



Portugal 2005

**Antonino Bussandri**

## **Support for social and community development**

Comment Paper, Italy



on behalf of



**European Commission**  
**DG Employment, Social Affairs**  
**and Equal Opportunities**





## Introduction

In our country social themes have been in the middle of Government policies, from the post-war period since today. The results of the choices of political origin have been different: in these 60 years has been created an important net of social protection characterized from a programming attributed to a central level, from different choices (like social pensions) for a big number of people (and not very selective) characterized from high costs, and from an approach (also) very helpful. The social policies have supported the transformation of the country's economy from a rural phase to a phase where the country has had an industrial development and modernizations.

Of course, this has answered also to the necessities of a political kind, and has reduced the tensions that derived from a process of modernization. It's evident that the model of the early 60s and 70s guaranteed. This condition had some good intentions but contributed to create a deeper division between: the north, developed; and the south, made weaker from a hole in the productive system and less workers.

Therefore a system of expensive social protection that brought to a lot of big expenses and to a lot of public debts is the most negative aspect of our country.

More recently (from the mid 80s) we started to change direction. We maintained the attention to social themes, but we started to make lighter the presence of a "public hand" in this field. First of all we transferred some competences and power addresses, and at the end we started to recognize and valorize the presence and the role of the third sector (the volunteers).

Very important is the role and the competences assigned to the local autonomies. In our country the base administrative are the municipalities. These institutions represent the base of the territory government, the first public point where the citizen go to talk with.

In the last 20 years, the axis of the choices and of the programming in social subject has been moved from Rome to the Regions, and (not in a omogenic way) from the Regions to the municipalities, and then to the territory. This situation generated a big variety of behaviors.



One of the fundamental questions that conditioned the results is the financial one (public) and the resources that can take place in the social policies. We read that Portugal was able to give a lot of funds to the social policies development and to the intervention of principal point of crisis. In our country this thing hasn't been possible. The public finances have been risen with a reduction of funds from the Country to the municipalities, and every year there is a revision of models of intervention and programming.

The thing works in this way: with a fundamental law at the end of the year the Government the state finances for the next year and gives the transfers to regions and municipalities.

Local autonomies have to make front to the needs and to the gestion costs of the services with their own private resources. This thing has been possible where the contest made it possible, where the local productive system produces wealth, guaranteeing a transfer to the public administration. Behind this reality data is situated the valorization of the "third sector". In our country in a lot of regions it's mostly catholic.. It's presence it's not the same on the whole territory. Some areas are so deeply involved that they give life to smaller organizations that assume also a very important economic valence. In other cases it's borned to fight actuality emergencies with a lot of difficulties and poor resources.

### **The national criticità**

Italy, like pretty much all the other UE countries, is managing problems of immigration, with the decadation of some urban areas , with the difference of conditions between rural areas and urban ares. It's doing it working with the problems like drugs with some pathologies with social impact, and with a strong topic on legality and territory control, settled in some particular areas.

But it should be localized in the distance between the north and the south of the country. It involves also other countries, but it's particularly strong in ours.

Seems like I understood that something similar is present also in Portugal, but it involves the territory with a development at "leopard spots". In our country, instead, there is a kind of of border that divides the two Italies.



In the year 2004, the Pil of the work unit was at the 86.2% of the centre and nord. The occupation tax in the south is 30% lower of the other two territorial ripartition. And the situation is continuing getting worst: if in the 1980 the occupation in the south was 75.4%, in the 2004 this ratio went down to 69.1%. It doesn't gets better if you see the unemployment taxes, that in the south are three times what they are in the north.

The weakness of the southern work market can be verified even in the ratio to th european countries. The southern taxes of activity, employment and female employment are in the worst of the area. And for what concern the unemployment the only Poland is worst then the south for teen unemployment. For female unemployment our southern region has the first place in Europe. Even talking about innovative capacity the South is soing good: low founds to research and development, low diffusion of internet and dsl are placing the south in a position a lot behind the other ones in Europe.

If the slowing down of the occupation in the 2004 interested Italy, in the Centre Nord, increased its occupation of 187 thousands units but in the South there were 23 thousands less employed. This area of the country is penalized from a slow economic growth conferring that in the south there are less resources then in the North.

A chapter must give a lot of space to the condition of young people that represent the 30% of the population of the South (in Italy young people represent 21% of the whole population). Then, responsible subjects have to give their attention to that part of the country. For this reason we are going to put great attention on other countries' experiences (in this case, Portugal) and our goal is to verify which "recipe" is good for our aim.

### *Ways of intervention*

The main characteristic of EU countries is the will of keeping our land good and wealthy, make disappearing poverty, improve our school system and our medical services, obtaining the best results in these directions.

I'm going to list the main record of cases of our intervention, with the final goal of social inclusion and the assertion of citizenship:

1. First of all the remarkable results of fiscal policies
2. The encouraging results with area programs (engaging economic subjects and Local Administration)



3. Creation of business corporations involving young people, to increase the value of local products
4. Improve Services for employment to help disadvantaged people, connecting demand and offer.

### *Connections*

Many elements in the Measure can be connected to the Italian situation. The order of priorities and the answers given to problems may change but it is interesting the idea of design the projects from the bottom.

Other element of connection is the investments on intervention managers: this has been a neglected issue for too much time.

### *Transferability*

It is surely interesting to involve poor communities in designing a strategy or a project and organizing in societies, true challenge for agents of local development. It is really meaningful the idea of a community that solves its own problems or socioeconomic problems that are under its own control. The question is if a community can truly solve its own social problems, searching solutions and managing them.

### *Questions*

It would be interesting for us to know what happens in Portugal referring to these issues:

1. Is there a confrontation, not only between Institutions and political powers but between social parts (trade unions...) too, sharing possible answers to social problems?
2. It would be interesting to know how the "third sector" is organized (associations, cooperation...) and how it can propose analysis, projects and strategies to Institution and Local Administration?
3. How can the efficiency of Local Autonomies be judge? What is the relation between the center (State) and the Local Autonomies?
4. Does Local Autonomies have their own resources for local policies? Where do they come from? Do they come from local taxes?
5. If resources were inadequate, how do you classify priorities?