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Portugal organises international conference on migration

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The 11th International Metropolis Project Conference, which every year brings together the world's foremost researchers in migration as well as policy makers and NGOs, will be held in Lisbon in October 2006. Competing with heavyweight Australia to hold the conference, Portugal won the 2006 bid for the organisation of the event, one of the most important of its kind.

The Luso American Foundation (FLAD), the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, the High Commissariat for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities (ACIME), the City of Lisbon, Caixa Geral de Depósitos bank and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation have been secured as the conference's main sponsors.

The theme of the 2006 conference has already been chosen. According to Lucinda Fonseca, from the Centre for Geographical Studies at the University of Lisbon and chairperson of the conference's executive organising committee, the main goal of the conference is to consider and debate migration not only from the point of view of places of destination and the effects of migration on receiving countries but also from the point of view of migrants' places of origin and the consequences of human mobility on them.

Country of immigration

The impact of remittances on economies and how highly skilled migrant workers influence the development of their countries of origin are just some of the many issues that will be explored. Other issues include the Portuguese-speaking (Lusophone) world and migration from the Mediterranean.

Portuguese researchers belonging to the Metropolis 2006 organising committee have participated in this international conference since 1997. It was held in Canada in 2005. These university professors come from the Centre for Geographical Studies at the University of Lisbon, from the Centre for Social Studies at the University of Coimbra and from Socinova at the New University of Lisbon.

Choosing Portugal to host the 2006 International Metropolis Conference, according to Lucinda Fonseca, had much to do with the positive role that Portuguese social science researchers have played in previous Metropolis conferences. The fact that the country has recently become a country of immigration (the number of legal immigrants doubled between 2000 and 2003) also influenced the jury.

The conference will be held in both Culturgest and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation between 2 and 6 October. Nearly 20 countries are currently involved in the Metropolis project.