

AIMA - AGENCY FOR INTEGRATION, MIGRATION AND ASYLUM

On the 29th of October, the Agency for Integration, Migration and Asylum (AIMA) came into operation, as part of the restructuring of the Portuguese border control system. Through AIMA, there is a separation between the exercise of police functions and administrative functions in matters of migration and asylum, competences previously attributed to the Foreigners and Borders Service (SEF).

AIMA is responsible for regularising the entry and stay of foreign citizens on national territory, granting extensions of stay, residence permits, renewals of residence permits, residence cards and permanent residence cards for family members of EU citizens who are third country nationals, permanent residence certificates for EU citizens and residence permits for British citizens who are beneficiaries of the Agreement on the Exit of the United Kingdom from the European Union.

The various competences attributed to AIMA also include recognising the right to family reunification, issuing statement on applications for consular visas and in the context of Portuguese nationality processes, participating in the definition of integrated management of migration and the movement of people, granting travel documents to foreign citizens and ensuring the national control and registration of travel documents issued.

AIMA's mission is to implement national and European public policies on migration, asylum and equality:

- Carrying out public migration and asylum policies, promoting the treatment of foreign citizens with compliance with the principle of equality and prohibition of discrimination, creating the conditions for them to be able to carry out their intended activities in Portugal, freely, in compliance with their rights, freedoms and guarantees and economic, social and cultural rights;
- Regularising the entry and stay of foreign citizens in national territory;
- Participating in the implementation of the Portuguese state's international co-operation policy in the field of migration and asylum;
- Implementing public policies relevant to the integration of ethnic groups, particularly gypsy communities, and the management and valorisation of diversity between cultures, ethnicities and religions.

The AIMA represents a new positioning of public migration and diversity management policies, both at national and international level, which is not unrelated to the complexity of current migratory flows. The Portuguese government argues that "the creation of an agency with a profile that cuts across different target audiences represents a new level of integration and inclusion that places rights, freedoms and guarantees at the centre of its work, ensuring the continuity of the humanist policies that have earned international recognition."

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