

Presentation by Charles Buchanan, member of the Executive Council
of the Luso-American Development Foundation, Lisbon

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Theme: "Immigration and Integration: dialogue between the young generations to
develop a culture of peace"

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Madam Vice-President of the Portuguese Parliament, Dr. Teresa Caeiro,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Distinguished speakers and guests,

I wish to thank Mr. Eduardo Cabrita, member of the Portuguese Parliament
and President of the *Committee on Improving Quality of Life, Exchanges
between Civil Societies and Culture*, for the invitation to be here today.

I am vice-president of the Luso-American Foundation, a private, Portuguese
grant-making foundation. I have been living in Portugal for about 20 years,
so that makes me an American immigrant to Portugal. Today I will discuss
some immigrant data for Portugal and then I would give thoughts of
outreach to the Med Region and how I think it must move forward. My
Foundation's mandate orients our work primarily towards relations with the
United States, but given the interconnected nature of our global world, we
have also developed modest programs in North and sub-Saharan Africa, as
well as Transatlantic program with U.S. partners to reach out to the
broader Med Region.

I will share some impressions with you about the nexus between migration
and integration, and the need for dialogue to promote youth empowerment
and a culture of peace.... I am certainly not an expert in this field, but have
worked hard to open up new avenues of understanding and productive

outreach in my attempt to spread a broader awareness about these issues.

It is tempting to think that with all the research carried out, speeches made, and legislation passed, we have almost mastered the migration challenge – that is, how to manage migration and, more importantly, the integration of migrants, in proper fashion, which in turn means assisting new migrant families to find adequate livelihoods, housing, education and health care, at the very minimum.

According to UN figures, there are over 210 million international migrants. This number represents 3% of the world population, which means that 97% of people are born, live and die in the same country. Why then are we so concerned about migrant populations? I suggest because it deals with people and that migrants are first and, above all, people just like you and me. But also because new migrants are now sought as an essential demographic factor for future economic growth in the European Union. Yet migration can be disruptive if not understood and managed. Either way, global migration is expected to increase, and has become even more critical in this time of deep recession.

Nevertheless, some countries – including Portugal, I am proud to say – have shown leadership in key migration areas, as officially recognized by MIPEX (the Migrant Integration Policy Index) and by the United Nations. Portugal is given credit for having adopted progressive integration policies in the areas of youth education, health care, social cohesion and – perhaps the most important – employment.

Until the late 1970s, Portugal was principally an emigration country

(presently, there are 2,3 million Portuguese emigrants in the world¹), but it is now on the receiving end of migratory flows. Portugal's entry into the European Union, in 1986, was a major reason for the shift; however, the immigration counter-wave was felt as early as the mid-1970s², with the return – due to the decolonization – of almost half a million Portuguese from the ex-colonies (a figure equivalent to 5% of its population³). This initial wave of immigration was later followed by fluxes from Brazil and eastern European countries, and the most recent wave has seen the arrival of migrants from Ukraine, Moldova, and Romania, some of whom remain undocumented.

Portugal is recognized as having excellent practices in what concerns migration integration. This may partly be the combined result of its particular characteristics. The country's unique geographical situation – located on the westernmost tip of Europe and having as neighbors Spain and, across the Atlantic, America – made it a historical point of passage for trade, information and people. Operating as a bridge between Europe, Africa, and the Americas, Portugal came to develop an outward-looking perspective. Its knowledge of what it is to be a country of emigration most certainly contributed towards the welcoming attitude it tends to adopt regarding migrants and I would argue that its experience with the repatriation of nearly half a million Portuguese from the ex-colonies stimulated a more flexible and informed approach to integration.

In a bid to accommodate this demographic change, and recognizing the

¹ *Portugal: Atlas Migrações Internacionais*, Coord. Rui Pena Pires, Lisboa 2010, pág. 16

² After 1960, Portuguese emigration was predominantly intra-european. Another destination was to the Portuguese African colonies, chiefly to Angola and Mozambique.

³ *Portugal: Atlas Migrações Internacionais*, Coord. Rui Pena Pires, Lisboa 2010, pág. 50

importance of migrants, in 1996 the government created the High Commissioner for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities, more recently renamed the High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue, which generated innovative programs to assist new arrivals.

One such initiative, launched in 2004, was the National Immigrant Support Centers, located in Lisbon, Porto and Faro. This initiative was acknowledged by the EU⁴, UN⁵ and IOM⁶ as one of the best practices in integration service provision. Since 2005, about 87 Local Centers for Immigrant Assistance operate in Portugal as a complement to the centralized services.

The National Immigrant Support Centers are internationally known as the “one-stop-shop” approach, receiving hundreds of immigrants daily, even undocumented ones, who need legal advice, information regarding employment, housing, family health and education, and so forth. In 2010, data shows a 1192 daily average of service users for a total of about 335,000 over the year.

Recognizing the importance of these centers, Portugal coordinated an EU project with the aim of testing the feasibility of transferring this model to other member states, following recommendations of the Common Agenda for Integration.

Portugal’s policies were also recognized in the MIPEX Survey for 2007, which ranked Portugal the second best “migrant integration” country among all the EU members. MIPEX “uses over 100 policy indicators to create a rich, multi-dimensional picture of migrants' opportunities to participate in European societies.”

⁴ *Handbook on Integration for policy-makers and practitioners*, EU Commission, http://www.migpolgroup.com/projects_detail.php?id=10

⁵ *Human Development Report 2009*, <http://www.undp.org/hdr2009.shtml>

⁶ *World Migration Report IOM 2010*, http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/index.php?main_page=product_info&cPath=37&products_id=653

I would like to stress that Portugal is a signatory to all international conventions ensuring the protection of its emigrants and obviously applies the same criteria to the immigrants it receives. This aspect is reflected in Portugal's high classification, but there are other concrete examples of the good practices and leadership shown by Portugal, namely: measures in the areas of 1) labor market integration; 2) family reunion; and 3) anti-discrimination, among others. In addition, Portugal continues to invest in research to inform the political and policy levels and feed into international research programs.

The Luso-American Foundation also provides support for projects relevant to improved integration policies and practices. One such project is the Immigrant Platform, established in 2007, which annually recognizes immigrants who have distinguished themselves in support of their community, as well as municipalities that have developed praise-worthy integration programs for immigrants.

From early on, the Foundation understood the extent to which our societies were changing through migration. One of the Foundation's most important initiatives in this field sought to provide Portuguese researchers with the means necessary to make contacts and engage partners internationally. My Foundation helped establish links, networks, joint research and interaction between Portuguese researchers and their counterparts worldwide.

The formation of three research teams at three of Portugal's top universities, which have trained dozens of researchers and young professors, not only produced an enormous amount of quality research, but also ensured that

these researchers are now core members of virtually all major EU-wide research networks.

Today, Portugal is considered a leading participant in various international research and policy networks, such as the Metropolis International Project, the largest global research network. Portugal's positive experience with immigrants and its resulting tradition of openness toward others, allegedly more than most of its fellow EU Member States, made Portugal a natural anchor of the European component of this *Metropolis* International Project.

This year the *Metropolis* annual conference will be held in the Azores Islands in September 12-16, this being the second time that Portugal is organizing and hosting this conference.

Moving beyond the migration/integration context, how can we help sending Med Region countries cope with rising youth unemployment that drives emigration, breeding new generations of aspiring migrants? The Maghreb is a well known region, in this regard, and several countries can be seen today in turmoil because of unemployment as one factor.

Our experience suggests that Portugal and others in the Northern Med borders must elevate programs of outreach and interaction among these countries, particularly among young professionals. And this will be required urgently and aggressively, in a non bureaucratic fashion. By cultivating dialogue on all levels, building friendships based on trust, and sharing knowledge and resources, development is promoted and perceptions of the Other become more positive.

Programs like the *Regional Strategy on Intercultural Dialogue and Cooperation for the Mediterranean* promoted by the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations are of the utmost importance and should gather everybody's efforts around its objectives.

Portugal enjoys the best of reputations among its southern neighbors, particularly those in the Maghreb, rooted in strong and growing trade, business and diplomatic ties. Yet these ties do not typically build the multiple “dialogues” I just mentioned and that are essential for the growth of real mutual-understanding. That is, they do not include the inter-university relations among countries (particularly among student groups), or community and twinning of towns and cities, dialogues between civil societies and their networks, or dialogues between professional associations, nor entrepreneurship education programs – in short, all the channels through which we can engage with each other and explore areas of shared interest, which are numerous, from environment, energy, marine sciences, water, climate, to gender, enterprise startups, and so forth. This entails reaching out to our Mediterranean partners and learning to work together. I mean: we need to meet, debate, discuss, produce papers, publish books, create study groups, and establish NGOs for civil society building, and other initiatives. This is not practiced, nor promoted enough in Portugal, nor in other countries in the region; and it is not “rocket science”... this is simple outreach and makes common sense. Furthermore, in my opinion, we hardly even know each other at these civil levels, and this is totally counterproductive.

Let me very quickly mention a couple of my experiences, such as our role as co-Chair of the Trans-Med Civil Society Dialogue, a union launched in

1997, with the Turkish TUSEV foundation as the other co-Chair. This initiative was developed under the auspices of the European Foundation Center in Brussels, other EU and US foundations, and met with measureable success.

In 2004, we started the North Africa Leaders Forum, hosting experts from the five countries of North Africa to discuss social change and education. The subsequent Leaders meeting, held in 2006 on the topic of the “New Economy: Education and Employment”, was hosted by the Al Akhawayn University, near Fez in Morocco. I took five top Portuguese scholars for a remarkable meeting with leaders from all North African countries. Education for Employment was stressed. I became convinced at that time that entrepreneurial education for employment was desperately needed. The Luso-American Foundation then hosted a roundtable with managers of nine remarkable entrepreneurship training programs in Morocco, some backed by U.S. philanthropies, and many supported by the business associations in Morocco. The idea was to introduce Moroccan managers to the top Portuguese counterparts in entrepreneurship training. For your information, Morocco is a showcase of diverse activities in entrepreneurship youth training, both male and female.

At the annual European foundation conferences in 2007 and 2008 we organized side meetings on Youth Unemployment in the Mediterranean Region to stimulate interest by foundations in this challenge. However, I must admit, only a few foundations take a genuine interest and make a large effort to engage with Mediterranean countries. This must change.

In 2009, the Luso-American Foundation created the

Euro-Mediterranean-Atlantic Study Group (GEEMA, for short), with its website at www.geema.org. This is a trans-Atlantic and trans-Med mini think tank which organizes meetings and connects with partners, researchers, academics and local associations in the Maghreb countries, and think tanks in the United States concerned with the Med Region. In this way Portugal uses its unique geopolitical position as a pivot for exchange and joint actions between the U.S., Portugal itself and the Maghreb. The purpose is to mobilize civil society, academic and business interests inside Portugal to engage with U.S. and Maghreb partners. University groups can research and publish together via the internet. It is only in this way – through massive outreach campaigns, which are non-bureaucratic and low cost, but that stimulate mobility, internet contact and interchange among Mediterranean region countries – that barriers will fall and that contacts and friendships are generated. This is a low cost model that I promote.

In conclusion, I recommend the following principles be promoted by partners in the North, in cooperation with partners in the Southern Med:

- 1 Focus on collaboration to achieve educational reforms to steer education for youth toward employment needs and skills;
- 2 Stress the importance of entrepreneurship education among the young, teach concepts, breed self-initiative, and create diverse hands-on, training programs;
- 3 Expand student exchanges: promote circulation of ERASMUS students;
- 4 Promote training of young leaders/ job promotion / social inclusion throughout the Region;

- 5 Bring E.U. foundations into the picture, forcibly, if necessary, because they are not currently a big enough part of the solution, and they offer special talents to work in this regard;
- 6 Start multiple outreach and think tank type mechanisms to engage the regional youth, and those in the U.S., and develop joint projects, products and publications.

Also, the Luso-American Foundation has supported numerous publications in the field of migration, and proceedings of workshops and conferences held at our Foundation, which included researchers from the Maghreb.

To close, I would say that personal respect remains the fundamental element in promoting any culture of peace. If this is observed, dialogue will become richer and more effective. I hope Portugal's youth can be stimulated to become increasingly aware of and respectful of cultures in the Med region, and themselves cultivated as seeds for peace.

Thank you for your attention. I will answer any questions you may have.

Charles Buchanan

Luso-American Foundation