

Update from the Piemonte group

The Italian and European perspective

The history of migration is a long-standing reality as is man's restlessness and his desire to be permanently on the move looking for better living conditions. This has generated massive migrations that have gradually reshaped the map of the planet.

Apart from being an aid to one's memory, the numbers involved in migration can also help us to have a better understanding of what is happening today.

Beginning with the 2014 figures, there is a definite increase in worldwide mobility. Of the 60 million forced migrants in today's world, 86% took refuge in developing regions. Turkey is the foremost country in the world for the number of refugees (1.5 million), and with Pakistan, Lebanon and Iran, have taken in 36%.

10% reaches Europe, and of these only 3% arrives in Italy .

In Italy, there is a sharp falling-off in the arrival of **economic migrants** and an increase in departures of long-time immigrants to other foreign destinations. On the other hand, here in Italy we are witnessing an increase in the arrival of **forced migrants**.

Where Italy is concerned, there has been an increase in the exit of young Italians and the unemployed to other European countries. The number of Italian emigrants abroad, estimated at more than **4,600,000**, is coming close to the number of immigrants in Italy, estimated at over **5 million**.

Arrivals by sea: it should be noted that in 2014, 170.081 people arrived on the coasts and ports in Southern Italy - three times the number of landings in the years 2012, 2013 (56,192). Of these, **66,000** were in Italy at the end of 2014.

The nationalities of the persons landing were specifically:

Syria(42,425, almost quadrupled compared to 2013)

Eritrea (34 329, more than tripled compared to 2013)

Mali (9,908, almost a 10-fold increase compared to 2013)

Nigeria (9,000, quadrupled compared to 2013)

Gambia (8,691, quadrupled)

¹□ Among sources used, this contribution used the information provided by the speakers at meetings of the Piemonte group in preparation for the 2016 international conference:
S. DURANDO, *The Year of Mercy. Welcome as a concrete gesture of mercy*, prepared by the Office for the Pastoral Care of Migrants, Diocese of Turin, 2016.
F. Chittolina, *Migration, between a weak memory and an uncertain future*, 2016.

Palestine (6,017)

Somalia (5,756, almost doubled)

Senegal (4,933, quadrupled)

Bangladesh (4,386)

Egypt (4,095 almost doubled).

Comparing the countries of departure and countries of origin, it can be seen that the majority has made a long journey from Syria to Libya, from Eritrea and Somalia to Libya, from the Atlantic coasts of West Africa (Senegal and Gambia) to Libya, from sub-Saharan Africa (Mali and Nigeria) to Libya.

The ten main countries of origin are in a war situation (Syria, Palestine, Somalia, Eritrea, Mali), guerrilla warfare (Nigeria), or experiencing political and religious persecution.

Turning to 2015, the increasing forced migration in the world is as follows:

2012: 45 million

2013: 51 million

2014: 60 million

2015: 60 million

In 2015, arrivals in Italy fell by 9.3%

The data on landings on the Italian coast belie the scaremongering re migration pressure on the Italian borders. Of the 153,842 arrivals in Italy in 2015, about 80,000 remained in the reception centres.

A change of route: for every person landing in Italy five landed in Greece. Since 1 January 2015, **325,000** people have entered our country. Of these, **more than 200,000** continued their journey.

In 2015, 48% of applicants were granted a document of international protection (compared to 60% in 2014) while 52% were refused (37% in 2014). 5% are political refugees, 14% subsidiary protection, and 29% humanitarian.

Again in 2015, a change of route can be seen:

Eritrea (38,612, with an increase of 10% compared to 2014),

Nigeria (21,886),

Somalia (12,176, more than doubled)

Sudan (8,909, tripled compared to 2014)

Gambia (8,123)

Syria (7,444, 6 times less than last year's number where it topped the list among the nationalities disembarking);

Senegal and Bangladesh (a little over 5,000);

A decrease in the number of people from **Mali** (5,752, almost halved).

Reception

The reception centres in Italy for applicants for asylum or international protection are: **CARA** – a reception centre for asylum seekers (8,000 places), **SPRAR** - protection System for asylum seekers and refugees (21,000 places). Those remaining are placed in **CAS**, Special Reception Centres).

Today there are about 105,000 people in reception centres in Italy (*SPRAR, CARA, CAS*).

Of the 8,000 or so people who have been accepted in Piemonte, 3,500 are in Church structures.

There is a lack of structures and co-ordinating agencies, and the limitations of some institutions has been recognised.

21,000 people have been accepted in church structures (CAS and SPRAR) in 1,600 facilities with widespread acceptance..

2,000 people have been received gratis by parishes.

Of the 105,000 persons who have been welcomed:

8,000 are in the 8 existing **CARA** centres("reception monsters")

21,000 in SPRAR (only 450 of the 8,000 local councils have joined SPRAR).

80,000 are in CAS (the special reception centres): these were set up based on an agreement between the State and the Regions.

Asylum seekers can expect a waiting period of 12-18 months for a reply from the Territorial Commissions to their request for protection. The equivalent time is spent in reception centres.

When considering the classification of the refugee, it is important to remember that public opinion identifies the exile in the individual, mostly a man, protesting against dictatorships and is looking elsewhere for a free and safe place where he can express his ideas.

But today, the reasons why thousands of people are requesting refugee status are not only opposition to tyranny, which continues to exist in many countries; their numbers have increased and in many cases involve women who are persecuted as women because of archaic, degrading and inhuman customs and public opinion is not always outraged when faced with acts of real torture and slavery.

Their number is increasing more than one might think and more than is being taken into account by organisations responsible for examining recognition of the right to asylum.

In fact, there is a submerged violence against women due to fear, shame in speaking about the abuses suffered, the indifference of States and sometimes even International Bodies and the citizens of the host countries who consider, based on respect for traditions, that their subjugation and the deprivation of their rights is lawful.

It took several decades with different legal and often conflicting interpretations to recognise that the specific persecutions of women were a valid reason to obtain refugee status. This left the applicants in absolute uncertainty about their fate.

Minors

Some numbers. In 2014: 13,000. In 2015: 11,000

Children must be integrated into SPRAR. Today, only 1,000 are in the Protection System. About 6,000 have disappeared and the rest are with the adults in CAS.

MIGRANTS AS A RESOURCE

According to the 2015 Report of the Della Leone Moressa Foundation, "The Value of Immigration", foreigners in Italy have produced **8%** of the national wealth, an overall figure of more than **123 billion euro**.

Of the 5 million foreigners living in our country, 2.4 million are employed, that is 10.8% of the total.

The last OECD report states that only 15% of jobs in high growth sectors was occupied by 1 migrant for every 6-7 workers against 1 in 4 in the lower sectors which are mainly abandoned by Westerners.

In Italy in 2014, the percentage of **foreign labour** (regular) reached almost **11%** (10.8), well above the EU average (7.07%), and ahead of the other powers in the Old Continent:

The United Kingdom (9.7%), Germany (9.3%) and France (5.30%).

The percentage of non-Italian workers in the total labour force has more than doubled over ten years; its initial figure in 2004 was just above 4%.

While in countries such as the UK, Germany and in part Spain, the foreign employment trend follows the general tendency of the labour market, in **Italy** it takes a different path compared to the trajectory of the native workforce. The nature of the demand expressed by the Italian economic and productive system in the specific case of foreign workers, is almost inundated by **low-skill** competence given the substantial absence of immigrant personnel with the necessary high-level technical and professional skills.

Italians and foreigners are doing very different jobs. **31.3%** of non-EU residents deal with **collective services and people** (the main area) while only 5.2% of Italians are employed in this sector. There are almost similar figures for **Industry**, which employs **20% Italians** and 19% non-EU citizens. **Industry** is followed by catering, retailing, the building trade and agriculture. In **construction work**, the presence of immigrant workers is structural and historical, especially in the building sector where foreigners are **16.7%** of the entire workforce: there are almost 250 thousand workers (50 thousand less than the given pre-crisis figures).

MIGRANTS AS A RESOURCE BOTH IN ITALY AND THE EU

According to Eurostat data, by 2050, 28% of the population in Europe will be of retirement age. The report which measures the "dependence" of the over 65 year olds with those who are actively working (15-64) will increase from 27.8% to 50.1%. This means there will only be **2 potential workers for every pensioner** compared to today's 4 active workers.

Italy will have 20 million older people whose pension will depend on the contributions paid by less than 38 million people of working age.

The OECD data shows that immigrant families contribute most to the public budget, due to the high rates of employment and a different demographic structure.

8.5% of total taxpayers in Italy were born abroad with 63.5% of them paying a net tax.

Among the 5 million foreigners, taxpayers in 2013 represent **72% (3.5 million)** who have paid about 16.5 billion euro into the Italian state coffers against 12.6 billion euro spent in the same year for the foreign population. This is (1.57% of public expenditure) and shows a positive balance of about **4 billion euro**. Official figures confirm that already today there are over **620 thousand old people** who owe their pensions to the salaries of immigrants.

When considering the profile of religious differences, one must keep in mind that migrants of Islamic tradition are upholders of different characteristics in the exercise of their faith. This means there can be no generalisation either in the attitude in the reception centres nor in the criteria for identifying ways for their integration.

It follows that the self-styled cultural mediation is not only an indispensable tool but also an appropriate one.

Migrants “Actors in Development”: Propensity for Entrepreneurship

According to data published by Unioncamere in 2015, **businesses headed by immigrants** have increased by 19% in the last three years.

At the end of September 2015, the group of businesses headed by foreigners reached **546 thousand** units.

Their contribution to Italy is a yearly **94 billion euro, 6.5%** of the national added value.

Between July and September 2015, **companies led by immigrants** advanced at a rate that was **four times higher than** the rest of the productive fabric (+ 1.51% against +0.34%), contributing to **40% of the growth** achieved by the entire Italian entrepreneurial system.

These are mainly individual companies with owners from India (+ 25.8%), Bangladesh (+ 21.1%) and Pakistan (+ 20.3%). One in four companies is run by an under 35 year-old, compared to 10% of all Italian companies.

The EU national policies on immigration are clear. Recently, we have seen an escalation of border closures aimed at a domino effect with each country believing it is protecting itself more effectively from the closures made or threatened by its neighbour. This is an escalating dynamic as shown by the seemingly temporary exceptions to the Schengen Treaty on the free movement at internal EU borders.

It started with Central European countries, such as Hungary and Poland, who show a very short memory vis-à-vis the restrictions suffered at their frontiers only about twenty years ago. They have been joined by countries with long democratic traditions, such as Sweden and Finland and parts of France, while particularly vulnerable countries such as Italy and Greece, have rightly resisted the temptation to close their borders.

These ingredients have formed an explosive mixture, whose burning fuse in the so-called "sovereign" EU states, threatens to explode in the heart of the EU institutions that are accused of not dealing with the problems caused by migration and not finding quick and effective solutions.

The migration phenomenon is not an economic matter, but a long-term structural reality for at least another twenty years. Europe's dwindling demographic growth compared to the rest of the world, due to differences in birth rates, means that our continent will require a "supplement" of population to support the economy and welfare.

We must start from these two premises to try and devise the future European common migration policy and begin by reminding people that this policy is non-existent at present: to build such a programme is a complex undertaking, opposed by alleged national "sovereignty" policies.

The complexity of the undertaking requires that other long-awaited fundamental common policies be set in motion simultaneously: economic policy, foreign and security policy supplemented by international cooperation and a fiscal policy, while at the same time anticipating the realisation of a structured European welfare.

Once this confidence in the future has been fuelled, then one can have a balanced view of guidelines in the current maze of cultural and political positions, starting with our attitude towards migrants. They can be used then as a lever in designing the new Europe, transforming the drama of migration from a reason to build new walls into a "leverage" of the new European Union.

To sum up:

Today, migrants do not move from south to north but also and frequently from east to west;
A considerable part of today's migration is also towards poor areas;
We need to start with the consideration that we are already in a multicultural society and the great challenge is transition to the so-called inter-culture,
Often it is difficult to identify the legal means most appropriate for achieving the intercultural objective because of being too busy barring foreigners;
While looking for a solution, it must be acknowledged that the issue is structural and long lasting;
We need to reflect more and better on the demographic imbalance: recognise in a concrete way that we need immigrants;
In a European community perspective, give the EU new powers, abandon the myth of the national state and acquire a real common foreign policy that no longer accepts the predominance of national sovereignty.

The words of Pope Francis (Sunday 6 September 2015)

“Faced with the tragedy of tens of thousands of refugees who flee death from war and hunger and who have begun a journey moved by hope for survival, the Gospel calls us to be ‘neighbours’ of the smallest and the abandoned and to give them concrete hope. It is not enough to say *take heart, be patient!* Christian hope has a fighting spirit, with the tenacity of one who goes towards a sure goal”.

“Often we are drawn up and closed in ourselves, and we create many inaccessible and inhospitable islands,” pointing out that “even the most basic human relationships can sometimes create realities incapable of reciprocal openness: the closed in couple, the closed in family, the closed in group, the closed in parish, the closed in country; this is not from God, it is our sin”.