

Support Fund for the reception and integration of immigrants and their educational support

Silvia Achille

Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies

1. A brief assessment of the possible relevance of the policy to Italy

In Italy, like in Spain, the high percentage of migrant population residing in the country has not only grown steadily in the last years, but is likely to rise even more in the future. From 2002 till 2007, the number of migrant people residing in Italy doubled, rising from 1,356,590 to 3,432,651 units, including minors, and a high presence of illegal foreign citizens is also estimated.

Migrant communities show a growing will to have a stable residence and this is demonstrated by the figures concerning foreign minors attending Italian schools who, during the year 2007/2008 reached the quota of 574,133 units, that is more or less 6,4% of the total number of students. The most spread nationalities (2007 figures) are Romans, with 625,278 units, Albanians 401,949, and Moroccans, 365,908 units.

This phenomenon clearly affected Italy's welfare system which – being based on a complex system consisting of the central administration, local and regional bodies and social private bodies – needs coordinated interventions.

Considering the similarities existing between the two countries, both characterised by a high decentralisation and by the sharing of competences between the central government and the local authorities, there is no doubt that measures similar to those adopted by the Spanish government could bring good results also to Italy, as for the strengthening of foreigners' social inclusion, through the fostering of interventions fighting discrimination and school abandonment and improving the access to lodgings and social integration, namely for Roma, Sinti and Camminanti communities which don't have a stable residence and still represent a major problem on the Italian territory.

Since the matter of immigration intersects a plurality of fields and competences belonging at the same time to central administrations, regions and local autonomies, the interventions for social integration have to be based on the principal of loyal collaboration between the institutions, both during the ascendant phase concerning the collaborative drawing up of the prior interventions and in the descending phase concerning the activation, monitoring and evaluation of measures for social integration. Italy's administrative organisation gives to the Regions full autonomy as far as social policies and education are concerned. The central government is competent in the field of refugees' right of asylum, juridical condition of non communitarian citizens and entry flows' regulations. Having said that, it is important to remember that through the drawing up of Programmatic Agreements between the central Government and the local Regions, it is possible to allocate funds for the carrying out of coordinated integration policies affecting different sectors, depending on the territorial differences of the various Regions and on the different needs emerged from the territory.

2. A brief assessment of the similarities/differences of the policy with the experience of Italy

Italy, like Spain, is a country of recent immigration, whose management of migratory flows is based on the system of entry quotas (the Government established 170.000 units for 2008). The Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies contributes towards the drawing up of the *triennial planning Document concerning policies for immigration* and foreigners residing on the Government's territory. The new 2009-2011 planning Document is currently under way. Besides, together with other administrations competent in this field, the Government contributes to the planning of the annual entry flows and has a central role both in the preliminary definition of the internal demand for foreign manpower and in the management of migratory flows for work reasons.

Article 3 of the Consolidated Act of the dispositions concerning the regulation of immigration and the norms on foreigners' conditions (Legislative Decree No. 286 on 25 July 1998, and following modifications) foresees that every year the President of the Council of Ministers defines a decree fixing the maximum quota of foreigners to be admitted on the territory - for work reasons - on the basis of both the annual document prepared by the Committee for the Coordination and the Monitoring, and the general criteria indicated in the programmatic document and considering the needs signalled by the Regions.

The **General Direction of Immigration** of the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies deals with migration issues on a double basis: on one hand there is the issue of entries for labour reasons of foreign citizens, on the other hand there are the integration policies. The two aspects have to be kept strongly linked, even because improving legal migration means having better integration in the country of destination.

On the first aspect, the Ministry participates, with other Italian Administrations, in the annual planning procedure of flows and provides for the distribution at a local level and for the monitoring of quotas. In the annual decree of authorised flows, quotas are dedicated to countries who have signed with Italy bilateral agreements for cooperation on frontiers and readmission procedures or for the management of labour flows. Furthermore, the Ministry provide for the setting up of lists of extra-EU citizens who willing to enter in Italy for working reasons and who have attended Italian language courses and vocational training courses in their countries.

In all Italian cooperation activities the Ministry of Labour has been working mainly on two aspects: capacity building, to enable an easy communication flow between the actors involved, through technical assistance activities and IT support to the public offices in the countries of origin in charge for migration policies, and pre-departure programmes to promote legal entries to Italy and create the first step for integration of foreign workers in Italy.

On the second aspect, the Ministry is also responsible for the social integration of migrants in Italy, and an Handbook¹ has been carried out by the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies in order to provide foreign citizens with all practical information they need for integration in Italy.

¹ <http://www.solidarietasociale.gov.it/NR/rdonlyres/9C487793-1ED0-4F8D-B52B-ADF3EFABB465/0/Vademecun2008inItaliano.pdf>

As far as integration policies are concerned, the interventions and the measures concerning foreigners' social integration are carried out by the Regions and by Local Bodies and they have been financed, for 2007, with two different national Funds: the National Fund for Social Policies and the Fund for the social inclusion of migrants.

The national Fund for Social Policies, which amounted to € 1.564.917.148 in 2007, is annually shared between several institutional actors, including the Regions, for which 750 million Euros have been allocated, and the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies, who has to manage € 43.450.208. As for the Regions, they allocate the resources of the Fund to the Municipalities, in order to finance the integrated network of territorial social services. The interventions intended for foreigners' integration are also part of this fund, but since social policies are of exclusive regional competence, there can't be any obligation of using the Fund for all the sectors of intervention. The Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies started up a monitoring system and the results underline a real difficulty in establishing the real entity of the resources of the Fund allocated by local Authorities for the interventions concerning migrants.

Of the quota allocated to the Ministry of Labour, € 7.000.000 are managed by the General Directorate for Immigration – within the Ministry of Labour – which has financed, in 2007, projects promoting Italian language learning through Programmatic Agreements with the Regions, international projects and reception measures in case of extraordinary events. Among these measures, it is important to remember the Agreements stipulated with the Municipalities of Rome, Naples and Reggio Calabria for interventions destined to Roma, Sinti and Camminanti communities, for a total amount of € 2.320.000.

Moreover, about € 2.700.000 are assigned to the activities supporting the Committee for Foreign Minors, an interdepartmental body which is part of the General Directorate for Immigration and which deals with the protection of the rights of non accompanied foreign minors and of minors received on the Italian territory, in accordance with the Convention of New York on the Rights of the Child.

The **Fund for the social inclusion of migrants** was allocated through the governmental Financial Act and amount to 50.000.000€ for 2007. The financial norm instituting such a Fund provided the allocation of the same sum also for 2008 and 2009, but after the sentence of the Constitutional Court which declared its constitutional illegitimacy because of the violation of the principle of the separation of the competences among the central government and the Regions, the Fund was abrogated for the next two annuities.

Through a ministerial directive issued from the Ministry of Labour together with the Department of Equal Opportunities, it has been possible to indicate the general objectives, the guidelines and the sectors of intervention to which the resources are destined: 1) support to the access to lodgings 2) access to lodgings for Roma, Sinti and Camminanti communities 3) reception of foreign pupils 4) reception of pupils belonging to Roma, Sinti and Camminanti communities 5) improvement of second generations' conditions 6) protection of migrant women who risk social marginalization 7) diffusion of the Italian language.

The financial resources were allocated only after the presentation of the projects, co-financed by 10 % of the total amount, to a plurality of actors (Regions, autonomous Provinces, local bodies, associations working for migrants' integration, associations of entrepreneurs, employers and

workers), awarding a prize to those proposals which pursued a high degree of innovation, partnership improvement and testability.

Fund for migrant Social Inclusion

Interventions	n. of financed projects	Euros
Support to the access to lodgings	26	20.013.107,50
Access to lodgings for Roma, Sinti and Camminanti	4	2.636.892,50
Foreign pupils reception	25	1.614.448,07
Reception of Roma, Sinti and Camminanti pupils	5	941.551,93
Second generation development	20	2.920.000
Protection of migrant women risking social marginalisation	11	3.393.367
Diffusion of the Italian language and culture	32	4.980.633
Diffusion of the knowledge of the Constitution, the national legal system and the measures for social inclusion	1	2.000.000
Protection of non accompanied foreign minors	Agreement with Anci	10.000.000
Technical Assistance		1.500.000
Total amount		50.000.000

Besides, it is important to stress the allocation of about € 53.000.000, managed by the **Ministry of Education**, financing projects of schools settled in areas exposed to risk and to huge migration processes. These resources are annually subdivided among the Regional Educational Offices, according to indicators evaluating social aspects and economic difficulties. Among the interventions there are:

1. on the basis of the territorial situation, organisation of schools' staff training;
2. interventions in favour of pupils and their families, even through the creation of networks among schools and of institutional and inter-institutional nets, aiming at implementing local initiatives promoting the reception and the insertion of foreign pupils;
3. interventions promoting reception and integration at school;
4. the creation of groups working to guarantee the continuity of integration and the identification of schools of central importance for the continuity of immigrated pupils integration;
5. the carrying out of collaborative agreements between schools.

The differences between Italian and Spanish systems are mainly two:

The first one is that the Italian system of governance misses a political body regulating the relationship State-Regions in the field of immigration, such as the Higher Immigration Policy Council, which establishes the cooperation "guidelines" for the management of the interventions concerning the reception, the integration and the education of foreigners. In Italy, the Government set up a Unified Conference, joining the Conference State-Regions, the Conference State-City and Local Autonomies, which is working for the promotion of the cooperation between the activity

of the Government and the system of the autonomies and for the examination of the subjects and the tasks of common interest.

Secondly, the difference between the Italian Funds and the Spanish Support Fund, is that the Italian model does not foresee the drafting of an annual Action Plan neither by the single Regions nor by the central Government (but, as said, the new 2009-2011 planning Document is currently under way). The present Italian Government, in office since May 2008, has not yet adopted any guideline concerning foreigners' social integration policies, but still there is the will of acting in concert for the inclusion of migrants, including Roma, Sinti and Camminanti communities. In order to have a starting point on which to build specific interventions in such a field, the Senate promoted a survey which could supply an up-to-date mapping of the situation of these populations on the Italian territory, while the Chamber should bring an organic bill aiming at preserving the characteristics and the distinctiveness of these cultural groups, promoting their real integration in the society of reception.

Moreover, the new *National Reports on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2008-2010* is in its completion phase. It is based on data concerning poverty, and starts from the challenges identified in the Joint Report 2007, in order to develop a strategy for the inclusion of all the disadvantaged sectors of the population, including legal migrants living on the Italian territory. In fact, during the last years the importance of the incidence of poverty in Italy, as in Europe, remained stable, with a wide range of families having low income levels, (in 2006 the National Statistical Institute (ISTAT) found 2.623.000 families in condition of relative poverty, that is 11.1 % of the total resident families, equivalent to 7.537.000 people, that is 12,9 % (13,0 % in 2005) of the whole population).

Together with the definition of the Strategy for Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2008-2010, it is necessary to consider the National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013, which defined the Regional Development Policy for the next six years, which includes – clearly – measures concerning employment and equal opportunities, with special regard to the weak sectors of the population, such as migrants.

The 2007-2013 National Operations Programme about the security for the development of the South of Italy provides, among the operating objectives of the axis II "Spreading Legality", measures aiming at stemming the effects of deviance behaviours (through services destined to the weakest parts of the population), and to spread the importance of legality (also through the recovery and the reconstruction of public spaces). In such a framework, this Administration, in agreement with the Ministry of Domestic Affairs (Authority of Management of the PON) and with the involved regional Administrations, has already shown its will to realise interventions specifically addressed to migrant women, non accompanied foreign minors and Roma, Sinti and Camminanti populations, which will be defined in the following stage intended for the presentation and planning of the guidelines.

3. A brief assessment of the potential transferability of the policy in Italy

Generally speaking, the policy implemented in Spain in the last years for the support to foreigners' integration, turns out to be potentially useful also for Italy, also because of the analogous systems of administrative decentralisation which ensure to the Regions full action autonomy as for social policies.

Still, from the point of view of a coming federalist institutional transformation which has already been launched, a system for the transfer of financial resources from the central administration to local administrations would turn out to be hardly feasible. In recent years welfare policies have already suffered from the impact of this institutional change, which gave rise to a growth in the importance of territorial systems for social protection, while the national level progressively "diminished" and became only a mean for the promotion of processes directed towards national and homogeneous targets related to the protection of the rights of the weakest bands of the population.

Anyway, the approach that might be used nowadays in Italy, should foresee dedicated allocations, directed to the resolution of some critical situations, usually deep-rooted in the main urban centres, such as social alienation of some minorities, as in the case of Roma, or phenomenon of lodgings overcrowding that so often affects migrant populations.

4. Important questions about the policy that are being raised and debated in Italy

Given the importance of the migratory phenomenon affecting Italy in these last years, the governability of the phenomenon on the territory turns out to be rather difficult, because of the lack of financial resources and of tools adequate to facing the real criticalities. As for immigration, the present Government principally dealt with the aspect of security, considered a tool to hinder illegal migration and, consequently, to give legal foreigners adequate supporting measures. In this context the Associations, homogeneously widespread on the whole territory, play a fundamental role for the integration of migrants, through activities supporting labour insertion, administrative and social fulfilments, as well as organising Italian language and professional courses, contributing at partially filling the real need of services for foreigners to which public offices do not manage to meet. The General Directorate for Immigration within the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies, set up a register containing the Associations and Bodies operating in favour of migrants, which receive public funding for the carrying out of their activities.

Nowadays, in Italy, also the linguistic-cultural mediators play a fundamental role in supporting public offices. They carry out their activity in very different sectors – contexts of first reception at school, health services, public security offices, counters for immigration and penitentiary administration - acting as a go-between for the society of reception and the identity of migrants. For the important role that they play in the integration process of foreigners, their support has to be further improved in Italy, creating a normative definition of their professional profile, and allowing their inclusion among social welfare operators.

5. Contribution of such a policy to the objectives and strategy of Italy's National Strategy Reports on Social Protection and Social Inclusion

The migratory phenomenon inevitably influenced the system of Italian social welfare which – being based on a complex structure composed by the central Administration, local and regional bodies and the private social sector – needs co-ordinated interventions. For this reason, in the last years this was one of the prior objectives of the Strategy for the Social Inclusion, which affected all the aspects of foreigners' life and stay in our country: the recognition and accomplishment of their rights (familiar unity, lodging, education, health, citizenship, etc); the promotion of measures fighting all kind of discrimination and exploitation; the strengthening of the culture of reception and the acceptance of "diversity" in the integration processes.

The National Action Plan 2006-2008, after a clear definition of the target groups, one of which constituted by immigrants, indicated a series of prior interventions for the action, all clearly interrelated: fight against monetary poverty, particularly through the support to domestic incomes, fight against inequalities, battle against labour precariousness, and territorial differences, support to the income of unemployed people, incentives to employment (above all women's employment), investments in schools and universities, integration of immigrants, strengthening of the protection for non self-sufficient individuals. In general terms, this will of equity was not considered – in the past biennium – in a separate way from other prior objectives, such as the balancing of public finances and the economic development, consistently with the content of the Lisbon Strategy in which such objectives are just a part of a single project which has to be led ahead coherently.

The new 2008-2010 *National Reports on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion*, which will be soon completed, is going to be an important tool for the complex planning phase, through which Italy wants to reform its own social welfare model, establishing three prior objectives: a plan for the extreme poverties and for people who do not have a stable lodging, a plan for supporting needy families, and a plan for supporting the birth-rate.

Although the Report does not specifically mention the immigrant citizens as target of the interventions, a policy promoting the inclusion and the social integration of migrants, similar to the one adopted by Spain, might be considered, at least in part, as a mean to put the first two objectives in concrete form. It is beyond argument that extreme poverty is a widely spread problem among migrant citizens, together with social alienation and with the lack of adequate lodgings.

To conclude, also the governance adopted by Spain for the management of integration policies seems to converge with the intention expressed in the new Report, that is the formulation of an open method of internal coordination through which – also for areas regulated by decentralised competences – it would be possible to define common objectives and national targets, to share the strategies for the funding of the actions, to establish processes of monitoring and control of the achieved results and even to exchange best practices, and not only during the traditional Conference State - Regions.

6. How success of policies in this field is measured in Italy

Since the concept of integration transversely links very different aspects, evaluating its condition is inevitably a difficult task. In Italy, this task has been carried out by the National Council for Economics and Labour, which includes the *National Coordination Organism for Social Integration Policies of Foreigners*, which, in collaboration with the Caritas, published, in March 2008, the V° Report on the Migrant Integration Index in Italy². The analysed phenomenon, being of merely "qualitative", has been analysed taking into account the so-called aggregated data, concerning three factors: the polarisation, the social stability and the working insertion. (data referring to 2004).

Moreover, the ISMU Foundation - Initiatives and Studies on Multi-Ethnicity is preparing an INTEGROMETER (Indicator, or Thermometer, of the Integration Level), that is to say an instrument that will be made available in order to determine immigrants' integration level, using individual data, based on surveys.

Research on integration indicators in Italy has been developed in the last years and has produced ideal indicators and some first measurements of a few specific aspects of integration. However research on indicators faced and continues to face different problems. First of all, the available data and the statistical material appeared for a long time unfit to construct a large number of indicators, which we actually need, due to the complexity of the notion of integration. This concept is very difficult to define uniquely, and it calls for an adequate information system. The situation has improved now, but it is still lacking. Moreover, given the large presence of irregular immigration in Italy for which there is no official data available, but only estimates, it is in any case impossible to identify appropriate data on immigration in Italy.

The lack of data on irregular migrants affects the reach of indicators of integration as well. So, the idea of the ISMU Foundation is that integration cannot easily be described with just aggregated indicators, based on statistics. We propose a different approach based on individual indicators, that is on surveys.

The ISMU Foundation has a multi-year experience in promoting surveys (by probabilistic samples) on migrant both in the Lombardia region and at national level. It is now promoting a new national survey including 20,000 sample units nearly, in order to collect some relevant individual characteristics to gain information about the level of integration of citizens of so called "High migration pressure countries" living in Italy.

By this survey it will be possible to measure immigrants' integration according to territorial differences and to socio-demographic characteristics such as: gender, age, civil status, religion, job, etc.

²[http://www.portalecnel.it/portale/documenti.nsf/0/C1256BB30040CDD7C125730E004A8727/\\$FILE/V%20Rapporto%20indici%20di%20integrazione.pdf](http://www.portalecnel.it/portale/documenti.nsf/0/C1256BB30040CDD7C125730E004A8727/$FILE/V%20Rapporto%20indici%20di%20integrazione.pdf)

7. Key issues and main questions proposed for debate at the review meeting

- Is there any provided intervention for Roma's integration? Of what kind?
- Do Regions have a real will to collaborate and politically converge on foreigners' integration?
- Does the Government have a system for the monitoring of the actions adopted by local Autonomies? If yes, is it effective?
- How the problem of non accompanied foreign minors is usually managed?