

REPORT

JANUARY 2023

CITIZEN ASSEMBLY

HOW TO ENSURE THE IMPERATIVE OF HOSPITALITY IN EQUALITY?



Citizen Assembly 2022 Poster

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Citizen Assembly: Conclusions and Recommendations

Forum Demos and the Municipality of Valongo, in collaboration with European Alternatives, organized a Citizen's Assembly, between April 22nd and 23rd, in the Cultural Forum of Ermesinde. This assembly was attended by 20 Portuguese non-governmental associations and civil society activists. The initiative was part of the TRANSEUROPA 2022 Festival - an initiative of European Alternatives -, which took place in Porto and Valongo, between April 20th and 25th. In this assembly, we seek to explore the issues of diversity, hospitality, equity and fundamental rights in Portugal and in the European Union.

The Citizen's Assembly was an involvement and communication initiative that sought to start from associations and activists working on the rights of socially discriminated people and communities and Portuguese minorities, and aimed to address the issue of guaranteeing rights on three levels: local, national, and European.

Starting from the particular Portuguese context, a mirror of the many European social and cultural contexts, the assembly brought together people who work and/or belong to three major socially discriminated communities in Portugal, namely, the Afro-descendant communities, the Roma communities, and the immigrant and refugee communities.

To accomplish this goal, three working groups were created between April 22 and 23, each consisting of citizens who are members of these communities or citizens who work directly with issues related to the three different communities, respectively. On April 23, these groups met in a plenary session to present the groups' discussion and suggestions.

Among these participants, 20 Portuguese NGOs were represented, namely, ACMET, ADEIMA, Association of African Students in Vila Real, Association for Integration, Soutelo's Social Center, CIVITAS Braga, Costume Colossal, Portuguese Red Cross - Gondomar/Valongo, DJASS, Forum Refúgio, KALINA, LAR, Mén-non, Moinho da Juventude, Brazilian Women's Movement, NEA, Ribalta Ambição, SOS Racism, TANE-TIMOR and UNA - Black Union of Arts.

Important for the selection of participants was the adoption of a methodology, created from scratch by some of the future Assembly participants, which aimed to ensure parity of gender, schooling, region, class, and age, aware of the cumulative and intersectional inequalities that guide discussions on race and social discrimination.

The Assembly is part of the Solidarity Assemblies project, created by the Citizens Take Over Europe coalition, based on a new way of doing politics that seeks to involve citizens horizontally, creating platforms based on direct participation in public policy-making.

It was based, therefore, on the principles of participatory democracy and its objective was not only the mere listening, but the elaboration of proposals on national and European public policies. One of the fundamental questions thought up and raised during the Assembly was, precisely, that the discourses and public policies on the rights of minorities and socially discriminated communities, and on the cultural diversity that should guide European societies, should be constructed from the people who make up this diversity and who have been marginalized, historically, from public bodies in decision-making.

Essential for the assembly was the deconstruction of Portuguese Luso tropicalist narratives, and to build the bases for transversal projects of good practices in the treatment of difference and the protection of human rights. With regard to the European dimension, one of the issues raised is that, although there is an institutional framework that guarantees a judicial character to the rights mapped out in the EU Charter of Human Rights, it is much less binding than would be desirable in terms of effectiveness.

The Assembly was also part of the debate launched by the Conference on the Future of Europe, falling under the topic "Values and rights, rule of law, security", but not limited to it. The assembly intended, therefore, to start from local and national experiences for a project that could define the future of Europe as a society of the future, characterized by diversity, the guarantee of equal rights and access to them, paying particular attention to socially discriminated communities and minorities and their inclusion not only in consultation processes, but also in decision-making processes. The aim was to understand what the EU should do to protect these rights and how it can include local experiences in a European policy.

This assembly, of 42 people, was continued online during the months following the physical assembly and is now in a position to present this report with the conclusions and recommendations specific to each group and general in the defense and guarantee of rights.

This Citizen's Assembly Report compiles the conclusions about the identified social problems and the recommendations of the three working groups, which seek to respond to these problems. These were prepared by the rapporteurs appointed by each group (Alexander Kweh, Susana Silveira, Safira Nancy and Lissa Bulu) in conjunction with the respective facilitators (Inês Granja, Joana Cabral and Vitor Barros). The synthesis of the conclusions and recommendations of this report was prepared by Jéssica Moreira.

The work of the three groups contributes to the foundation of a process of reparation and the construction of an inclusive, open, and anti-racist society, and thus to the construction of a multicultural society that protects fundamental rights and is guided by the imperative of hospitality.

Seven points for the future

The conclusions and recommendations resulting from the work developed by each group are the core of the intervention of this initiative and can be thought of as

integrative and integrated among themselves; therefore, they are summarized in seven fundamental points, agreed upon in meetings after the April Assembly:

1. Redefining education, national narratives and educational policies. Based on the belief in education as a fundamental structure for the redefinition of narratives, the empowerment of people and the development of societies, this should be the cornerstone in the construction of a true representativeness of African descendent communities, gypsies, immigrants and refugees, which starts from the root causes of social and institutional forms of discrimination and redefines the role of communities in decision-making bodies. It is necessary, in this context, to include racialized people in the construction of educational policies, in the construction of textbooks and in the bodies of education in Portugal and to popularize non-Eurocentric, anti-colonial and anti-racist education in schools and in the public space. It is also a structural revision of textbooks
- a revision that does not seek to negate the current programs and history, but that introduces new points of view and establishes a relationship of dialogue and reparation, involving and protagonizing all the inheritors of this history and culture.
2. Decolonizing institutions based on representation that should also be institutional, as well as diversified. The integration and representativeness of communities in public decision-making bodies - whether local, national, or European - is therefore necessary. This representativeness should, in a first instance, be guaranteed through quotas, which aim to level out the inequalities that are found at the outset. Although quotas may force an integration that may not be truly guaranteed, more and better support in preparing for the professions could mitigate this effect - since people from the communities, when in positions of access to the professions, are usually obliged, when possible, to conceal their ethno-racial identity. Under these leveling conditions, the integration of racialized people in underprivileged positions into public decision-making bodies would diversify the monochromatic aspect of institutions and foster a "sense of belonging" in communities and in the population at large, reconstructing narratives from a place of speech and belonging of a population patch that is and has always been part of the history and fabric of the nation.
3. Generalize the fight against inequality, making the local, national and supranational levels (including the European level) more flexible. As part of this goal, it is necessary to restructure and reformulate data collection, such as censuses, which promote - and often mask - structural inequalities. In fact, we need ethnic and racial data collection that does not invisibilize people belonging to different communities and discriminated groups, that allows the implementation of quotas, and that has conscious data protection policies and protects communities from possible persecution and reprisals.
- policies and others.
4. Design and reform integration projects, which should be based on the principle of difference. These projects should be sustained by giving autonomy to the people of the communities, namely through Portuguese language programs for newcomers and by strengthening the relations between communities and social and power organs. The intervention projects

are based on biased diagnoses and on quantity rather than quality. In this regard, it is necessary to institute and standardize quality criteria and de-hierarchize the traditional relationships between supposed "donors" and "recipients".

At a local level, there is a need for the enhancement of the figure of the intercultural mediator, who should serve as a neutral (but not neutralized) voice for racialized communities, and whose functions should be independent and extended within municipal bodies - notably within town halls and schools. These mediators should serve as points of communication and facilitation, not as substitutes for a representation of social bodies at all levels.

5. To combat spatial segregation, represented by the social housing estates and the impoverished fabric of the suburbs of large cities (of particular relevance in the city of Lisbon) which is composed, for the most part, of people from African descent and gypsy communities and by immigrants and refugees. To achieve this, it is necessary to break cycles of poverty and structural exclusion that shape the lives of people in these communities and remake the urban fabric.
6. Openly address the police violence suffered by people from racialized communities, which is a recurring practice that destroys the physical and moral integrity of its victims. This violence must be recognized as spatially delimited and economically and racially based.
7. De-racialize public health, recognizing the position of increased vulnerability of black and gypsy women. For this, it is necessary to review the very relations between doctors and patients, which are culturally based.

Jéssica Moreira (Forum Demos)

Conclusions and Recommendations by Working Group

Immigrants and Refugees

Since the 1980s, Portugal has predominantly become a country of immigration. According to data from INE, published in 2022, a little over 12% of the residents in Portugal, between the ages of 16 and 74, are first generation immigrants or descendants of immigrants, and Portuguese is the language most spoken by them. And, according to the Observatory of Migrations, the national origin of the immigrants is mainly, in order of numerical relevance, Brazil, Cape Verde, Romania, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, China, France, Italy, Angola, and Guinea-Bissau. The social implications are diverse, namely demographic, economic and cultural.

The discussion that took place over the two days of the Citizen's Assembly reflected these multiple issues. It highlighted, above all, the increasingly less monocultural condition enhanced by growing migration flows, and the challenges associated with it. The needs identified by the participants touched, among other issues: the teaching of the Portuguese language in the integration process, training for intercultural communication, historical narratives and the language used by the media and politicians, and cultural mediation. Participants also raised concerns about diversity education policies in public education and awareness policies for immigrants' access to health care. In the discussions of the working group, the major and perhaps most consensual concerns were those related to the critical perspective in the teaching of topics such as colonialism and the importance of raising awareness in society for the protection of cultural diversity. On the other hand, among the less consensual aspects is the management of historical narratives in their relationship with the cultural heritage present in the public space.

The following is the set of conclusions and recommendations of this working group:

1_Conclusion: Lack of an integration program on a national scale. Although there are measures at the local level, the same is not true at the national level. The same occurs with the teaching of Portuguese to migrants and refugees, which is very diverse throughout the territory, depending on the greater or lesser initiative of municipalities and the voluntarism of citizens and civil society organizations. Language teaching accelerates citizens' autonomy and brings them and the host society closer together.

Recommendation: Create a national integration program with long-term goals, which prioritizes the teaching of the Portuguese language, by public schools in cooperation with other entities, as a way to stimulate autonomy, inclusion and cooperation between beneficiaries and the host society.

2_ Conclusion: Poor recognition of academic qualifications of all those who want to continue studying and working. The process is lengthy, costly, and often with negative outcomes. Migrants are often deterred by the inefficiency of the process.

Recommendation: Simplify and extend the recognition of migrants' academic qualifications.

3_ Conclusion: Insufficient sensitivity to cultural diversity on the part of different social sectors - different areas of the public sector (schools, hospitals, courts), media, political parties, civil society organizations.

Recommendation: Implement socio-educational policies that accompany the challenges posed by cultural diversity to contemporary society directed at different spheres of the host society, as well as promote training for public administration, courts, and the media on issues such as preventing hate speech, police violence, and other forms of violence and discrimination, intersectionality, intercultural communication, and inclusive justice.

4_ Conclusion: Persistence of historical and cultural knowledge narratives marked by the colonizing perspective.

Recommendation: Develop an informed and broadened reflection in civil society about the colonial period, from the perspective of decolonization and guided by human rights (reflect on the facts and meaning of history, as well as on the symbolic marks that we share and that have built our national cultural identity, the presence of new symbols guided by contemporary principles of human rights and also, among other issues, the inventory and return of original works of art from the former colonies and historical reparation.

5_ Conclusion: Reduced access to political rights by non-nationals and nationals with migrant background and reduced interest and involvement of migrant populations in Portugal in exercising political rights at local and national level. Reduced participation in party life. Persistence of associationism as a form of intervention in public life.

Recommendation: Make more flexible and broaden the criteria for access to rights and the exercise of political rights and introduce into public debate the importance of electoral participation of migrant communities in Portugal, as well as their representativeness in local and national political bodies.

6_ Conclusion: Reduced effectiveness of public agencies aimed at informing migrants of their rights and of those responsible for documentation and reception of migrants.

Recommendation: Improve the functioning of the public bodies destined to legalize the stay of foreigners and to take care of their reception, and increase the articulation between the different levels (local and national) and sectors (public and private).

7_ Conclusion: Reduced number of cultural mediators in relation to the needs and insufficient training of the mediators

Recommendation: Increase the number of cultural mediators and develop specialized training, thinking about creating a relationship and dialogue with people with very diverse characteristics and needs.

8_ Conclusion: Difficulties in entering and maintaining the labor market.

Recommendation: Develop in IIEFP a training for migrants and refugees to prepare them to enter the labor market, learn the basics of interviewing and writing their CV. At the same time, in the same environment, develop training for employers aimed at promoting intercultural skills (communication, empathy, languages...).

9_ Conclusion: Lengthy and inefficient processes associated with the legalization of migrants.

Recommendation: Debureaucratize the legalization process for migrants and shorten the time it takes to complete the naturalization process.

10_ Conclusion: Persistence of forced and slave labor, especially in the interior of the country.

Recommendation: Supervise companies, including recruitment companies.

11_ Conclusion: Inexistence of official state sites in languages other than Portuguese, which often hinders autonomous management.

Recommendation: Translate the official Portuguese state websites into Portuguese, English, and French.

Gypsy Communities

1. About integration policies and projects

It is essential to move beyond integrationist and assimilative policies that preach a homogenizing equality, to build inclusive policies that highlight the principles of equity and value, cultivate, and celebrate diversity, rather than dissolve it. There is sometimes talk of a universalistic equality "as if diversity is bad and equality is good."

Although it cannot be generalized, many projects start from a position of supremacy and paternalism, do not involve people from the communities, and are thought "from for", not "with". Some projects become inconsequential because they start from a false or biased diagnosis and don't get to the real problems, are too short-lived, and are implemented by untrained people with the sensitivity and legitimacy to work with communities. They often sin by prescribing the same solutions for very different communities and do not respect the real needs and identities. The assessment and data collection tools are often offensive and maladjusted because they are based on majority criteria that do not apply to the life and customs of the communities (e.g., Are you married? Are you working?).

Most funding is allocated on the basis of criteria of quantity of beneficiaries rather than quality of measures. Many projects get systematic funding by counting many users/beneficiaries, regardless of the actual work they do and the quality of it. Many associations and organizations recruit people for funded training for adult education, but do not take responsibility for actually training and promoting skills. Many people see degrees awarded without the opportunity to learn to read and write.

Recommendations: (1) the work with communities must be continued and carried out by and with people from the communities; (2) projects must be evaluated by people from the communities and must be properly monitored and supervised.

2. Representation and participation

There is a huge lack of opportunities for representation and participation because it is assumed that Roma people are not empowered to represent themselves. Academic training is valued at the expense of the knowledge, cultural legitimacy, and involvement of people of one's own ethnicity. These policies of segregation of participation take away place of speech and protagonism, wasting opportunities for inclusion and for making narratives plural. In this way they also serve to maintain the *status quo* and protect places of privilege and power. The fact that people from the majority society often occupy these positions allows them to capture funding and generate

employment for themselves, instrumentalizing the promotion of human rights and integration, without favoring the communities.

Although communities value the role of allies, many - and often - work for the communities, but do not defend them, their needs, rights and demands in a public way and with the instances of political power.

Recommendation: ensure representativeness, through quotas, and create guidelines for working with racialized and minority communities to evaluate projects and monitor their implementation and assess actual impacts.

3. About prejudice and discrimination

People are systematically victims of offenses or disqualifying and unequal treatment, based on generalizations about their occupations ("they don't work", they only know how to "sell at the fair"), their family configurations ("you must have many siblings..."), where they live and with whom they live. Discrimination and prejudice are felt across the board in health, via social service technicians, and in schools, which distances people from these services, resulting in less health and less life expectancy (about 15 years less than the majority population), less employment, less education.

Prejudice and discrimination is all too often in schools and workplaces, in part of the technicians, who are the interface for social protection or in intervention projects and programs. Children are often discriminated against in the classroom by teachers. In order to seek work, it is necessary to hide identity and to face in silence the offenses to community and identity. If the identity is assumed the discrimination manifests itself ostentatiously with excuses based on the discourse of exception ("but you don't look like a gypsy").

The media contribute to promote imaginaries about the criminality of the Roma communities. They do not protect the image of the culture, but rather seek images that are allusive to ethnicity and that convey prejudices and stereotypes.

Recommendation on education on cultural diversity and combating ethnic and anti-Gypsyism: (1) There must be investment in promoting knowledge about Romani culture and history in schools and training for technicians and teachers. Training should be provided by people from the communities and educational manuals and programs should include this content and eliminate ethnicist imagery and language.

(2) It is essential to invest in the training of strategic audiences, in higher education, for magistrates, jurists, social service technicians, teachers, doctors, communication professionals, with the inclusion of chairs on cultural diversity and Romani history and culture.

4. Housing policies

The difficulty in the rental market is already known within the communities. The process for obtaining social housing is bureaucratic and inconsistent. It is essential to counter ghettoization and overcrowding and to insert into the urban fabric. Do not assume the intention of keeping the extended community all together. People prefer to be integrated into the urban fabric. The intention is only to maintain proximity to the immediate family.

Recommendation: insertion in the urban fabric has the advantage of promoting inclusion, facilitating relationships and access to school and employment. It is necessary to prepare the

people to a transition to urban life and in buildings. These measures are crucial to dismantle the cycle of poverty - ghettoization, school absenteeism, obstacles in access to employment.

5. Justice System

Law enforcement is biased, based on prejudices that lead people to be condemned for their ethnicity. Police harassment and excessive use of police force are serious problems. Access to justice and judicial protection is denied, people are deterred from filing complaints, and they are not properly protected as victims. The law, for example, on hate crimes and racial slurs is not enforced.

Recommendation: Creation of a Roma secretariat. Thinking about strategies and policies for the integration of Roma communities, would imply a Roma secretariat, rather than including community integration policies in a structure that deals with migration and therefore treats communities as if they were foreigners and migrants in their own country.

6. Censuses and quotas?

It is important to collect the data in order to make an effective diagnosis about the living conditions and the inequality and structural racism that affect the Roma and other racialized communities.

Recommendation: We need to control who collects (people from the communities) how they collect, who stores (the local associations) and who has access. Access should always be justified and data should only be provided after it has been anonymized.

Afrodescendants

On April 22 and 23, 2022, in the context of the European Alternatives festival, organized in Valongo - Ermesinde, a meeting took place where different groups participated with discussions on various topics, mainly related to issues of discrimination, everyday racism, police violence, racism at work, health, among others.

The group discussed issues related to Afro-descendants, addressing several topics, including: the issue of widespread everyday racism, structural racism (evident in official institutions), and concluded for the need to promote anti-racist education at different levels and in all sectors.

It was found, for example, that:

Textbooks, books and school programs (essentially the teaching of history) do not combat racism and do not promote an anti-racist education. Racism, colonialism and colonial heritage are linked.

Who sets educational policies? It was found that there is a lack of representation of people suffering from racism in the design of textbooks and curricula, educational policies and mediation in schools.

The lack of anti-racist education has an impact on labor relations and the labor market and employment, and this is one of the fundamental reasons for the racialization of social roles (less skilled jobs for the "racialized" and skilled jobs for the "racialized as white").

Structural racism: This is visible in the limited access of African descendants to higher education. As a rule, they are immediately directed to vocational education, which limits their room for maneuver to ascend socially, to obtain more qualified employment positions, and to break cycles of poverty and structural inequality.

It found the existence of obstetric violence against African descendant women who complain of discriminatory treatment by hospitals. Considering the historical role that medicine has played in reducing melanodermic people to biology, used as guinea pigs for colonial medicine, especially in the field of gynecology. Still regarding this topic, despite the enormous social pressure, the idea that Afro-descendants do not have mental health problems is naturalized in society, because cultural racism seeks the mental health etiology of this social group in the supposed psychic weakness of the "black".

The second major topic discussed was the issue of housing. In this regard, it was found that Afro-descendants and migrants are in segregated neighborhoods, with few conditions of habitability; and where the abuse of police violence force is flagrant, practices that configure the existence of a state of exception (suspension of rights), especially in the territories that the Criminal Policy classifies as Sensitive Urban Areas (ZUS). In this sense, it was felt pertinent to consider the need to promote access to housing, fairer housing policies, and to end spatial segregation through access to housing and new neighborhood rehabilitation policies. Specifically, it was understood that there should be concrete recommendations about the struggle of the residents of Cova da Moura for the right to a place, taking into account their community cohesion, historicity, that is, there is a well-rooted community and for this reason it is defended that there is an urgent need to resolve the land issue.

Another issue discussed was the abuse of force and violence practiced by the police institution. Police violence against Afro-descendants and racialized minorities is greater than for the rest of the population, configuring systematized practices of physical and psychological violence; the existence of a racial and criminal profile of young black/African/Afro-descendants that makes three young people from this social group classified as potentially dangerous, euphemistically called "gangs", being stopped and searched in public, which demonstrates the existence of institutionalized racism in the police force. This violence is not disconnected from discrimination, structural racism, and the perception that Portuguese society has about people of other origins. In short, these people are completely removed from the social imaginary since the official narrative continues to preach a distorted vision of history that continues to be founded on the identity fundamentalism that emerged from European modernity.

From the discussion it was understood to suggest the following recommendations:

Promote anti-racist education in all sectors: in school (by reforming school curricula, history teaching, and realizing how the legacies of colonialism still shape thought structures about contemporary racism today); in the media (with advertisements, educational ads, and examples of anti-racist behavior, have representation of African descendants in the media in central and visibility roles).

To combat structural racism it is necessary to create policies of effective representativeness: it is mandatory to have in all public institutions representatives of racialized and discriminated minorities; that Afro-descendants and representatives of other minorities participate in the design of educational programs and in the definition of public policies in order to decolonize knowledge and know-how. That decision-making groups and sectors have representation of these subalternized and discriminated groups; promote access to higher education.

Promote policies that end spatial segregation and facilitate fair access to housing.

We also believe that the Commission for Equality and Against Racial Discrimination, a specialized body for combating racial discrimination, should be independent, that is, its supervision should be given to civil society rather than to the Council of Ministers.

We also believe that there should be a policy of regularizing all immigrants and giving them the right to vote in legislative elections.

Considering the impact that racism has on social, affective, and psychological life, it becomes urgent to create policies to promote well-being and mental health.

Considering the construction of the Cova da Moura neighborhood as a collective historical heritage, it is necessary to promote articulation between the central and local authorities and the inhabitants with the aim of resolving the land issue, that is, the land issue that has been absent from the discussion in recent decades.

Considering that the majority of the prison population in Portugal are racialized, minority and poor people, it is necessary to create an independent commission to investigate the torture, abuse, overcrowding and deaths that have occurred over the years in prisons.

List of citizens participating in the Citizen's Assembly

Immigrants and Refugees

Afolabi Aderemi Paul, Aldair Anhaia, Alexander Kpatue Kweh, Alina Dudco, Allan Barbosa, Alvaro Oleart, Cláudia Coelho, Cristina Bighettti, Daniel Braga, Gustavo Behr, Inês Granja, José Faria, Mubarak Hussein, Teresa Amorim

Gypsy Communities

Bruno Oliveira, Guiomar Sousa, Joana Cabral, Sónia Prudêncio, Susana Silveira, Tânia Rute Oliveira

Afrodescendants

Analissa Vicente, Aurora Almada e Santos, Carmen Gonçalves, Domingos Alberto, Dulce Gomes, Euclides Graça das Neves, Eunice Vaz, Flávio Zenun Almada, Igor Castro, João Figueiredo, Joice Contente, Olávio Silva, Rafaela Contente, Saphira Nancy, Víctor Barros