

FROM EMIGRATION TO IMMIGRATION: TOWARDS AN ASSESSEMENT OF IMMIGRATION LANGUAGE POLICIES IN PORTUGAL

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Portugal's linguistic landscape has, in the past few decades, undergone changes which reflect its socioeconomic evolution and present new challenges to the educational system. It is those changes and the consequences they had on educational policies in Portugal that we will attempt to examine in this paper.

1. The linguistic landscape in Portugal up to the 1980s

Due to the historical circumstances of its formation, the Portuguese political space has always presented a sharp ethno-cultural homogeneity and a strong linguistic unity. The Portuguese linguist Paiva Boléo¹ notes: «A person, even if lay in philological matters, who has travelled from the North to the South of Portugal and talked to the country people, cannot but be impressed by the exceptional linguistic homogeneity of the country and its scanty dialectal differentiation – unlike what happens in other countries, both Romance and Germanic speaking».

The glottophagic character of Portuguese, with its consequent present homogeneity, explains the fate of two linguistic minorities that have historically been present in the national territory: the Gypsy community, with its Romani language, and the Mirandese speaking community.

The Roma, already present in Gil Vicente's² gallery of social stereotypes, arrived in Portugal at an uncertain date, either towards the end of the 14th century or early in the following century. Like the Moors and the Jews, the Roma would soon adopt Portuguese as the contact language, keeping the Romani language restricted to the specific activities of their culture. Due to their socio-cultural characteristics, in particular the nomadic lifestyle of the majority of the Gypsy population, the Roma have always been marginal to the Portuguese society.

Today with an estimated current population of around 50 000 and a high level of sedentarization (82%, according to the *Obra Nacional da Pastoral dos Ciganos*, a Catholic organization which works with the Roma), this community is still the target of negative social representations and the object of a kind of social «invisibility», factors which have made integration difficult and have justified the scarcity of studies

¹ Manuel de Paiva Boléo & M. H. S. Silva, «O Mapa dos dialectos e falares de Portugal Continental», *Boletim de Filologia*, 20, 1961, p. 85 . Original quote: *Uma pessoa, mesmo alheia a assuntos filológicos, que haja percorrido Portugal de norte a sul e conversado com gente do povo, não pode deixar de ficar impressionada com a excepcional homogeneidade linguística do país e a sua escassa diferenciação dialectal – ao contrário do que sucede noutros países, quer de língua românica, quer germânica*. This and the following quotes from Portuguese were translated by the authors of this paper.

² Portuguese playwright, poet and goldsmith (1465-1536)

and the absence of ample and rigorous socio-demographic data. Only in the 90s do we find studies about school enrolment of Gypsy children, with data that reveal their weak school integration, especially in the higher levels of study.

Table 1. Evolution of the number of Roma students in the Basic and Secondary levels³

School year	1st Cycle		2nd Cycle		3rd Cycle		Secondary Education	
	Student total	Roma children	total	Roma children	total	Roma children	total	Roma children
1992/93	534388	4072	259256	156	370262	47	218153	-
1993/94	505178	4294	256028	167	383981	27	279894	-
1994/95	482446	4671	243910	210	391806	66	284913	4
1995/96	458576	4753	235894	259	344206	66	287179	12
1996/97	448691	5026	222297	327	342444	78	293884	22

Source: ACIME. 1998. *Relatório Igualdade e Inserção dos Ciganos*: p. 68.

Studies focusing on the Lisbon area in the late 90s⁴, but that can be extrapolated to the rest of the country, showed that, in this group, the population aged 16 and over was, for the most part, illiterate (only 49.7% could read and write) and that only 54% of the children between 6 and 15 years of age were enrolled in school.

The Roma community, though no longer a linguistic minority (with the exception of a recent immigrant contingent from the Eastern European countries) presents today a significant challenge for the Portuguese educational policies, in terms of school integration and formal learning of the Portuguese language.

The other speech community historically present in Portugal, Mirandese, is a particular case in the linguistic landscape. José Leite de Vasconcelos described it for the first time in the late 19th century.⁵ Its territory (500 km²) presently covers some rural areas in the county of Miranda do Douro, in the Trás-os-Montes province (North-eastern Portugal). Its linguistic specificities and its survival up to the first half of the 20th century may be explained, on one hand, by the close and lasting contact of its speakers with the territory of the former kingdom of Leon and with the speakers of Western Leonese and, on the other hand, by the centuries old economic and cultural isolation, due to almost inexistent road connections with the rest of the country. From

³ Carlos Jorge Sousa, *Políticas Educativas: O caso da Etnicidade Cigana*. URL: http://www.multiculturas.com/cjs-politicas_educativas.htm

⁴ Alda Gonçalves, Orlando Garcia & Pedro Barreto, *Tradição e prospectiva nos meandros da economia cigana: circuitos peri-económicos na Grande Lisboa*, Lisboa, ACIME, 2006, p. 17. Also available online, URL: <http://www.acidi.gov.pt/docs/Publicacoes/CIGANOS/Olhares/ciganos5.pdf>

⁵ Leite de Vasconcelos, «O Dialecto Mirandez», *O Penafidense*, 1882. Quoted in Roberto Ceolin, «Um enclave leonês na paisagem unitária da língua portuguesa», *Ianua. Revista Philologica Romanica*, Vol. 3, 2003, pp. 62-83. Available online. URL: http://www.romaniaminor.net/ianua/index2_en.htm

the second half of the 20th century on, the opening of better and more widespread roads, the increased exposure to Standard Portuguese through the radio and, later, via television and, more significantly still, the pressure of the Standard language through compulsory schooling, led to a change in the transmission patterns of the mother language and set the Mirandese language on the path to extinction.

However, the rise of a language revitalization movement during the final decades of the 20th century, led by the local intellectual elites and institutions and strongly supported by linguists of the Linguistics Centre of the University of Lisbon, led, in 1999, to the juridical recognition of Mirandese as one of the official languages of the Portuguese State⁶ and of the right (of the local children) to learn Mirandese within the public school system.

Today, the existing estimates (although with no reliable statistical support) point to a number of 12 000 speakers⁷, based on the assumption that, in a county with 8 449 inhabitants (1991 Census figures), 7 000 of them and around 5 000 emigrants from this area know the language. The lack of realism of the assumption that *to know (about) is to speak the language* and the exaggerated optimism of the estimates are revealed by the data from a 2001 questionnaire⁸: though 87.6% of those questioned asserted they *understood* Mirandese and 64.6% that they *spoke* Mirandese, the majority did not speak Mirandese with their children. The 45-to-64 age group is the one that least spoke it with the children. The rupture in the language transmission pattern does not seem thus to have been altered by the recognition of Mirandese as an official language. Law 7/99⁹ also does not seem to have resulted in the expansion of the few interaction domains in which Mirandese was used. Today Portuguese is encroaching even in those domains traditionally assigned to Mirandese: home, rural life and love. We see a clear cleavage in the proficiency levels: the younger generations, unlike the older ones, recognize their weak proficiency and the fact that «many of the children and young people from Mirandese homes only have a residual knowledge of Mirandese»¹⁰

The scarcity of sociolinguistic studies and the lack of reliable statistical data about the numbers of students learning Mirandese in the schools of Miranda do Douro after 1999 do not allow us, for the moment, to assess the efficacy of the legislative measures on the younger generations' bilingualism, the real results of the many actions promoted by local groups and the consequences of academia's renewed interest in the language¹¹.

⁶ Law n° 7/99 of January 29th

⁷ Ferreira, Manuela Barros, «A situação actual da língua mirandesa e o problema da delimitação histórica dos dialectos asturo-leoneses em Portugal», *Revista de Filología Románica*, Vol. 18, 2001, pp. 117- 136, available online, URL: <http://mirandes.no.sapo.pt/BEestudos2.html>

⁸ Inquiry into the use of Mirandese, coordinated by Maria do Céu Carvalho de Sousa, Quoted in Ceolin (2002, pp. 73-74).

⁹ Martins, Cristina. 2002. «A lei 7/99 de 29 de Janeiro: ANTES e DEPOIS», communication presented to the V Simpósio Internacional de Línguas Europeias e Legislações, quoted in <http://mirandes.no.sapo.pt/LMRenasc.html>

¹⁰ *ibidem*

¹¹ See M. Barros Ferreira «O Mirandês no Ano Europeu das Línguas», in M. H. Mateus(ed.), *Mais línguas, mais Europa: celebrar a diversidade linguística e cultural da Europa*, Lisboa: Colibri, pp. 35-

2. A changing landscape

A sharp ethno-cultural homogeneity and a strong linguistic unity are no longer defining traits of the Portuguese landscape. The profound socioeconomic changes of the second half of the 20th century led to the alteration of the status of Europe, as a whole, in the international immigration panorama. Having been for decades the main supplier of emigrants at the global level, Europe became, in a relatively short time, a major area of reception of immigrants.

Portugal accompanied this change, though with a significant time lag, explained by its particular historical context and specific political and economic circumstances. Two major periods can be seen in the migration flows: 1. From the 1960s to the 1990s, with Portugal playing the role of a traditional emigrant country; 2. from the 1990s to the present, in its new role of an immigration country.

The first period (as a source country for migratory flows) will not be dealt with in this paper. It will suffice to say that Portuguese emigration reached its peak in the 1960s and 1970s and started to dwindle in the 1980s. For the 1960-1970 Census period, the net migration values showed a negative value of 1 298 760. This situation would increasingly be altered in the decades that followed.

2.1. Migratory flows - data and trends

Estimated in 50 000 people in 1980, the foreign population with legal residence in Portugal exceeded, in 2007, 435 000 people. In 2006, foreigners and people born abroad already constituted 6.1% of the total population (up from 1.3% in 1992). These figures illustrate a major change in the migratory flows observed in the country - from a traditionally emigrant country, Portugal became an immigration country.

Table 2. Evolution of the Legal Foreign Resident Population in Portugal (1980-2007)

Year	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2007*
Foreign Resident Population in Portugal	50 750	79 594	107 767	168 316	207 607	414 659	435 736

Source: Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras (SEF) / **Relatório de actividades 2007**: 11 / *- Provisional data

Events and changes (both internal and external) led to a reversal in the trends of migratory flows in Portugal, where the percentage of active foreigners in the total active population went from 1.3% to 5.3% between 1992 and 2002. The road marks of these trends, with consequences felt at different times, were: the end of the dictatorship in 1974, the end of colonialism, with a massive return of Portuguese

41. See also the initiatives listed in «O Renascimento da Língua», URL: <http://mirandes.no.sapo.pt/LMRenasc.html>

settlers from Africa, the normalization of relations with the former colonies, the integration in the EEC in 1986, the access to EC funds which would sustain a policy of development based on major public works (the highway system, for instance), the organization of international events capable of attracting substantial investments (Expo'98, European Football Championship 2004). Converging with this dynamics, we find events leading to a reduction of the socioeconomic disparities (within the EC frame): the increase in the number of universities, the entrance of women into the labour force, with the consequent increase in family incomes. Additional external events played a role in the migration flows: the fall of the Berlin Wall and the progressive inclusion of Central and Eastern countries in the EC, free movement and residence of UE citizens within the Community.

In the 1990s, we saw the beginning of immigration flows from Brazil and from the PALOPs (African Countries with Portuguese as Official Language). In the second half of that decade and up to the first years of the present one, the main immigration flows came predominantly from Eastern European countries. Simultaneously, we saw a reinforcement of immigration from Brazil and a diversification of the origins of the immigrant groups, which now include significant numbers of Asian nationals.

After decades of very negative net migration values (minus 1 298 760 during the 1960-1970 Census period), the net flow became persistently positive in the 1990's and reached a peak from 2000 to 2003 (more than 50 000 persons/year), confirming the inclusion of Portugal in the category of immigration country, though the differential has been decreasing since 2002. The *World Migration 2005: Costs and Benefits of International Migration*, issued by IOM identifies Portugal as one of the countries with the fastest growing population of immigrants¹². The number of Residence Permit applications in 2007 (60 117) points indeed to a reinforcement of the immigration flows. Although UN estimates for 2010¹³ point to a number of international migrants in Portugal at mid-year of 918 626, the present global economic crisis will doubtless have negative consequences in the migration flows.

The trend observed in the last decades has led the State to legislate about the entry, permanence, exit and expulsion of foreigners, in order to fit immigration flows to the needs of the country and of the national labour market. The policy of extraordinary immigrant regularisations, initiated in the 1990s (1992 and 1996), allowed tens of thousands to enter the immigration statistics, with a 69% increase between 2000 and 2001 (Decree Law 4/2001), an increase that highlights the importance of irregular immigrants in the country.

Successive legislative measures led to a simplification of administrative procedures. The number of legal titles required fell recently from 9 to 2: the Permanence Permit and the Residence Permit. The decrease in Permanence Permit applications and the

¹² *World Migration 2005: Costs and Benefits of International Migration*, Geneva, International Organization for Migration, 2005 p. 146. URL: <http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/cache/offonce/pid/1674;jsessionid=042962C4F823FE9ADE354E0CD8D81BAF.worker01?entryId=932>

¹³ *Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2008 Revision* (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2008), United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2009.

significant increase of Naturalization and Residence Permits point to a growing trend of settlement and integration among immigrants.

In the last few years, the nature of the immigration flows in Portugal has entered a transition process: a predominantly labour motivated immigrant flow is now joined by a family immigration (which constitutes more than 60% of the immigration flows in the 2006 data), a change that is particularly relevant in terms of the linguistic composition of the Portuguese school population.

3. The need for linguistic policies

Up until the final years of the 20th century, the majority of immigrants came from the PALOPs (African Countries with Portuguese as Official Language). Their origin (though most of these immigrants have a Creole as mother tongue) and the fact that, in most cases, these immigrants entered the labour market in low skilled jobs did not justify, in the eyes of the Portuguese authorities, any special concern in developing Portuguese language teaching programmes for the immigrant population, despite their apparent difficulties in speaking the language, difficulties translated, at the school age level, in a high degree of failure, higher retention rates, and a very high rate of school dropout.

From 2000 on, due mainly to the increase in the migration flows from the Eastern European countries, the need for specific measures promoting cultural and linguistic integration has increased exponentially. In the school year 1999/2000, there were 83 333 students (including immigrant and Roma children and children from returned emigrants) in the basic and secondary education system, representing around 6.9% of the school population attending those levels. The first programmes directed at the linguistic integration of immigrants appeared precisely within the context of the educational system, as an answer to the problems raised by the language difficulties experienced by the immigrant school population. At the same time, particularly since 2001, a number of measures designed to encourage the integration of adult immigrant have been implemented, promoted both by public and by private organisms.

3.1. The role of official policies

In view of the new migration landscape and of the impositions placed on the State by the signature of the European Community treaties (Schengen, Amsterdam), the Tampere and the Seville Summits, the Portuguese governments were confronted with the need for an immigration policy that would articulate the control of entry and the integration of immigrants and transpose into the national legislation the successive European directives.

Until the early 1990s, integration policies were almost non-existent and disarticulated, restricted to professional training and requalification programmes for adult immigrants and a few activities in the area of multiculturalism, with programmes directed to immigrant children, with the objective of statistical monitoring of the «ethno-cultural background» of the student population toward a future intervention in order to create the conditions for intercultural education in the schools.

It was only in the second half of the 1990s that a new governmental approach to immigration issues began to emerge, with the creation of official bodies dedicated to the promotion of immigrants' rights and their integration: the High Commissioner for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities – ACIME (1996, restructured in 2002); the Consultation Council for Immigration Issues - COCAI (1998); the Coordinator Office for Multicultural Education Programmes (1991, replaced by the *Entreculturas* Office in 2001); the Immigrant National Support Centres – CNAI and the High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue – ACIDI (2007, integrating some of the former organisms).

Two Action Plans have played an important role in providing a coherent framework for present-day integration policies: the National Action Plan for Inclusion (*Plano Nacional de Acção para a Inclusão* – PNAI), approved in 2006, and the National Plan for the Integration of Immigrants (*Plano para a Integração dos Imigrantes* – PII), published in 2007. Both Plans define specific measures and establish clear targets towards the linguistic (as well as the professional, social and cultural) integration of the immigrant population. The PII, however, plays a particularly significant role in that it constitutes a joint political program which involves all the ministries and was elaborated with the participation of non-governmental organisations, including immigrant associations. It proposes a number of measures for the period 2007-2010, including the following:

- 1) Measures which promote the development of instruments designed to facilitate immigrants' access to public services, e.g. through an investment in translation and interpretation services and the enhancement of the role of socio-cultural mediators;
- 2) Measures which reinforce the professional integration of immigrants by ensuring that employers provide employees with opportunities for language learning;
- 3) Measures which are designed to address the high retention rates and rates of school dropout among the immigrant population, promoting the teaching of Portuguese as a second language (PSL) within the educational system, language teacher training and production of PSL teaching materials.

3.1.1. Within the educational system

It is within this context that, from 2001 onwards, legislation promoting the teaching/learning of Portuguese as a second language increased exponentially. Within the state school system, this has led to the establishment of curricular and extracurricular activities addressed specifically at immigrant children, with the creation of a school subject of Portuguese as a Second Language, at the secondary level.

The creation of a task group within the DGIDC, an organism of the Ministry of Education, dedicated exclusively to the development of «Portuguese as a Second Language in the National Curriculum», highlights the growing importance of these

issues. This task group has played a particularly relevant role through the publication of official guidelines for the implementation of the relevant legislative measures, the promotion of PSL teacher training programmes and the production of PSL teaching and evaluation materials. The group has also contributed to a better knowledge of the immigrant school population, conducting regular surveys (in the school years of 1999/2000, 2001/2002, 2004/2005 and 2006/2007), designed to characterise this population, as well as identify the strategies put in place by schools to address the specific linguistic, cultural and educational needs of immigrant children.

These surveys bear out evidence of the numerous initiatives targeting immigrant children which basic and secondary schools have developed in the past few years. According to the document «Analysis of the survey on the school situation of students who are speakers of other languages», for the year 2004-2005,¹⁴ educational establishments have promoted three major types of activities addressed at these groups of students: projects in the area of literacy and interculturalism; curricular teaching/learning activities in the domain of Portuguese as a second language; and other support and extracurricular activities.

3.1.2. Outside the educational system

An effort to centralise and articulate the language courses on offer for adult immigrants has been made through the establishment of the programme «Portugal Welcomes You» – *Portugal Acolhe*. This programme was launched in July 2001 and it made language training freely available to adult immigrant workers, through Professional Training Centres. The goal of these courses was to promote knowledge both of the language and of the basic rights of citizenship, thus contributing towards the full integration of immigrants in Portuguese society.

In 2008, following the PII, the programme was restructured and, under the National Strategic Reference Framework, it became the responsibility of ACIDI. The restructuring of the programme (now known as «Portugal Welcomes You – Portuguese for All» – *Programa Portugal Acolhe – Português para Todos* and co-funded by the European Social Fund) aimed at ensuring broader access to the programme (henceforth open to unemployed immigrants), a reinforcement of the language and citizenship modules, and the introduction of a module of Portuguese for specific purposes, directed towards the sectors which exhibit the highest employment rates among the immigrant population, namely trade, catering, and the hotel, beauty and construction industries. At the end of the course participants are granted both a professional certificate and a language certificate at the A2 level (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages), which ensures exemption from the nationality language test.¹⁵

¹⁴ *Análise do Inquérito no âmbito do conhecimento da situação escolar dos alunos cuja língua materna não é o português*, available at <http://sitio.dgicd.min-edu.pt/linguaportuguesa/Documents/portLNMRrelatorioFinal.pdf>

¹⁵ Under the Law of Nationality, an elementary knowledge of Portuguese is a requisite for acquiring Portuguese nationality by naturalization, and applicants must provide evidence of their language proficiency, usually by taking a language test.

The legislative measures have also revealed a concern for the recognition of qualifications and professional skills of immigrants.

3.2. The role of non-governmental organisations

The new awareness of the social and educational issues brought forth by the increasing numbers of immigrants introduced new actors into the public arena, promoting a wide discussion and new forms of organization and participation.

As we have seen, immigrant associations play an increasing role as partners in the definition and implementation of immigration policies. Schools, universities, religious institutions, and both governmental and non-governmental organizations have also made Portuguese language courses available to adult immigrants and have promoted initiatives toward their integration.

3.3. Research and production of teaching materials

At the same time, there has been a proliferation of research studies on immigration issues, both from a theoretical point of view and in a more applied perspective, concerned with the development of teaching strategies, teaching resources and instruments for diagnostic assessment and evaluation for Portuguese as a second language. The Project described below is representative of this research, given that, while combining these two types of perspectives, it seeks simultaneously to contribute to the debate on the linguistic integration measures currently being implemented in the educational system.

The Project «Linguistic Diversity in Portuguese Schools»¹⁶ was developed between 2003 and 2007, by a team from the Institute of Theoretical and Computational Linguistics (ILTEC), in collaboration with the DGIDC, and was funded by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. It sought to contribute to a better understanding of the linguistic diversity found in Portuguese basic schools, aiming at raising awareness in schools about the positive aspects of multilingualism, promoting the native languages of immigrant children and creating guidelines and materials designed to improve the linguistic competence of these children.

Some of the major achievements of this Project are described below:

- 1) A survey was conducted in 410 basic education schools in the Lisbon area, with the aim of identifying and characterising the student population who does not have Portuguese as a mother tongue.
- 2) Oral and written production materials were collected from a representative sample of school children, native speakers of Cape Verdean Creole, Ukrainian, Gujarati and Mandarin.
- 3) Based on the analysis of the written and oral corpora collected, PSL teaching materials were produced specifically designed for learners who are speakers of one of the four languages included in the study.

¹⁶ <http://www.iltec.pt/divling/index.html>

4) A number of documents addressed at PSL teachers were published, presenting issues and concepts relevant to second language acquisition, models and methodologies for the teaching of Portuguese in multilingual contexts and guidelines for diagnostic evaluation.

Other organisms which have been significantly involved in the development of PSL teaching resources and materials are ACIME/ACIDI, which has promoted the publication of materials, particularly in the domain of interculturalism, since 1993, through its «Intercultural Education Collection», and the Camões Institute, an official institution dedicated to the teaching and dissemination of Portuguese language and culture abroad, which has developed a wealth of online resources for the teaching/learning of Portuguese as a second language through its Virtual Centre.¹⁷

4. The need for the assessment of policies and for new models

Ten years into the implementation of linguistic integration policies the issue of the assessment of those policies is beginning to be raised. So far assessment studies are scarce and do not allow us to fully understand the impact of the integration policies on the different socio-cultural groups in terms of attitudes, strategies and expectations. However, an appraisal of the effects of present-day official policies towards the linguistic integration of immigrant children in Portuguese schools has been undertaken within the project «Linguistic Diversity in Portuguese Schools». Evaluating the practices that have been followed in putting in place these policies, and identifying the issues and questions which have not been adequately addressed, the research team responsible for the project issued a number of recommendations, stressing the need for (a) the publication of practice guidelines and the production of instruments and materials for diagnostic assessment; (b) further and better teacher training in this domain; (d) the development of activities and materials which contribute to an increased awareness among teachers regarding children's native languages; (e) the promotion of children's mother tongues and the creation of opportunities for teaching/learning them within the context of schools.

4.1. Bilingual education

Many research studies have shown that the promotion of the first language of immigrant children increases their potential for academic success and improves social integration in the new country, securing self-esteem and identity. One of the recommendations issuing from the Project «Linguistic Diversity in Portuguese Schools» states that, although it is essential to create opportunities for immigrant children to learn the language of their host country, it is also important to ensure that they maintain their native language:

¹⁷ <http://cvc.instituto-camoes.pt/index.php>

The results of research in the domain of bilingual education have shown a positive correlation between the development of literacy in the **mother tongue** (...) and the development of literacy in the L2 (non-native language). According to these studies, children who develop literacy skills in their mother tongue reach higher proficiency levels in the L2 than those who have no literacy skills in their mother tongue¹⁸

This fact is also acknowledged both in the PII, which recognizes the need to work with immigrant associations and other partners in improving learning conditions for the different mother tongues, and in documents published by the DGIDC task group, which propose that «schools attended by immigrant children may implement learning programmes for the children's native languages and cultures, which will integrate their Educational Project and may take the form of curriculum enrichment or extracurricular activities (...).»¹⁹

These recommendations follow in the steps of a new international awareness of the needs of immigrant children: a multilingual model for schools, which would offer immigrant children the opportunity to simultaneously learn the language of their host country and their own native language, has been supported by UNESCO (2003) and by successive EU recommendations (from 1982 on)²⁰ In 2005, for example, a non-legislative Resolution on integrating immigrants in Europe through schools and multilingual education (2004/2267 (INI)) was approved by the European Parliament, recommending:

- «that the school-age children of immigrants have a right to State education, irrespective of the legal status of their families, and that this right extends to learning the language of their host country, without prejudice to their right to learn their mother tongue»;
- «that even when the children and/or descendants of immigrants (second and third generations) are proficient in the language of their host country, they should be given the opportunity to familiarise themselves with their mother tongue and the culture of their country of origin, without public funding being ruled out for that purpose»;

¹⁸ «Os resultados da investigação no domínio da Educação Bilingue (...) revelam a existência de uma correlação positiva entre o desenvolvimento de habilidades de literacia em **língua materna** (em diante, **LM**) e o desenvolvimento das habilidades de literacia na L2 (língua maioritária, não materna para o aluno). Segundo os mesmos trabalhos, os alunos que desenvolvem competências de literacia em LM atingem níveis de proficiência em L2 mais elevados do que aqueles que não são escolarizados na LM e não desenvolvem competências de literacia em LM.», *Diversidade Linguística na Escola – Uma problemática global*, p. 5, available in http://www.iltec.pt/divling/_pdfs/cd1_diversidade_linguistica.pdf

¹⁹ «As escolas com alunos oriundos de outros países poderão apresentar programas de aprendizagem da língua materna e da cultura de origem dos alunos, que integrarão o seu projecto educativo e que poderão assumir a forma de disciplinas de enriquecimento do currículo ou de cursos de educação extra-escolar, nomeadamente quando dirigidos a jovens fora da escolaridade obrigatória ou a adultos.», *Português Língua Não Materna no Currículo Nacional - Documento Orientador*, 2005, p. 23, available in http://www.dgicd.min-edu.pt/linguaportuguesa/Documents/PLNMDoc_orientador.pdf

²⁰ Miguel Portas, *Report on the integration of immigrants in Europe via schools and plurilingual tuition*, (2004K2267 (INI)), Commission for Culture and Education, 2005.

– that the European Commission should «increase its support for the specific training of teachers, particularly those who come from immigrants’ countries of origin, interested in the development of various methods of promoting integration through multilingualism (e.g. CLIL or multilingual or mother-tongue literacy) and, under the Leonardo da Vinci, Youth and Socrates programmes (Comenius and Grundtvig projects), in widening the range of target languages to cover immigrants’ mother tongues, bringing particular attention to bear on activities involving the sons and daughters of immigrants and the trainers and facilitators who work with immigrant communities».²¹

In spite of all these recommendations, a legislative proposal regarding the creation of bilingual classes in primary schools located in areas with a high representation of particular ethnic minorities was rejected by the Portuguese Parliament in 2007.²²

Nevertheless, isolated initiatives have been implemented in schools over the past few years, promoting the teaching/learning of immigrant children’s native languages. Private institutions such as the Gulbenkian Foundation, higher education institutions and, particularly, the *Entreculturas* Office (an organism of the Ministry of Education until its integration in ACIDI in 2004) have all played a major role in supporting and promoting these initiatives, which have taken place in schools, particularly at the Kindergarten level, within the scope of programs promoting interculturalism. One example of such an initiative is the Project «Bilingual Education at Pre-School Level», which involved two pre-school establishments in Greater Lisbon, located in areas with high rates of immigrant populations. This Project, which was developed between 1998 and 2000, under the coordination of the *Entreculturas* Office, aimed at working towards a definition of intercultural and multilingual educational strategies, promoting bilingualism and increasing children’s proficiency in the target language, hence contributing to the improvement of academic success at primary school level.

In 2008, a three-year Project on «Bilingualism, Learning of L2 Portuguese and Educational Success in Portuguese Schools», undertaken by ILTEC and funded by the Gulbenkian Foundation, started developing an innovative bilingual experiment, with the creation of a class composed by 10 Cape Verdean Creole and 10 Portuguese-speaking children²³. This experiment is intended to ensure that, throughout their first four years of schooling, these children will learn both Creole and Portuguese language and culture in parallel. The project also aims to develop research on the teaching/learning of Portuguese as a second language and to build teaching materials. Notwithstanding the relevance of all of these initiatives, there is still a need in Portugal for a concerted policy for the teaching and promotion of immigrants’ mother languages, particularly within an educational context, leading to the development of a model of intercultural education in which bilingualism may assure the equalization of

²¹ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2005-0385+0+DOC+XML+V0//PT>.

²² Newsletter Esquerda, available in http://www.esquerda.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1630&Itemid=67

²³ *Diversidade Linguística na Escola – Uma problemática global*, p. 6, URL: http://www.iltec.pt/divling/_pdfs/cd1_diversidade_linguistica.pdf

educational success and the acceptance and incorporation of ethno-cultural differences.

4. A case in point: the MERIDIUM Project

The study of the multilingual situation in six EU countries in the Mediterranean area (Italy, Spain, Portugal, Malta, Slovenia and Romania) is currently the object of a three-year research project, financed by the European Union - *Multilingualism in Europe as a Resource for Immigration – Dialogue Initiative among the Universities of the Mediterranean* - that we hope will contribute to the much needed assessment of current policies for immigrant workers and students and to the design of proper strategies aimed at promoting a plural and inclusive multilingualism, responding simultaneously to labour needs in a modern economy.

The linguistic complexity of Mediterranean Europe, a region characterized by centuries of contact, exchange and immigration, makes it an «ideal laboratory for the construction of a European multilingualism that is really «plural» and inclusive».

The goal of the project²⁴ is to carry out an integrated evaluation of the linguistic situation and policies and to determine the corresponding indicators: (1) How do the linguistic and educational policies affect (as carried out at the local level) the perception and the attitude of the citizens (native and immigrants) towards linguistic diversity and towards multilingualism?

(2) How does the fact of living in a highly dense centre of immigration/emigration affect these perceptions/attitudes?

(3) To what degree do these perceptions/attitudes fluctuate between childhood and adulthood?

(4) How is the behavior of institutions and of the working world towards linguistic diversity and multilingualism really perceived?

The research will include an integrated evaluation and the specification of these indicators in primary and adult education, through:

- in receptor countries: (a) a *national research* based on a census of dislocation and features of ethnic minorities; (b) some local *context-surveys* and (c) *questionnaires* in primary schools and among adults to detect awareness of multilingualism and tendency to consider it as a resource;

- in the exporter country (Romania): (aa) *identification of policies* of linguistic learning and maintaining of the language of origin in immigration Countries; (bb) *surveys and questionnaires* to detect, both in adults and children, awareness of the benefit of multilingual competences and the tendency to consider it as a resource.

Among the outcomes of the project will be: a *university network*²⁵ for promotion of multilingualism; a *Study and Documentation Centre on Multilingualism in*

²⁴ Detailed information on the MERIDIUM Project is available at the Project's site:

<http://meridium.unistrapg.it>

²⁵ Project partners: Università per Stranieri di Perugia (Italy); Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca (Romania); Transilvania University of Brasov (Romania); New University of Lisbon (Portugal); University of Salamanca (Spain); University of Malta (Malta); University of Primorska (Slovenia)

Mediterranean Europe; an on-line *data base*; national/local *seminars*; proceedings of the *closing international conference*.

We hope that this and further studies will provide us with a deeper knowledge of the complex dynamics of contact, linguistic exchange and immigration, indispensable to the construction of a *European citizenship*.