



CHECKIT HE – Countering Hate and Extremism on Campus

Working Document 1

Racism and Xenophobia

Contribution From Portugal

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1. Do you believe there is discrimination related to ethnicity or race on your campus and other HEIs in your country? If yes, can you briefly explain what it is?

The **Portuguese Constitution Law**, Article 13 defines the Principle of Equality:

1. All citizens shall have the same social dignity and shall be equal before the law.

2. No-one shall be privileged, favoured, prejudiced, deprived of any right or exemption from any duty on the grounds of ancestry, sex, race, language, place of origin, religion, political or ideological beliefs, education, ideological convictions, education, economic situation or social condition.

The **law. 61/2018, of 21 May**, approved the National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination 2018-2030 "[Portugal + Equal](#)" (ENIND), defining major goals of global and structural action until 2030, for the achievement of equality and non-discrimination.

This strategy is composed of three main measures that have guided the action of public institutions¹:

- The Action Plan for Equality between Women and Men PNAIMH;

¹ <https://www.gpeari.gov.pt/web/pt/sobre-n%C3%B3s>



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- The Action Plan to Prevent and Combat Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (NAVMVD);

- The Action Plan to Combat Discrimination on the grounds of Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sexual Characteristics (PNAOIC)

Despite the legislative advancements, studies and reports made on the topic assert that racism is still a prominent issue in Portugal. There are some specific groups that are more prone to suffer racism than others, according to nationality and ethnicity: afro-descendants and roma people ([FRA, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2017](#)). Discrimination is reported as more pronounced in the case of searching for house, then in educational institutions.

In 2017, a study from Doutor Marques and Ambrósio, spoke about the “skin colour of Portuguese HE”, demonstrating that afro descendant’s students suffer discrimination at different levels, particularly concerning: the integration in working groups; believe that they are not bright students, or do not possess adequate knowledge; and lack of equal support by teachers. Some of these results are confirmed in a study of 2020 ([Doutor&Alves, 2020](#)).

During the late years we have witnessed a crescent number of incidents derived from ethnic and racial discrimination, such as the case dated [February 2015](#), where six black citizens were tortured and physically and verbally assaulted by dozens of police officers. In [February 2017](#), the Roma community of Santo Aleixo da Restauração was the target of death threats on walls in the settlement and arson attacks.

- At the universities, especially at public universities, racism and xenophobia are an issue, however it is yet poorly studied.

In the year 2019, a student from another nationality (cape Verde), was beaten till dead in [Bragança](#) northern part of the country. Such as the case dated [February 2015](#), where six black citizens were tortured and physically and verbally assaulted by dozens of police officers.



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In 2020, a Portuguese deputy made public the existence of discrimination in Portuguese universities, particularly against Brazilians, the major migrant community in Portuguese HE. [Media](#) also reported that messages against students from other nationalities were written in the walls, in 2020, but the subsequent years also registered many problems in public and private universities, and in big cities, like [Lisbon](#) and [Porto](#). In the latter, a teacher was dismissed in April 2022, due to hate discourses and practices concerning women, migrants and roma people.

Students in Portuguese universities, still organize at the beginning of the academic year rituals of passage (*praxe*). These [rituals are still](#) strongly gender and race stereotypes based. In 2020, a group of students spread a video record considered to be extremely offensive for afro-descendent students. This case was very commented at the university and was object of several analysis by the national parliament.

- According to the [European Social Survey](#) (ESS) from 2018/2019, 62% of the Portuguese show racist attitudes.

In December 2021, based on a report elaborated by [UNO](#) experts Dominique Day said that Portugal is still having a "a toxic colonial narrative". To change this, she argues that is necessary to recognise the "powerful role that the country had in the social construction of race". For her, although the country welcomes migrants and there is diversity in its territory, Portugal still has to make a lot of progress on its approach to the race [issue](#).

Hate and discrimination about Portuguese whose parents came from is a major issue with expression in bigger cities. [Mamadou Ba](#), coordinator of **SOS Racism** states that there are multiple discriminations in Portugal due to race, in education, society in general, and educational system. He states that racialised women, who are massively working in cleaning, conservation, and catering sector, "are triple or quadruple discriminated against" by being victims of physical, moral, and sexual harassment" (Coutinho, 2021)



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The report of the project [MigraMyths](#) (2021) states that more than 70% of migrant people participating in the survey have been victim of hate speech in Portugal, mainly in public services. The same document also notes that the hate speech circulates especially through internet, and social networks.

One of the Portuguese parties – [CHEGA](#) (right wing party) has been spreading messages against migrants, and people from other ethnicities or nationalities. Portuguese afro-descendants, and roma people are the most affected by racism and discrimination. Several organizations reacted against these acts, proposing new measures.

The [High Commissariat for Migrations - The Commission for Equality and Combating Racial Discrimination \(CICDR\)](#) operates within the High Commissariat for Migrations, I.P. (ACM, I.P.). It is a body for combating discrimination based on racial and ethnic origin, colour, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, descent and territory of origin, under the terms and limits established in Law No. 93/2017, of 23 August.

The organisation **SOS Racismo** has all an active and intervening voice against acts of racism and xenophobia. There is also the [Frente Anti-Racista](#) (FAR) (Anti Racist Front).

In [march 2022](#), the Minister of State and of the Presidency, Mariana Vieira da Silva, celebrated the National and International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, announcing policies and strategies to combat racism.

In her intervention, the Minister referred to the fight against racism and discrimination as an "urgent challenge of our societies", at a time when "racist phenomena continue to happen in a generalized way and in our daily lives, violating fundamental rights enshrined in our Constitution and in the most varied international commitments assumed by Portugal, such as the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination".



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Mariana Vieira da Silva also said that the pandemic caused by Covid-19 exacerbated "inequalities at all levels and increased the stigmatisation of already vulnerable groups, nationally and globally".

What kinds of policies/solutions have been put into practice in different institutions (your and other)?

In Portugal, there are general rules that HE ought to follow. Concerning racism, the most important legal framework is the [National Plan to Combat Racism and Discrimination](#). This plan was proposed by the Secretary of State for Citizenship and Equality. In accordance with the inherent objectives, this plan seeks to encompass the entire Portuguese society and covers the following areas of action:

1. Governance, information and knowledge for a non-discriminatory society; education and culture;
3. Higher Education;
4. Work and Employment;
5. Housing;
6. Health and social action;
7. Justice, security and rights;
8. Participation and representation;
9. Sport;
10. Media and the digital.

The plan also proposes a commitment to training of public administration workers, namely, an "intensive program of anti-discrimination law" and actions for those working in public service, education community, health professionals, security forces, or workers of municipalities and parishes.



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A project of an academic nature but with strong interaction with Portuguese civil society, coordinated by researcher Sílvia Maeso from the Center for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra, [COMBAT](#), has sought to promote the discussion on institutional racism, racial discrimination, and permanent racial harassment in society Portuguese.

A book of this project was recently published with the participation of researchers, lawyers, activists, anti-racist movements entitled [“The State of Racism in Portugal. Anti-Black Racism and Anti-Gypsies in Law and Public Policy” \(2021\)](#).

The universities of Lisbon (ISCTE-UL) and Beira Interior have also invested in the creation of support networks for students of African and Brazilian origin who have been the target of racial discrimination in the relationship between teachers and students, virtual bullying and xenophobia.

The elaboration of the [Regulation on International Students](#), in 2014 was seen as important defining the ways in which any student victim of hate speech.

- Since 2021, a special plan was implemented defining special vacancies at HE for roma students. This plan also includes public fellowships for students coming from more vulnerable groups.

What kind of mechanisms (at different stages) do your and other institutions rely on to assist students, members of staff, and anyone else affected by race- and ethnicity-based discrimination?

The law. 61/2018, of 21 May, approved the National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination 2018-2030 "Portugal + Equal" ([ENIND](#)), defining major goals of global and structural action until 2030, for the achievement of equality and non-discrimination. This strategy is composed of three main measures that have guided the action of public institutions:

Combating racism and discrimination is a challenge for universities, because many cases go unreported, and universities end up unaware of the reality that exists on their



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campuses. However, there are some measures recommended to universities by some entities to tackle the problem of racism in educational institutions.

The [Equality and Human Rights Commission](#) explains that there are a few reasons why students and staff members do not report these situations:

- Students and staff are often unclear about what will happen when they make a complaint and are afraid of the personal consequences in doing so;
- Long complaints procedures prolong student and staff anxiety and further undermine confidence in the fairness of complaints handling;
- Inconsistent implementation of policies and procedures can leave those who complain feeling confused, unsupported and without effective redress;
- Too few universities seek to understand student and staff experience of their complaints procedures and, as a result, do not know how effective they are.

According to the [United Nations](#), there are some practices that educational institutions should adopt to end racial discrimination (quoting):

- Programmes for promoting greater awareness and understanding of the prohibition of racial discrimination;
- Campaigns to ensure that the general public is made aware of the legislation combating racial discrimination;
- Campaigns aimed at eliminating prejudices, stereotypes, social or cultural patterns and other attitudes that jeopardize the right of persons to live as equals and that perpetuate racial discrimination;



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- Campaigns to raise awareness in schools so as to change the mindsets of pupils, and to promote tolerance and respect for diversity in education;
- Educational programmes to ensure that the teaching of the principles of equality and non-discrimination is integrated in formal and non-formal education, in an effort to dismantle notions of superiority or inferiority based on prohibited grounds and to promote dialogue and tolerance between different groups in society;
- Communication policies that raise awareness of the richness that racial diversity brings to society and of the legal consequences of discrimination;
- Organizational training courses addressed at those responsible for recruitment and promotion procedures to ensure compliance with standards of non-discrimination and equal opportunity.

**Has your campus experienced instances of race- and ethnicity-based discrimination?
What has your institution or country done to find a solution to race – and ethnicity-based discrimination?**

In Portugal, racism configures a crime according to the Portuguese penal code (article 240th), being an important aggravating circumstance as a motive of a crime. However, there are few reports and statistics about the situation in Portugal regarding racial discrimination in HEI.

“With Portugal rated among the 3 or 4 safest countries in the world, PSP believes that it would be impossible to contribute to this sense of tranquillity, security, and public peace, if PSP presented itself as a violent or repressive police. This safety feeling is unanimously present



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in Portuguese cities, and certainly the ECRI delegation itself confirmed during its visit in November 2017". (Portuguese Government, 2018)

The main incident in HEI concerning race that became a main issue in political debates relates to the case of a student killed in [Bragança](#).

As it happens with other issues, racism and xenophobia may be veiled, and associated with other variables, such as gender, and class. As stated, Portugal has especially invested in legislation, and several other programs for migrant integration in recent years.

Does your university have any radio, newspaper or social media channel that can inform students and staff about the situation?

There are multiple channels at the university that can inform students and staff about the situation. At our university, there is a radio channel where several issues concerning students' lives are discussed ([RUM](#)).

Have you had any kind of projects or programs (including training and information sessions) that students and staff can benefit from and be better prepared to deal with the problem of hate and discrimination on campus? What has the outcome been like?

As it happens with gender hate actions, racism and ethnicity are sporadically mentioned at institutional level in HEI. There is not a specific program for racism prevention at the campus. However, students can attend different courses where this topic is debated.

Lately, issues related to the integration of Brazilian migrants in Portugal and refugees have pushed student's association, and other entities to approach the issues, demanding for more measures.

At the national level there are some programs whose mission is to create links between migrants and natives, to fight discrimination and reduce the burden of borders.



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The project [Speak](#) was created in Leiria, in 2014, and emerged when "several trips and experiences at an international level", a group of friends realized "the challenge that is to integrate in a new city", when "you don't speak the language" and you don't have an "informal network of friends".

This project aims to provide a safe network for migrants and refugees once they arrive in a new city and facilitate the exchange of intercultural experiences. Today, this project is already present in 11 countries such as Germany, Luxembourg, UK, etc., and is co-financed by the European Social Fund through [Social Inclusion and Employment Operational Program](#).

Another program created in the same direction is "[Renovar a Mouraria](#)", which was born in 2008, and was created by a neighbourhood group with more than 50 nationalities in the centre of Lisbon. This project provides various support and services for migrants, including teaching the Portuguese language, school support for children and teenagers, support to solve legal issues, and empowers the community to develop projects. It is a way to include migrants in Portuguese society and educate society itself to recognize migrants as an equal part.

What kind of mechanism do you have to track and identify perpetrators? What is the process once you have identified the problem like?

There are different laws that can be putted in place in case of race and ethnicity discrimination. However, the legal processes are normally too lengthy. There is no protocol to follow on this situation known by teachers, and non-teaching staff.

Reports of racial and nationality discrimination [can be made online](#) at the website of the [Commission for Equality Against Racial Discrimination \(CICDR\)](#), and need not be made by the victim, but by witnesses, family members, and friends.

According to High Commissariat for Migrations:



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Any person or institution that becomes aware of any situation which might be considered administrative offense shall circulate it to one of the following:

- a) Member of government that has the charge of the area of equality;**
- b) High Commission for Migrations (ACM);**
- c) Commission for Equality and Against Racial Discrimination (CICDR);**
- d) General-Inspection competent in the matter.**

The entities referred to in the first three paragraphs, upon learning of an administrative offense, send the case to the competent General Inspection, which will conduct its statement.

- Fill in the online complaint form available at www.cicdr.pt/queixas;
- Send complaint by mail, addressed to CICDR, to Rua Álvaro Coutinho, nº 14-16, 1250-025 Lisbon;
- Written complaint with the facts considered discriminatory, sent by email to: cicdr@acm.gov.pt;
- Personally in any of the entities referred to above, and make a written submission which report the facts as discriminatory.

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