

Maia - Portugal, November 21<sup>st</sup> 2014

## The first session in Viana do Castelo scheduled next Saturday

# Sonae Sierra opens the seventh CAFÉ MEMÓRIA in Portugal

- CAFÉ MEMÓRIA will be held in Estação Viana Shopping
- There are currently seven CAFÉS MEMÓRIA in the country
- CAFÉ MEMÓRIA is a meeting place for people with memory issues or dementia, their families and caretakers.

Sonae Sierra and the Alzheimer Portugal Association, in a partnership with the Viana do Castelo City Hall and HOPE! Respostas Sociais inaugurate CAFÉ MEMÓRIA in Viana do Castelo, with the first session being held this Saturday, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of November. This is another expansion of the CAFÉ MEMÓRIA project outside the Greater Lisbon area. With a little more than a year, this project now has seven meeting places in the country: three in Lisbon, one in Cascais one in Campo Maior, one in Viana do Castelo and one in Porto.

The CAFÉ MEMÓRIA sessions in Viana do Castelo will be held at the 'Camelo restaurant' at Estação Viana Shopping, every fourth Saturday of each month, between 9 and 11 am. This CAFÉ MEMÓRIA is also supported by Cafés Delta and the Delta Gourmet shop.

CAFÉ MEMÓRIA project was created in April 2013, with sessions in Sonae Sierra's Centro Colombo and CascaíShopping shopping centres. In February, through its partnership with Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa, two new CAFÉ MEMÓRIA were created, with sessions taking place at the cafeteria of the S. Roque Museum and Espaço Santa Casa, in Lisbon. More recently, the project reached Campo Maior, through a partnership with the Coração Delta Association and Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Campo Maior, and Porto, thanks to an investment from institutional partners Montepio and Calouste Gulbenkian Foundations, which enabled the initiative to reach the "unvanquished" city.

CAFÉ MEMÓRIA aims at offering meeting places for the sharing of experiences and supporting people with memory problems or dementia, their families and caretakers. The initiative thus aims at contributing to an improved quality of life and less social isolation these people often battle.

Since its launch, 51 sessions were held and the project has had 874 participations, mostly from caretakers and relatives of people with dementia, with the support of a team of 96 volunteers

that dedicated more than 1,500 hours to the project.

**Elsa Monteiro, Sonae Sierra's Sustainability Director**, says that "the arrival of CAFÉ MEMÓRIA in Viana do Castelo, after the recent expansions to Campo Maior and Porto, highlights the success and the relevance of this initiative to patients, their families and caretakers of people with memory or dementia issues."

Looking to the future of the project, Elsa Monteiro adds that "we want to keep extending this initiative to other regions of the country. We're confident of its real and positive impact on people's quality of life, and we're happy to be a facilitating and mobilising agent for this meeting point that already operates in restaurants at three Sonae Sierra shopping centres".

**Ana Taborda, President of the Northern Delegation of Alzheimer Portugal Association:** "It's a great satisfaction to witness the opening of CAFÉ MEMÓRIA in Viana do Castelo, since it's one more service for all caretakers and family members of people with dementia that live in the region covered by the Northern Delegation of the Alzheimer Portugal Association. I'm certain that all participants in these new CAFÉ MEMÓRIA sessions will be treated to a pleasant interaction that enables them to share experiences and find support in a relaxed environment. It is our wish that this project continues to grow and reaches more people, both in the north and other regions of Portugal."

**José Maria Costa, Mayor of Viana do Castelo**, says that in the region "this raging phenomenon is a growing concern, as in the rest of the country. Associated to aging, degenerative diseases have increased exponentially with a high impact on health and social security systems. Therefore, civil society, together with health organisations, is taking a different and more active approach to the causes and consequences of this public health scourge in developed countries.

Thus, the creation of a CAFÉ MEMÓRIA in Viana do Castelo is highly important, since it's a place to meet and share experiences among health professionals, social partners and citizens, to provide emotional support to caretakers and their families, and to fight the stigma this disease carries in the local community.

Besides that, it's important to promote a higher mental health awareness in the population, so as to enable citizens to help themselves and detect problems associated to neurodegenerative conditions early."

**Luís Durães, President of HOPE! Respostas Sociais**, says that CAFÉ MEMÓRIA "is a project that stands out for its ability to respond simultaneously to caretakers and people with dementia. And as important as the information conveyed to participants is the fact that it creates the time and the space to for a moment of sharing. Besides, it has a strong component of volunteer work and everyone's availability is required to make CAFÉ MEMÓRIA happen. These are the reasons that make us embrace this initiative and invest in its implementation in Viana do Castelo".

## **About Café Memória**

The launch of "Café Memória" in Portugal is an initiative of Sonae Sierra and the Alzheimer Portugal Association, and has, since its launch, the support of several institutional partners: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation; Montepio Foundation and the Health and Science Institute of Universidade Católica Portuguesa and as local partners, Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa, Coração Delta Association and Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Campo Maior, now joined by the Viana do Castelo City Hall and HOPE! Respostas Sociais. This network of partners also has the support of Portugália restaurants, NOS, Delta Cafés, Sumol+Compal, Celeiro, CPP, Imago Llorente y Cuenca, the Camelo restaurant and the Delta Gourmet shop at Estação Viana Shopping. The creation of "Café Memória" is part of a larger project - CUIDAR MELHOR, Support for Caretakers of People with Dementia - also launched by the Alzheimer Portugal Association and the aforementioned institutional partners, which also has the support of the municipalities of Cascais, Oeiras and Sintra. The launch of the project in Portugal is part of the social pillar of Sonae Sierra's Sustainability Policy, which includes the implementation of social projects that contribute to the improvement of the well-being and quality of life of Community members and visitors of its Shopping Centres. More information about the project at [www.cafememoria.pt](http://www.cafememoria.pt) and [www.facebook.com/cafememoriapt](http://www.facebook.com/cafememoriapt)

## **About Sonae Sierra**

Sonae Sierra, [www.sonaesierra.com](http://www.sonaesierra.com), is the international Shopping Centre specialist, with a passion for creating innovative shopping experiences. The Company owns 47 shopping centres with a market value of more than €5.9 billion euros, and is present in 4 continents and 14 countries: Portugal, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Brazil, China, Colombia, Germany, Greece, Italy, Morocco, Romania, Russia, Spain and Turkey. Sonae Sierra manages and/or lets 83 Shopping Centres with a total Gross Lettable Area of 2.6 million m<sup>2</sup> and about 8,300 tenants. In 2013, the Company welcomed more than 406 million visits in the Shopping Centres it manages. Currently, Sonae Sierra has 6 projects under development, including 3 for clients, and 4 new projects in pipeline.

## **About ALZHEIMER PORTUGAL**

ALZHEIMER PORTUGAL is a national voluntary organization created 25 years ago to improve the quality of life of people with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia, as well as of their family members and caretakers. As a member of Alzheimer Europe, ALZHEIMER PORTUGAL actively takes part in the global and European movement on dementia, seeking to assemble and disseminate the most recent knowledge on Alzheimer's disease, promoting its study, investigation of its causes, effects and treatment. Currently, Alzheimer Portugal has more than 9,000 members. Visit the association's website at [www.alzheimerportugal.org](http://www.alzheimerportugal.org).