



NATIONAL INTEGRATION PLAN

FOR PERSONS ENTITLED TO INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

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PREAMBLE

Constitutional Values and integration

Immigration has profoundly changed the appearance of Western societies, making it a priority for European governments to measure themselves with new instruments regarding the management of cultural and religious pluralism which today necessarily characterises the contexts of migrants' reception: in this sense, the governance of immigration must also become the governance of integration.

This reality has caused two questions to emerge. The first pertains to the capacity of the State to guarantee a dignified existence to those who request refuge in Italy, where dignity means the effectiveness of the constitutionally recognised rights.

This is the basis for the first National Plan for the Integration of Persons Entitled to International Protection. A plan whose common thread is that of providing concrete measures of support and inclusion in favour of persons entitled to international protection.

Holders of international protection shall be entitled to the essential rights that descend from their status, which must correspond, as with any Italian citizen, to just as many duties and responsibilities in order to guarantee an orderly and civil coexistence.

The second question, which is just as important, concerns the capacity of the State to govern in a balanced manner the delicate relationship between local communities and migrants, finding a balance between the rights of those who are received and those who receive.

This means that accepting those who come from a different culture and tradition not only entails providing enough capacity within the national reception system across the country, but also developing interventions that are aimed at facilitating inclusion within the broader society and adhesion to its values.

A number of attempts to impose social integration simply by means of new legislation have not worked. Obliging people to some form of cultural assimilation, in fact, brings the risk of causing

processes of de-culturization of foreigners provoking, especially in the second and third generations, the perception of being excluded from the public discourse.

The model of integration proposed here is inspired by what is provided by the 1948 Italian Constitution, which leaves the regulation of relationships between the State and religious faiths to a process of reciprocal understanding. The Constituent, consistently with the principles sanctioned in article 2, supports a logic of open dialogue and exchange with minorities of all kind, a precious paradigm for today's governance of integration of foreign residents.

However, any dialogue or interaction, in order to be authentic and effective, must be based on a common language and defined principles. In order for there to be real communication, it is necessary that the interlocutors agree on the rules of the shared language: in this case these are represented by the guiding principles and values of the Republican Constitution, a non-negotiable pillar upon which our citizenship pact is founded.

The keystone of this pact is certainly represented by article 3 of the Constitution which, in recognising the equal social dignity and equality before the law of all those who reside in Italy, ensures that integration leads, alongside the holding of the same rights, to the obligation to respect the same duties and the assumption of the same responsibilities. Therefore, not simply a commitment to respect Italian laws, but also a commitment to learn the language and to participate in the economic, social and cultural life of the Country.

In particular, proper integration has to be based on a full and sincere adhesion to the principle of gender equality, the respect for the secularity of the State – conceived as freedom of conscience and separation between religious and political authority – as well as the respect for personal freedom.

Equality must be the main guiding principle around which the action of the State must be designed, in a logic of subsidiarity and faithful collaboration between the centre and the periphery. In fact, a well-structured national strategy cannot but involve all the levels of government.

This approach, therefore, designs a systematic multi-level and multi-sectoral action to which Regional governments, local authorities and civil society have to contribute to, through increased coordination, to allow the full inclusion of foreigners within the host community.

However, in order for this to happen, the Italian integration strategy must also be sustainable. This will only be possible if the presence of foreigners is fairly distributed across the country. For this reason, Italy has opted for a shared model of reception, aimed at de-congesting the large migrants reception centres and supporting smaller reception centres under the Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees system (SPRAR), managed directly by local municipalities.

The Italian urban fabric undoubtedly favours this strategy of integration, to the extent that - differently from other European countries where immigration is an older phenomenon - most Italian

local communities do not present examples of mono-ethnic quarters, isolated from the surrounding social fabric.

This state of affairs favours the possibility of governing current migratory flows by spreading smaller numbers of foreigners across the national territory. However, even this model of integration cannot ignore the actual hosting capacity of specific local areas, which is not unlimited. The arrival and residence on Italian soil needs to be rigorously framed in a context of legality, since it is clear that the current irregular, large inflow of people - and the emergency response to it - have negative repercussions on the possibilities of integration.

Strong and effective policies on integration are, on the other hand, essential in order to guarantee social stability and security: security, in fact, is not only public order, but is also - above all - social cohesion, the perception of being secure within one's own community.

This is the essence of the Italian model on integration: aiming to build an instrument to instil a sense of attachment and responsibility towards the local community of residence, which is the strongest antibody able to prevent and neutralize the phenomena of radicalization.

An important precedent in this direction is represented by the "Charter of Values of Citizenship and Integration" adopted by the Ministry of Interior in 2007. The Charter aimed to respond to the growing cultural diversity that, in Italy like in the rest of Europe, required for a new type of social pact able to recognize the principles of respecting the law and the local culture, together with respecting and promoting cultural differences.

The National plan for integration of persons entitled to international protection constitutes a further milestone in the governance of integration, specifically in relation to the inclusion of those who have already obtained recognition of the right of asylum or of subsidiary protection.

The path proposed by this Plan concerns the commitment of a number of institutions and private parties in a plurality of contexts, from two priority axes: on the one hand on interreligious and intercultural dialogue, on the other on language training and access to the educational system.

The promotion of intercultural and interreligious dialogue entails the creation of new opportunities for reciprocal exchange within local communities, as well as between the communities and the broader society, also for the purpose of preventing and countering the spread of racism and, in particular, Islamophobia. Communities of worship - which need to be open in nature - can be the places to implement most policies on integration.

In this, Italy already boasts a good practice. The National Pact for an Italian Islam, is an expression of an open, integrated community, which adheres to the values and principles of the national legal system, and was signed in February 2017.

The document represents a decisive paradigm shift in the governance of integration: in fact, from a methodological point of view, it re-proposes the central values of the Constitution aimed at a reciprocal assumption of responsibility, and it does not result from a legal imposition but from an agreement involving almost all of the associations and communities representing Muslims in Italy.

The Pact provides, inter alia, a series of clear undertakings in the path of integration. Among these it is of fundamental importance to train a class of recognised imams who conduct their sermons in Italian and who shall be in a position to ward off the dangerous phenomenon of "do-it-yourself preachers". As this Plan also reaffirms, the Pact establishes that mosques shall be open to the participation of all citizens, in such a manner as to favour mutual knowledge, as well as providing transparency and information on the birth of new communities, and their sources of funding, both internal and international.

The second area of intervention of this National Plan, essential to the good success of any policy of integration, is represented by a new focus on language training which - for the youngest - is achieved through early access to the education system. Language is the first crucial tool for an effective exchange with the host community: without the knowledge of the local language there can be no integration and no participation in the civil, working and social life of the community. The education system, furthermore, in its universal and free existence, represents for young refugees the natural path for the full insertion into Italian society and for the possible attainment of citizenship.

Along with these two fundamental areas of interest, the integration strategy defined by the Plan considers a priority the socio-economic integration, based on access to employment, of international protection holders. To the extent in which it is work that makes the person an active part of the economic and social system of the community. On this, however, in order to design sustainable interventions, it is necessary to stimulate positive synergies between public actors and the private sector at the local level.

The Plan underscores, moreover, the necessity of making health care assistance available to all, with particular regard to the needs of the most vulnerable categories. Similarly, it is indispensable that all institutional actors responsible for those applying for international protection guarantee, at the time of recognition of the status, the necessary support for their exit from the national reception system, in particular with regards to housing.

Ultimately, the Plan recognises, among the positive factors supporting integration, the fulfilment of the right to family unity, and therefore, to reunification.

Finally, improving the general information and orientation to socio-economic services, in particular by means of the local democracy and social participation, are pivotal to allow persons entitled to international protection full enjoyment of the constitutionally guaranteed rights.

INTRODUCTION

The Legislative Decree of February 21st 2014, no. 18, provides that the National Coordination Mechanism on Immigration (*Tavolo di Coordinamento Nazionale*), chaired by the Ministry of Interior, prepares every two years a National Plan of interventions and measures aimed at favouring the integration of persons benefiting from international protection.¹ In detail, the National Integration Plan "*identifies the lines of intervention for the effective integration of persons entitled to international protection, with particular regard to socio-economic and employment inclusion, by promoting specific programmes reinforcing access to employment, access to healthcare and social assistance, housing, language training and education as well as combating discrimination. The Plan needs to indicate an estimate of the recipients of the measures of integration, as well as the implementation measures based on programming pertinent to European funds and programmes*".

The characteristic that distinguishes persons entitled to international protection from other migrants is detectable in the prevalence of imperatives of a non-economic nature that force them to flee from their daily lives. Furthermore, they do not enjoy the protection of their country of origin and they must recommence their life in a new country, without the possibility of choosing whether to return home, at least in the short term. In consideration, therefore, of the condition of initial disadvantage and of particular vulnerability, the integration of international protection holders requires specific measures with respect to what is provided more generally for other foreign residents in Italy. Thus our legislation, in implementation of the provisions regarding social integration provided in article 42 of the Consolidated Law on Immigration (*Testo Unico Immigrazione* - legislative decree no. 286 of 1998), provides that, in the provision of the services envisaged by the *National Migrants Reception System*, account must be taken "*also of the integration needs of the persons benefiting from international protection promoting, within the limits of the resources available, every initiative adequate to overcome the condition of disadvantage determined by the*

1 Legislative Decree 18/2014, Art. 1, paragraph 1: "*For the purposes of planning of the interventions and measures aimed at favouring the integration of beneficiaries of international protection, the National Coordination Mechanism on Immigration, chaired by the Ministry of Interior - Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration, prepares, moreover, every two years, a national Plan which identifies the lines of intervention in order to realise the effective integration of the beneficiaries of international protection [...]*".

loss of protection of the Country of origin and to remove the obstacles which de facto impede full integration²."

This explains the necessity for a document exclusively dedicated to persons entitled to international protection, to define a common strategy and identify effective instruments to promote their full integration within the economic and social system in Italy.

The Plan, by explicit legislative provision, focuses exclusively on international protection holders. However, the interventions suggested here may be considered a first step toward building an integrated and inclusive system for all foreigners legally residing in Italy.

The National Coordination Mechanism on Immigration (*Tavolo di Coordinamento Nazionale*), chaired by the Ministry of Interior, Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration, availing itself of a specific technical working group coordinated by the Central Directorate for Immigration and Asylum Policies, coordinated the elaboration of this Plan, developed with the full collaboration of all members represented in the Tavolo Nazionale: the Ministry for the Interior, the Ministry for Employment, Welfare and Social Policies, the Regional Governments, the Union of the Italian Provinces (UPI), the National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI), The National Anti-Racial Discrimination Office of the Department for Equal Opportunities within the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, the National Commission for the right of asylum, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

To strengthen the inter-institutional cooperation considered a key element for the future implementation of the Plan, the technical working group broadened the participation in the technical working group to the Ministry for Health, the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the State-Regions Conference, and to civil society, represented by the National Asylum Board. Finally, it was considered important to guarantee the direct engagement of international protection holders. For this purpose, UNHCR organised a series of focus groups, distributed across the country.

The Document elaborated by the aforementioned Technical Working Group constitutes the fundamental reference for this first National Integration Plan.

The Plan is aimed at all the actors committed in the sector of immigration and integration in Italy and aims to be a document of reference which identifies new lines of intervention.

The first objective is to coordinate all existing initiatives and programs, identifying clear priorities of action for the two-year period (September 2017-September 2019), while promoting the implementation of new policies and programmes. The main goal is to equip the entire system with

² Art. 29, paragraph 2, Legislative Decree no. 251/07, amended by the recent Legislative Decree no. 18/2014.

specific priorities, as well as guidelines, and engaging all stakeholders, (central government, local bodies, and civil society) in the Plan's implementation.

This being the first National Plan of this kind, it was decided to focus on the improvement of the current reception and post-reception system, designing responses to the immediate challenges and seeking to improve the general governance of a national "integration system".

The principles which have guided the development of this Plan are:

- 1. Integration is a complex process which starts from the first reception and has as its main objective the attainment of personal autonomy.**
- 2. Integration requires the engagement and awareness raising of the host population and must be based in local communities, and integrated in the existing local welfare.**
- 3. Specific attention will be dedicated to persons with greater vulnerability, such as refugee women, victims of trafficking and unaccompanied foreign minors.**

The priorities contained in the Plan are not exhaustive in responding to the multiple needs of the complex process of integration of holders of international protection in Italy. They represent, however, a significant step towards the design of the tools and services for socio-economic inclusion, to be updated and strengthened on the basis of the lessons learned during the implementation of this first national plan.

Integration requires time, energy and specific competencies, specifically because it concerns many areas of intervention which must directly engage all the national, regional and local administrations, and which requires financial resources which must be used in an effective manner.

A. The legislative framework

Article 2 of the Italian Constitution "*recognises and guarantees the inviolable rights of the person, and requires the fulfilment of the inderogable duties of political, economic and social solidarity*", while article 10 recognises that "*the foreigner who shall be impeded in his own country from the effective exercise of the democratic liberties guaranteed by the Italian Constitution, has the right of asylum in the territory of the Republic*".

One of the opening provisions of the Consolidated Law on Immigration, in terms of planning and implementation of national migratory policies, provides that, in the context of the respective competencies and budgetary allocations, the Regional governments and local authorities "*adopt the measures contributing to the pursuit of the objective of removing the obstacles which de facto*

impede the full recognition of the rights and interests granted to foreigners in the territory of the State, with particular regard to those inherent in accommodation, the language, social integration, in the respecting of the fundamental rights of the human person" (art. 3, paragraph 5). Art. 4-bis has envisaged for the first time the signing of an integration agreement, with which a true and proper pact between the State and the foreign citizen is ratified, and that reciprocally acknowledges the fulfilment of rights and duties of both parties. This rule establishes that "integration represents that process aimed at promoting the coexistence of Italian and foreign citizens, respecting the values ratified by the Italian Constitution, with the reciprocal commitment to participate in the economic, social and cultural life of society".

The same principle is developed in the "*Bill of values of citizenship and integration*" of the Ministry of Interior, which underlines the importance of respecting values and duties: "*Italy is committed so that each person from the first moment that he/she finds him/herself on Italian soil may enjoy the fundamental rights, without distinction of gender, ethnicity, religion and social conditions. At the same time, every person who lives in Italy must respect the values upon which society is founded, the rights of others, the duties of solidarity required by the law. This responds to a Unitarian concept of citizenship and coexistence among the various national, ethnic and religious communities in view of a path of integration founded upon the equality of the rights and duties for citizens and immigrants, which reconciles the respect of the differences of culture and of lawful and positive behaviour in respect of common values. It is necessary to better identify the expectations of migrants, to define their rights, to indicate the values and duties which all must abide by for the realisation of full integration and to promote a harmonious coexistence of the different communities of immigrants and communities of faith in Italian society, while respecting the Constitution and the laws of the Republic*".

According to the Common Fundamental Principles of the EU's Integration Policy, integration is "*a dynamic and bilateral process of mutual adjustment on the part of all the immigrants and all the residents of the Member States of the European Union*" which, on one hand, "*entails the respecting of the fundamental values of the EU*" and, on the other, the "*safeguarding of the practices of the various cultures and religions*" in which "*access to public and private services and institutions, is equal to national citizens and happens in a non-discriminatory manner*" is crucial, and "*the frequent interaction of immigrants and citizens of the Member States is fundamental*".

Also, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the process of integration of refugees is an "*articulated and dynamic bidirectional process, which requires the commitment of all concerned parties, including the preparation on the part of the refugees to adapt themselves to the society that receives them. The process of integration is complex and gradual, it presents distinct but interconnected economic, social and cultural dimensions, which are all important for the possibility of refugees to integrate themselves with success as fully included members of society*".

B. The recipients of integration services in Italy

In Italy, at the end of 2016, there were 65,765 holders of a residence permit for international protection, (this includes refugees as well as subsidiary protection). By August 31st 2017 this number had increased to 74,853 people, for whom this Plan aims to provide full paths for socio-economic inclusion, with the overarching goal of supporting them in achieving personal autonomy.

On August 31st 2017, **196,285 people** were present in the national migrants reception system, the majority of them requesting asylum, for whom recent legislative changes have introduced the possibility of participation in volunteer social activities in favour of local communities to favour integration. On August 31st 2017, an additional **18,701 unaccompanied foreign minors** were being hosted in specialized centres for minors.

However, it is important to highlight how in recent months a scenario of decreasing migratory flows has emerged. This is due in part to recent political decisions, including the bilateral agreement between the Italian government and the government of Libya for the control of migratory flows, the agreement with a number of Mayors of Libyan Municipalities and the recently implemented cooperation agreements with a number of transit countries.

1. MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

1.1 Institutional Competencies regarding integration: a multilevel network

Public services aimed at the integration of migrants in Italy are structured around a system which can be defined as a "*polycentric network of services*". The legislator has explicitly recognised the role of numerous institutional actors involved in the processes of integration. Art. 42 of the Consolidated Law on Immigration³ expressly provides that the State, regions, local authorities, in collaboration with civil society organizations working in this field, favour the integration of foreign citizens who legally reside in Italy. This richness of actors, recently recalled by numerous European Union policy documents calling for a system of multilevel governance, is the product of the long history and the social capital of our country, characterised by a rich presence of local identities and autonomy, intermediate bodies, and elements of civil society which take the responsibility for the fulfilment of community needs.

At central level, competencies in the sector of immigration and integration are split among several institutions:

The *Ministry of the Interior* is directly responsible for verifying and issuing residence permits and combating irregular immigration, as well as for providing orientation services for all new citizens. It is responsible for the services of first reception of asylum seekers, and directly manages the system for international protection, the reception system for unaccompanied foreign minors and the European Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). It supports the government in planning incoming flows of migrant workers and coordinates the Territorial Councils for Immigration, organs of connection between the central government and local authorities. The Ministry of Interior hosts the National Coordination Mechanism (***Tavolo di Coordinamento Nazionale***). This multi-sectoral council was established in order to favour more effective planning and coordination of all stakeholders and is composed by local and central departments that are competent in

3 Legislative Decree 25 July 1998, no. 286, "*Consolidated Law of the provisions concerning the governance of immigration and rules concerning the condition of the foreigner*".

the sector of integration and migratory policies. This body is tasked with the governance of the services of reception and integration of migrants.

The *Ministry of Labour and Social Policies* is responsible for policies of socio-economic and employment inclusion of (which it designs and implements in collaboration with the Regional administrations and Local authorities), for protection of unaccompanied foreign minors, as well as for the annual planning of incoming flows of working migrants (work permits).

The *Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development* has specific responsibilities regarding the issuing of visas, family reunification and the recognition of the foreign titles of migrants.

The *Ministry of Justice* is responsible for the system of appeals concerning international protection as well as supporting foreign minors who have entered into the prison system through the Department of Juvenile Justice.

The *Ministry for Education, Universities and Research*, also by means of the National Observatory for the Integration of Foreign Pupils and for Inter-Culture, promotes policies aimed at the integration of pupils with a migratory background.

The *Ministry for Health* promotes access to care and social support for foreigners with a particular focus on the most vulnerable and defines the guidelines for victims of torture, while monitoring the violence suffered by those requesting international protection prior to and during the journey and their physical and mental health.

The *Ministry for Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies* is in charge of the integration of migrants in the agricultural sector, through training, orientation and work placements with agricultural businesses and by fighting work exploitation and organized crime in the agricultural sector.

The *National Office Against Racial Discrimination* (UNAR) established within the Department for Equal Opportunities of the Presidency of the Council Of Ministers, is dedicated to the prevention and contrast of discriminatory phenomena. It promotes initiatives aimed at preventing and combating discrimination, xenophobia and racism.

1.2 The role of the Regions and Local Authorities

After the reform of Chapter V of the Constitution (implemented in 2001), regions and local bodies perform an important role, not only in the management, but also in the planning of most policies and programmes. Specifically, in what is essentially a strongly decentralised system, the central level has a general direction and coordination role, while the regions and local authorities plan and implement all policies related to the socio-economic inclusion of migrants.

The regional responsibilities on immigration are specified in the Consolidated Law on Immigration (*Testo Unico Immigrazione*). In recent years, the intensification of migratory phenomena and new priorities in terms of inclusion and integration of newcomers have led many Regions to update their laws. In general, Regional Governments have responsibilities for planning, managing, coordinating and evaluating regional policies as well as allocating financial resources for their realisation, and have a central role in defining policies related to welfare and access to social services.

Most recently regional legislation has called for a greater role of Municipalities and local authorities on immigration and specifically integration. Local governments, indeed, are no longer conceived exclusively as terminals of the regional policies, but as true and proper protagonists of their elaboration and implementation, in particular with regards to welfare interventions.

Areas of direct responsibility for Regions and local authorities range from healthcare, education and social services, to Italian language training, the promotion of cultural mediation services, access to housing and access to employment and training. Specifically, in consideration of these competences, a good policy of integration and social inclusion must take account of the specific local contexts for which it has been planned. Indeed, paths of socio-economic integration and social inclusion must be based in local communities in order to produce effective results.

1.3 The role of civil society organizations

In Italy organizations of the third sector working on the protection and promotion of the rights of migrants and, in particular, of those entitled to protection, are well established and active across the country. Some of these organizations are represented and coordinated by the **Tavolo Asilo** (Asylum Council), an instrument for civil society participation in governmental processes, which is included in the National Coordination Council (*Tavolo di Coordinamento Nazionale*).

This concerns organisations that are very different in terms of type and dimensions, and in terms of the activities that they undertake: from local or national associations born with the specific objective of working on immigration and/or the rights to asylum, to large scale networks of associations, of religious or secular inspiration, which have started to work on migration more recently, up to the Italian articulations of international networks of associations and international and/or inter-governmental organizations.

These organisations perform a significant role in the following contexts:

- **Informing and raising the awareness of the Italian public** on the right to asylum, the causes of migratory flows, evacuees, asylum seekers, refugees and displaced persons, as well the details of their presence in Italy, Europe and the world.
- **Reception, assistance, information and orientation** at local and national levels, with actions aimed at supporting persons seeking protection in Italy. From this point

of view NGOs and CSOs perform a central role in constructing the conditions for the starting and consolidating positive processes of social inclusion and integration.

- **Protection and promotion of human rights**, supporting the intervention of specialized operators and cultural mediators, as well as specialized lawyers, often from the moment of arrival at the border, to allow potential asylum seekers to access the procedure of international protection. The associations follow the course of the procedure in all its phases and seek to guarantee that current legislation is respected.
- **Influencing the choices and procedures of local, regional and national authorities**, as well as international and EU institutions. In this context they act, both individually and collectively, in order to guide the choices of municipalities, regions and the national government, organising political and cultural campaigns on a number of thematic issues (for example on the right to asylum). NGOs and CSOs also work to influence political and parliamentary groups, in order to amend legislation towards more effective protection of the rights of persons seeking international protection or those already in possession of a residence permit.

In conclusion, this Plan recognises how the role of civil society organisations is central in the processes of social integration of persons of foreign origin.

2. RECEPTION: THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS INTEGRATION

The reception phase represents a fundamental opportunity to receive the necessary support to start a path of inclusion in Italian society. For this reason, making the best use of the time spent in reception is essential, particularly **by providing integration activities and support from the start, to applicants as well as those already holding international protection.**

In order to support an effective national integration policy, it is urgent to overcome the system of emergency reception centres (*CAS – Centri di Accoglienza Straordinaria*) and to enhance the adhesion of municipalities to the SPRAR system⁴. As the national reception system moves towards adopting the smaller, locally distributed SPRAR model, it is urgent for emergency reception centres to align their provision of services and activities aimed towards socio-economic integration (primarily language and professional training as well as general orientation to public services) to those offered in the SPRAR system. Further, the emergency centres must be distributed on the basis of the recent “*National Distribution Plan*” agreed with the National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI), which provides for the direct engagement of local authorities in the design of a reception system spread across the country, linking the services of the reception centres to the local welfare system, and involving local communities and civil society actors in a wider social support network.

The objective is to fully implement the Agreement ratified in the Unified Conference between the central government and the Regions in 2014, making the reception system more orientated towards integration, raising the level of services offered in the emergency reception system (CAS), by immediately starting paths of integration and by reinforcing the existing initiatives through:

- Starting an initial path of integration from the time of first reception, in particular including language training and cultural orientation from the very beginning.

⁴ While emergency reception centres tend to be larger centres hosting hundreds of people, the SPRAR system is made up of smaller centres spread across different communities and managed directly by local municipalities, offering a series of integration services, such as language training and social-support, which emergency centres tend not to provide.

- While awaiting the full implementation of the SPRAR system across the country, services aimed at integration should be included in all reception centres, with particular attention to the emergency reception system, especially in the cases in which these perform the role of centres of second reception (where people tend to spend longer periods of time).
- The inclusion of competent, professional and experienced staff, able to work in multi-cultural contexts, to provide specific attention to the most vulnerable, paying specific attention to gender issues and the unity of family units.

2.1 Refugee women applying for international protection

While in recent years women have represented only 15% of the persons landing on Italian shores, the data shows a slight but stable increase, from 21,434 in 2015 to 24,133 in 2016, (by the end of August 2017 the number stood at 11,074). In particular, in the last two years Italy has seen a notable increase in the number Nigerian women, from 5,000 in 2015 to 11,009 in 2016, (at the end of August 2017 the number stood at 4,977). Nigeria has thus become the top nationality in terms of number of arrivals, with almost half the total.

The majority of these women arrive in Italy after a journey characterised by abuse, violence and various types of exploitation. The reception system must, therefore, pay particular attention to their specific vulnerabilities. Many of these women need particular support in overcoming their traumas, with dedicated medical and psychological support, the presence of staff with experience dealing with gender-based violence, with the involvement of social services and various civil society actors.

In light of the growing importance that Italy and the international community are justly reserving to gender-based violence, and based on the specific vulnerabilities that these women carry with them and that impact their experience in the reception phase and their path of integration as a whole, the Plan wants recommends the implementation of the following principles and actions:

- Specific attention must be reserved to women victims of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation – an increasingly growing phenomenon – in order to activate the mechanisms of protection envisaged by recent legislation and their timely referral to the specialized protection agencies. In particular, it is necessary that the actions envisaged by the “*National Action Plan against trafficking and the serious exploitation of human beings*”, adopted in February 2016, be realized and implemented in full.
- From the very first interventions, it is necessary to pay particular attention to the vulnerabilities deriving from gender-based violence (e.g. sexual violence, domestic violence, female genital mutilations) creating standard mechanisms for monitoring

and reporting these cases, including by means of a detailed mapping the network of centres dedicated to the protection and support of women victims of violence.

- Create standard procedures and guidelines for the prevention and immediate response to sexual and gender-based violence for the staff who work in reception centres (with the participation of migrant women).
- Revise the structure of most reception centres and provide separate accommodation, as well as toilet facilities, for women together with other initiatives aimed at improving their safety and well-being.
- All reception centres must include female reference staff, in particular for cultural mediation services, as well as lawyers and doctors, in order to inform women of the services offered, as well as to promote their health, including reproductive health and rights, and to facilitate access to specialist services for victims of violence and trafficking.
- Guarantee special support for women with particular reception needs, such as pregnant women, mothers with young children and other vulnerable categories.

2.2 Unaccompanied foreign minors

In recent years migratory flows into Italy have included an ever more significant presence of unaccompanied foreign minors. In the last two years the number of unaccompanied minors landing on Italian shores has doubled, increasing from 12,360 in 2015 to 25,846 in 2016, (at the end of August 2017 the number stood already at 13,131). This includes minors coming from a number of countries (predominantly Egypt, Gambia, Albania, Eritrea and Nigeria) who arrive and remain alone on Italian soil. They are predominantly males (90% against 10% of females), between fifteen and seventeen years old, even if there has been an increase in younger minors who require specific services taking account their particular vulnerability. A recent UNICEF study, based on interviews of minors from 11 nationalities both in Libya and in a series of transit countries, shows how three quarters of the minors interviewed have experienced violence and aggression during the journey to Italy.

In order to reinforce the system of reception for minors, in line with recent legislative measures, and ensure the effective respect of the principle of the superior interest of the minor, the following principles and actions should be undertaken:

- Consolidating the reception system for minors, set-up by Legislative Decree 142/2015, as amended and supplemented by the law no. 47 of 07 April 2017.

- Improving the coordination of all initiatives dedicated to unaccompanied minors, both at national and local level.
- Granting sufficient economic and human resources to municipal governments adequate to cover the care of an increasing number of minors and the presence of particular vulnerabilities.
- Standardizing the times required for the procedures of identification and determination of the age of the minor, in order to ensure a prompt issuing of a residence permit, even in the absence of documentation attesting the identity of the minor.
- Strengthening the procedures for the identification of the families of origin and for the opportunity to family reunification.
- Guaranteeing the immediate appointment of a guardian, including a voluntary one, who shall have the right competence, availability of time and commitment to the minor.
- Identifying opportunities for placements in foster families for the most vulnerable individuals.
- Providing better support services for voluntary guardians and foster families.
- Ensuring the timely registration in the National Health Service and the exemption from the payment of health-care co-pay fees (*ticket sanitario*) for all unaccompanied minors.
- Providing specific health care support within the reception centre system for minors, especially for complex cases, such as mental disorders.
- Guaranteeing school registration and broader social integration, in particular by making better use of the CPIAs (Provincial Centres for the Education of Adults), by providing pathways of accompaniment and mentorship among peers (*peer tutoring*).

The path towards socio-economic integration of minors requires a particularly onerous commitment and the connection and collaboration with a network of institutions and actors at the local level: the local social and health services, the Juvenile Court and the judge supervising guardianships at the Ordinary Court, the local Police, the public education agencies, schools of every type and level, including the provincial centres for the education of adults (CPIAs), the Employment Centres, etc. This network of actors is indispensable to achieve concrete results in terms of integration and social inclusion which, however, requires the creation of an effective system of coordination for the various welfare services involved.

3. PROUTES OF SOCIAL INCLUSION: PROGRAMME AND POLICY PRIORITIES

3.1 Interreligious dialogue

In recent years the importance of the promotion of Intercultural and Interreligious dialogue has emerged in an ever more evident manner, as a tool of integration and also for combating racism and Islamophobia. This Plan recognizes the pivotal social role of immigrants' faith communities in relation to the processes of integration in Italian society. Places of worship, in particular, perform complex and articulated functions, of a religious, social, cultural, political and economic nature. In some of these, for example, Italian language courses for new arrivals are organised, information of bureaucratic-administrative nature are provided, food and clothes are distributed to the poorest in the community. Moreover, numerous religious organizations are engaged in the reception and accomodation of refugees and asylum seekers.

The plurality of religious identities, connected to various ethnic groups, shows how Italy has already become a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious country.

The recently signed ***National pact for an Italian Islam***, which the State and the Islamic communities undertake to implement over the next few years, signals a new institutional phase of collaboration with the principal representatives of the Muslim communities in Italy.

Among the various commitments, the most important priorities include: general adhesion to the values of the Italian Constitution, including the clear equality of rights and social status between men and women, mosques required to be open to the general public, the set-up of a public register for imams, sermons to be given in Italian, as well as transparency regarding sources of funding and full collaboration with the authorities in the fight against religious radicalism.

The ***objective of this national plan*** is to continue the path of collaboration with these communities, in particular:

- Continuing in the path of dialogue and of reciprocal awareness by means of meetings with the faith communities, supporting the research and general knowledge

of the various religious entities, while monitoring their presence on the Italian territory.

- Pursuing the training of those members of religious communities who have not signed agreements with the State, which must include issues such as dealing with legal, social and historical matters, aimed at favouring a greater awareness of the institutional and social reality in Italy.
- Supporting the national policy of open places of worship, which falls within the remit of the right to religious freedom guaranteed by the Constitution. In this regard, there is a need for measures which on the one hand guarantee the full application of the constitutional rules in terms of freedom of religion and, on the other hand, favour the full integration of places of worship on the national territory respecting the legislative principles in terms of town planning and safety.

3.2 Language training

Learning of the Italian language represents a right but also a duty, since it constitutes an essential prerequisite for a concrete path towards social integration, fundamental for the interaction with the local community, for access to the labour market and public services.

The objective is to incentivize the learning of the Italian language in the entire migrants' reception system, with particular attention to the design and implementation of the "*Regional plans for linguistic training*", funded by the European Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). In particular:

- In order to better evaluate the level of literacy and linguistic capacity of the student an initial test must always be arranged to help define the level and most suitable teaching methods.
- Providing specific support initiatives for those who are illiterate
- Making mandatory the participation of the hosts, starting from the system of first reception, in the language courses provided in these centres, adopting all the measures necessary in order to improve participation, including the provision of incentives linked to paths of social-work inclusion and by providing economic penalties.
- Incentivize the participation in language courses offered outside of the centres, often offered by adult training centres or by civil society organizations.
- Providing language courses with teachers specialized in the teaching of level L2 Italian, with the use of interactive and experimental methodologies.

3.3 Access to education and recognition of educational titles and qualifications

Together with learning of the Italian language, the possibility of accessing education is one of the pillars for a true path of integration. This path requires investments in terms of costs, commitment and time, but also a particular attention to those who are more vulnerable, such as unaccompanied foreign minors who suffer from a high rate of school dropout. The Italian school system, which is universal and free, may redress some of these challenges with systemic actions aimed at supporting the families of people entitled to protection and with the help of experts external to the school system.

An important factor facilitating social integration of persons entitled to protection is the recognition of degrees and qualifications acquired in the country of origin. Currently, the formal recognition of degrees requires a very complex procedure, which proves to be impractical for persons entitled to international protection: the length, the costs and the complex bureaucratic steps for the recognition, indeed represent strong disincentives. Furthermore, the persons entitled to protection often do not have the original certificates of the degrees awarded with them and, due to the reasons which have caused them to migrate, they are not able to turn to the consular authority of the country of origin in order to obtain them.

The objective is to create concrete measures supporting participation in secondary and higher education and guaranteeing the recognition of previous studies and competencies. In particular:

- Giving full implementation to the Policy Handbook of the MIUR (Ministry of Education, Universities and Research), with particular reference to: the immediate insertion of minors in the school system, raise the awareness of teachers on their vulnerabilities, and improving the general information around the Italian school system and how to access it.
- Offering more pathways to literacy for illiterate persons entitled to protection and combating school dropout rates by: the inclusion of socio-cultural mediators, the opening of school buildings outside the classic teaching times; the insertion of new and innovative teaching methods aimed at supporting the motivation of students.
- Enhancing the measures supporting the pursuit of higher and university studies, disseminating the positive initiatives implemented by various Universities and evaluating the possibility of reinforcing secondary school courses of the I and II grade for foreigners, improving also the connection between these courses and the national reception system and the participation of women.
- Simplifying and unifying the procedures for the recognition of previous degrees and qualifications, standardizing the alternative methods of evaluation in the event of unavailability of official documents.

- Making effective the right-duty of minors to education and training, by means of specialized training pathways which also allow them to access initiatives for labour market access.
- Promoting among the teachers and students a correct information on the topics of asylum and refugees also through the elaboration of specific educational courses such as those suggested by the website www.viaggidaimparare.it created by the Ministry for Education, Universities and Research (MIUR) and UNHCR.
- Pilot sponsorship programmes among students in order to assist and accompany young persons entitled to protection registered in Italian Universities, following international models such as the Canadian one.

3.4 Access to employment and training

An aspect which requires particular attention is the verification and recognition of previous work experience of international protection holders, in order to favour their access to the labour market. Interventions aimed at promoting access to employment require, on the one hand, homogeneous guidelines and instruments across the whole country; on the other hand, the collaboration between the national reception system and the private sector, together with job centres and employment services, trade unions and employers' associations.

Providing sustainable and effective support for the creation of private enterprise, supporting therefore the self employment of third country nationals, remains a priority. This is also due to the fact that persons entitled to international protection encounter difficulties in accessing credit due to the impossibility of providing adequate guarantees.

Starting from reinforcing the many existing initiatives in this field, **the objective** is to:

- Create a training system that supports access to education and employment specifically for unaccompanied minors.
- Strengthen existing instruments such as training internships, and orientation apprenticeships, promoting the participation of women and the most vulnerable
- Standardize procedures for the recognition of previous skills and competencies, in order to better orientate pathways for professional requalification and training
- Favour the dissemination of successful pilot experiments (such as *Inside*, *Percorsi* from the Ministry of Labor) and the scale-up of Protocols signed by the Ministry of Interior with the Italian Association of Industrialists - *Confindustria* - and the Italian Business Association - *UnionCamere*)

- Incentivize the participation of holders of international protection in the National Civil Service
- Broaden the tax credits included in the legislation on social cooperatives (Law 381/1991), to the hiring of holders of international protection, for at least the first two years after their status recognition.
- Promote entrepreneurship, especially in innovative sectors, by offering instruments such as micro-credit, services supporting business start-ups, and improving general access to credit for international protection holders.

3.5 Access to health care

Access to healthcare is a right ratified by the Italian Constitution. All citizens of States not belonging to the European Union, legally resident in Italy and registered with the National Health Service (SSN), are guaranteed parity of treatment and full equality of rights and duties, in line with Italian citizens, in terms of access to healthcare. However, the offer of and access to health services by international protection holders proves to be heterogeneous, with inequalities which burden the most vulnerable subjects, such as victims of trafficking, torture, rape, exploitation, unaccompanied minors and survivors of shipwrecks. The most critical elements concern the lack of awareness of the services available, the language barriers, the different cultural attitudes towards health and health care assistance and the lack of a social support system in Italy.

The **objective** is to arrive at a full implementation of the “*Agreement between the State and the Regions for the health of migrants*” ratified in 2012, with an increase and a standardization of the interventions aimed at simplifying access to the National Health Service. In particular:

- Monitoring at national and regional levels the implementation of the 2012 Agreement, evaluating the planning of health care interventions at local level.
- Supporting a systematic survey of the needs of the most vulnerable sections of the population, including holders of international protection, with the involvement of migrant communities and associations and a particular focus on mental health and disability, minors, women, female genital mutilations (FGM), gender-based violence (GBV), and LGBTI people.
- Reinforcing the organisation and offer of health services, by defining specific pathways dedicated to each clinical condition, with particular attention to psychiatric cases and post-traumatic stress disorders, by augmenting the number of free services offered, and by enhancing prevention programmes with particular reference to vaccinations, screening and protection of the health of both mother and child.

- Enhancing the training of healthcare staff regarding current legislation in terms of international protection, and regarding the cultural aspects and values that can influence the clinical evaluation and the correct worker-patient relationship, and by increasing the use of intercultural staff and cultural mediators in health clinics and hospitals.
- Improving the quantity and quality of information regarding the right to health care in Italy, but also the appropriate use of health care services.
- Giving full implementation to the “National Guidelines on the Victims of Torture”, in particular regarding their training priorities.
- Promoting a revision of the national legislation on the exemption from the health care ticket (the National Health Service co-payment system) to take into consideration the needs of international protection holders.

3.6 Access to housing and legal residence

Some municipal authorities support the exit from SPRAR reception centres with specific initiatives aimed at access to housing, including by helping selecting and responding to property adverts, renting of rooms in apartments with fellow nationals, or by providing financial support to cover the rent for a number of months. Emergency reception centres (CAS) must move in this direction, adapting their services to support access to housing for holders of international protection.

Acknowledging how access to housing in Italy remains a challenge for a high number of low-income Italians, the objective for the next two-years is to allow holders of international protection to access the welfare services made available by Regional and Local governments. In particular:

- Extend access to the available housing solutions, by making the provision of services homogeneous across the country and developing minimum standards for access to residential services.
- Make sure that regional or local residential housing plans include paths for persons entitled to protection who are exiting from the reception system, including them in the interventions of social housing and rent support.
- Incentivize cohabitation initiatives (shared leases, jointly occupied residential buildings), starting in the last phases of reception, while experimenting initiatives of neighbourhood engagement (*iniziative di buon vicinato*).
- Design specific social interventions designed to respond to informal settlements in

urban centres, establishing procedures to support people's exit from such settlements also through a detailed mapping of empty or unused public buildings to be destined for social housing.

- Give full application to the "*National Plan to Improve the Working Conditions of Seasonal Activities in the Harvesting of Agricultural Products*", envisaged by art.9 of Law 199/2016.

After the period spent in reception centres, most international protection holders are pushed into precarious and informal housing solutions. Not being able to demonstrate legal residence in the building, often they cannot obtain the birth and/or residency registration with the municipal council, and consequently, all the rights and local services connected to it. It is important to underline how residency registration with the municipal authority is one of the necessary prerequisites for initiating and pursuing any path of social inclusion. Legal residency allows for a number of rights and services, such as: social assistance, unemployment or social payments, access to social housing, the issuing of identity cards and of other certificates necessary, for example, to obtain a driving licence, to proceed with family reunification, and even to open a bank account.

The objective of this Plan is also to guarantee, across the entire country, the ability all persons entitled to international protection to obtain municipal residency (*residenza and anagrafe*). In particular:

- On the basis of the recent *Residency Guidelines* of the National Association of Italian Municipalities, elaborate homogeneous and simplified procedures at central level which municipalities can use in order to guarantee the registration of residence for all persons entitled to international protection.
- Reinforce monitoring and administrative support, especially to resolve the more complex situations submitted by the local authorities, reinforcing the partnership and collaboration with the National Association of Officials of Civil Status and Personal Details (ANUSCA).

3.7 Family Reunification

Family reunification, with the possibility of reconstructing a family unit, creates the foundation for true integration. The separation of members of a family, in fact, can have devastating consequences for the psycho-physical well-being of individuals. For a person entitled to protection this separation is often accompanied by the absence of news on their family members and uncertainty regarding their safety. This condition of insecurity leads to a profound psychological distress which can represent a strong obstacle to the path of integration.

International protection holders enjoy a more favourable regime, with respect to other foreigners, with respect to the prerequisites needed to obtain the certificate of no impediment (*nulla osta*) to

family reunification. Indeed, in the application for reunification holders of international protection do not have to demonstrate the availability of a home conform to health and safety requirements, nor a minimum annual income. The recent law no. 46 of 13 April 2017 reduced to 90 days the time necessary for issuing the certificate of no impediment. The legislation in favour of persons entitled to protection, however, continues to encounter some challenges, in particular related to the procedural times required to issue the visa, due to the difficulties for refugees to prove family bonds with the family members to be reunited with and also due to the costs of the transfer itself.

The **objective** is to:

- Increase the period of validity of the certificate of no impediment (*nulla osta*), from six to twelve months, amending article 29 or 29 bis of the Consolidated Law on Immigration, and create facilitated channels with the Prefectures, Embassies and Consulates for requests presented by holders of international protection.
- Implement a legislative amendment (supplementing article 29-bis of the Consolidated Law on Immigration) to allow the issuing of the laissez-passer, possibly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, when the family member does not possess a national passport or other travel document, once the right of the foreigner to reunification has been ascertained.

3.8 Orientation to services and information on rights and civic duties

Il percorso d'inclusione sociale deve rendere effettivo l'accesso alle informazioni su diritti e doveri individuali e sui servizi disponibili sul territorio, oltre che un adeguato orientamento alla fruizione di questi ultimi. Molti titolari di protezione, infatti, incontrano difficoltà legate all'insufficiente conoscenza dei servizi offerti, alla disomogeneità delle procedure amministrative e alla mancata conoscenza del funzionamento della pubblica amministrazione.

L'obiettivo è:

- Enhance the information of persons entitled to international protection regarding their rights and duties (implementing art. 21 of Legislative Decree 251/2007)
- Incentivize the use of information technologies creating a single dedicated portal and a multimedia application in various languages to guide the timing spent in reception centres and longer-term integration.
- Support the opening of information and orientation to services helpdesks for persons entitled to international protection in the Municipalities where they have a more significant presence.

4.

PREVENTING AND COMBATTING DISCRIMINATION

In 2015 Italy enacted the “*National Action Plan Against Racism, Xenophobia and Intolerance*”⁵. According to the National Office Against Racial Discrimination (UNAR), the cases of discrimination regarding persons entitled to international protection are increasing. These include direct and indirect discrimination, instances of harassment and hate speech online, but also violence and aggression against reception centres as well as individuals or associations managing them.

The **objective** is to support the implementation of the aforesaid Plan and to invest in a national system able to prevent, document and combat the most common forms of discrimination. In particular:

- Commit regional and municipal governments to reinforce the national networks of anti-discrimination centres, guaranteeing the presence of these centres (along the model of Milan) within the municipal offices of large cities or in those municipalities hosting large reception centres.
- Render more systematic and deepen the training of police forces, in particular border police, and create training courses for Municipal Police on discrimination, mediation and the legislation around international protection.
- Create and offer training opportunities for social workers and staff at reception centres on the socio-cultural background of most countries of origin and transit, on discrimination, mediation, intercultural communication and current legislation on international protection.
- Strengthen the coordination and support between the systems of protection of victims of trafficking and the reception system for asylum seekers, as provided by art. 10 paragraph 1 of Legislative Decree 24/2014, in line with the actions identified

⁵ Decree of the Ministry for Labour and Social Policies - 7 August 2015

by the *National Anti-Trafficking Plan* established by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

- Strengthen the cooperation between the associations and civil society organizations working on the women's rights, victims of trafficking and serious work exploitation, sexual and gender minorities (LGBT people) and people living with disabilities, allowing them to offer training opportunities to the staff of reception centres on their issues of expertise.
- Pilot initiatives of community or neighbourhood mediation the local communities with a high presence of migrants reception centres.

5.

PROCESSES OF PARTICIPATION AND ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

The creation of opportunities for direct encounter between holders of international protection and Italian society can support the development of a sense of belonging and stability and the exchange and mutual knowledge with Italian citizens. In light of this, supporting dialogue between persons entitled to protection and natives, occasions of socialization such as sport, artistic and cultural events, as well as forms of civic participation and volunteering, must be seen as important occasions for favouring the integration of international protection holders.

The participation of persons entitled to protection in volunteering activities is particularly important. Indeed, by means of volunteering, the individual can reinforce their sense of "belonging" in Italy, contributing in an active manner to the collective well-being of the host society by making available their time, their skills and their "know-how". Equally, it is important that beneficiaries of international protection shall be placed in a condition to participate in sporting events, in local cultural activities, as well as adhering to recreational and sporting associations.

The **objective** is to put in place policies and instruments by means of which individuals entitled to protection can feel immediately part of the local community in which they live. In particular:

- Enhancing the volunteering opportunities and initiatives already present in many local areas in order to scale them up across the country on the basis of the latest legislation on the subject.
- Including, in a new reception pact to be signed as one enters the national reception system, the opportunity to participate in solidarity initiatives (volunteering, community service jobs, national volunteering civil service) as instruments of integration, exploring the possibility of setting up pilots on community service, to be implemented in public and non-profit institutions.
- Create a calendar, involving civil society, of opportunities for meetings and socialization between refugees and natives, supporting the engagement in NGOs and CSOs of the persons received.

- Activate pathways of socialization reserved to minors in the national reception system, through sporting activities using existing opportunities (Protocol between the Ministry of Interior and Italian National Olympic Committee (CONI)) and identifying new interventions.
- Favouring the contribution of persons entitled to protection, in individual or organized form, in defining the policies regarding asylum as well as their participation in the Territorial Councils for Immigration.
- Promoting activities in the area of art and entertainment in which Italian citizens and persons entitled to protection actively participate together.

6. INSTITUTIONAL COMMUNICATION AND AWARENESS RAISING

The process of integration of holders of international protection could benefit from stronger institutional communication. Communication strategies which favour dialogue between persons entitled to protection and host communities and dismantle false representations, are urgently needed. It is important that the various levels of government - national, regional and local - shall develop a coordinated communication strategy both towards holders of international protection and towards the general public, initiating also new initiatives of internal communication among the institutional actors working in this field.

In order to support evidence-based information, in line with the Charter of Rome, and to combat negative representations which fuel racism, xenophobia and discrimination the **objective** is to:

- Establish a working group with the administrations concerned which creates and implements a common communication strategy, involving civil society and the world of volunteering, sporting federations and cultural associations, including also well known athletes and artists as testimonials.
- Base this new communication strategy around the three institutional days 21st March (International Day for the elimination of racial discrimination), 20th June (International Day of Refugees) and 3rd October (National Day of Remembrance of the victims of immigration) in a single narrative.
- Promote new communication campaigns and implement actions of counter speech on social media and social networks which will combat hate speech and favour a positive counter-narrative.

7. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF INTERVENTIONS

The priorities included in this Plan cannot possibly be exhaustive in responding to the multiple needs of persons entitled to international protection in Italy. They represent, however, an important beginning and are the result of work undertaken in cooperation with all the stakeholders engaged in managing migration and international protection in Italy. Overall, they show a clear policy direction, which shall be developed further in future on the basis of the lessons learned and challenges encountered in the implementation of this first National Integration Plan.

More than anything, this Plan represents the first step towards building a well-coordinated system for integration in Italy, while identifying the most urgent priorities to improve the integration of persons entitled to international protection. Integration requires time, energy and competencies, specifically because it concerns many areas of intervention which must engage, in a virtuous circle, all national, regional and local stakeholders.

In order to give continuity to the joint work undertaken in the writing of this Plan, a **National Integration Council** (*Tavolo Integrazione*) will be established to coordinate the implementation, as well as monitoring and evaluation of the interventions proposed.

The overall objective is to reinforce the governance of a “system of integration”, enhancing the inter-institutional dialogue and coordination, as well as dialogue between centre and territory, between the various Ministries at national level, the different departments at regional and municipal level, local authorities and the Prefectures, as well as between the various institutional actors and civil society organizations.

This Tavolo Integrazione will support the Tavolo di Coordinamento Nazionale in the preparation of all guidelines for the implementation of the Plan, with the involvement of the Territorial Councils for Immigration, identifying the objectives and the activities to be developed during the two-year period of reference.

The implementation of the National Integration Plan shall, therefore, have a strong local dimension, with a clear role given to the regional boards and the territorial councils for immigration.

Furthermore, a number of Regional Governments will be supported in developing Regional Integration Plans.

The Integration Board, furthermore, will perform a coordinating role between the central administrations and local governments in the preparation of the Communication Campaigns proposed in chapter 6.

The **Tavolo Integrazione** will also have the duty to design a Monitoring Plan with **the following objectives**:

- documenting the results achieved and the interventions carried out at national, regional and local levels in relation to the needs and planning priorities recommended by the National Plan;
- Collecting quantitative and qualitative data to carry out a proper analysis of the conditions of integration of international protection holders;
- Identifying best practices as well as key challenges connected to the priority actions identified by the Plan;
- Provide additional support to decision making and policy development at central and regional levels.

The monitoring of this Plan must represent a moment of evaluation of how the Plan, in its implementation, will have inspired good practices and new actions, and how it will have contributed to the identification of new priorities and areas of action for the future. The results of the monitoring and evaluation of this plan will have to be taken into consideration in writing of the second National Integration Plan for the following two-year period.

8. FUNDING SOURCES

The financial support for the interventions envisaged by the Plan - pathways of social inclusion, participation, actions on communication and on combating discrimination - come predominantly from European funds, which are already actively in use for the realization of a number of projects aimed at overcoming the condition of disadvantage and vulnerability that characterises persons entitled to international protection.

The European Funding scenario 2014-2020 envisages various financial instruments which can support the process of integration of third country nationals, such as the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), the European Social Fund (ESF), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

Currently the **priority should be** to create better synergies between the various projects realised with the aforesaid funding, to make better use of financial resources, and overcome the sectoral nature of the planning which can lead to discontinuity and duplication of some interventions. The National Integration Board (*Tavolo Integrazione*) will have the responsibility to develop the strategy to be followed and the planning of the interventions, making sure that all related institutional actors and stakeholders will be included in this process.

Given its multi-sectoral composition, the tavolo integrazione should contribute to giving greater uniformity to the actions at national and regional levels, harmonizing the use of resources and favouring the complementary use of European funds. The inter-institutional and inter-sectoral dialogues among Central Administrations, Regions and Local Governments, driven by the priority interventions listed in the Plan, should become the linchpin of an "integrated policy" capable to providing concrete answers to the multiple needs (education, employment, health, access to services) while increasing the support in the reprogramming of European funds, revisited by virtue of the objectives of the Plan itself.

THE ASYLUM, MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION FUND (AMIF):

The Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), managed by the Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration of the Ministry of Interior, can support to build clearer pathways of integration on the basis of the priority actions listed in the Plan.

Starting from language training, an essential base and access door to effective participation in public life, to the work placement opportunities, which assume a central significance as a component of the process of integration and personal realization, together with services of orientation and accompaniment in the said placement, including therein the possibility of participating in the National Civil Service. Also, access to health care can be enhanced using specific projects with actions focused on holders of international protection with specific psycho-physical vulnerabilities.

A dedicated and privileged line of intervention is envisaged targeting all vulnerable categories, in particular women, including victims of trafficking, and unaccompanied foreign minors, with effect starting from the time spent in the reception system. Finally, funding possibilities exist for actions aimed at preventing and combating discrimination and improving information and communication, indispensable to promote government actions on inclusion and to allow beneficiaries of protection to start feeling as an integral part of the country that has received them.

EMERGENCY MEASURES FUNDING

The European Commission has recently made available 100 million Euros to be drawn from the Emergency Measures of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) which may be used for initiatives aimed at supporting integration with initiatives based in local communities and managed by local authorities, coherently with the priorities identified in the Plan.

EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND (ESF) AND THE EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND (ERDF)

The resources made available by these funds are shared in the context of national and regional operational programmes of various Administrations. This allows a multifaceted attention to the topic of integration.

In particular:

- The National Operational Programme on Legality (*PON Legalità*) managed by the Department of Public Security of the Ministry of Interior, which manages interventions aimed at promoting socio-economic inclusion in the least developed regions. The programme envisages the possibility of financing (together with the ERDF) offices and services aimed at social inclusion. One of the Lines of Action aims to develop, promote and reinforce the processes of integration in the social fabric of the marginalized bands of regular migrants, therein including persons entitled to international protection, by means of pathways of social integration for the completion of basic services (literacy, healthcare, legal and administrative orientation and basic training) already provided with other sources of funding (e.g. ordinary funds, the AMIF fund) which include services of professional training, of work orientation and support for business start-ups; services of orientation and inclusion within the Italian labour market.

- The National Operational Programme on Social Inclusion (*PON Inclusionione*), together with the National Operational Programme on “Active Inclusion Policies” managed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, envisage the implementation of active policies for inclusion in the labour market of beneficiaries of international protection as well as unaccompanied foreign minors (through apprenticeships and training courses).
- The National Operational Programme on Education (*PON per la Scuola*) managed by the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research includes actions to raise the level of education of all adults, including literacy courses for foreigners as well as interventions to reduce school drop-out and educational failures of students, including those with a migratory background.

In a perspective of complementarity, national resources which finance the activities of local authorities should also be added in this picture, as they can also impact interventions and services for individuals entitled to protection:

- the *National Fund for Asylum Policies and Services*, managed by the Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration of the Ministry of Interior, in order to ensure, in the context of the SPRAR reception network, the funding of reception centres and first integration services.
- The *National Social Policies Fund*, under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, is distributed across the Regions and contributes, together with local government funds, to funding social interventions.
- The *National Fund for Migratory Policies*, under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, represents a share of the National Social Policies Fund, allocating resources for interventions in favour of the integration of persons entitled to international protection, in addition to what is already possibly provided in the regional operational programmes and in the Regional Plans.
- The *National Health Service Fund*, under the auspices of the Ministry of Health, contributes together with Regional Governments and local authorities to funding all health-related services and matters.



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