**World Programme for Human Rights Education**

**Submission to the Office of the**

**United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

**(June 2023)**

The Portuguese Ombudsperson, in its capacity as National Human Rights Institution fully in line with the Paris Principles and accredited with “A” status since 1999, hereby replies to the call for input received from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the possible focus for the fifth phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education.

1. **Focus areas or thematic human rights issues**

Keeping in mind the desirable contribution of the World Programme for Human Rights Education to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially the achievement of Goal 4, target 7, the Portuguese NHRI suggests, as a thematic priority, the appreciation of migrants’ cultural diversity.

If we consider that the estimated number of international migrants has increased over the past 50 years, and that in 2020, almost 281 million people lived in a country other than their country of birth (*World migration report 2022*); that approximately 3.6 per cent of the world population currently live outside their country of origin *(* [*www.ohchr.org/en/migration*](http://www.ohchr.org/en/migration)); and that migration as a global phenomenon has grown, not just in demographic terms, but also as a social and political issue ([*https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/increasing-significance-migration\_en*](https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/increasing-significance-migration_en)),[[1]](#footnote-1) we must conclude that this will be an important topic to discuss.

We must also consider the worldwide demonstrations of intolerance such as xenophobia and related intolerance and incitement to hatred, racism, racial discrimination and religious intolerance. In this context, education and training for tolerance and respect of the “other” is paramount.

The relevance of this thematic human rights issue is addressed in the recent report “Cultural rights and migration” of the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights: “The process of being open to other cultural frameworks expands horizons, creates innovative ideas and theories through the fusion of cultural references and evolves cultures, individuals and groups to better adapt to current realities, both local and global values of anti-racism, racial equity and racial equality.”. In this report the Special Rapporteur recommends that States adopt all measures, including positive measures, necessary to eliminate negative stereotypes of migrants and their cultures among State officials, the media and society in all fields and at all levels; assess the presence of cultural diversity in educational curricula and textbooks, including the history of migration flows and of migrants, and the common stories and topics shared by host and migrant communities that are less known, provide teachers and trainers with material and resources to integrate more diverse material in their teaching and devise programmes so that the host population learns about migrants’ histories, realities and cultures.

1. **The target sectors**

The relevant actions and initiatives should be directed to the general public due to the importance of educating society to the appreciation of migrants’ culture and corresponding positive impacts on the host State.

It is especially important to promote human rights training for teachers and educators and public officials at every level of society and governance: civil servants that have direct contact with members of the general public, law enforcement officials, military personnel and employers of detention centers and accommodation facilities.

Lisbon, June 23 2023

1. Specifically in Portugal, in 2021, there were 698 887 foreign citizens holding a residence permit (6.8% of the Portuguese population). Preliminary statistical data from the Portuguese Immigration and Borders Service (SEF) shows that, in 2022, for the seventh consecutive year, there was an increase in the resident foreign population in Portugal, totalling 757 252 foreign citizens holding a residence permit. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)