

OUR PROJECT HAS DEVELOPED SUCCESSFULLY!



PARA DEFENDER OS DIREITOS E OS SALÁRIOS!

**REFORÇAR A
SINDICALIZAÇÃO
DOS
TRABALHADORES
IMIGRANTES!**

Seminários

No quadro do projecto POISE: ACTIVIDADE 6
Sensibilização e reforço da sindicalização dos trabalhadores de países terceiros

Co-financiado por:



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Editorial

With the publishing of this second edition of the INTEGRAR newsletter, in double format, we are implementing the activities we proposed to develop the project “*awareness raising and more unionisation of Third Countries’ migrant workers*”. Addressed at the CGTP-IN elected officials and shop stewards and having immigrants as the target audience, this Project was successfully concluded.

We must not be shy in using this classification for the final outcome of all the work. The fact we will now describe, more than being a dense and technically perfect report, describes how useful this project was for CGTP-IN’s action with migrants. At the final balance seminar, one trade union leader who had actively participated in the Lisbon Awareness Raising Seminar said how important the knowledge collected in that Seminar had been for his trade union work. In the company where he works, that comrade said that there are Pakistani immigrants who face natural communication difficulties given the language barrier (among other!). After the Seminar, our comrade contacted them again and distributed the project flyers, in English, containing information on their rights. This action allowed for immediate interaction among the immigrants and our comrade, opening up a space for trade union contacts. A few days later, in a cafeteria, our comrade noticed the presence of a foreign citizen, apparently Ukrainian immigrant. He immediately tried to speak to him, however, that citizen recoiled and showed lack of confidence. Our union official did not for the contact, but gave him the same flyer, this time in Ukrainian. Showing surprise, the foreigner received the flyer and went away, but started reading it. After reading it he approached our comrade and, although finding it difficult to speak in Portuguese, he started a conversation, thus establishing a trade union connection with his own work situation and his labour and social rights.

After these two contacts trade union activity was developed. The emotional experience lived by our comrade highlights the relevance of our Project. Our aim was clear – empowering officials and shop stewards with concepts and tools, as well as with best practices. In this manner, their action directed at immigrants will be more efficient, informing them, defending their interests and mobilising them to get involved in trade union action. This is the best way of integrating them in the CGTP-IN’s Unions and thus contribute to their integration in our society. Having accurately and clearly defined our aim, we designed a set of activities and materials to back it up. The primary tool chosen was the holding of six Awareness

Raising Seminars, covering the whole national territory: Greater Lisbon (in Lisbon), Alentejo (in Évora), Algarve (in Faro), Coastal Centre (in Coimbra), Interior Centre (in Covilhã) and the North (in Porto). These were the regions and cities where we held them. The total number of participants was 102 elected officials and shop stewards (an average of 17 in each Seminar), from the main activity sectors with migrant workers (construction, agriculture, restaurants and hotels, domestic and industrial cleaning) plus officials from our structure.

The main supporting tool for these training actions was the publishing of a *Guide for Trade Union Work with Immigrants* divided in two chapters. *The first one* purely union oriented, presents the Social and Labour reality of Immigration, as well as the principals, analysis, views, demands and guidelines of the CGTP-In for its trade union work on immigration. *In the second part*, we present the legal framework of immigration in Portugal, by using a “*question-answer*” methodology. This highly pedagogical methodology is better than a simple analysis and description of the legislation – which is a more technical methodology and thus more difficult to be used by trade union officials and representatives. From among many possible questions, we chose sixty four concrete ones (with their respective answers) that are usually put by immigrants in their contacts and actions. This *Guide* was the main tool used in the Seminars and the primary instrument for contacts with migrant workers.

[continues on page 15]



IMMIGRATION STATISTICAL DATA – PART 2

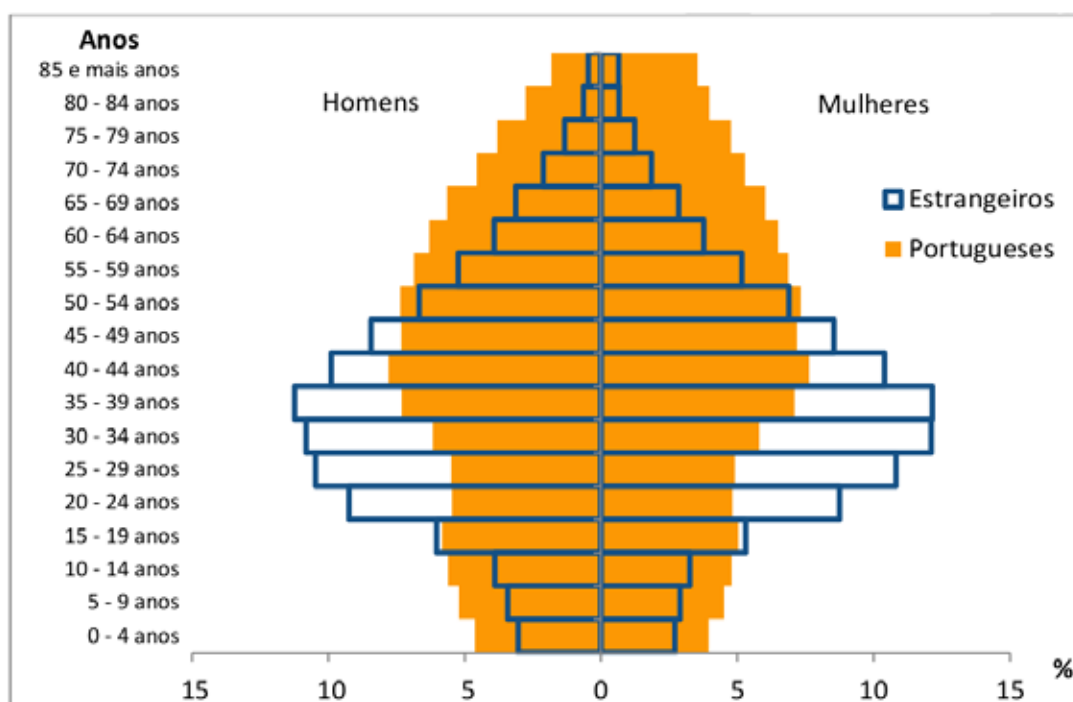
Part one of this item was presented in the previous INTEGRAR newsletter. We saw statistics concerning the evolution of the migrant population in Portugal from 1980 until 2017. We saw the main nationalities according to the data of SEF – Foreigners and Borders, in 2017. The figures surprised the participants of the awareness-raising seminars, for they dismiss the prejudice on the immigrants “invasion” in Portugal. In fact, Portugal has a 3.7% immigration rate, which is the lowest in the European Union. We saw that the five main nationalities were Brazil (20.3%), Cape Verde (8.3%), Ukraine (7.7%), Romania (7.3%) and China (5.5%). We also saw that in geographical terms most of the foreign population concentrated in the Lisbon and Tagus valley area, with the Lisbon and Setúbal districts, together, harbouring around half of the foreigners in 2016 (respectively, 173.18 and 36.481), with the Faro district being the area with more foreigners (63.481). (Please check table 3.1. of the Migrations’ Observatory 2017 Annual Statistical Report).

The demographic pyramid that questions us

In part 2, it seemed important to show other figures that dismissed prejudice, as well as stereotypes that are questioned by the Portuguese society. One of the stats concerns the age pyramid of the foreign population, compared with the Portuguese population and it reveals some essential data:

In fact, this table shows three crucial facts, with the first being that the foreign population age situation being younger and in its majority in the age groups of the active population; secondly, foreigners make up for the absence of the Portuguese population in the same age groups, allowing for more people with an age that permits contributions to Social Security; finally, we confirm that, besides the duty of welcoming immigrants in solidarity, we need more immigrants since there are no incentives and support that allow the Portuguese choosing to have larger families, and at the same time insuring more active population who contributes to Social Security.

GRAPH 4.6. AGE PYRAMID OF THE PORTUGUESE FOREIGN POPULATION IN 2015 (%)



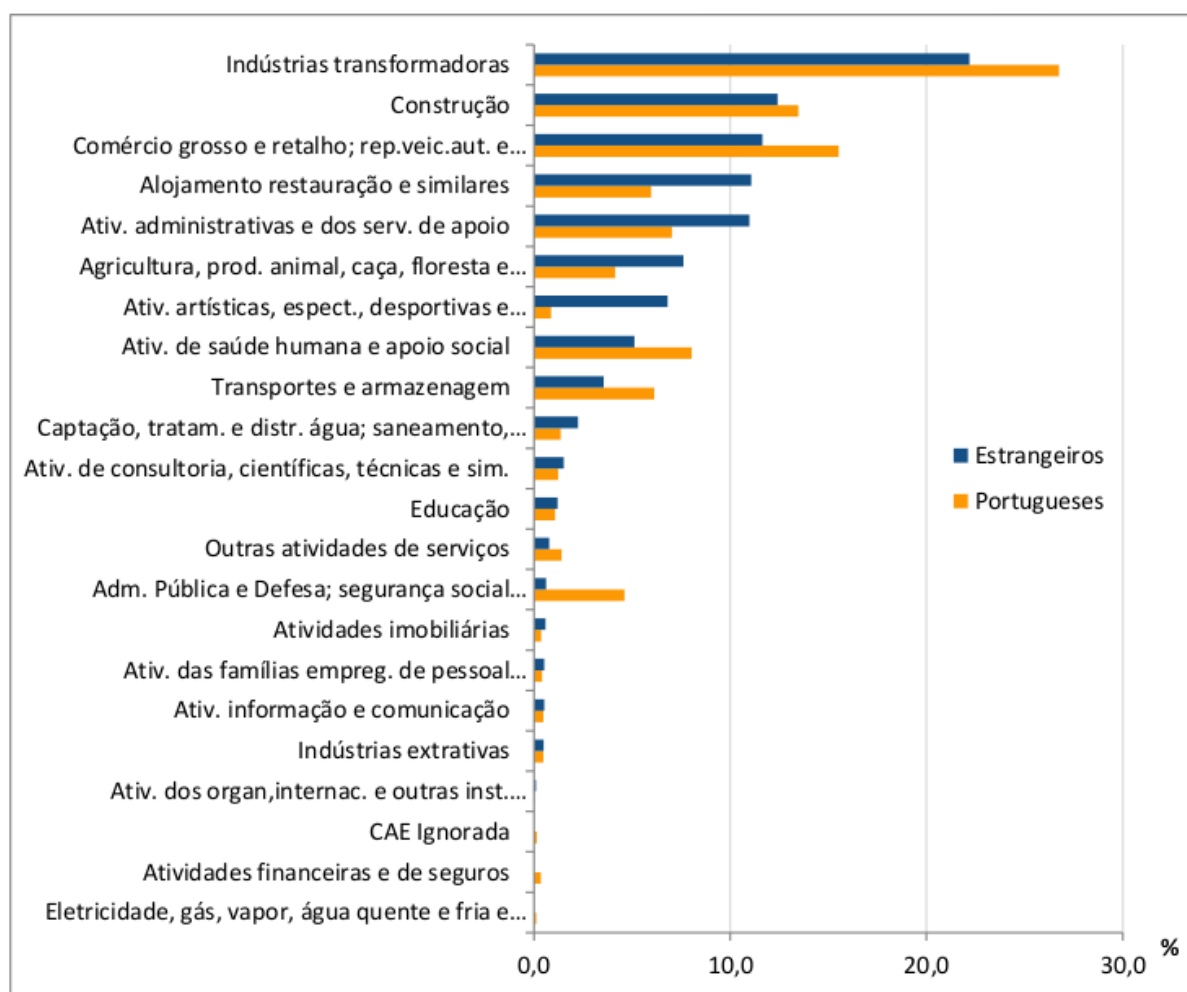
Source: INE, Annual estimate of resident population

Work accidents

Another aspect deriving is the fact that immigrants have a larger rate of active workers, plus the circumstance of being more prone to work accidents, due to bad occupational and health conditions. The lack of preparation for these hazards is often the cause for migrant workers suffering more fatal and none fatal work accidents. The table below shows the sectors in which this rate is higher and also that accident rates are higher than for the Portuguese workers.

The GEP data on foreigners' work accidents, in its totality (both fatal and non-fatal accidents) show a downturn evolution in relation to 2008. (Table 7.9). There was a decrease between 2008 and 2014

TABLE 7.8. FATAL AND NON-FATAL WORK ACCIDENTS OF THE PORTUGUESE AND FOREIGNERS, ACCORDING TO ECONOMIC ACTIVITY, 2014.

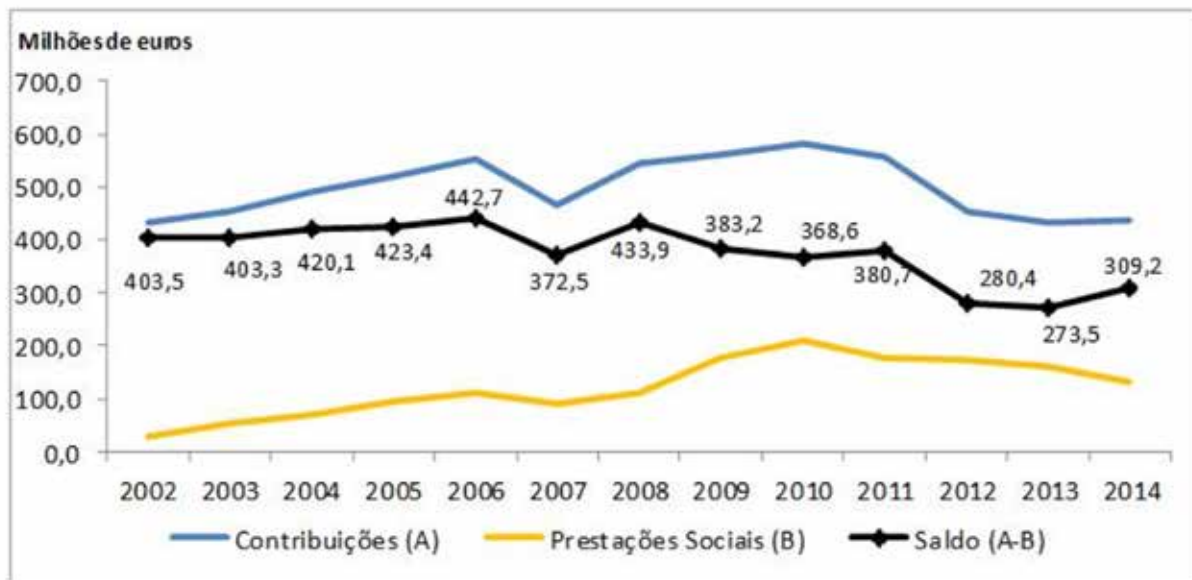


Source: Strategy and Planning Dept. GEP/MTSSS (Systematization of the authors' data).

Immigrants' contribution to Social Security is higher than what is spent on them

Finally, we want to dismiss the false idea and the prejudice of the racists, the right wing and the far right, that immigrants are a burden on the State, and therefore on the Portuguese, by abusing their benefits in health care, unemployment and other public services. In fact, a study of the ACM (Migrations High Commission), revealed that it was never the case. On the contrary, the next table shows that immigrants always contribute much more than they actually cost.

SALDO DAS CONTRIBUIÇÕES E PRESTAÇÕES SOCIAIS RELATIVAS À POPULAÇÃO DE NACIONALIDADE ESTRANGEIRA, ENTRE 2002 E 2014 (MILHÕES DE EUROS)



Source: MSESS (calculations by Oliveira and Gomes, 2016)

The previous table clearly shows that, for example, in 2014 (last available figures), immigrants contributed with around 450 million Euros to Social Security, when in the same year they only cost around 141 million Euros, thus representing a positive balance of 309 million Euros for the Social Security treasury.

The Social Reality of Immigration

An activity report of the General Labour Inspection mentioned the main labour market problems: subsistence of a large number of companies that do not meet all the quality requirements, namely in construction and public works; migrant workers in jobs with lower salaries, not corresponding to the reality and with lower income and social protection deductions; excessive daily and weekly work duration, in violation of provisions concerning weekly rest, safety and health. In a 2010¹ CGTP-IN study on immigrants' economic and social reality some of the main immigrants' problems were highlighted: regularisation and equal conditions (labour, social, civic...).

¹ Study included in the CGTP-IN project: "Immigration – Informing and Training for better integrating"

In fact, documented migrant workers are those that have: work with the worst conditons; lower wages; more serious work accidents; in their majority, lower qualifications and training in the main sectors; less exercise of their labour and social rights; more working time flexibility, not always duly compensated; lower deductions for income and social protection. In general, we see that companies without trade union activity are those where stronger discrimination prevails (salaries, labour rights...)

On the other hand, it is important mentioning other problems faced by the immigrants like access to social benefits and public services (laws, language, etc.), discrimination, gender and housing problems. Other conclusions that emerged from the debates in several districts with trade unions and emigrant/immigrant may be summarised as follows:

Although in comparison with other European Union member states, Portugal has very favourable legislation, there are still many social and labour inequalities; there is also great lack of knowledge of the existing laws on the part of migrant workers; the importance of exposing the employers' illegal use of the situation; the importance of migrant workers knowing they are entitled to rights and that they can organize themselves in trade unions; the importance of unions taking the first step to contact, inform and encourage them to react; migrant workers' dream is equal to that of the Portuguese workers: to live a stable life and enjoy decent working conditions.

In view of this reality, the CGTP-IN believes, since its foundation, that underground economy must be fought and immigrants' full integration must be promoted, if necessary with tools that prevent the most serious illegal practices concerning work and Social Security, notably by the immediate execution of the activity suspension.

In conclusion, it is important to say that the CGTP-IN strongly condemns the position of many companies and even of the public administration that often assume hypocritical behaviours in their work relations with the immigrant communities in Portugal. In some cases foreigners' wages stand clearly below the statutory minimum, mostly stemming from the existence of many undocumented workers in Portugal.

integrar boletim

2020

CGTP

Editorial

Vamos recomenciar a edição do boletim do nosso Departamento de Migrações e do boletim **INTEGRAR**, depois de algum tempo de suspensão devido às (naturais) dificuldades causadas por excesso de actividade sindical e consequentes carências de recursos. E este será o nº1 de 2ª série.

Desde sempre, os movimentos migratórios tiveram toda a atenção e os migrantes a solidariedade absoluta da CGTP-IN, porque observamos, com a máxima atenção e preocupação, que os migrantes são o principal objectivo da mensagem política da extrema-direita protofascista ou mesmo assumidamente racista, que os diaboliza e os transforma no bode expiatório de todos os problemas sociais que existem e persistem nas nossas sociedades.

A este estereótipo de migrante que a extrema-direita tenta difundir, os cidadãos democráticos e progressistas, começando pelos sindicalistas da CGTP-IN, combatem-na relevando a importância social, económica, demográfica e cultural dos migrantes para os países de acolhimento e os efeitos positivos que têm no seu desenvolvimento.

Por essa razão, a existência de um órgão de comunicação social sindical dedicada e focalizada nas temáticas das migrações e da solidariedade com os migrantes e da luta contra o racismo e a xenofobia é uma boa notícia para todos aqueles que fazem deste tema a sua intervenção militante ou cívica.

CGTP-IN mas também para todos aqueles que fazem deste tema a sua intervenção superior no actual momento político-sindical, integrando a concretização de um projecto de informação e formação sindical (apoiado pelo programa POISE) mais vasto e que se projecta no futuro.

Efectivamente, este projecto, intitulado "Sensibilização e reforço da sindicalização dos trabalhadores de países terceiros" tem uma finalidade dupla – formar os militantes e dirigentes sindicais da CGTP-IN para informarem, ouvir os migrantes em Portugal e agirem melhor para defender os seus interesses e combater a sobre-exploração de que, na generalidade, são vítimas por parte de patrões sem escrúpulos.

A difusão de informação sobre os direitos e a formação sobre o melhor agir (e lutar) para os realizar vai ser o essencial deste projecto. Desta forma, combatendo a sobre-exploração, as desigualdades e o dumping social, promovendo a igualdade e concretizando a solidariedade e a organização sindical nos locais de trabalho estamos a prevenir a penetração das ideias racistas e xenófobas nos locais de trabalho, que é um dos objectivos estratégicos da CGTP-IN. E, assim, reforçar o papel da nossa confederação na integração dos migrantes em Portugal.

Neste primeiro número desta nova série, apresentamos: umos transmitimos informações sobre o conteúdo e a forma de concretização do projecto POISE, descrever a actual realidade quantitativa da imigração em Portugal e registar as perspectivas e a actividade sindical da FEVICOM (Federação Portuguesa dos Sindicatos da Construção, Cerâmica e Vidro e da HEQUIMEJA (Federação Inter-sindical das Indústrias, Metalúrgicas, Químicas, Eléctricas e Farmacéuticas, Célulose, Papel, Gráfica, Imprensa, Energia e Minas).

Assim, damos corpo ao nosso objectivo: fazer deste boletim uma ferramenta de trabalho sindical dos militantes e dirigentes da CGTP-IN junto aos trabalhadores e trabalhadores imigrantes em Portugal.

VAMOS AO TRABALHO!

Carlos Trindade
Membro da Comissão Executiva da CGTP-IN
Responsável do Departamento de Migrações

Muito importante que os imigrantes se possam integrar social e economicamente nas sociedades de acolhimento e em Portugal não fogem a regra... (pág.95)

Prendamos assim transmitir uma informação geral aos trabalhadores imigrantes sobre os direitos existentes. (pág.93)

Resumo do projecto POISE da CGTP-IN no âmbito da "Sensibilização e reforço da sindicalização dos trabalhadores de países terceiros" - Janeiro 2019. Número nº1 de 2ª série. Distribuição: 1000 exemplares.

CGTP-IN Migrations Department.
April 2019

“Awareness – raising and stronger unionisation of third countries’workers ” PROJECT RESULTS (2017-2019)

As was presented in the first edition of the INTEGRAR Newsletter (2nd Series), this project appears in the follow-up of the Action Programme adopted at the last CGTP-IN Congress and contributes to promote the implementing of equal rights and fight against discriminations lived by migrant men and women workers, and the regularisation of all those workers who are in an irregular situation and continue suffering the consequent negative social consequences. Furthermore, we want to promote migrant workers integration in trade union life, in workers’ assemblies and other actions as well as their unionisation and election as workers’representatives. These are important guidelines for trade union action in this area. With this purpose, it was important training trade union leaders and cadres from all sectors, giving them the means and the tools to help and support them more effectively, to better integrate migrant workers at work, particularly those from third countries in relation to the EU, more specifically those from the Portuguese speaking African countries and from some Eastern European countries.

Activities and Outputs

In order to implement the Project and attain these goals, we held Seminars and published awareness raising materials; a Handbook for training and awareness-raising; a dissemination Poster; Dissemination and awareness flyers and the 2nd Series of the INTEGRAR Newsletter.

We held six **Awareness – raising Seminars** in six different venues in the country, attended by dozens of trade unionists , for their sensitisation on the knowledge of legislation concerning immigrants, on the relevance of the current situation of migrants in the labour world and in the Portuguese society, as well as

Sensibilização e reforço da sindicalização das/os trabalhadoras/es imigrantes

COM ESTE PROJECTO, O DEPARTAMENTO DE MIGRAÇÕES DA CGTP-IN PRETENDE DEFENDER A EFECTIVAÇÃO DOS DIREITOS DAS/OS TRABALHADORAS/ES IMIGRANTES PARA HAVER CONDIÇÕES DE IGUALDADE E NÃO DISCRIMINANTES NO TRABALHO E CONTRIBUIR PARA A SUA INTEGRAÇÃO AO NÍVEL SOCIAL, CULTURAL E POLÍTICO.

Pretendemos capacitar e formar um maior número de dirigentes e delegados sindicais para intervir, de forma qualificada, na defesa das condições sociais e laborais das/dos trabalhadoras/es migrantes, visando mais sindicalizadas/os e mais delegadas/os oriundos das comunidades imigrantes

TRABALHADOR E TRABALHADORA IMIGRANTE

VOCÊ TEM DIREITOS LABORAIS E SOCIAIS E TEM DIREITO DE ESTAR LEGALIZADO EM PORTUGAL!

- ▶ VOCÊ TEM DIREITO AO SALÁRIO ESTABELECIDO NA LEI OU NO CONTRATO COLECTIVO DE TRABALHO DO SEU SECTOR.
- ▶ VOCÊ TEM DIREITO A UM HORÁRIO DE TRABALHO LEGAL MÁXIMO DE 40 HORAS POR SEMANA.
- ▶ VOCÊ TEM DIREITO A CONDIÇÕES DE SAÚDE E SEGURANÇA NO TRABALHO.
- ▶ VOCÊ TEM DIREITO AO ACESSO À PROTECÇÃO SOCIAL E AO SERVIÇO NACIONAL DE SAÚDE.
- ▶ VOCÊ TEM DIREITO A SER SINDICALIZADO E A PARTICIPAR NAS ACÇÕES SINDICAIS.

Você tem o direito de estar legalizado em Portugal!

Participe no projecto da CGTP-IN para a sensibilização e reforço da sindicalização dos trabalhadores imigrantes!

Informe-se no sindicato da CGTP-IN

Contacto:
Departamento Migrações da CGTP-IN
Rua Victor Cordon, n.º 1, 2.º, 1249-102 Lisboa
Telefone geral: 213 236 500
Telefone directo: 213 236 518 ou 213 236 668
E-mail: cgtp@cgtp.pt

PARA DEFENDER OS DIREITOS E OS SALÁRIOS!

REFORÇAR A SINDICALIZAÇÃO DOS TRABALHADORES IMIGRANTES!

Seminários
Manual de Formação
Boletim “Integrar”

No quadro do projecto POISE: ACTIVIDADE 6
Sensibilização e reforço da sindicalização dos trabalhadores de países terceiros

POISE
PORTUGAL 2020
European Union

on the importance of their trade union involvement. Seminars were always attended by trade union cadres and elected officials from different sectors of Regional Trades Councils, as follows: North: Porto/Braga/Viana do Castelo and Vila Real; Centre – Coastal Area: Coimbra/Aveiro/Leiria; Centre – Interior: Guarda / Castelo Branco/Viseu; Greater Lisbon: Lisboa/Setúbal/Santarém; Alentejo: Beja/Évora/Portalegre; Algarve/Faro.

The participants' contributions were decisive to address concrete cases and confirm situations of work exploitation and others felt by migrant workers. In this Newsletter we publish several testimonies that reinforce the importance of better knowing this reality, for more efficient action.

We published the **Guide in Support of Trade Union Work**, which was the basis to orient these Seminars but also for future awareness-raising actions. It is a guide to support trade union action with migrant workers, especially for Portuguese trade unionist, but not only! The Guide intends to foster trade union interaction in favour of migrant workers from the third countries and support Seminars and other forms of training on this subject in all trade unions.

This is why its contents have a first part containing the CGTP-IN views on immigrants, starting with a presentation of the social, economic and labour situation of migrant workers, with qualitative statistics, positions and guidelines of the CGTP-IN and its work on migrations since its outstart. The second part addresses and presents the Portuguese immigration legislation, with questions and answers around 64 concrete problems.

Thousands of flyers were distributed, to disseminate this Project and sensitise migrant workers, in four major languages (Portuguese, English, Ukrainian and French), spoken by the majority of migrant workers from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe: This Flyer aimed especially at introducing the Project, its activities, venues and calendar. On the other hand, it also briefly informed immigrants on their several rights and encourage them to be informed and involved in trade union action. We know that after the Seminars, leaflets were very useful. And to complete this dissemination and sensitising, we distributed hundreds of **Posters named “Defending rights and Salaries”**, in the same four languages of the flyers. This was put up inside companies and public areas accessible to the Unions, thus encouraging the immigrants and the Portuguese to be informed and to participate.

Finally, three **INTEGRAR Newsletters, published in the same four languages**, continued the Newsletter published by the previous Project as a way of articulating and informing about all the activities of the CGTP-IN and its member Unions for migrant workers. We want to spread information for the promotion of migrant workers' better integration in the labour market and in the Portuguese society. Such as testimonies, news, information, legislation data, statistics and activities. The first INTEGRAR Newsletter (Nº 1 – Second Series) was published in a paper format and in thousands. It was already distributed. Nºs 2 and 3, which you are currently reading, will be published digitally and accessible online at the CGTP-IN website.

*Giorgio Casula
Technical Project Manager
Department of Migration / April 30, 2019*

TESTIMONY OF LIBÉRIO DOMINGUES – Coordinator of USL – Lisbon Trades Council IMMIGRANTS AT WORK AND TRADE UNION ACTION



The Lisbon Trades Council is CGTP-IN's largest regional trade union structure, covering the national territory with the largest number of immigrants. Over 40% of the employed residents and half of the foreign workers live and work in the Lisbon district. Therefore this is necessarily a subject which is among the work and trade union priorities of the USL.

In a context in which the initial motives to enter our country are diverse and in which there is an increase in cases where the reason for migrating is not directly connected with economic motives (students, family reunion ...), the truth is that the permanence of these citizens ends up being directly related with the economy and the labour market.

In this respect, we have to mention that not only migrant workers' participation in the labour market in Portugal is high, but also that the employment rate of the foreign population is higher than that of the nationals (confirming that immigration in our country continues being strongly marked by work motives). Therefore, "work" has been and is a fundamental structure for the integration of those who seek our country in search of better living conditions.

Nevertheless, we also know that the insertion of migrant workers (particularly from the so-called third countries) is normally more fragile, more precarious, more unprotected, with lower pay, more vulnerable and more dependent from the economic context. No surprise that, despite working and contributing (much more than they earn) for our country's social insurance and welfare system, foreign citizens (namely those from outside the EU) are under higher poverty and social exclusion risks than our nationals.

The model prevailing until now in our country (marked by irregular entry; followed by a shorter or longer period of clandestine insertion in the labour market and after by a late regularisation process which, although formally solving the problem, does not avoid the situation of disadvantage at work) together with bureaucratic obstacles and delays in regularisation, all of them contributing to maintain and perpetuate exploitation and the vicious circle of illegality. This is why it is so important the existence of laws for the foreigners that help regularisation instead of hampering it. We must wait and see how recently approved laws will be applied (apparently they will simplify the procedures).

We live a moment in which immigration is again rising in our country. In the years of stronger economic downturn, the denominated crisis years and of the troika intervention, we saw not only immigrants abandon our country, but also our nationals, who were forced to emigrate.

So the last years had negative migration balances (more exits than entries), a situation which is now being reversed. Therefore, since 2016, immigration to Portugal is growing again and in 2017 the migration balance became positive again.

Together with the numerical increase, we saw in the last years a more diverse kind of migration, now becoming more complex. Now we see a growth in communities until now virtually absent from our country: we are speaking of China (currently the 5th largest community in Portugal), of India, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, etc.

This diversity sets even more demanding challenges for unions to integrate migrant workers, starting with more difficult communication. They are men and women who arrive in search of better living conditions. They need to be welcomed and integrated in terms of jobs, health, education, living conditions, housing, civic and political participation. In these various dimensions, it is not a coincidence that jobs come first! Integration at work is one of the most structural and stronger dimensions of the integration of migrant citizens in the host societies.

Trade Unions must show themselves and immediately welcome foreign workers. And, as we always insist, migrant workers' rights are the same as those of all workers. A working migrant, even in an irregular situation, is always a worker and trade unions must always expose violations and try to help regularise their situation.

In a world of growing labour exploitation with stronger extremist and xenophobic discourses, where the right-wing is growing ground, trade unions play a crucial role in building solidarities, by involving foreign workers in the trade union organisation.

This is a struggle to which the Unions and the Lisbon Trades Council never turn their back, on the contrary. This is the struggle of all times of our trade union movement, although we know that we are still far from responding adequately. This is why we need spaces for reflection like these, that help us know the reality in depth, for a more efficient intervention.

Libério Domingues
USL Coordinator



Testimony of STAD - Porters, Private Security, Domestic Cleaners and Allied Trades Workers' Union



In my view, the feeling prevailing on the presence of immigrants in Portugal is good in general terms and the vast majority of the Portuguese feel quite comfortable with their presence. In their large majority, immigrants are well integrated in society and in the work places.

In the sector of Industrial Cleaning, and in others represented by STAD, as in Private Security, migrant workers have been, for many years, well integrated and accepted in the work places. They fight for a better life, side by side with all the workers and this is why united we are stronger. And because our struggle is common, when we gain new rights they are applied to all without discrimination, immigrants or not. Only in this way we prevent the employers from blackmailing or frightening the workers.

However, in the Industrial Cleaning sector the situation is worrying, without collective bargaining in the last 15 years, rights being reduced, and only being paid the statutory minimum wage, due to the absence of collective bargaining. Despite this, salaries are equal for all - migrants and nationals – and this is why we fight the employers, as shown by the 2 nationwide struggles in 2018.

STAD's actions in the work places is permanent, with workers' assemblies often attended by migrant workers. Because we speak alike to both migrants and nationals, they all trust the Union and our leaders and they actively participate in the life of the Union.

This active participation is translated into their election as shop stewards, many of them immigrants or immigrants' children, but also as national office - bearers, members of the Board or of the General Assembly. Immigrants bear offices at all levels of our Union.

Our response to both immigrants and nationals is always the same. However, we do have some specific cases. When some employers do not provide the contract documents for migrants to go to the SEF and regularise their situation, our Union issues a Declaration proving that the worker is our member and we accompany the worker in the interview with the SEF. In this way, the worker does not feel being alone.

The scourge of war forces many people to leave their countries of birth and their homes, trying to escape from a life of hunger and misery. Therefore, if a country is capable of welcoming those people, it must do it, in my opinion. Reason why I agree with our country receiving them. Solidarity is deeds and not words.

Vivalda Silva
National Coordinator of STAD

TESTIMONY OF DANIEL BERNARDO, FROM SINTAB - BEJA



My name is Daniel Bernardo and I am an elected trade union official of SINTAB – Portuguese Trade Union of Agriculture, Food, Beverages and Tobacco. With SINTAB’s trade union work, it is possible to verify that, in the last years, the immigrant population has significantly grown in the Odemira municipality, which is part of the Beja district, which currently has people of more than thirty nationalities working in agriculture.

The majority are immigrants from Thailand, India, Bangladesh and Nepal, among other, and more recently Cuban immigrants are also arriving. Most of the farming work is seasonal, bringing difficulties to career development and salaries and also showing job precariousness growth. And even extension decrees of Collective Agreements are enhancing those situations.

The Intercultural Department of the Odemira Town Council is working in cooperation with other public authorities and local companies to develop an information Toolkit with information on welcoming and informing immigrants on their rights and duties, on the procedures of regularisation in Portugal, and on access to health and social security, among other. This Kit is distributed in different languages.

It is sometimes difficult to unionise immigrants, due to language differences, fear of employers’ retaliation, pressure at work and lack of information about trade unions. Despite this, in one particular company, the SINTAB Union was able to unionise 28 Thai immigrants. After this, those workers confronted their employers with illegal measures regarding their rights. As a result of this action, workers were strongly pressurised by the employer and by the agency that placed them in Portugal, to abandon their SINTAB membership immediately, otherwise they would be dismissed.

Immigrants’ housing is often inadequate in terms of hygiene and living conditions. Among other situations, I can say that immigrants often sleep in bunk beds, piled up in containers, inside the company premises or in houses where 8 or more people share two bedrooms.

In order to fight these situations, the Union is developing an intense dissemination of information documents, in Portuguese and in English, to improve the situation and the awareness of immigrants on their labour rights and on the advantage of being a SINTAB member. We also encourage workers to expose situations of discrimination, moral harassment and slavery, among other illegal deeds, and we help them acting upon these cases.

TESTIMONY OF PAULO COSTA , MIGRANT WORKER AND ELECTED TRADE UNION OFFICIAL

I consider Brazilian immigrants are well integrated in Portugal, enjoying all social benefits available in the country, as well as access of their children to education and training in the schools of their area of residence. Immigrants who already came with some education and training were given an equivalence of that education and were able to enter the labour market.

In my job, as a private security worker, I know many workers who are integrated in this same job and we all enjoy the same rights as the Portuguese nationals. We are equal workers, immigrants or not.

In Private Security, the workers' situation is the same for everyone, with equal rights. This industry is labour-intensive, with a growing number of migrant workers and very few nationals. The challenges, the duties and the rights of migrants are the same as those of the Portuguese nationals.

In our Sector's Collective Labour Agreement – signed at the end of 2018 - a very important clause for our sector and for migrant workers was negotiated. It was Clause Nº14, regarding the succession of work locations. When a company leaves the location and a new one takes over, the new company is obliged to keep all the workers, who maintain all their previous rights. This Clause means that workers are no longer precarious, on short-term contracts, and that they become much more protected in their rights and salaries. This applies to both migrant and national workers.

*Paulo Costa
Elected official of STAD - Porters, Private Security,
Domestic Cleaners and Allied Workers' Union*



TESTIMONY OF PAULO RODRIGUES, FROM SIESI – SOUTHERN AND ISLANDS' ELECTRICAL WORKERS' UNION



Paulo is a Cape Verde original who came to Portugal at the age of 11. Nowadays he is an elected trade union official of SIESI and also of the National Sector Trade Union Federation – the FIEQUIMETAL, as well as of the Lisbon Trades Council. Below his testimony on the reality of migrant workers in Portugal.

“ Regarding social integration, I believe housing is crucial for immigrants’ social inclusion, given the fact that there is a direct link between your place of residence and the standards of living of a person in society. In education, migrant pupils’ rate of school failure and early school leaving clearly demonstrate some of the shortcomings that disturb the educational path of immigrants in Portugal.

Regarding economic integration during the last decade, the financial balance of social security regarding immigrant workers was positive. Although migrant workers’ social security contributions have been decreasing, they were not affected by the economic crisis, nor by the need to support them in terms of social protection. In a context of economic crisis and of increased unemployment, and if we count the contributions of immigrants to social security and then deduct the amounts paid to them in social protection, we still have a positive balance. Immigration proves to be necessary to counterbalance the effect of ageing population in social security, thus contributing to the relative relief of the social security system and to its sustainability.

In terms of cultural integration, the Portuguese society is welcoming a growing number of migrants from different corners of the world, for whom Portuguese is not their mother tongue. Portugal is therefore facing new challenges of language and culture diversity. Thus, we believe it essential and a challenge to be sensitive to linguistic and cultural pluralism.

Regarding labour rights, we must say that in Portugal one of the most discussed labour issues is the weak aid migrants feel they get concerning labour issues and their weak membership of trade unions, as well as the scarce number of specific trade union demands concerning migrant workers. It is also crucial to fight the dark side of labour exploitation, as well as promoting trade unionism. For example, at the Legrand Elétrica company, we are facing uncertain contract links, with migrants working for temporary agencies and after many years of work still not having open-ended contracts.

Some comments on trade union action on behalf of migrant workers

Migrant workers are often told that Trade Unions are only for the Portuguese nationals, so that they are not acquainted with their rights. So we must clarify that Unions are for everyone. Then we give examples that, in other industries, the same was happening until migrants started to join the Union. After this, the employers realised that workers became aware of their rights and workers started to use them.

An example was when a company (Call-Centre) management prohibited a trade union assembly inside the company premises. This was a real “key test” in which workers might lose their courage and strength to attend the assembly outside, in the street, outside the company gate. But even in the street, with rain and cold the assembly took place. We must highly praise the workers’ attitude who, under threat that the assembly time would be deducted from their wages, came to the assembly in even larger numbers, showing the employers that they were in favour of trade union action. Nonetheless, their wages were partially cut, but later paid back, as a result of a powerful trade union struggle.

The more employers try to prevent trade union action, the more migrant workers realise the importance of joining a Union and become part of a trade union family that helps them in terms of their social and labour rights.

Finally, another example in a Call-Centre working for EDP (Electricity of Portugal). Workers were not entitled to their paternity/maternity rights, nor to the Portuguese public holidays, for the simple fact of being Argentinian, Cuban, Brazilian or Mexican. They were being forced to only be entitled to the public holidays of the countries from which they received the phone calls.

After the Union’s intervention, they started enjoying their days off in accordance with the Portuguese calendar.”

Paulo Rodrigues - SIESI

[continued from page 02]

In order to disseminate the Project information, we produced two means of communication. The first one being a flyer in A4 format for distribution in the workplace containing the description and aims of the Project, the venues of the Awareness Raising Seminars, and synthetic information of the core immigrants’ rights. This flyer was published in four languages; Portuguese, French, English and Ukrainian. The other project communication tool was the publishing of a A3 poster, to be put up in the workplace, also in four languages, containing the same information,

Finally, the last project output was the publishing of the “INTEGRAR” newsletter. This is the CGTP-In publication for trade union action among immigrants and is the specific tool for publishing news on immigration and disseminate in our movement our trade union action in this area of work. The “INTEGRAR” was also published in the four working languages.

Actually, this “INTEGRAR” edition mirrors its purpose, it includes testimonies of five trade union officials who attended the Seminars (conveying their vision and outlook of their organisations on Immigration) as well as articles in the social and labour realities of immigration, and the Project

development. The contents of this present edition help us understand the essence of the newsletter and its relevance for CGTP-In’s work with migrant workers.

When, in the beginning of this article, we classified our project as a success story it was not an exercise of self-praise, we are conscious of the work carried out, and strongly aware that a lot remains to be done! In fact, this was the challenge set out to CGTP-IN by those who attended the Seminars, and this is the challenge we must continue responding to!

Carlos Trindade
Head of the CGTP-IN - Department of Migration

CGTP
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