

NETWORKING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Rethinking Citizenship Education in European Migration Societies Political Strategies - Social Changes - Educational Concepts

Conference Paper

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Mr. Chairman
Ambassadors
Dear Colleagues
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Many thanks for your invitation and kind words.

The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation is pleased to cooperate with your Conference.

This initiative goes along with one of our priorities and will help to extend the debate on important issues such as the European perspectives on Citizenship and Immigration; the Integration Projects in the EU; Cultural Identities, Religious Pluralism; Intercultural Dialogue.

It became clear that in the coming decades Europe will have a radically different social landscape due to the demographic trends, the circulation of people and new migratory flows. This shift has direct implications in terms of communities living together: social tensions, changes in rituals and the emergence of new forms of cultural expression, which mostly come from suburban cultures that are a mixture of groups from diverse cultural origins.

For example, over a dozen different mother-tongues are spoken in some of our schools, a situation that neither teachers nor the curricula are prepared for. Likewise, in a society with a Christian background, new religions and new forms of religious behaviour have also appeared.

Let me give you a short briefing of our work on immigration issues.

In recent years Portugal became a country of immigrants: a totally new phenomenon for the Portuguese society.

The Gulbenkian Foundation launched a programme based on three main lines:

- 1) Research, knowledge and information;
- 2) Field actions;
- 3) Space and voice to the immigrants.

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1) Research, knowledge and information

In this complex field it is essential to know more and to know deeper. As such, we have been trying, on the one hand, to support academic research and, on the other, to contribute to inform public opinion.

*António Vitorino, former European Union Commissioner and former Portuguese Minister, was invited to organise the **Gulbenkian Immigration Forum**, a one-year initiative included in the 50th anniversary celebrations of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.*

Conferences and debates were held on issues such as the position of the United Nations and the diasporas for the development of the countries of origin and the role of foundations and civil society in general in the search for new solutions.

There was a constant concern for close monitoring of the international agenda, such as the presentation of the report by the **United Nations Global Commission on International Migration**, which brought to Portugal Jan O. Karlsson, Co-Chair of the commission¹, and the conclusions of the European Union *Green Paper on Economic Migration*, which gave us the opportunity to hear Franco Frattini, **Vice-President of the European Commission**.

Several workshops took place, covering issues as diverse as *the management of migratory flows and corresponding policies of admission in the host country, the reception and integration challenges, and the relationship between immigration and development of the countries of origin.*

Some one-hundred Portuguese and foreign experts participated in these workshops.

All the proceedings were summarised in the book ***Immigration: Opportunity or Threat? Recommendations of the Gulbenkian Immigration Forum***. This book presents reports that not only open gateways on some of the issues that are considered essential but also identify a set of recommendations deemed important to increase the range of opportunities given to immigrants as well as to hosting societies and hosting countries.

These recommendations include suggestions and proposed actions intended to a number of entities both public and private, to immigrants and to civil society organisations. **Citizenship Education** was, of course, an important topic.

The closing event of the Forum was an **international conference** looking for answers to the question “Immigration: Opportunity or Threat?”

[With the help of different personalities such as André Azoulay, Manuel Marín, Joaquim Chissano, Mohammad Hossein Adeli or Eduardo Lourenço], we all concluded that by making the most of given opportunities we can mitigate upcoming threats and thus contribute to a better collective future.

2) Field actions

Once our aims go beyond research and debate, we have been testing concrete field actions through projects with immediate and positive results and demonstrative effect. I highlight three examples:

- The **Project to Recognise the Qualifications of Immigrant Doctors and Nurses** – supported by the Foundation there are today 105 immigrant doctors and 60 immigrant nurses who got the recognition of their diplomas and are working at the National Health Service

1 Atenção: Estará presente no CCB Rita Süßmuth, ex-presidente do parlamento alemão e membro desta Comissão

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- The **Projects Geração and K' Cidade** in the neighbourhoods of Lisbon that, through partnerships with Municipalities and other Foundations, such as the Aga Khan in Portugal, help urban communities facing social exclusion to fight poverty through capacity building.
- Pilot projects of **Curricula Adaptation in Schools through the Implementation of Bilingual Classes** facing the linguistic diversity existing in the Portuguese school rooms.

3) Space and voice to the immigrants

Cultural exchange is a motivating factor of any integration process. A varied and innovative programme of art and artistic creation was put on between June 2006 and March 2007 to give an idea of the unknown dimensions of the contemporary culture of the immigrants who live and work among us. There were multimedia installations, films, photo exhibitions, concerts, theatre, etc.

Ladies and Gentleman,

The Gulbenkian Foundation will continue to give priority to migrations, seeking to contribute to more innovative intervention by civil society agents.

For our future work we consider an important tool the **Platform on Immigrant Reception and Integration Policies**, we launched last November involving numerous civil society partners – foundations, trade unions, employers' associations, religious institutions and professional confederations, and the association of several municipalities.

By using its capacity to mobilize other institutions, the Gulbenkian Foundation is leading this platform that will constitute an excellent basis for implementing best practices as recommended in numerous international and national documents.

The involvement of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in **international networks and projects** will continue to be the path of expanding knowledge, encouraging the development of constructive integration policies in the European Union and ensuring that policies are effective at national, regional and local levels.

Let me mention, as examples of this orientation, our participation on the **European Programme for Integration and Migration**, an initiative of the Network of European Foundations for Innovative Cooperation, the **Migrant Integration Policy Index**, coordinated by The British Council and the Migration Policy Group and the **European Citizens' Consultation**, headed by the King Baldwin Foundation.

I conclude by highlighting the example of our Founder, Calouste Sarkis Gulbenkian, an Armenian born in the Ottoman Empire, educated in France and the UK that became British citizen. He was a pioneer in the oil industry in the Middle East and a skilled art collector. During the Second World War he was living in Paris and decided to travel to Lisbon, where he stayed for the last thirteen years of his life. With this background and surrounded by the universalistic tradition of Portugal, we felt inclined, since the beginning, to promote a strong international component in our mission.

It will be worth to build bridges of knowledge and experience between different national cultures. The stones of those bridges are our values: democracy, human rights, solidarity, tolerance and environment respect. Over those bridges flows the creative work of philosophers, scientists, artists and writers: the vital and dynamic flows that will help to face present challenges and to anticipate the future.

To conclude, I would like to share with you what I have been advocating for some time now: There is a need to imagine a sort of charter of new basic rights and duties. It is imperative that representatives of the immigrant communities, accepting the principle of integration, should participate in this process. It is equally imperative that Europeans accept the revision of school curricula, especially those that most directly include the study of history, geography and economics. On the other hand, if we want immigrants to integrate European cultural practices into their daily lives – as it is vital – then means must be established for these practices to be effective and shared. One example to be explored is to use

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museum and exhibition objects coming from outside Europe to teach the two sides of the history of artistic creation.

During this European Conference, two films supported by the Gulbenkian Foundation will be shown. One is a documentary by Luísa Homem called *Retratos* (Portraits) and aims at giving voice to immigrants on the way they see Portugal and the Portuguese. The other, is called *Entre Nós* (Among Us) and combines twelve documentaries of three minutes each on the daily life of immigrants in Portugal. Three of these documentaries will now be presented to you. They express emotions, feelings and cultural memories of immigrants living in Portugal.