



S. R.
**PERMANENT REPRESENTATION OF PORTUGAL
TO THE OSCE**

ENGLISH only

**Human Dimension Sessions
of the 2010 Review Conference**

30 September to 8 October 2010, Warsaw, Poland

26 to 28 November, Astana, Kazakhstan

Working Session 2: Fundamental Freedoms I

Contribution of Portugal

Institutional Framework

The High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue, I.P. (ACIDI, I.P.) was initially created by Decree-Law no. 202/2006 of 27 October, which approved the organic law of the Presidency of the Council of ministers and merged the High Commission for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities.

The ACIDI, I.P. it is a Public Institute that was established in May 2007¹, under the indirect administration of the Portuguese State, possessing administrative autonomy. It is under the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and the Prime Minister. The High Commission's mission is to collaborate in the conception, implementation and evaluation of public policies, both cross-cutting and sector-specific, relevant for the integration of immigrants and ethnic minorities, as well as promoting dialogue between various cultures, ethnicities and religions, but also to combat all forms of discrimination based on race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin or religion through dialogue and integration policies.

Moreover, ACIDI, I.P.'s activities are based on seven key principles: Equality, Dialogue, Citizenship, Hospitality, Interculturalism, Proximity and Initiative. The organisation provides information in order to promote immigrants' rights and fulfilment of duties, including information leaflets, local immigrant support centres and an information phone line.

¹ For more information, please see ACIDI I.P.'s Organic Law ([Decree-Law no. 167/2007](#), dated 3rd May).



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Hence, the functioning and work of the High Commission demonstrates Portugal's objective and action to prevent and forbid every discriminatory act and to discourage every discriminatory practice. It also represents an active engagement in improving the living conditions of persons belonging to minorities and immigrants.

Freedom of Thought, Conscience, Religion or Belief

In Portugal, the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion is in same conditions as any Portuguese citizen, according to article 41 of the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic (C.P.R.).

The predominant religion in Portugal is the Christian religion in its catholic dimension, Portugal being a non confessional and laic State. However, all religions have their place in the country's legal and social system². Therefore, according to article 3 of the Decree-Law n.º 167/2007, dated 3rd May it is incumbent on the ACIDI, I.P., in this area:

- e) To promote interculturality through intercultural and inter-religious dialogue;
- j) To promote interest in civil society and academia in research on themes related to immigration, ethnic minorities, intercultural dialogue and inter-religious dialogue;
- m) To foster dialogue with religions through knowledge of the different cultures and religions, and by encouraging an attitude of mutual respect and love for diversity, both within Portuguese territory and in the relationships that Portugal has with the rest of the world.

In this sense, the activities undertaken by the Department of Support for Associative Activity and Intercultural Dialogue – **Entreculturas** are framed within the topic of interculturalism as an explicit dimension of policies to support welcoming and integrating immigrants, and reflect the promotion of Dialogue with Religions.

² See namely the Law on Religious Freedom, Law n. 16/2001, dated 2 June. For a complete sight on the legislative texts, see "Liberdade Religiosa", at www.gddc.pt (www.gddc.pt/direitos-humanos/portugal-dh/legislacao-portuguesa.html#d).



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The challenge of the promotion of Interculturalism is a process of learning that relates to all and is based specifically on the very strong and systematic involvement of the greatest possible number of actors and institutions of the receiving society. It involves projects where competences for the management of diversity are learned, to be applied in the different contexts in which they intervene.

There are two programs undertaken by Entreculturas that exposes the Inter-religious Dialogue awareness: Campaign “Conhecer para Agir” (You Have to Know, to Act) and Calendar “Celebração do Tempo” (Celebrating Time).

In the first case, the Operational Program of Human Potential, from the European Social Fund, ACIDI is going to develop a Campaign, where Inter-religious Dialogue is one of its main focuses, through:

- 4 seminars on inter-religious dialogue;
- Poster for youngsters to help disseminate the message from Charter for Compassion (an international movement);
- Calendar “Celebração do Tempo” – Celebrating Time;
- “Um dia para Agir” – One Day to Act (Proposals for teachers of activities to use in school at different levels of education).

In the second program, the Calendar includes a theological/historical approach regarding each religion’s symbology, main doctrine and fundamental principles, as well as sacred texts. Published since 2003, it is an inter-confessional and inter-religious calendar, in the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and of the Declaration for the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination. This calendar has been widely distributed by ACIDI, I.P., free of charge.