**Task Force: Advocating for a human rights approach to Migration/Refugees**

***National Context Fiche***

**Name:**

**Country and Network: Portugal – European Anti-Poverty Network/Portugal (EAPN Portugal)**

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1. **State of play on migration/asylum**

**Migration**

In Portugal the economic crises has had a considerable effect on the migration flows (both immigration and emigration). According to the Migration Integration Policy Index 2015 (MIPEX) Portugal is a “recent destination country since 1990s [but we have assisted] mostly emigration since the crisis (2/3 to EU countries, 1/3 mostly to non-EU PT-speaking countries) and sharp decline in immigration (mostly still from non-EU PT-speaking countries)”. In fact we have assisted in terms of the resident foreign population to a considerable decline between 2008 and 2015. In 2009 the resident foreign population was 454 191 and since then is being declining: in 2012 was 417 042 and in 2015 it reached 388 731. On the other hand the emigration of the Portuguese population has increased due to the crises: according to the Statistics Portugal Institute the permanent emigrants reached in 2013 the number of 53 786 and is decreasing since then (in 2014 it was 49 572 and in 2015 it was 40 377). Even though these migration flows we have assisted to a negative balance (-10 481), as the number of immigrants continued to be lower than emigrants.

According to the Migration Observatory “the ten most popular foreign nationalities in 2014 were: Brazilian (22.1%), Cape Verdean (10.4%), Ukrainian (9.6%), Romanian (8.0%), Chinese (5.4%), Angolan (5.0%), Guinean (4.5%), British (4.2%), Sao Tome (2.6%) and Spanish (2.5%). (...) The resident foreign population is mainly composed of women (51.5%), male foreigners corresponding to 48.5%, which reinforces the trend of feminization of immigration in Portugal”. It’s also important to demonstrate that in this moment and also due to the economic situation and “decrease in employment opportunities”, migration flows to Portugal are now more associated to study (education) and family reunification.

**Asylum**

According to the Portuguese Council for Refugees, in the *first three quarters of 2016 Portugal welcomed about 1200 asylum seekers applying for a “refugee status”. This number covers more than 500 individual requests at the border and national territory (“spontaneous requests”), 680 received under the EU relocation program and 12 refugees from the UNHCR resettlement program*. The same source informs that in the *total of the spontaneous requests (503 until October 2nd), 70% are men, 30% are women, and 30 unaccompanied minors*. In terms of countries of origin, there are 49 nationalities, and the most relevant are Ukraine, R.D. Congo, Guinea Conakry and Pakistan.

Under the National Relocation program, Portugal received this year 670 *applicants that came from Greece and Italy hotspots (the most relevant nationalities are Eritrea, Syria and Iraq*). These persons are being included in different districts of the country and until now *70 municipalities are already hosting refugees and asylum seekers and there are more than 140 municipalities available to receive them*.

Portugal has already *declared that is available to receive more people, especially vulnerable situations in which are included unaccompanied minors and 400 members of Yazidi community, from Lesbos hotspot*.

Under the Resettlement Program of UNHCR, Portugal received *12 refugees for resettlement (Syria with origin in Turkey). The Portuguese Council for Refugees also declares that until the end of the year, it is estimated that Portugal will receive around 2000 asylum seekers and refugees.*

1. **Policy responses**

**Migration**

In 2015 it was approved the new Strategic Plan for Migration 2015-2020 that assumes as main challenges the Demographic deficit; the Integration and Capacity building of immigrants that gives some focus to the prevention and fight against racial discrimination, in particular in labour context, labour exploitation, contact with services and so on; Inclusion and training of new nationals; International mobility, management talent and enhancement of the country's attractiveness; Better links between immigration and emigration and support for the return and reintegration of Portuguese emigrants.

According to the Migrant Integration Policy Index 2015: *“despite the crisis and austerity, PT maintained its investment in integration and even worked to increase its reach and effectiveness. PT continues to climb ahead on MIPEX: +1 point from 2007 to 2010 during the start of the crisis; immigrants benefited from more realistic family reunion requirements and more targeted support to pursue jobs, training and recognition procedures. PT rose another +1 point from 2010 to 2014; more immigrants can access protections against domestic violence and expanded targeted employment programmes, e.g. Mentoring for Immigrants Programme”.*

**Asylum**

In March of this year EAPN Portugal published a position paper on the refugees crises and one of the things that we have highlighted was related to the fact that is still negative that there is a difference between the concept of family used in the Asylum Law and the one used in the foreigners regime (Law nº 23/2007 of 4th of July, amended by Law nº 29/2012 of 9th of August and Law nº 63/2015 of 30th of June), which means that refugees have a narrower definition of family members and, therefore, limit the family reunification capacity of this group.

Despite this Portugal has assumed a clear and public position concerning the welcome of refugees and Asylum seekers.

1. **General civil society response**

**Migration**

Civil society organisations always assumed in Portugal a relevant role considering the inclusion of migrants. We want to highlight the importance of programs like *“Escolhas Program”* that was created in 2001 and it was already considered a good practice. This program has as main aim to promote the social inclusion of children and young people from vulnerable socio-economic backgrounds, for equal opportunities and the strengthening of social cohesion. This program has grown over the years, both in terms of funding and in terms of projects supported. It’s important to say that these projects are developed by local organisations implemented in the territory. In the fifth generation of the program had protocols with 140 project consortia, 110 multi-year projects and 30 experimental and innovative projects (one year of duration), many of which located in territories where descendants of immigrants and ethnic minorities are living (more information: <http://www.acm.gov.pt/-/escolhas>).

Other important Program is the *Mentoring for Immigrants Programme* that is promoted by the High Commission for Migration and a set of other organisations (local authorities and non governmental organisations). This Program aims the exchange of experiences, mutual aid and support between volunteers (Portuguese citizens) and migrants (migrants and immigrants) and/or refugees. (more information: <https://mentores.acm.gov.pt/home>)

**Asylum**

In 2015 as an answer to the refugee crises, a group of Organisations promoted the Platform for Refugees. This is a Platform of civil society organisations to support refugees (<http://www.refugiados.pt/>). One of the main actions of this platform was to inform civil society about refugees and the humanitarian crisis around these persons, and organise an integrated answer to welcome refugees at local level.

1. **How your organization and EAPN is responding/working with the issues.**

EAPN Portugal is one of the founding members of the Platform for Refugees and it is partner (associated partner) in some *Escolhas Projects*.