and their participation in city dialogue platforms and intercultural activities often depends on their leaders’ willingness and interest.

This latter factor was also evident on the occasion of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. Alongside successful outdoor cultural events, the municipality, together with the CMIC, organised workshops and conferences held on Saturdays at the explicit request of the associations’ leaders, in order to facilitate immigrant workers to attend them. In spite of this, the level of participation of ethnic minority associations was very low and only the leaders took part in these meetings (CMIC, 2009). In fact, the association leaders seem to play an ambivalent role: most of them are involved in the city’s intercultural dialogue, yet they risk undertaking this dialogue alone, detached from the rest of the ethnic community. Thus, the high dependency of ethnic minority associations on their leaders could hamper the intercultural dialogue and may constitute one of the main problems faced by the municipality in coming years.

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29 Since the end of April, the CMIC members are: Friends of the Angolan Women’s Association, Cape Verdean Association, Guinean Association of Social Solidarity, Lisbon’s House of Brazil, House of Mozambique, Community of Refugees from Timor, National Work for the Promotion and Pastoral Care of Gypsies, SOS Association for the Defence of Angolans. Membership of the CMIC also includes a representative of the Municipal Assembly and two citizens designated by Lisbon City Council and is chaired by the Deputy Mayor of Social Affairs; Association of Ukrainians in Portugal; ACAJUCI Christian Association for the Support of Gypsy Youngsters; APARATI Association for the Timorese People; São Tomé and Príncipe Friend’s Association; Lisbon Islamic Community; Lisbon Israeli Community; IICD Institute for International Cooperation and Development; SOS Racism Movement; Immigrant Women – Association of Study, Cooperation and Solidarity; Portuguese Catholic Order for Migrations; Jesuit Refugee Service; Immigrant Solidarity – Association for the Defence of Immigrants’ Rights.
With regard to interculturalism, in addition to coordinating the CMIC, the municipality manages the Centre of Multicultural Resources (Centro de Recursos Multicultural). The centre was set up in 1997 through the Local Integration Partnership Action Project (LIA), a European project in which the city of Lisbon took part. The centre could represent a good practice example in the field of intercultural dialogue as it aims to facilitate cultural and information exchange between people of different backgrounds living in Lisbon. It has a library, an exhibition area, as well as multimedia and computer areas. It is located in the neighbourhood of Bairro Padre Cruz which, although dominated by social housing, does not seem to be particularly marginalised or stigmatised. The centre receives quite a lot of requests from ethnic associations from all over the city that are interested in organising events or activities such as feasts, cultural events, conferences, seminars, meetings and training activities. It also provides logistical support when required. In addition, it offers internet classes and courses on subjects such as multiculturalism, citizenship, Creole culture, as well as hosting a legal support service, promoted within the CLAI.

Finally, the Lisbon municipality organises public events in order to promote the culture of ethnic minorities. As mentioned earlier, on the occasion of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, the Department of Social Affairs, through the CMIC, organised outdoor public events, workshops and conferences. As the public events were particularly successful, the municipality intends to increase the number of festivals, gastronomic events, dancing and music performances that enable the indigenous Portuguese population to come into contact with ethnic minority cultures. In fact, these events, together with debates and conferences, represent the core of the municipality’s work with the majority population aimed at improving relations between different ethnic groups.  

All of the actions described up to now comprise the main initiatives undertaken by the municipality in the field of interculturalism. No other relevant actions have been developed; this relates to the aforementioned limited economic and human resources available for this purpose. Despite these limitations, the municipality has also established partnerships with those ethnic minority associations that are significant in terms of intercultural dialogue. In this regard, one of the most important developments is the Social Network (Rede Social). Through this, the main organisations operating in the social sector exchange information and develop strategies for local social policies. In Lisbon, three main actors coordinate the Social Network: the Lisbon municipality, Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa and the District Centre of Social Security which is part of the Ministry of Social Security. There are more than 200 partners involved, including local and ethnic minority associations. The network was set up in 2006 and only began to operate in 2007; until now, it has focused on planning activities and developing the ‘Social Diagnosis’ (Diagnóstico Social). The latter covers seven themes, one of which is cultural diversity.

Immigrant associations acknowledged both positive and negative aspects of the activities of the municipality. They usually appreciated the increasing attention of the local administration towards minorities and their readiness to cooperate. On the other hand, some underlined the insufficient support offered to associations and the tendency to involve the oldest and most established organisations in local policies, instead of newer, smaller ones. However, the lack of municipal resources available in this policy field has already been noted, as well as the low level of involvement of ethnic minority associations in this area; this has led the local administration to work mainly with the more reputable, reliable ones.

30 Other types of initiatives aimed at changing the majority population’s attitude towards minorities have been undertaken within projects promoted by the government and especially by ACIDI. For instance, within the EU EQUAL programme, the Lisbon municipality was a partner in the project ‘Migrations and development’ (Migrações e Desenvolvimento). Within this project, the training reference guide ‘Citizenship and cultural diversity in professional practices’ was produced.

Some relevant local actors in Lisbon other than the municipality are also worth consideration. Firstly, there are private foundations, such as the Gulbenkian, the Aga Khan and the Luso-American Foundation. These bodies undertake huge integration programmes as a result of their considerable economic and organisational resources, and are usually involved with the municipality and the immigrant associations as strategic partners. For instance, the Aga Khan Foundation has undertaken the Urban Community Development Programme K’CIDADE, in which the municipality is involved as co-founder, while ethnic minority organisations are involved in the implementation phase, mainly at neighbourhood level. The goal of this programme is to empower excluded urban communities and improve their quality of life by supporting education, economic development, social cohesion and citizenship. The Gulbenkian Foundation has promoted the Platform on Reception and Integration Policies of Immigrants (Plataforma sobre Políticas de Acolhimento e Integração de Imigrantes) with the aim of promoting the EU Basic Common Principles and enhancing civil society’s capacity to participate in public debates and influence policy decisions in the area of integration. The Gulbenkian Foundation has also developed initiatives as part of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, such as the ‘Distance and proximity’ programme which explores the possibilities and limits of interculturalism through four months of art exhibitions and performances. The proposal’s stated aim is ‘to reflect upon the present-day barriers and limits to understanding and cultural communication and to question ourselves about the possibilities that have been opened up by the new conceptual, societal and artistic approaches’.32

NGOs, such as SOS Racism, Solidariedade Imigrante and Olho Vivo, also promote local initiatives in the field of interculturalism, although their activities are mainly focused on the protection and improvement of immigrants’ rights. One the most relevant initiatives promoted by NGOs in Lisbon is the annual three-day festival called ImigrArte. This involves many different ethnic minority associations and for which the municipality has always provided logistical support, for example by providing billboards, fliers, stages and sound systems, and fostered the promotion of the event. The aim is to enhance intercultural dialogue through a range of means including artistic performances, such as music and dance shows, workshops, screening movies, holding public debates, and organising exhibitions and gastronomic events. While the NGOs are capable of coordinating such big events, the ethnic minority associations seem to have difficulties in this regard; however, they are usually involved as partners, as explained earlier.

Various NGOs that work with immigrants, mainly advocating for their rights, providing legal support and supporting access to the labour market, have members from different ethnic minority backgrounds. The municipality has developed a good level of cooperation with them. The main reasons behind this collaboration seem to be their reliability as partners, their networking skills and their interethnic nature.

On the contrary, trade unions do not seem to be involved in local intercultural activities and projects; neither have they tended to cooperate on integration issues with the Municipal Department of Social Affairs.

Interreligious dialogue
In the case of religious communities, the existing platforms for dialogue have been created through a bottom-up approach, without the input or involvement of local authorities which occurs in most European cities, as outlined in other CLIP reports. The two main examples that can be considered models of good practice are the Abrahamic Forum (Fórum Abraâmico) and the association known as Universos. The Abrahamic Forum was imported from the UK in recent years and involves the Jewish, Christian and Islamic communities. Its main aims are:

- to strengthen bridges between the Jewish, Christian and Islamic traditions and to emphasise the similarities between these three religions;
- to undertake initiatives to generate harmony between the followers of all religions and between them and non-believers;
- to organise and attend meetings, workshops, conferences and events that can promote knowledge of the three faiths, underlining their positive aspects and combating exploitation of them that goes against human dignity, religion and God’s laws.

Universos involves a wider range of religions, not only the monotheistic ones. It is a non-profit organisation, is non-denominational and non-religious, and fosters intercultural and interreligious dialogue. Its main aims are:

- to promote analytical studies, research and debates on religious phenomena in an open dialogue between the different religious groups, but also involving agnostics, atheists and others;
- to provide a greater knowledge of different religious traditions and the related cultural heritage in collaboration with different religious institutions;
- to contribute to bringing the teaching of religious phenomena to schools as well as teaching about philosophies that challenge religion.

On special occasions, the religious minorities organise common prayer services, which are attended by both the different religious leaders and local political authorities. Examples include the common prayer service at the Hindu temple following the terrorist attack in Mumbai, India, in November 2008 and the common prayer service held at the Jewish cemetery in Lisbon after a recent (effectively the first) attack from skinheads. As noted earlier, the mayor also invites religious leaders to public ceremonies.

Religious issues occupy quite a marginal position in the municipality’s policies. In the past, the local administration gave land to Muslims and Hindus to build places of worship and it has also reserved part of the cemetery for the Islamic community. Nowadays, the municipality’s action is mainly aimed at recognising religious communities through their participation in public ceremonies, as outlined earlier, and fostering their integration into local society. Apart from these symbolic but nonetheless significant events, no local policies or measures concerning religious issues have been developed.

33 http://www.forumabraamico.eu.org
34 http://www.universos.org
Religious organisations such as the Islamic Community of Lisbon or the Lisbon Hindu Community are entitled to economic support from the municipality for the social and cultural activities they carry out, as are ethnic minority associations. However, they usually only request and receive logistic support. There is some evidence that this situation is changing since, following the field visit, the municipality has decreed to provide both religious and ethnic minority organisations with a certain level of funding. Moreover, the Islamic Community of Lisbon has recently requested that the municipality fund specific activities.

It is worth remembering that the leaders of the main religious communities attend the CMIC, though in this Council ‘religion is not an issue’, as a representative of the Department of Social Affairs explained. Moreover, religious communities seem to have no problem with this situation. Two explanations were provided by representatives of the municipality and religious organisations for the limited significance that the CMIC attaches to the issue of religion. Firstly, it was noted that very few problems emerged with religious groups. Secondly, there was a perceived tendency among religious minorities to keep their religious needs out of local public debate; this was attributed to the perception that public opinion associated religious issues with extremism.

Relationships between different ethnic groups in the city

Unfortunately, no opinion polls have been conducted of the attitudes of indigenous people in Lisbon towards ethnic and religious minorities. However, some national data are available on this issue. According to the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), ‘racism and xenophobia do not seem to constitute a particularly acute problem in Portugal’ (ECRI, 2007). In fact, a more recent poll reveals a fairly positive attitude towards immigration among Portuguese people: 69% support the idea that immigrants should have equal rights and 45% think that immigrants should be able to acquire Portuguese nationality easily (Niessen et al, 2007).

However, when shifting from the subject of rights to everyday relationships, the picture is less positive. For instance, a Eurobarometer study (European Commission, 2008) showed that, when asked to rate the idea of having a neighbour of a different religion or from a different ethnic origin from 0 (very uncomfortable) to 10 (totally comfortable), Portuguese people are among the four ‘least comfortable’ national groups. Furthermore, according to a study carried out by Lages et al (2006), ethnic minorities that face the most discrimination are those from Africa, followed by Brazilians and eastern Europeans. The ECRI (2007) also points out that immigrants from Brazil and Africa face more discrimination, especially in employment and housing, than newcomers from eastern Europe, probably due to factors such as skin colour and religion. To sum up, immigrants from PALOP countries suffer the most discrimination from the indigenous population. These data are quite interesting, since they challenge the idea of a cohesive lusophone community which was widespread among interviewees both in the public authorities and civil society.

As far as relations between different ethnic or religious minorities are concerned, no great tensions have yet been registered. In 2008 and 2009, some conflicts occurred between immigrants of African origin and Roma people in council housing neighbourhoods. The task of managing and preventing this kind of tension is assigned to social mediators from GEBALIS, the public enterprise that manages council housing. Apart from this, the associations that participated in this research emphasised that the more consolidated ethnic minority organisations usually collaborate with one another, especially in promoting immigrants’ rights. No local federations or platforms emerged during the field visit. However, many associations in Lisbon have been involved in social movements and national umbrella organisations with the intention of coordinating common agendas and lobbying for the promotion of immigrants’ rights. The Platform of Immigrant Organisations for Regularisation and Integration (Plataforma de Organizações de Imigrantes pela Regularização e Integração), for example, has brought together various immigrant, anti-racist and human rights associations, as well as trade unions, religious organisations, social movements and civil society organisations, with the purpose of lobbying government and producing changes in immigration, integration and nationality laws. The first
national forum of immigrant representative bodies was held on 7–8 April 2006, on the island of São Miguel, Azores. It brought together 64 immigrant associations to discuss recommended changes to immigration and immigrant integration policy. Following this, a second platform was set up in 2006: the Platform of Representative Bodies of Immigrant Communities in Portugal (PERCIP), which comprised about 40 associations. Another important pluri-ethnic platform is the Coordinating Secretariat of Immigrant Associations (Secretariado Coordenador das Associações de Imigrantes, SCAI) which unites a dozen immigrant associations representing immigrants from Brazil, Angola, China, eastern Europe, Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau (Sardinha, 2007; Albuquerque and Teixeira, 2005).

As already noted, all of these umbrella organisations have been developed at a national level and mainly aim to promote immigrants’ rights rather than enhancing intercultural dialogue. Nevertheless, they may foster intergroup relations and promote cooperation at a local level, especially in Lisbon, where many of the member organisations are located.

Public communication

The municipality has not developed a strategy for public communication relating to ethnic and religious minority groups. Indeed, as previously noted, municipal intercultural policies are still quite weak. Furthermore, the scope of the local administration’s action in this field is limited by the lack of local media in Lisbon, or at least by the fact that it is fairly unknown: none of the interviewees was familiar with it. On the other hand, local media is widespread in the rest of the country. Nevertheless, the population of Lisbon makes use of national media outlets. Some studies point out that the media have constructed images of immigrants and ethnic minorities as ‘others’ and often as ‘criminals’, ‘delinquents’ and ‘undesirables’, which contribute to shaping negative attitudes and behaviours towards them (ECRI, 2007; Fonseca et al, 2005). According to interviewees, security-related issues are often emphasised in the media. Studies of this subject also emphasise the focus on security, followed by the issues of integration and employment (Ferin Cunha and Almeida Santos, 2006). In this regard, it is worth noting that the media have concentrated on problems related to the integration of second generations and on the increase in youth crime in social neighbourhoods of the Lisbon urban periphery (Fonseca et al, 2008).

One example is the media coverage of a group robbery undertaken on 10 June 2005 by a group of young people of African origin on the Carcavelos beach on the Estoril coast near Lisbon. The media showed pictures of young black people running away and armed police officers on the beach, and described the incident as having involved 500 young people, primarily of immigrant origin, who had attacked people on the beach to rob them of their belongings. Afterwards, the police stated that there were at the most 30 or 40 people involved and the young people shown on television were not robbers: they were running away with their own possessions in the panic and general confusion. Allegedly, the police received only one report of theft. The first report, although later corrected, inevitably generated a feeling of insecurity, reinforcing stigmas and discriminatory perceptions regarding crime and young people of African origin and fostering xenophobia. Indeed, the Commission for Equality and Combating Racial Discrimination (CICDR) made a public statement on 21 June 2005 condemning the attitude of the media involved in providing a distorted account of this incident. One year later, on 10 April 2006, the CICDR made another public statement condemning the excessive number of references in the media to nationality, ethnic origin, religion or legal status, which they drew from official sources, used to stigmatise certain groups (ECRI, 2007).

Despite these problems, some studies (Cádima, 2003; Ferin Cunha et al, 2004) point out that positive change is taking place regarding the representation of immigrants and ethnic minorities in the media. The media is taking a greater interest in the culture and identity of minority groups. Sensationalism is being replaced by more neutral reporting that focuses on facts and the benefits of immigration. In the period 2004–2008, migrants were more likely to be generally described as ‘foreigners’ than before, and references to people’s specific ethnic background have become less frequent. The
number of sources used has increased and expanded beyond the government to civil society and the migrants themselves (Ferin Cunha et al, 2008). Nevertheless, such examples of obvious xenophobia have given way to new subtler forms of racism, such as the association of certain ethnic minority groups – young people of African origin and Roma people – with topics like drugs, crime, violence and prostitution (ECRI, 2007; Fonseca et al, 2005). Moreover, according to the interviewees, media organisations do not provide their staff with any training on intercultural competence; as well as this, the proportion of staff in media outlets who belong to ethnic minority communities seems to be very low. It was also noted that journalists from African and Indian minorities seem to be discriminated against due to their skin colour, while those of Brazilian origin are discriminated against because of their accent.

While local authorities have no public communication strategy relating to ethnic and religious minorities, ACIDI has played a crucial role in this field. For instance, in 2002 it introduced the annual ‘Immigration and ethnic minority – Journalism for tolerance’ award, a prize given to journalists who have played a role in combating racism and xenophobia in order to promote tolerance and integration, combat racism and discrimination and contribute to the understanding of cultural, ethnic and religious differences. The initiative comprises awards for three categories: print and online media, radio and television. Since 2004, ACIDI has also produced the television programme ‘Us’ (Nós), which is a weekly magazine show on the Portuguese public television channel RTP2. Its name reflects the aim of the programme: to invest in a plural society. It presents a set of interviews and debates, information pieces on rights and duties, as well as connections with immigrant associations. The various segments are written and produced by different religious communities; they send delegates to a special television commission that determines the scheduling of segments. Besides ethnic minorities, religious communities that are eligible for participation in the programme are those that have been established for at least 30 years in Portugal, or at least 60 years in their country of origin; this is based on the criteria laid down in paragraph 2.2 of the Religious Freedom Law (ECRI, 2007; US Department of State, 2008). ACIDI has also promoted a programme called ‘People like us’ (Gentes como Nós), which is broadcast weekly on TSF radio. It presents the life stories of immigrants who live in Portugal, with the goal of raising public awareness on issues of acceptance and integration. Other programmes that focus on religions are ‘Faiths of men’ (Fé dos Homens) and ‘Paths’ (Caminhos).

As far as local ethnic media are concerned, minorities from Africa, Brazil, China and eastern Europe produce their own media, namely newspapers and a few radio channels. These are in the minorities’ languages of origin, and address the ethnic community in question; therefore, according to some interviewees, these media outlets do not have a great impact on intercultural dialogue since they do not foster exchanges between different ethnic communities.

Summary and lessons learnt

Immigration is a relatively recent phenomenon in Portugal. Public debate and local policies still revolve around the difficulties faced by immigrants in terms of social integration, while cultural issues are not yet considered to be of crucial concern. In Lisbon, intercultural and interreligious relations are an issue, but they are not perceived to be particularly problematic. It is difficult to say if this situation is due to good intergroup relations resulting from a mix of successful policies and auspicious sociocultural factors, or to a limited awareness of critical aspects both at political and civil society level. Indeed, the fact that the majority of immigrants are part of the lusophone community may have favoured peaceful intergroup relations. Nonetheless, it might also have concealed hidden tensions, which were in part revealed by the aforementioned opinion surveys.

As for policy-making, the municipality of Lisbon was a pioneer in promoting intercultural dialogue, especially in terms of setting up the CMIC. However, local ethnic minority associations seem unable to seize this opportunity to develop
useful proposals. The limited activism of CMIC members carries the risk of a top-down approach being adopted: given the absence of proposals from ethnic minority associations, the municipality might be forced to guide the CMIC’s activities instead of developing input from members.

Three basic lessons can be learned from the experience of the CMIC. First, the continued involvement of ethnic minority organisations is crucial as the imposed pause on its activities has led to a lack of trust among its member associations. Given that trust is easy to destroy and difficult to build, this situation could be hard to resolve. Secondly, ethnic minority community leaders may represent both a support and an obstacle to the development of intergroup relations: on the one hand, their openness to exchange fosters dialogue, while on the other hand, if they cannot involve the whole community, this dialogue could have limited impact. Thirdly, this kind of consultative body can only have a certain degree of influence on the development of local integration policies; this may discourage the commitment of immigrant associations.

In Lisbon, the involvement of ethnic minority associations in integration policies actually seems to occur via partnerships rather than the CMIC. Here, local and governmental authorities, private foundations, NGOs and ethnic minority associations work together, each bringing different resources, competences and skills. At the same time, it enables ethnic minority organisations to be involved in local cultural and social projects.

Another important aspect of local intercultural policies is the significance given by local civil society organisations and the municipality to public events, such as music and dance performances or food festivals. These events can be useful in terms of favouring intercultural dialogue and capturing the attention of members of society who are usually indifferent to this issue. However, it is important to note that the appreciation of exotic foods, music and dance does not necessarily imply the appreciation of immigrants, for instance, as neighbours. These events only form part of the solution.

The situation appears to be quite different in relation to interreligious dialogue. First, this area is quite separate from interethnic dialogue. Secondly, religious minorities have established dialogue platforms that adopt a bottom-up approach, without the support of public authorities. Ethnic minority associations have also developed umbrella organisations, but their main purpose is to promote immigrants’ rights, while the interreligious platforms explicitly aim to encourage exchanges between different religious traditions and perspectives. Although the municipality does not play a central role when it comes to interreligious dialogue, reciprocal invitations between the mayor and religious leaders on the occasion of public events and celebrations contribute to enhancing the recognition of religious minorities. This conveys the message to both religious minorities and civil society as a whole that they are a fundamental and integrated part of Portuguese society.
Local intercultural policies towards Muslim communities

Major issues, demands and interests

Up until now, the Islamic presence in Lisbon has not led to any tension. Neither has it captured much interest among the public, academics or the media. There have not been any demonstrations against the building of mosques or regarding controversial issues faced by the local government. No public debates have taken place on the wearing of headscarves or on the relationship between religion and the state. Indeed, as already noted, issues of ethnicity prevail over those of religion in the public arena in Lisbon.

Some significant demands made of the municipality by the Muslim community, have already been fulfilled. The Central Mosque was built on a site donated by the municipality. Since 1938, part of the cemetery has been reserved for Muslims, allowing them to follow the Islamic burial procedure of placing the body into the ground without the use of a coffin.

Interviewees from the Islamic Community of Lisbon pointed out other, unmet religious needs, such as:

- halal food in public canteens;
- the option of praying in places of work;
- the teaching of Islam in schools.

These demands have never been put to the municipality; consequently, local authorities have never taken up a position on them. This situation appears to be the choice of the Muslim community which does not seem to consider these needs as being urgent. It may also be relevant that, unlike other Muslim minorities in Europe, those in Portugal were also a minority in their countries of origin, namely Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau (Tiesler, 2000). Tiesler argues that as Islam was not the state religion in these countries either, Muslims in Portugal are less likely to expect the public authorities to recognise their religious needs. The lack of religious demands could also be a strategy undertaken by community leaders in order to keep a low profile and avoid conflicts with the majority population.

Until recently, the Islamic Community of Lisbon never requested economic support for its activities; one of its leaders explained that this was because it was not required. However, the community recently presented some proposals to the municipality, requesting economic support. More specifically, the Islamic Community of Lisbon would like to promote:

- sports activities with teams made up of members from various ethnic and religious groups, in order to have people with different backgrounds working towards a common goal – until now, teams in these kinds of events comprise people with the same ethnic background;
- cultural and gastronomic events, such as gatherings with traditional foods and picnics, in order to bring people of different ethnic and religious backgrounds together;
- the building of shelters and council apartments for homeless people – the Islamic Community of Lisbon will build the accommodation if the municipality provides the land.

35 Obviously, these kinds of demands are posed to the municipality by the Islamic Community of Lisbon and not by the Ismaili community, since the latter can implement these cultural and social activities through its foundations.
The first two requests were accepted and included in the 2009 Activities Plan of the CMIC. These proposals are further evidence of the limited emphasis publicly placed on religious issues by the local Islamic community and Muslims’ commitment to social activities and the development of intergroup relations.

**General approaches and policies to improve relations with Muslim groups**

The Lisbon municipality has not developed an integration policy specifically relating to Muslims, or special channels of dialogue with Muslim groups. A uniform approach is adopted towards all religious minorities. The mayor invites Muslim community leaders to take part in celebrations, ceremonies and public events in general, thus reinforcing the idea that the Muslim minority is part of Portuguese society. Indeed, the municipality does not feel that a specific approach is required which reflects the absence of problems related to Muslims. The Muslim minorities agree with this approach.

The CMIC is the main instrument available at a local level through which Muslim minorities can make demands. The Islamic Community of Lisbon is among the new members of the CMIC; before becoming a member, the community was invited to take part in the meetings, though without the right to vote. However, despite the fact that the leaders of Muslim organisations spoke positively about the CMIC, they rarely attend its meetings, like other ethnic and religious associations leaders. The Department of Social Affairs, which is responsible for the CMIC, does not have regular and frequent contact with the Muslim minority. The municipality offers two main reasons for this. Firstly, up until recently the Muslim community never asked for support or attention. Secondly, the presence of Muslims in Lisbon is not perceived to cause any problems, thus the department has never developed specific actions regarding this community or given special attention to this group.

Despite this low level of contact between the municipality and the Muslim community, the Islamic Community of Lisbon feels that the municipality is ‘always prepared to cooperate and to participate’. Indeed, the impression gathered during the field visit is that Muslim community leaders have direct connections with local policymakers, and the notion of using ‘special’ channels of communication that are reserved for immigrants does not really fit with their sense of what it means to belong in Portuguese society.

The role played by Muslim community leaders in relations between the municipality and the Muslim community should not be underestimated. As noted earlier, these community leaders arrived in Lisbon in the 1950s and 1960s, attended university in Portugal, have Portuguese citizenship, belong to the middle/upper classes and have good political connections. By way of example, the first president of the Islamic Community of Lisbon, Suleiman Valy Mamede, acting in this role from 1968 to 1985, arrived in Portugal in 1953. He was a university professor, the author of several studies on Islamic issues and an important member of the Social Democratic Party. His successor, Abdool Magid Karim Vakil, is the Director of Bank Efisa. As a result of their personal resources and high social status, Muslim leaders have undoubtedly contributed to constructing a positive image of Islam, as well as to its institutionalisation.

The Islamic Community of Lisbon has received some logistical assistance from the civil parishes for some of its activities. Until recently, it has never requested money for its activities from local authorities; one of its leaders explained that this was because it never needed this support. It does receive financial support from foreign countries. For instance, the Central Mosque was built with the use of funding from central government, as well as that provided by Islamic

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36 The Islamic Community of Lisbon has never received money from central government either, except for aid given under the Programme of Religious Equipment for the construction of the Central Mosque (Leitão, 2004).
countries, such as Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Saudi Arabia, the Sultanate of Oman and the United Arab Emirates. Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Pakistan also donated smaller amounts of money. These key investors stopped making contributions when an internal conflict for presidency of the mosque arose in the mid 1980s (Tiesler, 2000). There are therefore still some parts of the mosque waiting to be completed, especially in the underground area, which will include a dining area to seat around 600 people, an auditorium and a gym. The Islamic Community of Lisbon continues to receive economic support from abroad, but it is difficult to evaluate the impact of the reduction of this funding on the community’s activities and attitude. In any case, the local authorities do not seem concerned about the situation.

Good practice examples of concrete activities and measures to improve relations with Muslim groups

Muslim leaders have contributed to the positive, integrated position in society that is enjoyed by the Muslim community in Lisbon. This is partly due to their good social connections and prestige. In addition, Portuguese political leaders, including ones local to Lisbon, have often recognised the contribution made by Islam to the genesis of the Portuguese culture, with visible influences in language and architecture (Leitão, 2004). This attitude is reflected by the participation of political authorities in ceremonies promoted by the Islamic Community of Lisbon, and the fact that the government treated visits to Portugal by the prince Aga Khan, head of the Ismaili community, as though they were state visits.

The Day of Portugal and of the Portuguese Communities is celebrated on 10 June of each year, at which retired military officers of the colonial war get together, alongside the official celebration. In recent years, this has involved both Catholic and Islamic services. This is due to the fact that, during the colonial war, the Portuguese army in Guinea-Bissau enrolled a significant number of Muslim troops, some of whom now have Portuguese citizenship (Leitão, 2004).

Muslims themselves play an active role in fostering interreligious dialogue, undertaking different initiatives to promote good relations with the rest of Portuguese society. As already noted, they are members of the Abrahamic Forum and of the Universos association which aims to encourage exchanges between different religious views, including those of atheists and agnostics.

Another good practice is that of opening the Central Mosque to students, about 9,000 of whom visit each year, as well as to anyone else interested in visiting it. Indeed, the Islamic Community of Lisbon has made a great effort to make Islam comprehensible to non-Muslims. Other initiatives include the establishment of the Portuguese Centre of Islamic Studies in 1989, where the Koran is available in Portuguese, along with videos about Islamic history, culture and religion, translating most of the writing on the walls of the mosque’s main prayer room into Portuguese, and explaining all the different stages of Muslim prayer on the Islamic Community’s website. Furthermore, the Islamic Community of Lisbon provides free Arabic courses which are open to everyone and are mainly attended by non-Muslim students. Lastly, it organises conferences and workshops, as well as trips around Lisbon with a view to highlighting its Islamic heritage, which has not only shaped the Portuguese language, but also the city’s architecture, including Saint George’s Castle.

The Lisbon Ismaili Centre aims to be a symbol of interfaith and intercultural dialogue. It was jointly designed by the Muslim architect Raj Rewal and the Portuguese architect Frederico Valsassina. It is made from the traditional stone of the city and its external form blends architectural features from Lisbon’s Catholic Geronimo Monastery with elements of the Indian Fatehpur Sikri and the Spanish Alhambra (Leitão, 2004). This symbolic design could have a positive influence on interfaith relations, as it conveys an openness to dialogue.

Finally, the social activities organised by both the Islamic Community of Lisbon and the Ismaili community also play a crucial role in the development of good intergroup relations. One of the most positive aspects of these activities is the fact that they address both Muslims and non-Muslims who are living in social exclusion. This reinforces the Muslim
community’s ties with the rest of society in Lisbon. In this field, the activities of the Aga Khan Foundation, which belongs to the Shiite Ismaili Community, are particularly significant. These activities involve a large proportion of the city’s population and are developed in cooperation with various actors, including municipalities, faculties, NGOs, and Santa Casa da Misericórdia.

Public communication

Although the Muslim community is concentrated in Lisbon, there is no local Islamic media outlet. However, it is worth remembering two relevant initiatives developed at national level. The first is the conservative Islamic journal Al-Furquan founded in 1989. Its Director, Yiossuf M. Adamgy, has also set up a website of the same name, which provides a lot of information on the Muslim religion and aspects of its culture, such as architecture, calligraphy and ceramics. It is important to highlight that the website is in Portuguese, revealing once again the desire to foster non-Muslims’ understanding of Islam and, as a consequence, interreligious dialogue.

The second initiative is the website of the Islamic Forum. Here, a range of issues such as conversion and gender matters are discussed. The imam answers the questions of Portuguese-speaking Muslims from Portugal, Brazil and sometimes from the UK. As Tiesler (2000) notes, the Portuguese language and new technologies have both contributed to improving relations between Portuguese and Brazilian Muslims, in spite of their very different histories and traditions.

Naturally, Muslims are also involved in programmes targeted at ethnic minority and religious communities that were already outlined, for example, ‘Faiths of men’ and ‘Paths’.

Regarding media coverage of news features related to Islam and the Muslim community, the Islamic Community of Lisbon emphasised the fact that such news items are of global rather than local importance. While the media in Lisbon do not tend to pay great attention to the local Muslim community, neither do they represent it negatively. Furthermore, they always distinguish between the different Muslim communities, showing respect for the different religious traditions (Tiesler, 2000).

Finally, it is interesting to note that the wearing of the hijab has not been an issue in Portugal, either in media in public debate. The most significant issue relating to Muslim women is the practice of female genital mutilation, which is one of the few topics that is sometimes discussed in the press (Leitão, 2004). It is worth highlighting that this practice is publicly condemned not only by the media, but also by Al-Furquan and the Islamic Forum website.

The aim of many middle and upper class Muslim families is to send a child to study abroad and the UK seems to be the favoured country for this purpose. This preference is due not only to the wide range and high level of Islamic education opportunities in the UK, but also to the Indo-Pakistani origins of most of the British Muslim community. The choice of a European country instead of an Islamic country for their children’s education is significant evidence of the deep-rooted integration of Lisbon’s Muslim minority into European society.
Summary and lessons learnt

The Muslim community does not have a high profile in public debate in Lisbon. This could be seen as a sign of the absence of tensions between this community and the rest of Portuguese society. It would appear improbable that this is the result of an underestimation of Muslims’ needs, since the leaders of the Muslim community have enough personal resources to present demands and requests to local and central institutions.

Nevertheless, this dependence on leaders’ personal resources, which grants the Muslim community easy access to political arenas, renders special channels of communication both futile and unappreciated. Moreover, the absence of a formal channel for dialogue could become a serious problem if current Muslim leaders are replaced with others who are less well connected, such as those from the Guinea-Bissau community which today constitutes a large part of the Muslim minority. The recent formal entry of the Islamic Community of Lisbon into the Municipal Council for Citizenship and Interculturalism could be a first step in the right direction.

Alongside Muslim leaders’ prestige and openness to dialogue, the positive image of Islam in Lisbon probably also stems from the efforts of the Muslim community to be understood by the rest of Portuguese society, such as explaining Islam and its heritage in the city, using the national language as much as possible and emphasising its similarities with other religions, rather than its differences. Lastly, the community’s commitment to social projects that address both Muslim and non-Muslim people socially, has certainly enhanced its positive image and ties with local society.
Intergroup relations and radicalisation

Radicalisation within the majority population

According to the ECRI (2007), immigrants are generally well received and positively perceived by Portuguese society. Racist, anti-Semitic and xenophobic acts and statements are isolated occurrences. Interviewees from local authorities and immigrants’ organisations confirmed that radicalisation was not occurring within the majority population. Apart from some small, extremely right-wing groups, there are no political parties or movements in the country that adopt a xenophobic or racist slant. Actually, the only organisations of this kind are certain groups of skinheads, the National Front movement (Frente Nacional, FN) and the political National Renewal Party (Partido Nacional Renovador, PNR) which attracts at the most a few thousand votes. The interviewees explained that both men and women are involved in these movements and are usually aged around 30 years.

While these extreme right movements are marginal, they are becoming more visible. In recent years, PNR promoted various actions in Lisbon involving FN members. In 2006, it organised a public demonstration called ‘Stop Invasion!’ in Vila de Rei in central Portugal. In 2007, it erected a large billboard at the Praça Marquês de Pombal square in Lisbon, with the slogan ‘Stop immigration! We wish them a good journey!’ In 2008, it erected another billboard against immigration which read, ‘Immigration? We say no!’ at another central city location – the Rotunda de Entrecampos.

Furthermore, an increase has been registered in the number of racist websites in Portugal (ECRI, 2007). The Annual Report of Internal Security of 2007 notes that, ‘the political activism of the extreme right expresses itself mainly through the internet where, usually anonymously, the most radical militants are engaged in the diffusion of ultra-nationalistic, neo-Nazi or revisionist propaganda’ (Ministry of Interior, 2008). According to some interviewees, this increase is due to the lack of clear legislation that penalises racist acts and statements made on the internet, rather than an increase in the number of xenophobic groups.

Up until now, the Muslim presence in Lisbon has not sparked manifestations of hostility and rejection. Even the outbreak of Islamophobia that occurred in several European countries after the 9/11 attacks in the US in 2001 did not have a significant echo in Portugal, as acknowledged by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC). According to Leitão (2004) and Tiesler (2000), the main reasons behind this situation are:

- the slow growth of the Muslim presence;
- the high proportion of Muslims with Portuguese citizenship;
- the Muslim community’s use of the national language;
- the high social, cultural and economic status of Islamic community leaders;
- the commitment to interreligious dialogue, led by the most outstanding representatives of Islamic communities.

Other important factors include the efforts made by some Islamic organisations to explain Islamic religious practices and beliefs to the rest of Portuguese society, as well as their strong involvement in social initiatives in the most deprived neighbourhoods of the city.
Radicalisation within the migrant and/or minority population

The municipality and the religious and ethnic minority organisations agreed that radicalisation processes were not taking place within ethnic minority communities in Lisbon. Moreover, the 2007 Annual Report of Internal Security points out that religious and political extremism is absent not only in Lisbon but also in the rest of the country. According to interviewees, this is the result of positive intergroup relations and the absence of conflicts between ethnic minorities and the majority population.

Some of the factors that explained the lack of Islamophobic movements are also relevant here. Both Muslims and Hindus, who represent the two major immigrant religious minorities, are characterised by:

- the use of the national language;
- the high social, cultural and economic status of community leaders;
- a commitment to interreligious dialogue.

These elements are very likely to have played a role in the prevention of radicalisation.
Key challenges and lessons for CLIP

In Lisbon, intergroup relations appear to be fairly good and no tensions among different ethnic groups have been registered. This situation is the result of both the measures adopted by the Lisbon municipality, such as the establishment of the CMIC, and the characteristics of the ethnic and religious minorities settled in the city. However, this positive situation does conceal some challenges.

Firstly, while the high proportion of immigrants belonging to the lusophone community may facilitate relations between minority and majority populations, the belief in the cohesive power of the collective Portuguese-speaking community could delay the adoption of certain required measures. It can be observed from this study that immigrants from PALOP countries seem to suffer the most discrimination. This is a challenge as well as a lesson: cultural similarities can facilitate dialogue but they can also hide difficulties. A frequent and in-depth analysis of intergroup relations could therefore be useful.

Secondly, the Lisbon municipality pioneered the promotion of intercultural dialogue, establishing in the early 1990s a council made up of the main ethnic minority and religious associations in the city. However, it is crucially important to guarantee that the work of this kind of platform is sustainable and that its continuity does not depend on the political situation. It is also necessary to ensure that councils such as this one exert a meaningful influence on local policies, in order to prevent them from becoming separate and insignificant arenas. Otherwise, there is a risk of losing the trust of participants in these instruments of dialogue. The Lisbon municipality’s commitment to the CMIC after it resumed activity reflects an awareness of these challenges.

Thirdly, the leaders of ethnic minority associations appears to have an ambivalent role. On the one hand, they support intercultural dialogue by participating in the initiatives promoted in this field by the municipality and NGOs. On the other hand, they have difficulties in involving their associations and communities in this dialogue. Thus, there is a risk that their participation in specific platforms or meetings has no real impact on intergroup relations. Indeed, local and central government are working to develop these associations and to enhance their leaders’ skills and ability in this field. Once again, these reflections offer both a challenge and a lesson, since they reveal the crucial role played by ethnic minority leaders in fostering or hampering intercultural dialogue and the importance of formulating specific measures to develop their potential role as leaders.

Fourthly, Lisbon’s religious minorities’ leaders have been able to establish a fruitful interfaith dialogue; this is largely due to their positions of prestige in Lisbon society, good social relations, high level of education and open attitudes to this issue. These personal resources play an important role in fostering dialogue. However, the fact that dialogue depends so strongly on the leaders’ personal resources could become a problem if the current elite is replaced by a less integrated and less educated one. In Lisbon, this is a plausible hypothesis, especially in the case of Muslims and Orthodox Christians whose community bases are now largely made up of immigrants who arrived in Portugal over the last 15 years.

The last issue concerns economic and human resources. Building intercultural dialogue and positive intergroup relations requires steady and significant investments. While the Lisbon municipality plays a central role in this field, it lacks both clear targets and sufficient resources. This, however, is not a new challenge.


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List of persons and organisations interviewed

Mahomed Abed, First secretary of the Islamic Community of Lisbon’s Steering Committee
Gustavo Behr, Head of the House of Brazil, Lisbon
Sofia Branco, journalist with the newspaper Publico and winner of the Immigration and Ethnic Minority – Journalism for Tolerance Award
Representative of the General Confederation of Portuguese Workers (Confederação Geral dos Trabalhadores Portugueses, CGTP)
Camila Cardoso Ferreira, Head of the Interreligious Cabinet and member of the Department of Support for Associations and Intercultural Dialogue of the ACIDI (High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue)
Ana Fortes, Coordinator of the Secretariat of Municipal Council for Interculturalism and Citizenship
Karin Gomes, Cape Verdean Association of Lisbon
Monica Goracci, Chief of Mission of the International Organisation for Migration, Portugal
Ashok Hansraj, Public Relations of the Lisbon Hindu Community
Timóteo Macedo, President of Solim (Solidariedade Imigrante – Immigrant Solidarity)
Jennifer MacGarrigle, researcher at the Centre of Geographical Studies of the University of Lisbon
Hugo Martinez de Seabra, Head of the Administrative Office of the Immigration Platform, Lisbon
Marisa Mateus, Secretariat of the Municipal Council for Interculturalism and Citizenship
Dina Moreira, Head of the Studies and Planning Division of the Department of Social Affairs of the Municipality of Lisbon
Carmen Queiroz, member of Solim (Solidariedade Imigrante – Immigrant Solidarity)
The Sikh Community, Lisbon
Fernando Soares Loja, Vice-President of the Commission for Religious Freedom
Karim Vissangy, Head of the Aga Khan Foundation Cabinet for the Development Network

Irene Ponzo, International and European Forum on Migration Research (FIERI), Turin, Italy