"Working abroad" campaign – What you need to know before leaving (Portugal)

ACT (Working Conditions Authority)

http://www.act.gov.pt/(pt-PT)/CentroInformacao/DestacamentoTrabalhadores/Paginas/default.aspx

http://www.trabalharnoestrangeiroinforme-seantesdepartir.pt/

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1. Observations and motivations

We are currently in the midst of a major economic and social crisis in Portugal. As a consequence of this situation, unemployment has sharply increased (the unemployment rate in Q4 2012 was 16.9% according to the National Institute of Statistics).

For this reason, the number of workers leaving for other countries has also increased.

This campaign is based on the fact that the more information workers have before leaving the country, the less they will be vulnerable to abuse under foreign working conditions.

In this way, we hope to give workers a basis for being able to make a well-reasoned decision before leaving.

2. Goals

Through better worker information, the idea is to:

- combat fraud and undeclared work in countries hosting Portuguese workers by letting these workers know what their rights and obligations are,
- act on employment conditions (ensure respect of minimum wage, working hours, etc.),
- avoid the isolation of Portuguese workers when faced with problems they may encounter in the host country by providing practical information (access to health care, contacts for administrative requirements, etc.).

The main message is: "If you are planning to work abroad, get information before leaving!"

3. Partners

This campaign is promoted and coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in partnership with the:

- Working Conditions Authority (ACT)

- Directorate-General of Consular Affairs and Portuguese Communities (DGACCP)
- Institute for Social Security (ISS)
- Employment and Vocational Training Institute (IEFP)

4. Method implementation

- A total of 5,000 posters, 50,000 brochures and 100,000 flyers were created and distributed. Specific brochures were designed for certain target countries which are the most frequent destinations for Portuguese workers (France, Luxembourg, Brazil and Angola).

We used different "relays" to disseminate information:
- **institutions**
  92 municipal offices to support migrant workers in the North, Centre and Algarve areas,
  10 municipal offices in the Lisbon area,
  ACT, IEFP and ISS public assistance services.
  Portuguese Catholic Mission for Migration for distribution in parishes.
- **media**
  We have broadcast TV and radio spots
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XfM_AN8k3bY
- **websites**
  All partner websites and the creation of a specific campaign site:
  http://www.trabalharnoestrangeiroinforme-seantesdepartir.pt/
- **specific events** such as the organisation of European Job Days in Portugal.

5. Actions

We carried out three campaigns: the first took place in 2003, the second in 2006 and the third in June 2012.

Contents were defined starting from an **identification of needs** (What types of information are necessary before leaving for a foreign country?) and include:

- **information on methods and useful information**
  o How do you look for a job and apply for it in another country?
  o How can you access health care in the different countries?

- o Which language is spoken in the destination country?
- o Which contacts are useful? Which authorities can workers contact for the different issues which may be encountered?

- **legal information to enable workers to be aware of their rights and obligations**
  - o What are the different ways of working abroad (direct hiring by a company located in another country, posting, employment through a private agency, as an independent worker)?
  - o What are the regulations and administrative formalities for the different trades and professions for each country?
  - o What is the country's legal framework with respect to labour (minimum wage, working hours, etc.)?