

**CLIP - Cities for Local Integration Policies**

**Intercultural Policies**

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## Foreword

This report is part of the Eurofound project «Cities for Local Integration Policy» (CLIP), which started in 2006. Lisbon is one of the 35 European cities exchanging information on their Integration Policies.

The project aims to collect and analyse innovative policies and their successful implementation at the local level; to support the exchange of experiences between cities and encourage a learning process within the network of cities; to address the role of social partners, NGO's, companies and voluntary associations in supporting successful integration policies; to offer an objective assessment of current practice and initiatives and discuss their transferability, communicating good practices to other cities in Europe and developing guidelines to help cities to cope more effectively with the challenge of integrating migrants, and to support the further development of a European integration policy by communicating the policy-relevant experiences and outputs of the network to: European organisations of cities and local regional authorities, the European and national organisations of social partners, the Council of Europe and the various institutions of the European Union.

The CLIP network also entails cooperation between cities and research institutes. Six research institutes in Bamberg, Amsterdam, Vienna, Turin, Wroclaw and Swansea are responsible for the publications of the CLIP project. The researchers of FIERI are responsible for this report on Lisbon.

I would like to thank Mrs 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. I am particularly grateful to Mrs Ana Fortes of the same Division for all her efforts to organize visits, provide information and answer all my questions, as well as to Mrs Marisa Mateus and Mrs Ana Cosme for their friendly welcome and support during the field work in Lisbon.

Naturally the author is entirely responsible for the contents of this report and for any inaccuracies it may contain.

## 1 Introduction

This module of CLIP deals with phenomena of urban life that are related to the multi-national, multi-ethnic and multi-religious 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, with special regard to its ethnic and religious structure. Chapter 4, 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 analysing the Muslim community's socio-economic structure and organizations, as well as relations with local authorities. Finally, the concluding part of the study examines radicalisation

processes both in the majority population and in ethnic and religious minorities. As we shall see, in the case of Lisbon interviewees essentially pointed out the absence of such radicalisation processes.

This study started with a review of the existing literature and datasets. Research work comprised two main stages: information-gathering, through the so-called Common Reporting Scheme (CRS) compiled by the city Department of Social Affairs, and a field visit to Lisbon carried out by the author with the support of the Lisbon Municipality. The CRS, which is the same for all the Municipalities involved in CLIP, includes information on policy goals, the city's concrete programmes and activities, the structure of relevant migrant communities and relationships with them. As far as the field visit was concerned, I interviewed key actors in the Lisbon Municipality and governmental bodies with specific tasks in the intercultural and interreligious dialogue, NGOs, religious communities and ethnic associations (see the list at the end of the report). Most interviews took place on the premises of religious minorities and associations, enabling me to gather further information through field observations. Finally, before and during the field visit, documents produced by different actors were gathered (e.g. the Municipality, private foundations, governmental bodies, NGOs and associations, etc.)<sup>1</sup> in order to get more precise information on their activities.

## **2 Background information on the country**

### **2.1 History of migration and composition of the migrant populations**

Before the decolonization process, there was a relatively small number of foreigners in Portugal. Only in the Seventies did emigration decline and immigration begin to increase, as a consequence of different factors, such as the establishment of the democratic regime in 1974, the African decolonization process, the internalization and modernisation of the Portuguese economy and the beginning of EU integration. Thus, like the other countries of southern European, since the mid-1980s Portugal has become a receiving 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 were Africans from Angola, Mozambique and Cape Verde and ethnic Indians from Mozambique and Brazil (Fonseca, Caldeira and Esteves, 2002). At the end of the past decade, there were new waves of immigration from Brazil and Eastern Europe, mainly from Ukraine, Moldova, Romania and Russia. Nowadays the Brazilians and Ukrainians are two of the largest foreign groups in Portugal.

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### **Principal nationalities of documented foreign citizens in Portugal in December 2006**

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<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to Viviana Premazzi, a FIERI researcher, for her help in translating documents from Portuguese.

Country of origin	Number of foreigners
Brazil	73,975
Cape Verde	68,163
Ukraine	42,765
Angola	33,705
Guinea Bissau	24,550
Moldova	15,991
Romania	12,405
S. Tome and Prince	11,350
China	10,578
Mozambique	6,136

Source: Fonseca et al. (2008) (elaboration of INE/SEF data)

The immigration from Eastern European countries was an unexpected change in Portuguese migratory patterns, since the main reasons usually mentioned in the literature to explain migration flows – such as 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 – were absent (Marques and Góis 2007)<sup>2</sup>. Migrants from Eastern Europe have posed new challenges, such as large volumes of undocumented foreigners and linguistic problems. However, since 2003 a reduction in the number of foreign immigrants entering Portugal has been registered, as a consequence of a substantial rise in the immigrant unemployment rate due to the economic problems which started in 2002 (OECD 2006). Furthermore, some Eastern European groups, primarily the Ukrainians, are decreasing in number due to return migration (Fonseca et al. 2008).

Another feature that characterizes Portuguese immigration is the high proportion of irregular migrants since the 80s. Despite the five regularisations undertaken until now<sup>3</sup>, the problem of irregular immigration persists. Though it is difficult to calculate the number of irregular foreigners working in Portugal, they are estimated to represent almost 20% of total immigrants from non-EU countries (Fonseca, Malheiros and Silva 2005).

Concerning the socio-economic integration of migrants, Chinese, Indian and PALOP (Portuguese-speaking African Countries) nationals – with the partial exception of people from Guinea Bissau – are at a more advanced stage of the migratory process, meaning there is a lower number of male pioneer workers and a larger proportion which arrived through family reunion. On the contrary, Eastern Europeans and Brazilians are less likely to enter the country on the basis of family reunion, reflecting their recent arrival in the country and the growing importance of labour market

<sup>2</sup> Two major surveys conducted by the research team of the Centro de Estudos Sociais in 2002 and 2004, point out that the 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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 other two recent regularisations in 2003, after a special agreement between Portugal and Brazil, and in 2004 (Fonseca, Malheiros and Silva 2005, p. 1-2).

demand as a pull factor; furthermore, a great many of them are undocumented (Fonseca, Malheiros and Silva 2005).

The majority of people from African countries have low-skilled and low-paid jobs, especially in the construction industry, in personal services and cleaning companies. Asians (mainly Chinese, Indians and Pakistanis) are numerous in ethnic business, such as the retail trade and hospitality. Brazilians are distributed over different jobs, both qualified and semi- or low-skilled, especially in tertiary activities. Eastern Europeans have an occupational profile similar to that of PALOP citizens – differing only in terms of over-representation in manufacturing – despite their much higher level of education and professional qualifications, which is even higher than that of the Portuguese population (Fonseca 2008; Fonseca, Malheiros and Silva 2005; Malheiros and Vala 2004).

Actually, despite their lengthier presence in the country, PALOP citizens seem to face more difficulties in the integration process than newcomers from Eastern Europe. With regards to young people, the PALOP students, who speak and write a «different» Portuguese – and for this reason do not benefit from specific listening-comprehension classes – show more learning difficulties than Eastern Europeans, Indians or Chinese<sup>4</sup>, and they are more involved in processes of social exclusion and eventually in deviant behaviours. When it comes to residential patterns, PALOP immigrants are over-represented in several deprived neighbourhoods (public housing estates, shack settlements and clandestine housing) on the periphery of Lisbon<sup>5</sup>, while Brazilians and Eastern European citizens show a more dispersed settlement pattern<sup>6</sup>. Finally, PALOP immigrants (e.g. Angolans and Guineans) face more problems in labour market integration and, as consequence of the economic down-turn that occurred in Portugal, seem to suffer significantly higher rates of unemployment than other immigrants (Fonseca, Malheiros and Silva 2005; Fonseca et al. 2008).

As far as religious affiliation is concerned, Cape Verdean and Brazilians are Catholic, Eastern European are Orthodox, while Muslims come mainly from Guinea Bissau, Senegal, North Africa, the Middle East, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Lastly, people from Mozambique are both Muslims and Hindu. Unfortunately, data on the size of the different religious groups are not available.

## 2.2 National policy context

Like in other southern European countries, immigration did not become a politically relevant subject in Portugal until the 1980s and 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 the concerns about first-generation immigrants mainly regard access to the labour market and appropriate housing.

<sup>4</sup> In 2001, in the LMA, PALOP pupils showed a high rate of failure; for instance, 31.9% of PALOP pupils aged 10 to 14 were still attending the 1<sup>st</sup> cycle of education (6-10 years old). Furthermore, the percentage of PALOP pupils attending secondary school was significantly lower than the Portuguese and only 0.9% of PALOP pupils had actually graduated (Fonseca et al. 2008).

<sup>5</sup> In the Lisbon Metropolitan Area (LMA) the PALOP groups show the highest proportion of population 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 they were the group that benefited most from the re-housing process, they are still the group with the largest percentage in non-traditional housing (Fonseca et al. 2008).

<sup>6</sup> However, Brazilians and Eastern Europeans, together with Asians, are over-represented when it comes to shared and over-crowded houses in the private rentals sector (Fonseca et al. 2008).

Below, I focus my attention on national policies concerning intergroup relations, as well as on intercultural and inter-religious dialogue.

In the past Portuguese law preferentially targeted immigrants from Portuguese-speaking countries<sup>7</sup>, reflecting the intense political, economic, and socio-cultural relations that exist with the former colonies. In this regard, Portuguese policy reinforced the creation of a Portuguese-speaking trans-national community through the widening of PALOP citizens' rights. However, policies formulated since the beginning of the new millennium have gradually moved away from the preferential treatment of immigrants from PALOP, adopting a more universal approach to immigrant groups (Marques and Góis 2007; Fonseca, Malheiros and Silva 2005).

The prevalence of PALOP citizens among migrants has also affected the recognition of cultural difference. In this regard, Oliveira (2000) points out that in the discourse of the governmental elite immigration has been discussed in terms of cultural affinity. However, even if the ethnic categorizations that characterize the multiculturalist model are absent in Portuguese policy documents, an effort has been made to recognise immigrant associations as political partners, both at national and local level. This trend has also been favoured by the increasing awareness, since the 1990s, that some of the problems faced by immigrants in terms of education, housing and employment are not individual issues, but common to specific ethnic groups (Esteves, Fonseca and Malheiros 2005).

The first step towards the recognition of cultural differences was the establishment, in 1991, of the Co-ordinating Secretariat of Multicultural Education Projects (Entreculturas) – which was transferred in 2004 from the Minister of Education to ACIME (see below) – with the aim of promoting equal opportunities and intercultural education, and helping students develop the skills needed to live in a society characterized by increasing cultural diversity. However, as Fonseca, Malheiros, Esteves and Caldeira (2002) point out, the fact that the first initiatives took place in the field of education indicates a rather nationalistic approach, since the people that 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)<sup>8</sup> was set up. In 2002 this was replaced by a more complex structure, the High Commission for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities. Finally, in 2007 this body changed its name to the High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue (ACIDI), revealing the increasing importance of the issue of intercultural dialogue in Portugal. The ACIDI is an inter-ministerial co-ordination bureau<sup>9</sup> under the direct authority of Prime Minister. ACIDI's mission is to collaborate in defining, implementing and evaluating public policies for the integration of immigrants and ethnic minorities, as well as enhancing dialogue between religions, cultures and ethnicities, and developing initiatives to combat xenophobia. In this perspective, ACIDI works in collaboration with immigrants' associations, members of ethnic minorities and NGOs. Furthermore, within ACIDI the COCAI (Consultative Council for Immigration Affairs - *Conselho Consultivo para os Assuntos da*

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

<sup>8</sup> See the web site [www.acidi.gov.pt](http://www.acidi.gov.pt)

<sup>9</sup> 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 centralized competencies in the area of integration and intercultural dialogue which were previously scattered over various entities (SEF 2008b).

*Imigração*)<sup>10</sup> was established in order to involve representatives from NGOs, immigrant associations, trade unions, business associations 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 and the National Immigrant Assistance System (CNAI) and a nation-wide network of Local Immigrant Assistance Centres (CLAI). CLAI are local offices for welcoming and providing information to immigrants, managed by different local actors such as municipalities, immigrant associations, NGOs, parishes, private and non-profit organisations. Finally, ACIDI has set up a national immigrants' information network (*Rede nacional de Informação ao Imigrante*), publishes a monthly newsletter (*Boletim Informativo*) and various brochures, and manages a telephone helpline (*SOS Imigrante*) accessible in three languages (SEF 2008b; Esteves 2008; ECRI 2006)

However, despite the emphasis 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 no. 2b, DL no.251/2002, 22 November). Thus, the concept of integration at the base of ACIDI's work includes not only the knowledge of the national language and the respect for the law, but also the acceptance of the moral and cultural values of the nation. Indeed Fonseca, Malheiros and Silva (2005) draw attention to a certain neo-assimilationist perspective that is softly incorporated into the governmental regulatory documents, as well as certain signs of «governmentalisation» of the structures that handle immigrant-related issues. Nevertheless, the ACIDI and some of its initiatives have been referred to as examples of best practices in various European publications (Fonseca et al. 2008). Moreover, despite the fact that integration policies were introduced relatively late, Portugal was considered second in terms of the quality of its legislation in this area by the Migrant Integration Policy Index (Niessen et al. 2007).

When it comes to handling integration and cultural diversity issues of new comers, Portugal does not have a pre-arrival introduction programme, or a strict or compulsory integration programme like some northern European countries. However, in 2001 the initiative Portugal Hosts (*Portugal Acolhe*) was launched by the Institute of Employment and Professional Training (IEFP). The programme offers a «Welcome Guide» in six languages, Portuguese language classes and a training module on «Citizenship practices», which are free of charge and not compulsory. Besides this programme, courses on Portuguese language and citizenship have been also promoted by immigrant associations, Catholic Church organisations and NGOs (Fonseca, Malheiros and Silva 2005).

Lastly, with regards to interreligious dialogue, in 2001 the growing weight of non-Catholic religious denominations led to the adoption of a new law on Religious Freedom (Law no. 16/2001, 22 June), which created a legislative framework for religious groups established in the country for at least 30 years or those recognized internationally for at least 60 years. The law provides qualifying religious groups with benefits previously reserved only for the Catholic Church: full tax-exempt status, legal recognition of marriage and other rites, chaplain visits to prisons and hospitals, respect for traditional holidays, recognition of the rights of ministers of cult<sup>11</sup>. It allows each religion

<sup>10</sup> 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 Council (Fonseca, Malheiros and Silva 2008, p. 28).

<sup>11</sup> In this regard, if ministry represents a person's source of income it is considered a professional activity and is valid for the purposes of renewing residence permits (Leitão 2004)

to negotiate its own concordat-style agreement with the Government, although it does not ensure the acceptance of any such agreements (U.S. Department Of State 2008; Leitão 2004). The Law of 2001 also established the Commission for Religious Freedom, an independent consultation body of the Government and of the Parliament devoted to the study of, information on and the formulation of proposals related to the Law on Religious Freedom.

Summing up, we can conclude that, while integration policy is quite recent 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 characterized by strong links with Portuguese society and belong to the lusophone community. Indeed, the approach to the various cultural and religious groups is still ambiguous and cannot be tied to a precise model.

## **3 Background information on the city**

### **3.1 Brief description of the city**

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

Lisbon is in the centre of LMA and since the 1950s it has undergone a steady demographic growth fostered by a series of successive migration inflows: domestic migration, the return home of Portuguese people living in the former colonies, and, since the 1980s, foreign immigration. However, since the 1990s the Lisbon Municipality has undergone a significant demographic decline, losing about 15% of its population between 1991 and 2001 (according to the 2001 census the municipality of Lisbon has almost 565,000 inhabitants), while the other municipalities of the LMA experienced a growth. This decrease, which is mostly due to economically active young people moving to the suburbs, has been reinforced by the tertiarization of the central areas and the increase in housing prices in the more central and prestigious areas. Also the incidence of the migrant population has decreased: in 2001 in the LMA<sup>12</sup> Sintra became the municipality with the largest concentration of immigrants, overtaking Lisbon. Furthermore, in Lisbon the percentage of foreigners in the total population is significantly lower (3.3%, equivalent to 18,736 people) than the LMA average (4.7%) (Fonseca et al. 2008).

In the last two decades, the major changes in the social structure 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 associated with unemployment, old age and ethnicity. Indeed the restructuring of industry, and the changes in the professional and ethnic composition of the population, as well as the major urban interventions that have taken place in the city of Lisbon, have increased social and economic differentiation. The diversification and segmentation of the labour market have led to an increase in unskilled jobs, that are usually filled by migrants. Employment has become increasingly precarious, particularly in personal/domestic services and

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<sup>12</sup> In 2001, 55% of the total migrant population lived in the LMA.

the building industry, where ethnic minorities are largely over-represented (Malheiros and Vala 2004; Fonseca and Esteves 2002).

Furthermore, since 2002 the city, like the rest of the country, has undergone an economic downturn, which risks widening these social differences. In fact, immigrant groups seem to be the most vulnerable to the economic downturn, since they are facing increasing difficulties in finding jobs and show an higher unemployment rate compared to Portuguese people<sup>13</sup> (Fonseca et al. 2008).

### 3.2 The city's migrant population and its characteristics/main groups

The immigration history of the city more or less reflects that of Portugal. Like on the national level, since the end of the 1990s in Lisbon the predominance of PALOP citizens (from Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe) has been challenged by the arrival of huge inflows from Eastern Europe. The result is that, together with PALOP citizens, Ukrainians and Romanians are among the main foreign groups living in the city.

**Main foreign nationalities living in Lisbon District in 2007**

Country of origin	Number of foreigners
Cape Verde	40,000
Brazil	24,400
Angola	24,200
Guinea Bissau	15,700
S. Tome and Prince	6,900
Ukraine	6,900
Romania	6,800
China	4,300

Source: SEF (2008a)

From the religious point of view, in Lisbon the main groups are Muslims, Hindu and Orthodox. The first two boast a long presence in Lisbon, linked to immigration from the former colonies, mainly Mozambique. However, while a small part of Lisbon's Hindu community (about 20% according to the Hindu community itself) is made up of new immigrants, who usually do not arrive for economic reasons but for marriage or family reunification, the inflows of Muslim migrants are still significant, especially from Guinea Bissau. The Orthodox community, while already present in Portugal, has grown as a consequence of immigration coming Eastern Europe. Lastly, Sikhs, usually of Bangladeshi and Pakistani origin, represent a very recent minority, speaking little Portuguese and characterised by a low rate of family reunification (Pereira Bastos and Pereira Bastos 2006).

As far as ethnic associations are concerned, while among the oldest ethnic communities the most organized groups in Lisbon are still those from Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau and Brazil, the most active Eastern Europeans are the Ukrainians, whose associations seem to be engaged mainly in the preservation and promotion of their culture of origin.

<sup>13</sup> In 2006, the unemployment rate for the male population born in Portugal was 6.9% and for foreign born male 8.2%, while for female was 9.3% and 11.4% (SOPEMI-OECD 2008).

According to Fonseca, Caldeira and Esteves (2002), it is possible to identify three stages in the development of immigrant associations in Lisbon:

- 1) The first stage began in the mid-70s, after the arrival of refugees from the former African colonies; associations were rather informal in nature and their main concern was to facilitate hosting immigrants of the same origin, solving daily problems and promoting cultural activities typical of the country of origin.
- 2) The beginning of the 1990s represented the major growth period in the number of associations, since political authorities recognised migrants' associations as interlocutors during the 1992/93 regularisation process. Since then, ethnic associations widened their civic intervention area and reinforced their capacity to fight for the social and political rights of immigrants, being involved in the debate on immigrants' rights.
- 3) The establishment of ACIME in 1996 (par. 2.2) represented a crucial step in the consolidation process of immigrant associations, which have strengthened their role as partners of public and private institutions.

Indeed short term alliances with municipal authorities and participation in public programmes represent the main strategies used by ethnic associations – like the Capeverdean associations analysed by Beja Horta, Malheiros and Graça (2008) – in order to capitalise public funds and increase their capacity to influence social policy-making.

However the field visit revealed that only a few ethnic associations are regarded as reliable partners by local authorities. Indeed in the city the present trend among ethnic associations consists in developing a more professional attitude. For instance, the training courses for leaders of ethnic communities launched by the ACIDI and aimed at developing the skills involved in formulating and managing projects and developing partnerships, have been well attended by Lisbon's ethnic associations<sup>14</sup>. Indeed we can say that the professionalization of associations can be regarded as the fourth phase, following on from the three phases mentioned above.

With regard to the activities promoted by ethnic associations and their contribution to the welfare of local immigrant communities, the field visit confirmed what Sardinha (2005) and Albuquerque, Ferreira and Viegas (2000) have pointed out, namely that ethnic associations' activities are focused on three main areas:

- Socio-economic: 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: promotion of cultural activities, consolidation of the sense of belonging, based on identity affiliation and the preservation of cultural identity through musical, dancing and gastronomic events and mother-tongue language courses.
- Political: providing information on immigrants' rights and representing immigrant communities in the dialogue with local authorities and other partners.

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<sup>14</sup> This initiative was developed by GATA (Support Office for Immigrant associations), a branch of the 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, *More diversity better humanity*, 2009).

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.

As far as religious minorities are concerned, their organizations are fewer but longer-standing than ethnic associations. They promote social activities too, such as training courses, blood donation campaigns and assistance to poor people. Their main activity when it comes to preserving their own culture and religion consists in mother-tongue language courses, mainly for the new generations. Lastly, they are mainly active in fostering interreligious dialogue, establishing joint platforms and associations and involving all religious leaders and local authorities in public ceremonies, as we will explain better later.

With regards to Lisbon Municipality's attitude towards ethnic and religious organizations, it recognises them, and tries to back their activities giving logistic and economic support if required.

### 3.3 The city's Muslim population and its characteristics

Most of the Muslims in Portugal live in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area. However, there are no exact data available on the Muslim population in Lisbon. According to the leaders of the Islamic Community of Lisbon, it numbers around 35,000, with the 2nd and 3rd generations representing more than half of the whole community and around the same number of males and females.

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<sup>15</sup>, 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. On the contrary, the new Islamic presence comes mainly from Central Africa, especially from Guinea-Bissau (around 50-60% of the Muslim community, according to the interviewees), but also from Guinea-Conakry, Senegal and Ivory Coast. The migrants from North Africa, mainly Morocco and Algeria, constitute a minority (around 6% of the Muslim community, according to the interviewees). Lastly, part of the Muslim minority comes from Pakistan and Bangladesh.

In terms of socio-economic status, while the initial Muslim community was always fairly wealthy, the situation has changed with the widening of the 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, mainly the African minorities and the newcomers. Indeed in view of what was said in the previous paragraphs (par. 2.1) regarding the most disadvantaged ethnic groups, it is evident that a large part 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 Community, are employed mainly in the construction sector, with an average monthly income of around 600 Euros.

In analysing the Muslim population, it is also important to distinguish the two main Muslim communities living in Lisbon: the Sunnites and the Shiites, namely the Ismailis. The former is the larger community and is represented by the Islamic Community of Lisbon (CIL), the first Muslim

<sup>15</sup> Muslims left Mozambique as consequence of the Africanization process and, later, of the civil war.

association in Portugal, which was established by the Indian-Mozambican minority in 1968 and was initially made up of 25-30 members. Even if its elite are still Indian-Mozambican, nowadays its composition is not homogeneous and it includes migrants from sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, Arab countries and Southeast Asia. However, no internal conflicts are visible. The only exception was the fight for the CIL presidency in the mid-1880s.

The CIL manages the Central Mosque of Lisbon<sup>16</sup>, the construction of which started in 1979 on the land given in leasehold for a period of 99 years by the Municipality, and lasted until its inauguration in 1985 (Leitão 2004). While the Mosque's Statute decrees that its president should be a Sunnite, it is open to all Muslims, who usually use its facilities for funerals and other relevant celebrations. Furthermore, a member of the Ismaili community was among the founders of the CIL.

Though the Islamic communities outside Lisbon have their own organizations, the CIL plays a central role and often represents the whole Portuguese Muslim minority, given the lack of an alliance or a federation of Islamic organizations. This role is due to the large size of the Islamic Community of Lisbon and probably to the characteristics of its elite which arrived in Portugal in the 50s and 60s and belongs to the upper classes; therefore having the intellectual and social resources and the diplomatic and political relations necessary to establish a religious and cultural infrastructure and to mediate with political authorities (Tiesler 2000).

The Ismaili community<sup>17</sup>, mostly of Indian-Mozambican origin<sup>18</sup>, 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 the United States, Canada, Great Britain and Spain. The Ismailis seem to be very well integrated. This successful integration has probably been favoured by various factors. First of all, the community is characterised by an high educational level and good jobs. Secondly, the Ismaili migration is a diaspora: they have no homeland<sup>19</sup>. Lastly, while the first basic principle introduced by Aga Khan<sup>20</sup> 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). This principle probably contributed to preventing conflicts or tensions with host populations and, at the same time, 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

<sup>16</sup> The first mosque was built in 1982 at Laranjeiro, the second in 1983 at Odivelas

<sup>17</sup> The Ismailis constitute the second largest Shia community after the Twelvers in the Muslim world and are now scattered throughout more than twenty countries of Asia, Africa, Europe and America.

<sup>18</sup> 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 sub-continent migrated to East Africa in significant numbers. In the twentieth century numerous institutions for social and economic development were established on the Indian sub-continent and in East Africa.

<sup>19</sup> In Mediaeval 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.

<sup>20</sup> 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.

upholding national integrity and contributing to peaceful development. The Ismaili community has two foundations<sup>21</sup> in Lisbon, the Focus Foundation and the Aga Khan Foundation, the biggest of the two and part of the Aga Khan Development Network<sup>22</sup>. The Aga Khan Foundation has «philanthropic, charitable, scientific, sporting, religious, literary, cultural and educational objectives as well as objectives in the health area. These objectives must be followed in Portugal and in any other part of the world regardless of race, religious or political belief», as stated in section 4 of the Statute. It received major support from His Highness Shah Karim Al-Husseini Aga Khan, while the main contribution of the Lisbon Ismaili community seems to consist in voluntary work, as emerged in the interviews. The Foundation runs various projects in partnership with the Lisbon Municipality and the other relevant local actors.

The Islamic Community of Lisbon is also engaged in social initiatives, though it cannot rely on the economic and human resources of a private foundation. The main activities, which are addressed to all, not just the Muslim community, are an annual charity lunch for poor people, blood donation campaigns, and distributing clothes. They do not receive any support from the Municipality for these activities (they have never asked for support), only logistical support from the civil parishes – indeed, as we explained previously, the neighbourhood level is crucial in terms of the social activities of ethnic and religious associations. Furthermore, the Central Mosque represents a point of reference for Muslim newcomers and a support for the poorest members of the community, thanks also to the Islamic charity system of zakat.

Lastly, it is interesting to note that there are no Muslim student associations or women's organizations in Lisbon, probably because of the small size of this minority<sup>23</sup> (Tiesler 2000). We can assert that the Muslim community shows a simple organizational structure with few nodes, i.e. a rather centralized structure. This reduces the number of subjects that the local authorities have to deal with and may thus simplify the process of establishing fruitful dialogue.

## 4 Local intercultural policies in general

### 4.1 General approach and responsibility for relations with ethnic and religious organisations in the city

Local authorities have a significant role in promoting the integration of immigrants because they deal directly with people's social needs. However, the possibility of developing initiatives is partially hampered by the limited amount of resources available, especially if compared to the number of immigrants living in Lisbon and their wide range of needs (Esteves, Fonseca and Malheiros 2005). In the Department of Social Affairs of the Lisbon Municipality, which is responsible for integration matters as well as intercultural dialogue, there are few civil servants exclusively dedicated to these issues: just 3 out of 5 civil servants working on immigration are

<sup>21</sup> They were recognized and approved by Decree-law no. 27/1996.

<sup>22</sup> See [www.akdn.org](http://www.akdn.org) see [www.akdn.org](http://www.akdn.org)

<sup>23</sup> Other relevant Muslim associations, though marginal compared to 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, since many Muslims seem to join non-denominational associations.

devoted only to this issue - and 2 of these 3 persons work also at the front office of the Local Immigrant Assistance Centre (CLAI) managed by the Department (see par. 2.2). There is a similar shortage of economic resources: in 2009 the budget for intercultural policies is around only 50,000 Euros. Nevertheless, it worth noting that also other municipal departments, such as the Culture, Education, Sports and Housing Departments fund and promote activities that involve ethnic minorities and immigrants, fostering the intercultural dialogue.

Despite this situation, the Municipality has promoted intercultural initiatives since the 1990s and can thus be regarded as a pioneer in this field – even if the new approach to ethnic minorities developed in that period was influenced by the changes which occurred at national level, illustrated in par. 2.2 (Fonseca, Malheiros, Esteves and Caldeira 2002). As a matter of fact, Lisbon Municipality was among the first Portuguese municipalities which formally recognised ethnic minorities and their specific needs and demands, establishing in 1993 the Municipal Council of Migrant Communities and Ethnic Minorities, a consultative council which includes representatives of the main ethnic associations, as we will explain better below.

Nevertheless, the approach towards ethnic minorities is far from the multicultural and intercultural models adopted in many cities of Northern Europe. Indeed, at local level policies targeting the development of migrant associations are still weak (Beja Horta, Malheiros and Graça 2008) and they are rather influenced by national policies, following the National Immigrant Integration Plan and National Action Plan for Social Inclusion<sup>24</sup>. The Municipality itself states that it does «not have an explicit policy aimed at improving intercultural relations<sup>25</sup>» except for the aforementioned consultative council of the ethnic associations – and, we can add, for the economic support to ethnic associations, as we will illustrate later.

The impression one gathers is that the local authorities swing between the recognition of cultural diversities and the emphasis of similarities, fearing that an emphasis on differences might easily be transformed into discrimination. The result is the lack of a clear approach. In this regard, it is important to remember that the idea of a common 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 perspective, 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 already has members from ethnic backgrounds<sup>26</sup>.

Finally, it is worth underlining that whereas the intercultural dialogue is managed mainly by the Department of Social Affairs, the interreligious dialogue is managed principally by the City Council or even the Mayor, who attends important celebrations promoted by religious organisations or invites them to public events in order to enhance their recognition. For instance, the Mayor attended the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Islamic community, on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2008 he invited the different religious organisations to lunch at Mitra Palace, on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2008 he launched a memorial in memory of the Jewish Massacre of 1506 in Lisbon. Indeed the intercultural and interreligious dialogues are developing quite separately and, moreover, in public discourse and local policies ethnicity seems to prevail over religion.

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<sup>24</sup> The current Plans are referred to the period 2008-2010.

<sup>25</sup> From the Common Reporting Scheme

<sup>26</sup> 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. Anyway, a relevant part of the oldest minorities has acquired the Portuguese nationality, therefore it has the same political rights of the majority population.

## 4.2 Issues, demands and interests

The recent nature of immigration has contributed to orienting the demands of a significant number of associations principally towards issues concerning immigration policies, citizenship rights and social integration, rather than towards cultural issues (Beja Horta, Malheiros and Graça 2008).

Concerning the cultural domain, the ethnic minorities, especially those of PALOP origin, seem to perceive no conflict between their culture identity and mainstream Portuguese culture. According to some immigrant interviewees, the fairly strong feeling of belonging to the same cultural community – not always registered in other European countries with migration flows from former colonies – seems to be linked to the common language and the strong relations with former colonies established by Portuguese people who often settled there, becoming «the only one that generated a new race: the mulatto». As a matter of fact, the more recent communities, who do not belong to the lusophone community – the Ukrainians in particular – seem to place greater emphasis on their cultural identity, stressing its characteristics.

The weak and recent nature of cultural demands, especially from PALOP immigrants, is also revealed by the difficulties faced by ethnic associations when it comes to formulating requests to present to the Municipality, which is ready to support some of their cultural activities compatibly with available resources. For instance, the Department of Social Affairs recently asked the associations involved in the aforementioned Consultative Council of ethnic minorities to submit proposals for the Council's intercultural activities, but it did not receive any proposals.

Lastly, several associations have asked the Municipality to provide them with premises. In this case, the requests are forwarded to GEBALIS (*Empresa Municipal de Gestão dos Bairros Municipais de Lisboa* – Municipal Enterprise for the Management of Lisbon Municipal Neighborhoods), which is the public enterprise responsible for council buildings. However, associations often refuse the solutions offered 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 for the local population. Nevertheless, 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. Actually, no demands closely linked to faith are put by the religious minorities to the Municipality. In this regard, Muslims expressed some religious needs during the interviews (i.e. halal food and room for praying in public places, etc.) but until now they have not made any requests to local administration concerning these matters (see chap. 5); 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 as far as religious needs are concerned, it should be noted that the need for places of worship was already fulfilled in the past, in the case of Muslims and Hindus (the land was given by the Municipality), while the Orthodox Christians recently arrived from Eastern Europe are using churches of the Catholic Church.

On the contrary, Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims accord greater importance to the need to improve courses in their original languages and culture, especially for new generations, and promote cultural, gastronomic and sporting events in order to bring people together, overcoming prejudice. What they mainly ask the Municipality for is to provide the logistical assistance (i.e. venues, infrastructures, facilities) to enable them meet these needs autonomously – the Hindu community, however, also asked for teachers from India. Indeed the religious communities seem to be aware that the Municipality has difficulties in offering a significant amount of money to ethnic and religious associations, while it is easier to obtain logistical assistance (par. 4.1). As a matter of fact, the Municipality has provided logistical support to the various organisations, but mainly for public events.

### 4.3 Forms of relations and dialogue

#### 4.3.1. Intercultural dialogue

As we said before, the Municipality of Lisbon supports ethnic associations; however, it is not an easy task for the Department of Social Affairs. The budgetary constraints due to the economic recession have led to a substantial reduction in expenditure and in 2009 the budget for financing associations' activities is around only 25,000 euro<sup>27</sup>. The associations' budgets indeed come mainly from membership fees and from central government, first and foremost the ACIDI (par. 2.2), while the main support provided by the Lisbon Municipality consists in logistical assistance for organizing public events.

With regards to relations with ethnic minorities and organizations, Fonseca, Caldeira and Esteves (2002) identify two different approaches adopted by the Municipalities of the Lisbon Metropolitan Area:

- a) the relationship between local government and immigrants' communities is institutionalised through consultative councils or specific internal municipal bodies that frequently work and listen to the associations;
- b) 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<sup>28</sup>) fits the first category, since in 1993 local authorities decided to establish the Municipal Council of Migrant Communities and Ethnic Minorities, with the aim of ensuring the development of migrant communities and the participation of ethnic associations in activities for the promotion of cultural diversity, as we explained previously (par. 4.1). According to Fonseca, Malheiros, Esteves and Caldeira (2002), the personal attitudes of local political leaders may contribute to accounting for the creation of this kind of consultative body. Indeed in Lisbon the Council's activities were interrupted with the

<sup>27</sup> In 2005, for instance, was higher (63,555 Euros).

<sup>28</sup> In 1994 Amadora municipality established the municipal Council of Ethnic Communities and immigrants, functioning as a consultative agency to promote the participation of ethnic communities in the definition of 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.

change in political majority at the beginning of the new millennium, and only resumed in November 2007, after the election of the new Mayor<sup>29</sup>.

After its re-establishment, the Municipal Council of Migrant Communities and Ethnic Minorities changed its name to the Municipal Council for Interculturality and Citizenship (CMIC), stressing the increasing centrality of the intercultural issue. The Council is a local consultative structure headed by the Social Affairs deputy and including 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*). The Forum is open to individuals, as well as public and private organizations, and aims to promote and foster a joint reflection on local integration policies, coming up with proper methods for intervening in these fields. 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<sup>30</sup>.

Since 2007, besides the establishment of the Municipal Forum of Interculturality, Council activity has concerned:

- the organization of events for the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue;
- the drawing up of a new Regulation<sup>31</sup>.

The new Regulation decreed the increase of the members from 9 associations to 17<sup>32</sup>. The CMIC's members are not elected by ethnic communities, but appointed (in 1993 by the Municipality and afterwards by the current members and President of CMIC). The members are selected according to their relevance: for each of the largest ethnic communities living in Lisbon, the most relevant ethnic associations are selected. In any case, other associations can attend the meetings, though without the right to vote.

The associations involved in the CMIC do not seem very active. Despite the small number of meetings during the year (around four), they do not attend them regularly. Furthermore, as we said above (par. 4.2), the associations have not answered the CMIC's call for proposals. This low involvement of associations in CMIC's activities could be due to its limited effects on local

<sup>29</sup> Antonio Costa is the former Minister for Home Affairs who gave up his office to become Mayor of Lisbon.

<sup>30</sup> 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 through 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* – see below), the central and local administrations and public and private entities, promoting information and training and intercultural and interreligious education; d) to combat stigmatization and stereotypes concerning migrants and ethnic minorities.

<sup>31</sup> Alteração do Regulamento Geral do Conselho Municipal das Comunidades Imigrantes e das Minorias Étnicas, Proposta n. 159/2008, Reunião de 20/01/2009.

<sup>32</sup> Since the end of April the CMIC's members are: Friends of the Angolan Woman Association, Cape Verde 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 of Gypsies, SOS Defense of the Angolans. The CMIC is also composed by a representative of the Municipal Assembly and two citizens designed by Lisbon City Council and is chaired by the Deputy mayor of Social Affairs; Cape Verdean Association, Guinean Association of Social Solidarity, Lisbon's House of Brazil, House of Mozambique, Association of Ukrainians in Portugal; ACAJUCI Christian Association for the Support of Gypsy Youngsters; APARATI Association for the Timorese People; Friends of the Angolan Woman Association; Association of the Friends of Príncipe; Lisbon Islamic Community; Lisbon Israeli Community; ICDI Institute for International Cooperation and Development; Racism SOS Movement; Immigrant Woman – Association of Study, Cooperation and Solidarity; Portuguese Catholic Order for Migrations; Jesuit Refugee Service; Immigrant Solidarity – Association for the Defence of Immigrants' Rights.

integration and intercultural policies. Indeed, while some associations interviewed pointed out its utility to express minorities' needs, others underlined its limited impact. We should however consider that the Council only started working in 2008 and during the first year its activity concerned mainly formal matters (the new Regulation, the increase in members, etc.). According to the Municipality, the unsteady involvement of associations can be explained by two main factors:

- the interruption in the CMIC's activity 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 allow immigrant workers to attend them. In spite of this, the ethnic associations participation was very low<sup>33</sup> and only the leaders took part in these meetings. Indeed the association leaders seem to play an ambivalent role: most of them are involved in the city's intercultural dialogue; however, they risk undertaking this dialogue alone, detached from the rest of the ethnic community. Thus, the ethnic associations' «leader-dependency» could hamper the intercultural dialogue and might constitute one of the main problems the Municipality will face in future years.

In the intercultural field, besides coordinating the Municipal Council for Interculturality and Citizenship, the Municipality manages the Centre of Multicultural Resources (*Centro de Recursos Multicultural*), set up in 1997 within the LIA (Local Integration Partnership Action Project) European project that the city of Lisbon took part in. The Centre could represent a good practice in the field of intercultural dialogue since it is a structure for cultural and information exchange between people of different backgrounds living in Lisbon. It has a library, an exhibition area, multimedia and computer areas. It is located in a neighbourhood dominated by social housing (Bairro Padre Cruz), that however does not seem particularly marginalized or stigmatized. The Centre receives quite a lot of requests from ethnic associations coming from the whole city and interesting in organising events or activities like feasts, cultural events, conferences and seminars, associations' meetings and training activities. If needed, the Centre also provides logistical support. Furthermore, the Centre offers Internet classes and courses on multiculturalism, citizenship, Creole and so on. It also hosts a legal support service, promoted within the CLAI (see par. 2.2).

Finally, the Lisbon Municipality organises public events in order to promote the culture of ethnic minorities. As we said before, on occasion of the European Intercultural Dialogue, the Department of Social Affairs through the Municipal Council for Interculturality and Citizenship (CMIC) organized outdoor public events, workshops and conferences. As the former were very successful, the Municipality intends to increase the number of festivals, gastronomic events, dancing and music performances that enable the native population to come into contact with the

<sup>33</sup> Conselho Municipal para a Interculturalidade e a Cidadania – CMIC, *Ano Europeu do Diálogo Intercultural 2008. Avaliação Sumária*, February 2009.

cultures of the ethnic minorities. In actual fact this kind of events, together with debates and conferences, represent the main municipal strategy directed at the majority population for improving relations with ethnic minority groups<sup>34</sup>.

The actions described up till now are the main initiatives undertaken by the Municipality in the field of interculturality. No other relevant actions have been developed, also due to the aforementioned limited economic and human resources available for this purpose.

Nevertheless, the Municipality has also established partnerships with the ethnic associations which are significant in terms of intercultural dialogue. In this regard, one of the most important experience is the Social Network (*Rede Social*), which is a concertative structure where the main organizations operating in the social sector exchange information and come up with common strategies for local social policies. In Lisbon the Social Network is coordinated by three main actors: 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 associations. Since it was established in 2006 and only began to operate in 2007, until now the Network has been focused mainly on planning activities, elaborating the *Diagnóstico Social*, articulated in seven different thematic axes, one of which concerns Cultural Diversity<sup>35</sup>.

In general, the immigrant associations' view of the activities of the Municipality points out both positive and critical aspects. They usually appreciate the increasing attention of the local administration towards minorities and their readiness to cooperate. On the other hand, they sometimes underline the insufficient support offered to associations and the tendency to involve the oldest and most established organizations in local policies, instead of the newest, smallest ones. Yet concerning these two issues we have already illustrated the lack of municipal resources available in this policy field and the insufficient reliability of many ethnic associations, which leads the local administration to work mainly with the most reputable ones.

Apart from the Municipality, in Lisbon there are other relevant local actors which are worth briefly analysing. First of all, the private Foundations - such as the Gulbenkian, the Aga Khan and the Luso-American Foundation – undertake huge integration programmes thanks to 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 organizations are involved in the implementation phase, mainly at neighbourhood level; the goal 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

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<sup>34</sup> Other types of initiative aimed at changing the majority's attitude towards minorities have been undertaken within projects promoted by the government and especially by the ACIDI, which is the body responsible for this issue (par. 2.2). For instance, within the 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.

<sup>35</sup> Câmara Municipal de Lisboa – Departamento de Acção Social, *Intervenção Social. Uma Cidade Para as Pessoas*, 2009.

Gulbenkian Foundation has also developed initiatives within the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, such as the «Distance and Proximity» programme, which explores the possibilities and limits of interculturality through four months of art exhibitions and performances. The proposal 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»<sup>36</sup>.

Also NGOs (i.e. SOS Racism, Solidariedade Imigrante, Olho Vivo) sometimes promote local initiatives in intercultural field, even if their activities are mainly focused on the defence and improvement of immigrants' rights. One the most relevant initiatives promoted by NGOs in Lisbon is the an annual three-days festival called ImigrArte, which involves many different ethnic associations and for which the Municipality has always provided the logistical support (i.e. billboards and fliers, stages, sound systems, etc.) and fostered the promotion of the event. The aim is to enhance intercultural dialogue through artistic performances, such as music and dancing shows and ateliers, the screening of movies, debates, exhibitions and gastronomic events. While the NGOs are capable of organizing such big events, the ethnic associations seem to have difficulties in this regard, but they are usually involved as partners, as we explained before.

Various NGOs which work with immigrants (mainly fighting for foreign citizens' rights, providing legal support and favouring immigrants' access to the labour market) also have members from different ethnic backgrounds. The Municipality has developed a quite strong 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 seem not to be involved in local intercultural activities and projects nor have developed a steady cooperation on integration issues with the municipal Department of Social Affairs.

#### 4.3.2. Interreligious dialogue

In the case of religious communities, the existing platforms for dialogue have been created bottom-up, without the input or involvement of local authorities, as happens in most European cities (see CLIP reports). The two main examples, which can be considered good practices, are the Abrahamic Forum (*Fórum Abraâmico*)<sup>37</sup> and the Universes Association (*Universos*)<sup>38</sup>. The former was imported from Great Britain a couple of years ago and involves the Jewish, Christian and Islamic communities. Its main aims are:

- to strengthen bridges between the Jewish, Christian and Islamic traditions and to stress the similarities between the three revealed religions;
- to undertake initiatives to generate harmony between the followers of all religions and between them and non-believers;

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<sup>36</sup> <http://www.gulbenkian.pt/index.php?section=19&artId=592&langId=2>

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.forumabraamico.eu.org>

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.universos.org>

- to organize and attend meetings, workshops, conferences and events that can promote knowledge of the three faiths, underlining their positive aspects and combating exploitation of them which goes against human dignity, religion and God's laws;

The *Universos* Association involves a wider range of religions, not only the monotheistic ones. It is a nonprofit organization (non-denominational and non-religious) fostering intercultural and interreligious dialogue. The main aims are:

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

On special occasions the religious minorities also organize common prayers, which are attended by both the different religious leaders and local political authorities. An example was the common prayer at the Hindu Temple after the terrorist attack in Mumbai in November 2008 or at the Jewish cemetery in Lisbon after a recent (effectively the first) attack from skinheads. As we said before, the Mayor also invites religious leaders to public ceremonies (par. 4.1).

As far as municipal policies are concerned, religious issues occupy quite a marginal position. In the past, the local administration gave land to Muslims and Hindus to build places of worship and it has reserved part of the cemetery for the Islamic community (par. 4.2 and 5.1). Nowadays, the Municipality's action is mainly aimed at recognising the religious communities through the aforementioned common participation in public ceremonies, fostering their integration into local society. Apart from these symbolic (and nonetheless significant) events, no local policies or measures concerning religious issues have been developed.

Actually, the religious organisations such as the Islamic Community of Lisbon or Lisbon Hindu Community can receive economic support from the Municipality for the social and cultural activities they carry out, like the ethnic associations, but they usually only request and receive logistic support<sup>39</sup>.

Lastly, it is worth remembering that the leaders of the main religious communities attend the Municipal Council for Interculturality and Citizenship (CMIC). Nonetheless, in this Council «religion is not an issue», as the Department of Social Affairs explains, and religious communities seem to have no complaints about this situation. The limited weight of religious issues in the CMIC and, more broadly, in local policies has been accounted for by the Municipality and some of the religious organizations interviewed in terms of: a) the lack of problems related to religious minorities and b) the tendency of these minorities to keep their religious needs out of local public debate due to public opinion's tendency of associating religious issues with extremism.

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<sup>39</sup> However, the situation is changing since, after the field visit, the Municipality has decreed to give them a certain amount of money along with other ethnic associations. Moreover, recently the Islamic Community of Lisbon has ask the Municipality to fund specific activities (see par. 5.1).

#### 4.4 Relationships between different ethnic groups in the city

Unfortunately opinion polls on native people's attitudes towards ethnic and religious minorities regarding the city of Lisbon are not available. However, we think it could be useful to analyse some national data in this regard. According to ECRI (2006), «racism and xenophobia do not seem to constitute a particularly acute problem in Portugal». As a matter of fact, a more recent pool from MIPEX reveals a fairly positive attitude towards immigration among Portuguese people: 69% support the idea that immigrants should have equal rights and 45% think that foreigners should be able to acquire Portuguese nationality easily (Niessen et al. 2007).

Yet when we pass from formal rights to everyday relationships, the picture is less positive. For instance, a Eurobarometer study (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, Policarpo, Marques, Lopes Matos and Cristo António (2006), the most discriminated ethnic minorities are those from Africa, followed by Brazilians and East Europeans. ECRI (2006) also points out that immigrants from Brazil and Africa face more discrimination (especially in employment and housing), even compared to 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 native 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 been registered until now. In 2008 and 2009 some conflicts between immigrants of African origin and Roma people occurred in council housing neighbourhoods. The task of managing and preventing this kind of tension is assigned to social mediators from GEBALIS, the public enterprise which manages council housing.

Apart from these limited conflicts, the associations interviewed underlined that the more consolidated ethnic organizations usually collaborate with one another, especially in the fight to promote immigrants' rights. Nevertheless, no local federations or platforms emerged during the field visit. Many associations of Lisbon have however been involved in social movements and national umbrella organizations 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*) has brought together various immigrant, anti-racist and human rights associations, labour unions, religious organisations, social movements and civil society organisations with the purpose of lobbying government and producing changes in immigration, integration and nationality laws. After the so-called Azores meeting<sup>40</sup> another similar platform was set up in 2006: the Platform of Representative Structures of Immigrant Communities in Portugal (PERCIP), made up of about forty 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,

<sup>40</sup> The «First National Forum of Immigrant Representative Structures» was held on 7th and 8th 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.

Angola, China, Eastern Europe, Cape Verde, S. Tomé and Príncipe, Mozambique, and Guinea Bissau (Sardinha 2007; Albuquerque and Teixeira 2005).

As we said before, all these umbrella organizations have been developed on a national level and are mainly aimed at promoting immigrants' rights rather than enhancing intercultural dialogue. Nevertheless, they may foster intergroup relations and promote cooperation at a local level, especially in Lisbon, where a great deal of the member organizations are located.

#### **4.5 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, the fact that it is fairly unknown: none of the interviewees was familiar with it), whereas local media is widespread in the rest of the country.

Nevertheless, since the population of Lisbon makes use of national media, it could be useful to look at this area. Some studies point out that the media have constructed images of immigrants and ethnic minorities as «others» and often as «criminals», «delinquents» and «undesirables», contributing to shaping attitudes and behaviours (ECRI 2006; Fonseca, Malheiros and Silva 2005). And according to the interviewees, security-related issues are often emphasised in the media. Also specific studies on this area underline the focus on security, followed by the issue 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 by a band of young people of African origin on a beach of Carcavelos, near Lisbon (on the Estoril coast) on 10 June 2005. 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, though later corrected, inevitably generated a feeling of insecurity, reinforcing stigmas about the criminalisation of 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 media involved in distorting the news concerning the incident on Carcavelos beach. And, a year later (10 April 2006), it took another public stand regarding references in the media to nationality, ethnic origin, religion or legal status from official sources, in reaction to the excessive number of cases where such details were given, stigmatising certain groups (ECRI 2006).

Despite these problems, some studies (Cádima 2003; Ferin Cunha, Santos, Silveirinha and Peixinho 2004) point out that positive change is taking place as far as representations of immigrants and ethnic minorities are concerned. The media is taking a greater interest in the

culture and identity of minority groups. Sensationalism is being replaced by more neutral reporting, focused on facts and the benefits of immigration. In the 2004-2008 period migrants were more often described as «foreigners» and references to people's ethnic background have become less frequent. The number of sources used has increased and widened from the government to the civil society and the migrants themselves (Ferin Cunha, Almeida Santos, Filho and Fortes 2008). Nevertheless, old-fashioned racism has given way to new forms of subtle racism, such as associating certain ethnic groups (e.g. young people of African origin and Roma people) with topics like drugs, crime, violence and prostitution (ECRI 2006; Fonseca, Malheiros and Silva 2005). Moreover, according to the interviewees, media organisations do not give any training to staff in cultural competence and the proportion of ethnic minority staff in media organs seems to be very low. In particular, journalists from African and Indian minorities seem to be discriminated against for their skin colour, while Brazilian ones are discriminated against for their accent.

While local authorities have no strategy for public communication relating to ethnic and religious minorities, on the contrary the ACIDI has played a crucial role in this field. For instance, in 2002 it established 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/Online Media; Radio; Television.

Since 2004, the ACIDI has also produced the television programme «Us» (*Nós*) which is a weekly magazine TV show on RTP 2 (Portuguese public television – channel 2). Its name reflects the aim of the programme: to invest in a plural society. The programme consists of a set of interviews and debates, information pieces on rights and duties, connections with immigrant associations, etc. The various segments are written and produced by different religious communities, that send delegates to a special television commission which determines the scheduling of segments. Besides ethnic minorities, religious communities eligible for the programme are the ones established for at least 30 years in Portugal or at least 60 years in their country of origin (based on the criteria of the Religious Freedom Law, see par. 2.2) (ECRI 2006; U.S. Department Of State 2008). ACIDI has also promoted the programme «People like us» (*Gentes como Nós*) which is broadcast weekly on TSF, presenting the life stories of immigrants who live in Portugal, with the goal of raising public awareness on issues of acceptance and integration<sup>41</sup>. Other similar programmes, with a focus on religions, are «Faiths of Men» (*Fé dos Homens*) and «Paths» (*Caminhos*). Some of the ethnic and religious minorities interviewed in Lisbon have taken part in these programmes and expressed a positive opinion of them. Yet according to journalists interviewed these programmes boast low audience figures and their impact is therefore limited.

As far as local ethnic media are concerned, minorities from East Europe, China, Africa and Brazil 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, they do not have a great impact on intercultural dialogue since they do not foster exchanges between different ethnic communities.

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<sup>41</sup> See ACIDI, "More diversity better humanity", 2009.

#### 4.6 Summary and lessons learnt

Portugal is a recent immigration country, therefore the problems at the centre of public debate and local policies still revolve around the difficulties faced by immigrants in terms of social integration, while cultural issues are not yet a crucial concern. In Lisbon intercultural and interreligious relations are an issue, but they are not perceived as a particularly problematic one. It is difficult to say if this situation is due to good intergroup relations resulting from a mix of successful policies and auspicious socio-cultural 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, but it might also have concealed hidden tensions, which were in part revealed by the aforementioned opinion surveys (par. 4.4).

As for policy-making, the Municipality of Lisbon was a pioneer in promoting intercultural dialogue especially in terms of setting up the Municipal Council for Citizenship and Interculturality (CMIC). However, local ethnic 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 lack of proposals from ethnic associations, the Municipality might be forced to give input the CMIC's activities instead of developing input from members.

Three basic «lessons» can be learned from the experience of the CMIC. First of all, the continued involvement of ethnic organizations is crucial since, as we said above, the interruption in the CMIC's activity has led to a lack of trust among associations. Given that trust is easy to destroy and difficult to build, this situation could be hard to resolve. Secondly, 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; on the other hand, if they are not able to involve the whole community, the impact of this dialogue risks being limited. Thirdly, the limited influence exerted by this kind of consultative bodies, which are hardly able to really promote or affect local integration policies, may discourage the commitment of immigrant associations.

In Lisbon the involvement of ethnic associations in integration policies actually seems to pass mainly through partnerships rather than through the CMIC. In Lisbon the usual cooperation between different actors, such as local and governmental authorities, private foundations, NGOs and ethnic associations brings together various resources, competences and skills and, at the same time, it enables ethnic organizations to be involved in local cultural and social projects.

Another important aspect of local intercultural policies is the significance accorded by local civil society organizations and the Municipality to public events, such as music and dancing performances, gastronomic festivals, and so on. Even if these events can be useful in terms of favouring intercultural dialogue and capturing the attention of the part of society most indifferent to this issue, 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. Therefore, this kind of events are just part of the solution.

The situation appears quite different as far as the interreligious dialogue is concerned. First of all, this area is quite separate from interethnic dialogue. Secondly, religious minorities have established platforms of dialogue bottom-up, without the support of public authorities. In reality, ethnic associations have also promoted umbrella organizations, as we explained above, but their main purpose is to promote immigrants' rights, while the interreligious platforms are explicitly aimed at encouraging 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 occasion of public events and celebrations contribute to enhancing the recognition of religious minorities, conveying the message – to both the minorities and civil society as a whole – that they are a fundamental and integrated part of the Portuguese society.

## 5 Local intercultural policies towards Muslim communities

### 5.1 Major issues, demands and interests

Until now the Islamic presence in Lisbon has not caused tensions, nor it has captured great interest in public opinion and in the scientific or media arenas. There have not been any demonstrations against the building of mosques, controversial issues faced by the local government, public debates on the headscarf or relations between religion and state. Indeed in Lisbon, as we noted previously, in the public arena ethnicity often prevails over religion.

With regards to the Muslim community's requests to the Municipality, it must be said that some significant demands have been already fulfilled. As we said above, the Central Mosque was built on a piece of land donated by the Municipality and part of the cemetery has been reserved to Muslims since the 1998; in there it is possible to place the bodies directly into the ground without a coffin, as Islam prescribes.

During the interviews the Islamic Community of Lisbon (CIL) pointed out other religious needs, such as:

- halal food in public canteens;
- the possibilities of performing prayers in working places;
- the teaching of Islam in schools.

However, these demands have never been put to the Municipality, consequently local authorities have never taken up a position on these issues. This situation appears to be a voluntary choice of the Muslim community, which seems not to consider these needs urgent. In this regard, Nina Tiesler's (2000) interpretation of this «silence» regarding Muslim religion in the public arena is very interesting: unlike the other Muslim minorities in Europe, Muslims in Portugal were already a minority in their country of origin (i.e. Mozambique and Guinea Bissau). Therefore, due to the fact that Islam is not the State religion in the sending country, claims for the recognition of religious needs by public authorities are less pressing. In our view, however, 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 had never requested economic support for its activities, as it was not needed, as one of the leaders explained. However, they have recently

presented some proposals to the Municipality asking for economic support. More specifically, the CIL would like to promote<sup>42</sup>:

- sport 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, in this sort of events teams have been made up of people with the same ethnic background;
- cultural and gastronomic events, i.e. meetings with traditional foods, picnics, etc., in order to bring people with different ethnic and religious backgrounds together;
- the building of shelters and council apartments for the homeless – they are willing to build houses if the Municipality gives them the land.

The first two requests were accepted and included in the 2009 Activities Plan of the Municipal Council for Citizenship and Interculturality (CMIC). Apart from the successful results, these requests confirm, on the one hand, the limited emphasis on religious issues by the local Islamic community and, on the other, Muslims' commitment to social activities and the development of intergroup relations.

## 5.2 General approaches and policies to improve relations with Muslim groups

The Lisbon Municipality has not developed an integration policy specifically addressing Muslims, or special channels of dialogue. The approach is the same as that adopted towards the other religious minorities, as described previously: the Mayor invites Muslim community leaders and takes part in celebrations, ceremonies and public events in general, contributing to acknowledging the Muslim minority as part of Portuguese society. Indeed the Municipality does not feel that a specific approach is necessary, underlining the absence of problems related to Muslims. The Muslim minorities agree with this choice.

As far as the communications channels provided by the Municipality are concerned, the Municipal Council for Citizenship and Interculturality (CMIC) is the main instrument available at a local level for Muslim minorities to express their demands: the Islamic Community of Lisbon is among the new members of the CMIC – and before becoming a member it was invited to take part in the meetings, though without the right to vote. However, despite the fact that the leaders express positive opinions about the CMIC, they have hardly ever attended the meetings, like other ethnic and religious associations leaders (par. 4.3). In actual fact the Department of Social Affairs, which is responsible for CMIC, does not have steady and frequent contact with the Muslim minority. Two main reasons for this are offered by the Municipality: on the one hand, until recently the Muslim minority never asked for support or attention; on the other hand, the Muslim presence in Lisbon is not perceived as problematic, thus the Department has never developed specific actions or given special attention to this minority. Despite these infrequent relations, the Islamic Community of Lisbon considers the Municipality «always prepared to cooperate and to participate». Indeed the impression gathered during the field visit is that the Muslim community leaders have direct

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<sup>42</sup> Obviously, this kind of demands are posed to the Municipality by the CIL and not by the Ismaili community, since the second can implement these cultural and social activities through its Foundations.

contacts with local policymakers, and the notion of using of «special» channels of representation reserved for immigrants does not really fit with their sense of belonging to Portuguese society.

Indeed, when looking at relations between the Municipality and Muslim minorities, the role of Muslim community leaders should not be underestimated. As we said before, these community leaders arrived in Lisbon in the 1950s and 60s, 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 (from 1968 to 1985) arrived in Portugal in 1953. He was a university professor, author of several studies on Islamic issues and an important militant in the Socio Democratic Party. His successor, Abdool Magid Karim Vakil, is the director of the Bank Efisa. Thanks to their personal resources and status Muslim leaders have undoubtedly contributed to constructing a positive image of Islam and to its institutionalization.

With regards to economic aspects, as we said before the Islamic Community of Lisbon has received logistical assistance for some activities from the civil parishes, but until recently it has never requested money for its activities from local authorities, as it has never needed funds, as one of CIL's leaders explained<sup>43</sup>. On the contrary, it receives support from foreign countries. For instance, the Central Mosque was built thanks not only to central government funding, but also thanks to support from Islamic countries, such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Libya, the United Arab Emirates, the Sultanate of Oman, Iran and Iraq, as well as Pakistan, Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon, which donated smaller amounts of money. The contributions for the Mosque from these main investors stopped when the internal conflict for the presidency arose in the mid-80s, as previously mentioned (par. 3.3) (Tiesler 2000). There are therefore still some parts of the Mosque waiting to be completed, especially in the underground area, where a dining room to seat around 600, an auditorium and a gym are under construction. The CIL continues to receive economic support from abroad, but it is difficult to evaluate the impact of this on the Community's activities and attitude. In any case the local authorities do not seem concerned about the situation.

### **5.3 Good practice examples of concrete activities and measures improving relations with Muslim groups**

We can assert that the Muslim leaders, thank to their moderate positions and prestige, have contributed to institutionalising the Islamic minority in a positive way. On the other hand, Portuguese political leaders, including local ones, have often recognized the Islamic contribution to the genesis of the Portuguese culture, with visible influences in language and architecture (Leitão 2004). Among these good practices, we can mention the participation of political authorities in ceremonies promoted by the Islamic Community of Lisbon, as well as the handling of visits to Portugal of the Aga Khan prince, head of the Ismaili community, as if they were state visits.

Among the public events, it is worth remembering that the celebration of the Day of Portugal and of the Portuguese Communities, in June 10<sup>th</sup>, with the meeting of old military officers of the colonial war (parallel to the official celebration) has been characterized in recent years by the both Catholic and Islamic services. This is due to the fact that, at the time of the colonial war, the

<sup>43</sup> The CIL 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).

Portuguese army in Guinea-Bissau enrolled a significant number of Muslim troops, some of whom now have Portuguese citizenship (Leitão 2004).

Muslims themselves are active in fostering interreligious dialogue, undertaking different initiatives to promote good relations with the rest of Portuguese society. As we have already said, 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 (see par. 4.3).

Another good practice is that of opening the Central Mosque to students (around 9,000 a year) and to everyone interested in visiting it. Indeed the CIL has made a great effort to make Islam comprehensible to non-Muslims: establishing in 1989 the Portuguese Centre of Islamic Studies, where the Koran in Portuguese is available, 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 the Muslim prayer on the CIL website. Furthermore, the CIL organizes free Arabic courses open to everyone and attended also (and mainly) by non-Muslim students. Lastly, it organizes conferences and workshops, as well as trips around Lisbon's Islamic heritage, which has not only shaped the Portuguese language, but also the city's architecture, including the St. Jorge Castle.

The Ismaili community is also active in this field and its Centre aims to be a symbol of interfaith and intercultural dialogue. The Centre was designed by the architect Raj Rewal together with the Portuguese architect Frederico Valsassina. It is made of the city's traditional stone 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). Although the architecture of the Ismaili Centre is just a symbol, it could have a positive influence on interfaith relations, conveying openness to dialogue.

Lastly, alongside the cultural initiatives, the social activities organised by both the Islamic Community of Lisbon and the Ismaili community are also crucial in favouring good intergroup relations (see par. 3.3). One of the most positive aspects of these activities is the fact that they address the socially excluded population at large, not only Muslims, reinforcing this minority's ties with the rest of local society. In this field, the activities of the Aga Khan Foundation (which belongs to the Shiite Ismaili Community) are particularly significant, since they involve a large part of the city and are developed in cooperation with different local subjects (municipalities, faculties, NGOs, Santa Casa de Misericórdia) (see par. 3.3).

#### **5.4 Public communication**

Even if the Muslim community is concentrated in Lisbon, there is no local Islamic media. However, it is worth remembering two relevant initiatives developed at national level.

The first is the conservative Islamic journal *Al-Furqan*, founded in 1989. Its director, Yiossuf M. Adamgy, has also founded a website of the same name, which provides a lot of information on the Muslim religion, and also on Muslim culture (i.e. architecture, calligraphy, ceramics, etc.). It is important to highlight that it is written in Portuguese, revealing once again the desire to foster non-Muslims' understanding of Islam and, as consequence, dialogue.

The second one is the Islamic Forum website, where different issues, such as conversion, the condition of women, etc. are discussed. The Imam answers the questions of Portuguese-speaking Muslims from Portugal, Brazil and sometimes from the UK<sup>44</sup>. As Nina Tiesler (2000) underlines, thanks to the Portuguese language and the new technologies the relations between Portuguese and Brazilian Muslims have increased, despite their very different histories and traditions.

Naturally Muslims are also involved in programmes reserved for the ethnic and religious communities mentioned in par. 4.5, such as «Faiths of Men» (*Fé dos Homens*) and «Paths» (*Caminhos*). Concerning the media cover of issues related to Muslims, the Islamic Community of Lisbon underlined the fact that they give news about Muslims, but the information provided is usually not related to the local community, rather events all over the world. Even if the media do not pay great attention to the local Muslim community, nor do they attack it. 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 is not an issue, either in media in public debate. The most significant issue related to the condition of Muslim women is the practice of female genital mutilation, which is one of the few topics 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.

## 5.5 Summary and lessons learnt

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

Nevertheless, if leaders' personal resources grant them easier access to political arenas, rendering special channels of communication futile – and unappreciated –, the lack of an institutionalized dialogue could become a serious problem in the case of a replacement of the current leadership with a less integrated one, for instance, 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 in the Municipal Council for Citizenship and Interculturality could be a first step in the right direction.

Alongside Muslim leaders' prestige and openness to dialogue, another key factor in the construction of a positive image of Islam in Lisbon probably stems from the efforts of Muslims minorities to be understood by the rest of Portuguese society, explaining Islam and its heritage in the city, using the national language as much as possible and stressing similarities with other religions rather than differences. Lastly, their commitment to social projects that address all of the

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<sup>44</sup> It is interesting to underline that 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 favourite country for this purpose. This preference is due not only to the wide range and high level of Islamic education opportunities there, 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.

most deprived sections of the population, and not only the Muslim community, has certainly enhanced its positive image and ties with local society.

## 6 Intergroup relations and radicalisation

### 6.1 Radicalisation within the majority population

According to ECRI (2006), immigrants are generally well-received and positively viewed by Portuguese society, and racist, anti-Semitic and xenophobic acts and statements are isolated occurrences. Interviewees from local authorities and immigrants' organizations confirmed the lack of radicalization within the majority population. Apart some minor extreme right groups, there are no relevant political parties or ultra-nationalist movements with a xenophobic or racist slant. Actually, the only organizations of this kind are some groups of skinheads, the National Front movement (*Frente nacional* – FN) and the political party National Renewal Party (*Partido Nacional Renovador* – PNR) which attracts at most a few thousand votes. The interviewees explained that both men and women are involved in these movements and usually around the age of thirty year.

While these extreme right movements are marginal, they are becoming more «visible». In the last years the PNR promoted various actions in Lisbon, with the participation of FN members. In 2006, it organized a public demonstration (Stop Invasion!) in Vila de Rei. In 2007 it put a big billboard with the slogan «Stop immigration! We wish them a good journey!» at Praça Marquês de Pombal. In 2008, it set up another billboard against immigration: «Immigration? We say no!» at Rotunda de Entrecampos.

Furthermore, an increase in racist websites has been registered (ECRI 2006). The Annual Report of Internal Security of 2007 refers that «the political activism of the extreme right expresses itself mainly through the web where, usually anonymously, the most radical militants are engaged in the diffusion of ultra-nationalistic, neo-Nazi or revisionist propaganda»<sup>45</sup>. According to some interviewees, this increase is due to the lack of clear legislation punishing racist acts and statements made on the web, rather than to an increase in the number of xenophobic groups.

With regards to Islamophobic movements, until now the Muslim presence in Lisbon has not sparked manifestations of hostility and rejection. Even the outbreak of Islamophobia which occurred in several European countries after the 11 September 2001 did not have a significant echo in Portugal, as acknowledged by the European Monitoring Centre On Racism And Xenophobia. 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;
- their use of the national language;
- the high social, cultural and economic status of the Islamic community leaders;

<sup>45</sup> Relatórios de Segurança Interna, RASI-2007, Relatório Anual de Segurança Interna, Ano 2007, Gabinete Coordenador de Segurança, Março 2008, Disponível na Internet em: [http://www.mai.gov.pt/data/documentos/{76D3C32A-9691-4456-AF6B-3F6B4EEA4392}\\_RASI2007\\_Versao-Parlamento.pdf](http://www.mai.gov.pt/data/documentos/{76D3C32A-9691-4456-AF6B-3F6B4EEA4392}_RASI2007_Versao-Parlamento.pdf).

- the commitment to interreligious dialogue by the most outstanding representatives of Islamic communities.

As well as these elements, we can mention the efforts made to explain Islamic religious practices and beliefs to the rest of Portuguese society, as well as the strong involvement in social initiatives in the most deprived neighbourhoods of the city.

## 6.2 Radicalisation within the migrant and/or minority population

The Municipality, and the religious and ethnic organizations interviewed agreed about the lack of radicalisation processes within minorities in Lisbon, and the Annual Report of Internal Security of 2007<sup>46</sup> points out that alarming religious and political extremism is absent not only in Lisbon but also in the rest of the country.

According to the interviewees, this is the result of positive intergroup relations and the lack of conflicts between minorities and the majority population. We can add that some of the factors pointed out in the previous paragraph for explaining the lack of Islamophobic movements could probably also explain why radicalisation within minorities is absent. Indeed both Muslims and Hindus, who represent the two major immigrant religious minorities, are characterized by:

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

These elements are very likely to have played a role in the prevention of radicalization.

## 7 Conclusion: Key challenges, lessons and learning for CLIP

In Lisbon, intergroup relations appear to be fairly good and no relevant tensions are registered. This situation is the result both of the measures adopted by the Lisbon Municipality (such as the establishment of the Municipal Council for Interculturality and Citizenship) and the characteristics of the ethnic and religious minorities settled in the city. This positive situation does however conceal some challenges.

Firstly, while the high proportion of immigrants belonging to the lusophone community may facilitate relations between minority and majority populations, the rooted idea of the Portuguese-speaking community's cohesive power could delay the adoption of specific measures. Indeed, we observed that immigrants from PALOP countries seem to suffer the most discrimination, undergoing the stigmatization that affected Africans. This is a challenge but also a lesson: cultural

<sup>46</sup> Relatórios de Segurança Interna, RASI-2007, Relatório Anual de Segurança Interna, Ano 2007, Gabinete Coordenador de Segurança, Março 2008, Disponível na Internet em: [http://www.mai.gov.pt/data/documentos/{76D3C32A-9691-4456-AF6B-3F6B4EEA4392}\\_RASI2007\\_Versao-Parlamento.pdf](http://www.mai.gov.pt/data/documentos/{76D3C32A-9691-4456-AF6B-3F6B4EEA4392}_RASI2007_Versao-Parlamento.pdf).

similarities can facilitate dialogue but they can also hide difficulties; therefore a frequent and profound analysis of intergroup relations could be useful.

Secondly, Lisbon Municipality was a pioneer in the promotion of intercultural dialogue, establishing a Council made up of the main ethnic and religious associations located in the city in the early 1990s. However, it is crucial to guarantee continuity in the work of this kind of platforms, independently of the political situation. It is also necessary to ensure that this kind of consultative body exerts a genuine influence on local policies to prevent them from becoming separate and insignificant arenas. Otherwise, there is a risk of losing minorities' trust in these instruments of dialogue. The Lisbon Municipality's commitment to the Municipal Council for Interculturality and Citizenship (CMIC) after it resumed activity is a sign of its awareness of these challenges.

Thirdly, the role of the leaders of ethnic associations appears to be ambivalent. 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, their participation in specific platforms or meetings risks having no real consequences on intergroup relations. Indeed local and central government are working to enhance these associations and their leaders' skills and ability. 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 for developing their leadership in a positive direction.

In fourth place, thanks to their prestige, social relations, education and open minds, Lisbon's religious minorities' leaders, have been able to establish a fruitful interfaith dialogue. However, while these personal resources are precious when it comes to fostering dialogue, they are also frail. 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 during the last fifteen years.

The last challenge and lesson concerns economic and human resources. Building intercultural dialogue and positive intergroup relations requires steady and significant investments. Indeed, while Lisbon Municipality plays a central role in this field, it lacks both clear tasks in this regard and sufficient resources. This, however, is not a new challenge or lesson.

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## 9 Interview partners

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