

IMMIGRATION TO ITALY: THE CASE OF UKRAINIANS

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1. Overview of the immigration history and development in Italy

During the 1960s, Italy faced a rapid transformation from a still largely rural and traditional society into an industrial and largely urban one. Up to that moment and more precisely for one century (from the late 1870s to the late 1970s), in different waves, more than twenty million Italians emigrated all over the world (especially in North Europe, the Americas and Australia); one of the main consequences of this enormous exodus is that paradoxically the number of Italians in the world is higher than those within the country's territory¹.

The first immigration flows in Italy occurred in the 1970s although they were not yet consistent. Immigrants regularly residing in Italy were 143,838 (61.3% from Europe, 3.3% from Africa, 7.8% from Asia, 25.7% from America and 1.9% from Oceania). The majority of them originated from Tunisia as well as from Eritrea, Cape Verde, the Philippines and Latin America (Idos 2004). The first work areas were domestic assistance (Cape Verde and the Philippines) and fishing (Tunisia) which rapidly expanded to cattle-breeding, fruit-picking, metal and mechanical industry and catering (Pastore 2004). The main reasons for their arrival in the country were the stricter immigration policies applied in the Northern European countries, especially following the oil crisis in 1973, coupled with the need in Italy for workers in the service and agriculture areas. In that period, until the 1990s, no legislative framework regulated immigration in Italy².

At the same time, Northern European countries started “to bar their front doors” to Italian emigrants, whilst the second generation already showed themselves reluctant to perform work activities which were usually carried out by their parents. As a consequence, minor niches in local labour markets opened up to immigrants. In the 1960s, the economic boom initiated and in the 1980s reaches its climax. At the same time, the fast development of immigration flows to Italy were due to several factors, namely the growing proportion of small and medium enterprises and the simultaneous expansion of the hidden economy which structural affected Italy since that period (*Ibid*).

In this decade, the number of immigrants more than doubled reaching approximately 300.000 persons, out of which 53.2% were coming from Europe. In these years the first legislative steps were made in 1981, when Italy approved the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention no. 143/1975 on migrant workers³ and in 1986 the Italian Parliament approved the Law no. 943/1986 which foresaw equal rights and equal treatment between foreign and Italian workers⁴.

¹ Including nationals born abroad with parents and grandparents with Italian citizenship.

² The first embryonic Italian law on immigration is the so called *Legge Martelli*, dated 1990 whilst the first comprehensive one was adopted only in 1998.

³ The Convention concerning *Migrations in Abusive Conditions and the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity and Treatment of Migrant Workers* came into force in 9 December 1978. Further to the recall of the “conventional” worker rights, it also calls on the States to encourage the efforts of migrant workers and their families to preserve their national and ethnic identity and their cultural ties with their country of origin

⁴ Law 943/1986, *Regulations regarding the employment and treatment of non-EU immigrant workers and against illegal immigration*, in Official Gazette n°8, 12 January 1987.

2. Major developments in Italian immigration policy since 1990

The 1990s were characterised by the first consistent migration flow to the country which also unfolded the largest migration emergency phase Italy tackled. This was the consequence of the Yugoslav war (1992 and the successive ones), which triggered a large wave of migration. During this period, the first Italian law, (law no. 39/90 published in Gazette no. 49), regulating immigration and some aspects of asylum⁵ was adopted and constituted the first legal ground and conceptualisation of the Italian Migration policy. On the contrary, no regulations have been adopted concerning the subsidiary protection that is why Italy has always adopted *ad hoc* provisions for the Somalis, Former-Yugoslavians and Albanians which influxed in the country during the 1990s. Until now, Italy did not adopt an asylum law to regulate asylum and subsidiary protection.

During this decade, Italy passed from being one of the main entrance doors to Europe and a transit country to reach Northern Europe, to a place where to stay on a long-term basis. Immigration becomes a structural component in Italy and the stabilisation process starts up. Thus by the year 2000, the progressive flow of immigration represented 2.4% of the native population. Italy therefore became the fourth favoured country of immigration after Germany, France and United Kingdom (Idos 2004).

It should be also highlighted that in spite of the consistent presence of Italians⁶ in emerging countries, in Italy there is a very heterogeneous immigration and no national or ethnic group predominance. This is mainly due to the absence of post-colonialist links with developing countries. In contrast, a new privileged relation had developed with countries such as Romania (the first migrant community in Italy), which originated through the consistent Italian investment policy in this country (especially outsourcing) which paradoxically is having a “pull effect” of Romanian emigration into Italy maybe also related to a cultural factor namely the Latin origin of this population that facilitates relationships and communication in the process of integration.

Only in 1998, and not by chance, following the implementation of the Shengen Treaty, Italy finally elaborated and adopted its first legislative framework which outlined a comprehensive national strategy on immigration. The main planks of the Law no. 40/98, the so called *Legge Turco-Napolitano* were a substantial upgrading of border control and law enforcement capacities against irregular migration and human smuggling. The major outputs of this was the institution of the temporary detention centres for undocumented migrants awaiting expulsion.

Secondly, the readmission mechanisms were reformed making them more flexible and better adapted to the economic demand for foreign labour. An instrument of yearly planning of entries (quota system) on the basis of the labour shortages was set up. Further, a limited slot of jobseekers, the so-called sponsorship system, was

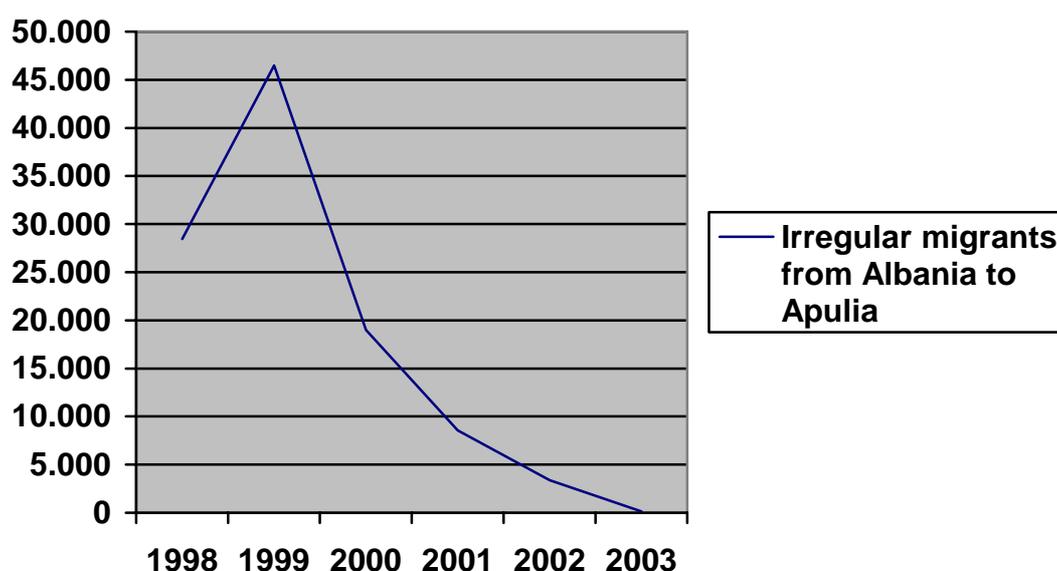
⁵ The Law abolished the clause of the 1951 Geneva Convention which did not allow to grant the refugee status to non-European country nationals.

⁶ Mainly Italians who emigrated and Italians born abroad who acquired the citizenship according to the *ius sanguinis* rule up to the second generation. Due to the sever economic problems experienced by some emerging countries like Brazil in the 1980s and Argentina in 2001 – 2002, many of these Italians, especially the young generation emigrated in Italy.

foreseen additionally to the quota system consisting in the admissions linked to a specific job offer.

Thirdly, the admission and law enforcement components of the policy were linked to an explicit foreign policy strategy consisting of setting up strategic partnerships with countries with high emigration rates towards Italy (e.g. Albania, Morocco, Tunisia), based on a request of cooperation on anti-smuggling activities and readmission on one side, and providing them with targeted technical and financial aid as well as privileged admission quotas on the other.

Some conclusions can be made on the impact of the bilateral agreement signed with Albania in November 1997. The irregular huge migration flows coming from this country and related to their nationals as well as other countries (Asia and Africa) had consistently dropped down. In the late 1990s, the percentage of undocumented migrants arriving in the coasts of Apulia Region was 75% whilst in 2003 this dropped to 14%⁷. However, at the same time, the one concerning the arrivals to the Region of Sicily reached 77%⁸. A new migratory route was set up involving principally Libya.



Source: Polizia di Stato available at:

http://www.poliziadistato.it/pds/primapagina/immigrazione/relazione_convegno_SIDI.pdf

Finally, the Framework Law laid the foundations for a national integration policy based on a substantial increase of the financial resources (a National Fund for Integration Policies was set up⁹) and the decentralization of competencies to local governments¹⁰.

⁷ An exception is 1999 due to the Kosovo war which constrained many Kosovars to emigrate by force.

⁸ Source: *Anuario Caritas 2003*, elaboration of the Ministry of Interior data.

⁹ The Fund was then abolished by the Berlusconi government elected in 2001. Though, the very recently new elected second Prodi government has expressed the intention to re-establish it.

¹⁰ According to the Italian Constitution, Italy is divided in Regions (*Regioni*), Provinces (*Province*) and Municipalities (*Comuni*). Whilst the central state maintains the competence in the migration

The *Legge Turco-Napolitano* foresees provisions on vital areas such as the right to healthcare, including to undocumented immigrants, the right and obligation of education of minors up to fifteen years old (documented and undocumented), the right of defence in court and to family reunification as well as gender and anti-discrimination provisions. Furthermore, it institutes the permanent resident permit (*Carta di Soggiorno*) which constitutes an important step towards integration of immigrants.

Following the election of the new government in 2001, amendments and new measures were adopted which partially modified the previous legislation in a more restrictive way, which has been in force since then. This was the so called *Legge Bossi-Fini* (law no. 189/2002 published in Gazette no. 199). The most important changes relate to the modalities of the quota system, the latter linked to a stricter parameter of matching of offer and demand of work namely the creation of the so called Residence “Contract” rigorously correlated to the duration of the work contract of the immigrant. The above-mentioned more flexible procedure of sponsorship was abolished. Finally, immigrants who lose their jobs, are now not allowed to regularly stay in the country more than six months¹¹ following the termination of the work permit visa, reducing subsequently his chances to look for and find another job opportunity. As for the undocumented immigrants, the expulsion provisions became tougher envisaging an immediate expulsion mechanism and the prolongation of the permanence of irregular immigrants to the temporary detention centres from thirty to sixty days. In addition, whilst the application to the quota “vacancies” was possible throughout the year currently the applications are eligible only if submitted between the date of the quota decree publication and a short-term strict deadline. Despite its pure procedural nature, this provision has had a very negative impact on the management of migrants presence in the country as it created a sort of collapse of the administrative system which could not tackle the huge number of persons addressing to the Post Offices thus demonstrating the incapacity of the institutions to deal with very basic issues¹². However the most interesting thing to highlight is that applicants were not the employers but the immigrants already within the country without a regular position. This clearly demonstrated the artificiality of the system and its inability to reflect the needs of the market. In addition, the number of persons excluded from the early 2006 decree, approximately 300.000 persons, are currently present in the country with undocumented status.

2.1 Conclusions

As for all Southern European countries, immigration in Italy is a relatively recent trend, often defined as the “Mediterranean Immigration Model” (Idos, 2004; Pastore,

management issues (e.g. the quota system, the issuance of residence permits and the management of the detention centres), especially Regions and Municipalities are progressively acquiring more competences in the development and implementation of integration policies such as the health and education sectors.

¹¹ On the contrary, according to the previous law, it was allowed to stay one year.

¹² An excellent example of this chaos, which was extensively reported by the media, happened early 2006 when dozens of thousands of immigrants queued in front of the *Poste Italiane* mail offices for days sleeping over the night in the streets in order to guarantee their regularisation.

2004). This is characterised by a consistent employment of immigrants in seasonal work (agricultural and tourism sector), in the domestic services and the care sector (assistance to elders, ill persons and children). An exception of Italy, compared to the other Mediterranean countries, is the employment of the foreign labour force in the industrial sector. The model is also characterized by a very segmented labour market, with a high presence of irregular migrants which is consistent with the already well rooted phenomenon of the hidden economy. Further feature is the very recent legislative and administrative framework with weak policies and strategies, including those related to the social integration of migrants. Another common peculiarity of the Southern European Union countries is the negative demographic trend of the native population and the interconnected growing need of workers.

Furthermore, within the European context, only in Italy and Greece does the visa issuing falls under the competence of the police, which demonstrates how immigration in these countries are firstly dealt as a security matter instead of a civil and administrative one (Idos, 2004). As for the bureaucratic aspects, in Italy the procedure of issuing and renewal of the residence permits can last more than one year, leaving immigrants in an apparently never ending and precarious situation. Several Italian institutions and bodies engaged in migration issues, among them CNEL (2004)¹³, have recommended the shift of the competence on migration administrative management to Municipalities (i.e. local governments) in order to ensure the efficiency of the bureaucratic mechanisms as well as the consistency to the real needs of the country.

In spite of the negative consequences of the social image of the immigrant as a socially deviated individual, resulting from the combination of the political and the media stakeholders' manipulation of the reality on one side, and public opinion's need to find a "guilty" to the growing social insecurity on the other, which characterized the Italian opinion vis-à-vis migration for many years (Dal Lago, 1999), the country is currently and gradually moving towards a more balanced vision. On the other hand, though, the country had not yet definitely assumed a serious and "integrated approach" (Golino, 2006) on how to develop and manage migration policies from a medium and long-term perspective. Often the way the system is (dis)organized violates human dignity as well as increases bureaucracy and slows down or even impedes the process of integration.

Finally, the integration policies, which represent the real challenge of the future, are not yet seriously taken into consideration by policy makers. One emblematic example relates to the legislation concerning the acquisition of the Italian nationality based on the rule of the *ius sanguinis*¹⁴. According to this principle, descendents of Italians, up to the second generation, can obtain the Italian citizenship. Persons born in Italy with foreign parents have to reach eighteen-years-old, and reside in the country without interruptions, in order to apply (within at maximum one year) for the Italian citizenship. During eighteen years the minor and then the young adult is classed as a foreigner and face all the consequences this has socially, culturally and legally

¹³ CNEL – *Consiglio Nazionale dell'Economia e del Lavoro*, is a prestigious public institution which deal with labour and economic matters.

¹⁴ For example, according to this principle, the sons and nephews of emigrated Italians born abroad, who often do not know Italy, can apply for and obtain the citizenship.

speaking¹⁵. The “sons of immigration”¹⁶ representing the multi-ethnic Italy have to face not only the difficulties inherent to the natural growth process but also those related to their hybrid position in a social organization with cultural traditions often far different from the one inherited by their familiar background (Valtolina & Marazzi, 2006).

Between 1982 and 2004, at least six regularisation schemes have been adopted and implemented for undocumented migrants whether they were irregularly entered or exceeding their visa entitlements. It is evident therefore that the current three million estimated non-EU citizens living and working in Italy became independent of any kind of policy planning, through a nevertheless very efficient circuit – *irregular migration à regularisation à family regroupment*. This trend is occurring in other Mediterranean countries according to the above-mentioned Mediterranean Admission Model. The attitude of the vast majority of Italian society can be described by a psychiatric analogy: schizophrenia. On one hand the immigration labour market is utilised daily and thus benefiting individuals, families and the system, on the other hand, any visible sign of an immigrant presence beyond their silent impact of their work is perceived as a disturbing interference in Italian domestic affairs. (Pastore, 2004)

3. The size of the immigrant population from the end of the 1990s to nowadays

According to the most reliable estimates¹⁷, at the end of 1998 and following a regularisation decree, immigrants with a regular residence visa were approximately 1.250.000 immigrants (Idos, 2000).

At the end of 2001, according to the Ministry of Interior archive, there were registered more than 1.360.000 immigrants who, together with the estimated undocumented immigrants and minors, reached a total estimated number of 1.600.000 persons (Idos, 2002). In 2002 they were present officially 1.512.324 immigrants, although the actual number of regular immigrants considering the visas granted not yet registered, the minors registered in their parents permits along with the foreigner babies born in Italy, was estimated at 1.800.000 persons (Idos, 2003). In 2003, following a new regularisation provision, the residence visas amounted to more than 2.500.000 with an immigrant community incidence of 4.5% of the total population.

The nature of this presence is very heterogeneous as foreigners come from 191 countries and there is no prevalent country of origin. At the end of 2002, a stabilization process emerged and consequent integration related to some countries

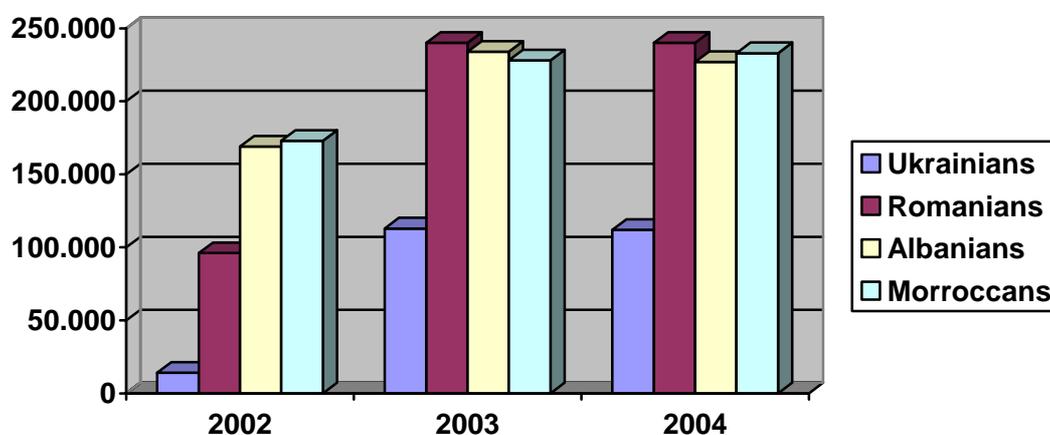
¹⁵Further to this, according to the law, the main two ways to acquire the Italian citizenship are ten years of legal residence and the marriage with an Italian citizen, the latter constituting a right whilst the procedure for its acquisition lasts approximately three years, in both cases.

¹⁶In early 2005 minors constitutes 17.6% of the immigrant population regularly residing in Italy based on an estimate presence of immigrants of 2.786.340 persons (Idos 2005).

¹⁷It has been difficult to quantify the number of migrants in Italy as the competent public authorities still lack of an efficient statistical system. This is why for many years and still now the *Caritas/Migrantes* data yearly released by its research institute Idos (*Dossier Statistico Immigrazione*) is considered to be the main source of data concerning immigration. The latter is based on official figures of the Minister of Interior and ISTAT, the Italian public statistical authority as well as from other official sources.

such as Morocco (172,834 persons, 11.4 % of the total migrants population); Albania (168.963 persons, 11.2% of the total migrants population); Romania (95.834 individuals); the Philippines (65.257), China (62.314) and Tunisia (51.384).

However, recent figures have depicted a change of trends in the last few years: at the end of 2002, a sudden increase of Eastern Europeans especially Central-Eastern Europeans occurred, reaching 42.5% of the immigrant population. In 2003 another regularization decree was adopted and in the same year, Romania became the first country of origin for immigrants in Italy (240.000 persons) followed by Morocco (233.000 persons) Albania (227.000 persons) and unexpectedly Ukraine (112.000) which, compared to the previous year, pulled from twenty-seventh place to the fourth one¹⁸ (Idos 2003, 2004, 2005).



Source: Idos - *Dossier Statistico Immigrazione 2003/2004/2005*, Caritas/Migrantes. Elaboration of Ministry of Interior data.

In early 2004 (Idos, 2005) the estimated presence of immigrants raised to 2.786.340 representing 4.8% of the native population. Minors specifically constituted for 17.6%¹⁹ of the immigrant population regularly residing in Italy (in total 491.230 persons).

Evidence of this stabilization process is also supported by considering the main reasons for visa requests in Italy, which is work, followed by family reunification (the latter of which is increasing). From a territorial perspective, immigrants are present in all geographic regions of Italy, with a prevalence in the Northern area which is the most industrialized and economically dynamic region of the country.

In May 2006 (Idos, 2006) the updated statistics preview was published, which showed the immigrant population regularly present in the country reached approximately three million individuals. The Romanian population is confirmed to be the first community

¹⁸ Then follows China (100.000) and the Philippines (74.000).

¹⁹ According to ISTAT data, in 2004, 48.384 foreign babies were born in Italy.

present in Italy representing one out of five working visa requests. Following this are Albania, Morocco, China, Ukraine, India, the Philippines and Serbia and Montenegro. In the last years the main reason of entrance was family reunification which confirms the integration trend occurring in Italy.

Concerning the statistical monitoring of migration flows, a new survey system has been established by the Ministry of Interior which involves the Italian public firm *Poste Italiane*²⁰ and the recently activated locally based immigration territorial offices *Sportello Unico*, the latter of whom are in charge of the bureaucratic procedure related to employment hiring and the family reunification. The new system has already been able to quantify the total number of requests of stay and, in the near future, it will be able to elaborate accurate statistics according to the territorial presence and other characteristics such as sex, age and origin. This will be useful for the correct elaboration of surveys, identification of migration trends and it will subsequently facilitate the outline of policies and strategies, especially with regards to the needs of the work market. In addition, the *Poste Italiane* recently became the responsible body for the overall management of the procedure of applications for employment offers according to the quota system, whilst the Minister of the Interior, in conjunction with the police, remains the authority in charge of the substantive aspects of the grant or refusal of residence permits including the permanent residence permits (*Carta di Soggiorno*). The above innovation represents a clear step forward in the reinforcement of an efficient management system of migratory flows in the country.

Finally, according to the last census (2001) and compared to the results of the previous one of 1991, the (regular) foreign population has tripled: from 356.159 persons to 1.334.889. What emerges is the still low percentage of foreigners born in Italy, characterizing it as mainly a first-generation immigration: only 11.9% of the total number of foreigners were born in Italy.

Table 1: Stock of foreign population in Italy, by country of origin

Breakdown by Country of Origin	Immigrants
Total	1.334.889
Non-EU European countries	396.506
Albania	173.064
Romania	74.885
Former Rep. Yugoslavia (mainly Serbia and Montenegro)	49.324
Macedonia	28.073
Croatia	18.362
Bosnia-Herzegovina	16.927
Russia	9.344
Ukraine	8.647
Africa	386.494

²⁰ *Poste Italiane*, provides core postal public service and other financial services.

Morocco	180.103
Tunisia	47.656
Senegal	31.174
Egypt	27.331
Ghana	21.676
Nigeria	16.890
Algeria	9.971
Ivory coast	7.783
Asia	214.000
The Philippines	53.994
China	46.887
India	27.188
Sri Lanka	26.474
Bangladesh	14.695
Iran	5.658
Japan	4.497
Lebanon	2.617
America	143.018
Peru	29.452
Brazil	18.216
United States	16.871
Ecuador	13.716
Argentina	12.768
Dominican Rep.	11.222
Colombia	9.456
Cuba	7.353
EU countries from 2004 Enlargement	40.948
Poland	27.220
Czech Republic	12,000
Hungary	3.186
Slovenia	3.045
Slovak Republic	2.064
EU countries prior to 2004 Enlargement	132.067
Germany	35.091
France	29.313
U.K.	19.957
Spain	12.327

* Source: ISTAT – Istituto Nazionale di Statistica, census 2001 available at www.istat.it .

Table 3: Stock of foreign population in Italy

Population	1991	2001
Total population of Italy, 2001 national census	56.778.031	56.995.744
Of which foreigners, 2001 national census	167,000	1.334.889
In percentage of the total population	0.6%	2.3%
Immigrant population		2006
Total immigrant population, 2006 Idos	n/a	3.000.000 approx.
In percentage of the total population	n/a	5%

* Source: ISTAT – Istituto Nazionale di Statistica, census 2001 available at www.istat.it . Idos – *Dossier Statistico Immigrazione 2006* – preview.

4. Immigrant workers and immigrants as social actors in the new Italian multi-ethnic scenario

Generally, it is deemed that immigrant workers play a more complementary role in the Northern area of Italy compared to the South. This is due to the fact that the North of the country is the most economically rich area of Italy and therefore subsequently is able to offer more work opportunities. On the contrary, the South faces high rates of unemployment, especially in the young, native population. One perspective is that in the South, although diminishing, competitiveness between the native and the immigrant population is present, especially considering the informal modalities of recruitment and work which characterizes the region. However Pugliese (2002) considers that the pressure on the levels of unemployment of the highly skilled native Italians is the prevalence of low-skilled work like agriculture, fishing, construction and the service industry which attracts immigrants to settle there.

According to INAIL²¹ data of 2002 (Idos, 2004), small and medium firms hire more immigrants than the big ones and the main work sectors involved are in hiring immigrant workers are: agriculture 13.8%, industry 26.4%, services 39.2% and 20.6% undetermined. The average age employment is between 19 and 35 years old. The balance between recruitment and termination of employments is more favourable for immigrants than for Italians which highlights how the immigrant work force is needed since the native work population no longer can respond to the needs of the work market. In the service sector, the work needs especially affects the domestic service sector i.e. domestic helpers and caretakers of elderly and ill persons, as well as of baby-sitting services. This sector is most commonly composed by women, initially coming from Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia and Cape Verde, then the Philippines and very recently, in the late 1990s, from Eastern Europe. Also under the umbrella term

²¹ INAIL – Istituto Nazionale per l'Assicurazione contro gli Infortuni sul Lavoro, available at: <http://www.inail.it/statistiche/statistiche.htm>

of “service sector”, is work related to hotels, restaurants, tourism, real estate activities and commerce (i.e wholesale, retail and car repair). The largest group involved in the construction sector comes from Romania, following Albania, Poland, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia and Bulgaria, however, only one out of ten has a regular contract and usually they are heavily exploited with low salaries (Idos 2004).

The year of 2005 has been a particularly interesting year as it highlighted the discrepancy between the formal market (the fix quota system) and the real market (the real needs of the sector). This emerged in early 2005 and could be assessed thanks to a closer monitoring of the labour market. During this year three quota decrees were adopted. In the first round, 79.500 places were reserved to the new EU citizens coming from Eastern Europe, whilst only 44.096 persons applied. The major group was represented by Poles, followed by Slovaks, Czech and Hungarians. Non-seasonal workers were 11.737, one third addressed to the domestic assistance area. The remaining seasonal workers were included in the agriculture and tourism sectors. The second decree involved 79.500 places for non-EU citizens (out of which 25.000 were seasonal workers) and the third decree included further seasonal non-EU citizen workers. A number of 20.800 places were reserved to privileged admission quotas and related to non-seasonal work, more precisely 15.000 regarded the domestic assistance sector and further 15.000 persons to other work sectors; 2.500 persons were admitted as free professionals, one thousand as managers and highly skilled workers and two hundred workers as pertaining Italian origins (Idos, 2005).

It is important to highlight how applications for non-seasonal works were higher than those planned by the government. A high request comes from the domestic and care assistance sector (44.2% of requests reaching 50% in some regions) as well as the construction one (17.2% reaching 20% in some Centre-North regions). It was estimated that in 2005, 100.000 were the requests of work coming from foreigners already in Italy which were not satisfied, so subsequently in this year the national planning has closed with at least 100.000 irregular immigrants (Idos, 2005).

A recent survey from a specialized web media newspaper²², carried out in March 2005, highlighted how in two-thirds of the Italian Provinces there were submitted at that period 258.000 work applications which, along with the absent Provinces, were estimated to be 370.000. It was estimated that in case the applications were presented in the further months, they would have reached the total of 450.000 requests of work, three times more that the scheduled places available.

Concerning the impact of immigrant workers in the Italian welfare system, it is difficult to outline it firstly due to the recent phenomenon of immigration in the country, secondly because the studies carried out in the field are based on insufficient data. In Italy there is a high level of elderly and ageing population caused by a decrease in the birth rate and increase of the life span, which means the retired population is expanding alongside welfare expenditure. The main consequence of this is a progressively reducing working population, which can imply a decrease of the entrances to the welfare system. One of the main concerns of researchers and policy makers is whether the working immigrant population is able in the long-term to fill the void left by the native Italians and overcome the possible future scenario

²² Stranieri in Italia , www.stranieriinitalia.it

consisting in the welfare incapacity to satisfy the large amount of requests for pensions and social assistance. Economic theories are cautiously positive or neutral, and deem that immigration cannot solely resolve this structural problem. However, it is possible to say by now that immigrant workers, by contributing to the welfare system, significantly delay and decrease this negative impact and effects of the shift in Italy to an elderly population.

Despite this view, CERP²³ has indicated that the jobs that are carried out by immigrants are unstable and characterized by atypical contracts, therefore contributions to the pension system are still very low and unstable due to the frequent change of their status. The statistic service of the Italian public institution in charge of the welfare funds, INPS, is more optimistic following a simulation carried out in 2002 which highlighted that the contribution of immigrants to the public pension fund in a period of twenty years will be sufficient to cover the costs of the Italian welfare system²⁴. This would be ensured especially if emersion of the work relationships of immigrants will continue. It is worth noting that only thanks to the recent regularization, INPS has received 310 million euros of contributions from private and public employers. This is why it is logical to say that policies which tackle the dynamics of the black market thus facilitating the regular assumption of immigrant workers is, from a long-term perspective, a strategic one.

The already mentioned process of stabilization and integration of foreign communities in Italy also affects the consumption sector. Although immigrants tend to save money, according to an advertising agent (ISI Etnocommunication 2004), immigrants spend approximately 25-30 euros per month on telephone cards to communicate with their relatives which constitutes a very significant figure considering the millions of immigrants present in Italy. Likewise, a very high expenditure for immigrants relates to the public transportation largely used by them as well as the air transportation as a mean to visit their country of origin. Another sector that have received benefits from the immigrant presence, is the money transfer agencies and companies: the remittances to the banking accounts in the country of origin of immigrants progressively increase and relate to millions of euros per year. This has lead Italian banks and public firms, such as the already quoted *Poste Italiane*, to increasingly specialize in this sector. Finally, real estate constitutes the first substantial financial investment from immigrants in Italy. According to the Italian Federation of Professional Real Estate Agents²⁵ in the first six months of 2002, 15% of real estate purchases in Ancon and Rome were made by non-EU citizens (which includes, though, also foreigners from non-immigrant countries).

In addition, since the abolition of the rule of reciprocity under Law no. 39/90, in the 1990s, there have been rapid increase of firms owned by foreigners, especially in

²³ The “Centre of Research on pensions and welfare Policies” which is the research institute of INPS – *Istituto Nazionale per la Previdenza Sociale*, the Italian welfare public authority in charge principally of the pension and other welfare assistance funds.

²⁴ The results were calculated considering an average of 25.000 per year new recruited immigrant workers which would create a 41 billion euros surplus by 2020.

²⁵ Federazione Italiana Agenti Immobiliari Professionali – FIAIP.

Northern Italy. According to the *Infocamere* archive²⁶, in 2002, 4% of all companies were made by individuals born abroad (including repatriated Italians and immigrants with Italian citizenship). The average age of this category is between 30 and 49 years-old coming principally from Morocco, China and Senegal.

The demand for highly skilled immigrants is not yet high and the low skilled labour market remains the principal area of job opportunities in Italy. In the quota decree of 2004, the government fixed in 500 units the need for managers whilst 2.500 for the other categories including self-employment, researchers and professionals in general.

Immigration is consistently changing the Italian society subsequently having implications also for social life. Along with the effects globalisation produced in terms of dissemination and sharing of “diversity” in the world, the new traditions and cultures brought by immigrants are slowly being absorbed by the native Italians. The structured social component of migration is resumed in the concept of a “migration network” (Decimo & Sciortino, 2006), which highlights the interpersonal dimension of the immigrants relations. The social network of migrants constitutes not only paths of mobility, but also grows roots at the local level allowing them to disseminate their rich cultures and traditions in various sectors, such as arts and food, which are changing the system from inside as well as “re-creating” the atmospheres of local life. It is in fact from the local dimension that this process starts and is not often very visible or well-known by the institutional structures which the decision makers strive to outline.

4.1 Conclusions

The current legislation strictly linking the needs of the labour market to the regular presence of immigrants in the Italian territory, as well as its modalities of implementation, namely the nominative call as the only way to be included in the Italian labour market are not feasible and do not reflect the dynamism and informality of this sector. The current legislation also amplifies the phenomenon of irregular immigration as it creates many obstacles to find job opportunities from the country of origin especially in countries, as is Italy, where the employment is often found through interpersonal connections. The possibility to match the supply and demand of work directly in Italy has been already successfully experimented and reflects more pragmatically the cultural and social characteristics of Italy. It is furthermore differently implemented in other EU countries like Greece and Denmark. It has been demonstrated (Corsi, 2005) that the rigid quota system does not respond to the actual work market needs existing in Italy, and a mismatch between demand and offer of work especially in the North of the country²⁷ is present. The number of immigrants allowed to enter the country each year to “fill out” the system needs are not sufficient. Evidence supporting this is the never ending *ex-post* regularisation provisions and the high figures related to the foreigners informally recruited and taking part in the hidden economy.

²⁶ *Infocamere* is a Statistical Archive of the Union of Italian Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Craft and Agriculture (*Unioncamere*).

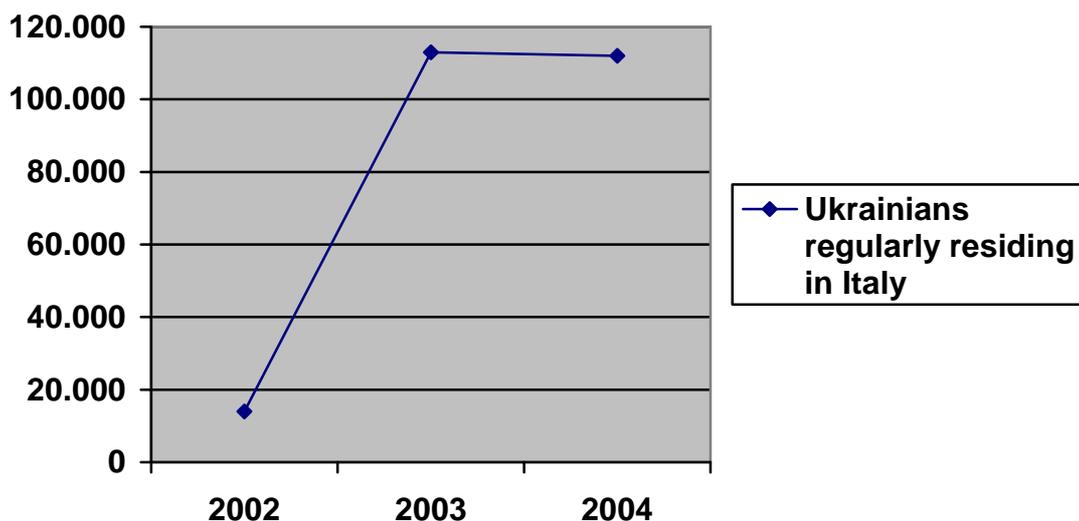
²⁷ According to the study, the mismatch percentage goes from a minimum of 68,6% to a maximum of 79% based of the number of workers' range of 102.620 and 176.985.

It has been already envisaged that the request of work in the field of the care assistance especially addressed to elders will increase in the future and that more qualified workers will be needed (Idos, 2004). Immigration can be a decisive factor to respond to these challenges, but new tools should be developed, namely the increase of activities in the countries of origin like vocational training, to ensure more relevantly qualified immigrants. In addition, a wider and more direct involvement between immigrants and their representatives in the elaboration of immigration policies is needed.

5. Ukrainian community in Italy in the “feminisation immigration” context

Ukrainians are now the fourth immigrant community present in Italy according to the last figures published (Idos, 2005). Therefore, it is considered an important community in terms of immigration. The way Ukrainian immigration has occurred and developed also warrants reason for further investigation as it has been recent and rapid, and it had occupied a specific sector of employment which has interesting socio-cultural implications for Italy.

Ukrainian immigration started in the mid the 1990s and since early 2000 it has been progressively and heavily increasing. In 2004, they were positioned as the first group in the rank of domestic and care work, representing respectively 26.6% and 35.7% of women employed, whilst the 16% of the women having another type of (short or long-term) work contract. According to a very recent study (Redattore Sociale, 2006), in Italy 90% of Ukrainians are women and work mainly in the domestic and care sectors as housekeepers, baby-sitters and care workers (mainly of elderly and ill persons). They are approximately 500.000 women out of which, according to the estimate, 400.000 have an undocumented status.



The majority of Ukrainians coming to Europe and to Italy come from Western Ukraine as it has historically had more links and interaction with Western Europe compared to the Eastern part of the country. Evidence, such as the low requests for

family reunification, suggests that Ukrainian immigrants do not intend to stay in Italy on a permanent basis. This is why no real socio-cultural integration paths are undertaken by them when staying in Italy. It should also be noted that the absence of strategic planning in the country and the misuse of the regularisation scheme does not allow them to plan and organise their permanence, thus they are not so able to reduce the psychosocial hardship migration implies. According to the above-mentioned study, the Ukrainian Women Migration Project is characterised by temporality. Their goal is firstly to pay debts contracted for the migration travel²⁸, then to save money to buy a house, ensure education for their children and lastly invest in some small personally-owned firm activity. They usually enter with a regular tourism visa which lasts for a few days up to few weeks and arrive with vans which drive through Hungary and Austria. The travel lasts for approximately three days. In winter it can take up to ten days due to the harsh climatic conditions and tougher border controls (Amadei, 2005).

Furthermore, the emigration of Ukrainian women is located in the wider context of the “feminisation of immigration”, characterised by a growing emigration of women from all over the world looking for economic independence, mainly through working in the domestic and care sector, but often assuming an invisible role in destination societies. They respond to the need of assistance of rich Western Societies whose native women are increasingly assuming roles outside the house (Ehrenreich & Hochschild 2004). This phenomenon is reinforced by statistical data (United Nations 2004) according to which in the 1960s, women emigrating in the world were 46.6% compared to men, reaching 48.8% in 2004, in numbers they are eighty-five million. In addition, they are mostly between forty and fifty years-old and possess a high level of education (mainly chemical and mechanical engineering university degrees). Currently in Italy there is a trend for a new migration flow affecting younger women (the average age is twenty years-old), with a lower education level and often lacking working experience in their country.

5.1 Background, reasons and motivations for migration

“Ukraine” means border country. At the very beginning of the history of Eastern Europe, this was a borderline between the Slavic-Christian world and the world of the Muslim Tartar-Turks, the crossroad of trade exchanges which linked the Black Sea to the Baltic. Paradoxically, due to the almost absence of clear borders, Ukraine was often involved in wars and was subject to regular invasions from foreign powers. The country was initially incorporated in the Tsarist empire, then into the Soviet one and its language is considered to be a Russian dialect. On the other hand, it is a large and prosperous country, with a highly educated population and strong agricultural workforce. The main reason for the huge emigration towards Western EU countries is the failure of the former Soviet Union socio-economic system, in which Ukraine was encapsulated in, which created an unstable economy and welfare system²⁹. In spite of implementation of the free market economy, a huge political and economic crisis affected the country (as well as the other former Soviet Union satellite countries) from which derived severe socio-economic problems, such as high unemployment rates (especially in the education and public health sectors) and a general de-stabilization of

²⁸ Usually it ranges from 600 to 2700 US dollars with an interest rate of 10%.

²⁹ As a general peculiarity of all former communist countries the welfare system used to ensure the free access to education (schools and university), health, local public services in general.

the country. Furthermore, the agricultural sector heavily suffered from this change and the countryside was and is still progressively abandoned by the local population. Economic isolation as well as the end of the once strong regional cooperation were also decisive factors in the collapse of Ukraine. The social gap is increasing and the wealth produced in the country relates to only a very small portion of the society. The political establishment has been considered responsible for this prominent fracture, due to their incapacity to secure social justice and equality, as well as the high corruption rates in the public system. In Ukraine there is a wide gap between civil society needs and the political elite. This is why millions of persons, disillusioned by democracy and capitalism, are leaving the country looking for stability and well-being. Before this, in 1986, the Chernobyl disaster also had a negative impact on Ukraine. Since then, 12% of the agricultural land is still declared radioactive, whilst thyroid cancer and cardio-respiratory problems are relatively common both in adults and children.

The first social group affected by the lack of employment were women. When is considered together with the internal needs of Italy for workers in the fields of domestic and care assistance on one side and the cultural independency of women promoted by the former communist countries of Eastern Europe on the other one, Ukrainian migration can be identified as a mainly gender-characterized migration. This huge migration movement not only has created a “brain-drain” phenomenon in the Ukraine, meaning a negative impact on the future intellectual class of the country, but it also creates big social unbalances and familiar desegregation. Often women leave their families, especially small children for many years, whilst husbands also often unemployed stay in the country and instead of contributing in a supportive way to the home economy become a burden and deviate to alcoholic addiction and the use of violence towards children and their wives (Amadei, 2005).

Finally, the high rates of undocumented Ukrainians have serious implications not only economically speaking but also socially. They are more vulnerable psychosocially as this precarious status increases stress, social isolation and the difficulty of integration in the social context. Many women reported their 24-hour a day availability to the house needs which often goes far beyond what was convened, as they often live in the house where they work (*Ibid*).

5.2 Ukrainian networks of support

Migration paths and modalities are in the majority of cases known by word of mouth. The same mechanism relates to the search of work opportunities. New emigrants have always a friend or a connection in Italy who organize their arrival in the country. They support in identifying initial accommodation and employment. Those few who did not have connections and pertained to the first migratory flow, used to go to the South of Italy where it was easier to familiarize with the language and the country, and then later move to the rich area located in the North. In Italy a well structured underground network exists which rules the flow of workers, organises their first reception, the offer and inclusion in the labour black market. The network has solid links in Ukraine and it seems it is able to quantify the needs of work force in Italy. Usually well established places are chosen for the regular meetings. It also provides

changes and substitutions between workers when they return back home. The “services” are usually paid through the retention of a part of the first salaries (*Ibid*).

Ukrainian women are socially and sensitively well connected amongst themselves. They have in common a strong connection to their country both in the emotional and practical sense and the well structured community dimension in the country of origin fosters such feelings and needs. Their social life in general consists in Sunday meetings in religious places or squares. The latter are very important spaces where all gather to send or receive goods, mail and maintain contact with their country. The same vans which continuously come and go bringing new persons to Italy or back to the Ukraine for holidays stops in the same squares and places. This reinforces their system of migration and the connection to Ukraine and their families.

5. 3 Future perspectives

Despite the consistent modernisation process started in the 1960s in Italy, the role of the family networks retained a strong role in the provision of basic care services within Italian society. Nevertheless, this role began to be less sustainable throughout the last two decades due to the loosening of family ties, the shrinking of families and the increase in female participation to the labour force. This is the reason why compensatory support naturally evolved and Ukrainian women amongst others³⁰ assumed this role: housekeepers, baby-sitters and care-workers became indispensable to millions of Italian families. The reduced possibilities of Italian native families to access specialized services, the need of strengthening saving policies due to the decrease of their financial capacities are further motivations which influenced this trend. This type of assistance is also due to the need of “care” and support which the socio-health services are no longer able to secure. On the other hand, through this alternative solution, the elderly can stay at home and benefit from their familiar and more comfortable lifestyle. Ever since, the concept of “community care” characterized the Italian family according to which the weak components of the group are protected and supported by the stronger ones. Additional important factors are the change of the extended family into a mono-nuclear one, the delayed entrance in the work market as well as in marriage, having the first child and the increase of life expectancy³¹. Finally, characteristics such as the lack of familiar links in Italy, the persistent necessity of work and living in the same place as well as the age of these women push native Italians to privilege this community to others.

A wide window of opportunity has been opened to these women for the implementation of their life projects in Italy due to the incapacity of the institutional and political actors to respond in a quick manner to this socio-cultural and socio-economic slow revolution on one side, and the *de facto* delegation to the native civil society of looking for the right solution to the problem on the other.

It is ultimately considered that this trend will continue and consolidate as the old native population will keep increasing, whilst the welfare policies and financial resources will in contrast, decrease. The natural consequence is to leave to the free

³⁰ Firstly they were from Cape Verde, Somalia and Eritrea, now from the Philippines, Romania and Peru.

³¹ Italy is the “elder country” in Europe and one of the eldest in the world.

market the match of demand and offer of domestic and care work whilst at the same time corrective measures should be secured by the state such as mechanisms to foster the emersion of this hidden world. This solution would also avoid the birth of socio-psychopathologies of immigrants (Losi, 2006) which, additionally, would influence the relationship with elders and children and increase the costs of the health sector. The promotion of an institutional level space of communication and interrelation is recommended and would ease the already difficult life immigrants face³².

6. General conclusions

When analysing migration, it is impossible not to consider the role the European dimension plays, not only in Italy but in all EU member states. Following the Amsterdam Treaty and despite the limits and obstacles encountered in the outline of a common migration policy, the transnational dimension will increasingly count in the decisions made by each EU country. An example of this is Italy, towards which Europe acted since very recently mainly as a constraint³³. The need to adapt the Italian context to the *Schengen acquis* was a factor in fostering legal and policy innovation. All the European countries are currently facing a “comunitarisation” of asylum and immigration policy starting from Amsterdam onwards in which Italy more specifically looked for a more significant and autonomous role for itself in the European migratory scenario. The first outcome arrived in November 2003 when it was decided at EU level (the debate which was leaded by Italy) to create an EU border management agency for a common patrolling of the EU external borders including the Mediterranean and Carpathian areas (Pastore, 2004). At the same time, it is evident the lack of attention on the internal virtuous dynamics of migration and subsequently by the EU supportive policies which could to promote and facilitate integration and social cohesion.

However, the common immigration and asylum policy are no more than the result of the countries perspectives considered in a common European view. The necessity of states to maintain their exclusive competence in “internal” matters, such as immigration is traditionally, as well as the fear of countries to renounce their exclusive powers, which could possibly lead to an uncontrolled immigration, is the motivation of the inadequate common policy at the EU level.

From a wider and more in-depth perspective, migration along the East-West path into Europe is likely to remain substantial so long as political instability, poverty and repression drive people out of the countries of the former Soviet Union, China, South Asia and the Middle East. This is why it is important policy makers consider the global dimension and its interrelationships when dealing with human movements. The choice of the European Union to include the Eastern European countries into the EU club is evidence of such an acknowledgement: wealthier and stable countries will lead to, from a long-term perspective, individuals to stay in their countries and invest in it without looking for “fortune” abroad which would be, furthermore, the natural choice of all citizens.

³² A pilot project was recently implemented, although addressed to the labour needs of protection, which consists in the creation of a desk office in an Italian Union to which domestic workers can address to.

³³ See the above-explained coincidence between the adoption of the first framework law on immigration and the conditions requested to enter the Schengen rigid club.

Regarding the Italian perspective and with a view to promote integration policies which reflect the real needs of the country and to secure an effective migration management, as already mentioned, it is important to highlight the strategic role the local dimension plays. Decentralisation of the competences to the local governments in the field of migration is an optimal choice as they have the real picture of the need and gaps to be filled out. The institutional capacity to ensure a good quality of life to immigrants means at the same time to guarantee a good response, from their part, to the needs of the country of destination and primarily to its native population. To do so, the interpersonal dimension, and not only the institutional and political one, plays a key role. On one side much more should be done in Italy to ensure equality of rights and institutional protection to immigrants, including in some important aspects such as those with the undocumented status, whilst on the other, a real “institutional communication” should be initiated (or not interrupted only for changes of the governmental policy), with immigrants and their communities which would enact as a tool to share their view and needs as well as to have a prompt response to changes.

A step forward for a real integration of immigrants regularly residing in the country would be the right of the administrative vote. Currently many Municipalities expressed openness although such decisions have to be taken at the central state level. According to a recent survey (Fondazione Nord Est 2002) 72,5% of native Italians agree in granting the possibility to immigrants to vote for the election of the local governments. It seems, subsequently, that despite the maturity of the civil society and the local governments, Italy, at the central level, is not able to reflect the position of the “real” country.

Furthermore, this direction is being addressed by the recently elected Italian government. A panel for the review of the citizenship legislation has been announced in order to adapt it to the new context and foster social cohesion especially of the second generation of immigrants. Likewise the National Fund of Integration Policies will be re-activated and changes to the organization and functioning of the detention centres for irregular immigrants are envisaged following some media and political criticism which highlighted the violation of human rights which is often occurring in some of these centres.

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