**Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

**Report on Local Government and Human Rights**

**Issued by: Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights**

**Purpose: To inform the drafting by OHCHR of the report requested by Human Rights Council Resolution 45/7 on local government and human rights.**

**By the Resolution n.º 101/2021, of 28 July, the Portuguese Government approved the National Plan to Combat Racism and Discrimination 2021-2025 - Portugal against racism (PNCRD 2021-2025). The PNCRD affirms equality, opposes segregation, is based on a vision of community that refuses any marginalization of its citizens and fights structural inequalities.**

The PNCRD is premised on articulation with other existing national strategies, plans and programs aimed at certain groups and vulnerabilities: the *National Strategy to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion*, the *National Strategy for Equality and non-discrimination 2018-2030*, the *National Plan for the Implementation of the Global Pact on Migration*, the *National Strategy for the Integration of Roma Communities 2013-2022* and the *National Program on the Remembrance of the Holocaust*.

**Main actions at local level**:

* Training actions for municipal workers on combating racism and discrimination, and about diversity and equality ethnic-racial, cultural, linguistic, and religious, including information about the history of colonialism, slavery, and Holocaust.
* Studies and research work - Questionnaire about itinerant population at the local level, to ensure mechanisms of access to decent housing when desired or, if itinerant is maintained, access to social services and official information.
* Dissemination of support for employment, to promote the establishment of people in the rural areas and attract qualified labour from abroad, through immigration.
* Mobilization of municipalities to integrate local associations representing discriminated groups in their respective consultative structures.
* Promote counselling, guidance, and information services for victims of discrimination in collaboration with the Bar Association, and actions and campaigns for literacy of rights and access to the law, empowering victims.
* Develop multidisciplinary teams of social intervention as proximity responses that guarantee diversified social support services.
* Technical and financial support to municipalities for the preparation and presentation of Local Housing Strategies.
* Interventions in social housing neighbourhoods and segregated spaces, to promote neighbourly relations, improvement of public transport, and valorisation of diversity, requalification, green spaces, and others.
* Hiring, training, and involving intercultural mediators in the resettlement processes.

By **Resolution n.º 51/2020, of 25 June**, the Portuguese Government approved the «*Never Forget Project — National Program on the Remembrance of the Holocaust*», marking the 80th anniversary of the rescue of thousands of lives due to the action of Aristides de Sousa Mendes, the Portuguese Consul in Bordeaux during the Second Word War.

The Program is structured in four distinct axes: knowledge, education, memory and institutional recognition and dissemination.

In the scope of Axis 3 — «Memory and Institutional Recognition» —the **Municipality Award «Aristides de Sousa Mendes and other Portuguese Saviours — Holocaust, universal values, humanism and justice**» was introduced.

The Municipality Award, non-pecuniary, distinguishes the action and initiative of Local Authorities, continuously encouraging the symbolic and material adhesion of Portugal to Human Rights.

Based on the concept of «saving, protecting and dignifying human lives in Portugal, facing contemporary atrocities», the Municipality Award aims:

1. Promote and project the active involvement of Portuguese local authorities in continued and consistent development of practices, programs and projects considering the concept of the Award;
2. Value the active and meaningful involvement of local communities, and young people, in practices, programs and projects promoted by local authorities;
3. Encourage the consistency and durability of collective social positions, attitudes and behaviours.

**In 2021, 5 awards and 12 honourable mentions were awarded in the following categories**:

- «Social and Community Cohesion», in which practices, programs or projects that contribute to the social cohesion of communities, localities and territories were distinguished;

- «Arts, Heritage and other Cultural Domains», in which practices, programs, projects, symbols and material and immaterial works were distinguished;

- «Modeling the Future on memories and living experiences», in which practices, programs or projects that are objectively designed as impressive contributions to cement lasting social cohesion of communities, localities and territories were distinguished;

- «Difference, innovation, creativity», in which experimental practices, programs or projects of free creation were distinguished because of the generated dynamics;

- "Make It Happen", in which practices, programs or projects of youth initiative were distinguished, aiming to promote remarkable worldviews around the Award’s values and based on actions of sharing, awareness and involvement of communities and youth.

**The following initiatives stand out:**

«**Municipal Council for Immigrants, Integration and Interculturality**», consultative structure together with the Mayor, to promote cooperation strategies between local entities and improve the inclusion of immigrants. Submitted by the municipality of Braga;

**Theater show «Miosótis».** Portrays the Nazi Holocaust. The staging is intended to show one of the cruellest parts of the 20th century’s History, experimenting new scenic and characterization forms and providing greater realism. Submitted by the municipality of Arcozelo (Ponte de Lima);

«**Exhibition Spaces**» with interactive visits, promoting cultural diversity, social inclusion and mechanisms that strengthen ties between people, institutions, and the community. Submitted by several municipalities;

«**School of Citizenship**» – to promote humanistic training to all citizens based on information, knowledge of others, acceptance, integrity, integration, and mutual respect, considering democratic values ​​and human rights, promoting civic equality, dialogue and social justice. Developed with other local, regional, national, or international institutions, to promote UNESCO’s aims. Submitted by the municipality of Fundão;

«**Local Programmes – Think About Holocaust**», in partnership with local development associations, to think about the motivations that led to the extermination of millions of people: Jews, gypsies, persons with disabilities, and people belonging to other minorities. To promote children's awareness of empathy and respect for diversity, in order to eliminate racism, xenophobia and hate speech. Submitted by the municipality of Serpa;

«**Educating for Coexistence and Communication Between Cultures Program – Ser(Pa)+Cidadão**», involving teachers and students, taking advantage of the syllabus and disciplinary contents to reinforce students' learning about identity, local history in a national and global context. Funded by EU Operational Program Social Inclusion and Employment, with an intervention program with two vulnerable communities in the municipality: the Roma community and the migrant community. Submitted by the municipality of Serpa;

**Project «The School Goes to the Neighborhood**», promotes an outdoor exhibition, using an exhibition tent, in residential neighbourhoods during Christmas, Easter and Summer school breaks, shows student’s works for families to visit. Submitted by the municipality of Falagueira-Venda Nova (Amadora);

**Project «In the Bags We Left Our Heart…»** to promote knowledge about the Second World War among younger students, considering the growing waves of anti-Semitism, the growth of incidents and violence for racial reasons, violations of human rights in several countries and the lack of knowledge about the Holocaust. Students are asked to imagine what they would carry in a suitcase if, suddenly, they had to abandon everything. It is intended to raise ambassadors for the development of new behaviours. Submitted by the municipality of Vila Nova de Poiares;

**«CHUDE –Humberto Delgado Centre for Studies on Republicanism and Opposition to the Portuguese Dictatorship»**, with the aim of promoting civic awareness and stimulating critical thinking about contemporary society. Submitted by the municipality of Torres Novas;

**Study «Portuguese Forced Workers in the III Reich and the Louletanos in the Nazi Concentration System»**, by the municipality of Loulé in association with the Institute of Contemporary History (Universidade Nova de Lisboa). International study that rescues the history of Portuguese victims of Nazism, recognizing hundreds of Portuguese who were forced laborers during the Third Reich. The project is funded by the German Foundation – EVZ – (Memory, Responsibility, Future) – specialized in funding research projects on forced labour in Germany, by the Goethe-Institut of Lisbon and by the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences ( Universidade Nova de Lisboa).

**Project «Outdoor Museum: The Museum visits Social Solidarity Institutions»** to promote the heritage of the Sesimbra’s museum to audiences with physical and mental conditions. Initiative that breaks down material, age, and intellectual barriers, combating all forms of discrimination, and promoting the values ​​of equality, justice and humanism within society. Submitted by the municipality of Sesimbra;

**Project «*Eurocity* CERVEIRA-TOMIÑO»**, to promote the convergence between two municipalities of Portugal and Spain, in a border territory, for territorial and socio-economic development, facilitating the involvement of citizens, with the aim of building Eurocitizenship and «social and administrative free zones», where citizens can use public services regardless of nationality. Submitted by the municipality of Vila Nova de Cerveira;

**«Memorial to Refugees and Consul Aristides de Sousa Mendes»**, Building where activities on humanitarian values ​​take place, with guided tours, testimonies and historical reconstruction. Includes a «Virtual Exhibition» about the issuance of visas to thousands of refugees during the Second World War, when the Nazi army was occupying France. The Exhibition shows paintings, sculptures, artistic installations, poetry, caricatures, and cartoons, in honour of Aristides de Sousa Mendes, in the context of the Holocaust and the Human Rights theme. Submitted by the municipality of Almeida;

«**Study Visit to the city of Krakow and Auschwitz**» with teachers and students and an itinerary related to the Holocaust. Submitted by the Município de Carregal do Sal;

**«House of Jewish History»**, building in an old Jewish quarter of the Municipality of Elvas, with the rehabilitation of the great synagogue of Elvas, built in the 14th century and enlarged in the 19th century. In this religious space, an interpretive centre was created to make known the ancient Jewish and New Christian community in Elvas, honouring their memory and doing justice to a community that indelibly marked the history of the city of Elvas.

**«Unveiling Memories of the Gibraltians»**, educational project to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the Gibraltarians refuge in Madeira during Second World War and promote reflection on inclusion, integration, equality, and advantages of multiculturalism, creating a bridge with what continues to happen today, and which marks the history of Madeira: migration. The question continues to arise, as can be seen in the case of people who live in Venezuela and who have been looking for a new opportunity in Portugal, in Madeira. Submitted by the Municipality of Funchal.

**«A Hug in a Letter»** project proposed by a young girl to the Youth Office of the municipality, to create a bridge of contact between young and old people through written letters, combating the loneliness, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, bearing that senior are not always comfortable with digital tools. The entire community was involved, and thousands of written letters were delivered. Submitted by the Municipality of Vila Nova de Gaia.

**«Essence: Being Humanity Project»**, to raise awareness of the universal values ​​of humanism and justice through a multidisciplinary program that promotes local, national, and international history, making known some prominent figures whose actions had an impact on the community and exploring the cultural heritage, material and immaterial, of the represented territories. Submitted by the Municipality of São João Batista e Santa Maria dos Olivais (Tomar);

**«Acting and Intervening with Older Persons»**, educational project focused on cognitive activities that promote older person’s rights and prevent or end their exclusion. Submitted by the municipality of Silves.