

Combating discrimination against migrant workers

MAKING INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS WORK
FOR DECENT WORK
BRIEFING ON THE SITUATION IN ITALY

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Introduction

Immigration and exploitation

Since the early seventies Italy, which for over a century had been a nation of massive emigration, has become a nation of immigration. In the past 35 years it has fast-forwarded through the entire migration history of European countries with older immigration traditions, to a point where today immigration in Italy is a full and mature process¹. According to the latest available data, there are 5 million immigrants in Italy, 7.5 per cent of the total population².

Immigrants represent at least 10 per cent of the workforce. Increasing numbers are taking Italian citizenship (66,000 in 2010 and over 600,000 overall), accounting for 7.9 per cent of the total number of children enrolled in school, they get married to Italians (257,762 mixed marriages between 1996 and 2009) and 650,000 were born in Italy. They assist 2.5 million families.

The ISTAT data also estimate that there are at least three million illegally employed workers, 13 per cent of which are immigrants. The data therefore clearly shows that there is a rampant illegal economy and that undeclared work is accompanied by serious exploitation of immigrant workers.

Most of the migrant workers are concentrated in small and medium sized enterprises, in the North-East: Lombardy, Veneto and Emilia Romagna. In recent years the Caritas Reports ("Migrantes") have pointed to a partial change in the original distribution by sector: a decrease in the percentage working in manufacturing but an increase in those working in construction, together with an increase in those in the service sector (in particular, in the care and hotel sectors) and in agriculture. The mass regularisation of the early 2000s confirmed both the presence of a high number of undocumented migrants employed in manufacturing and a strong presence in the domestic care sector.

During periods of stagnation and market contraction, the weakest social groups like immigrants and unskilled workers are destined to suffer the consequences of the downsizing of labour and are more exposed to risks such as unemployment and dismissal. Social exclusion and the high number of immigrants among long term unemployed people show the economic, social and political costs linked to discrimination³. An important factor to be taken into account is that the incipient tertiarisation of advanced economies and the increase of competitiveness require more qualifications and a more stringent selection of human resources. This process might penalise immigrants, who usually work in traditional sectors that are more affected by changes linked to globalisation and where there is more delocalisation⁴.

1 G. Zincone, "The Making of Policies: Immigration and Immigrants in Italy", in *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, vol. 32, n. 3, p. 347-375, 2006; M. Ambrosini, *Una trasformazione imprevista: l'incontro tra economia italiana e immigrazione straniera*, in "Quaderni di rassegna sindacale", n. 2/2008.

2 Caritas/Migrantes, "Dossier Statistico Immigrazione", 21° Rapporto, 2011. The increase in 2010 was 335,258 residents. The main communities are the Romanians (968,576), Albanians (482,627), Moroccans (452,424) and Chinese (209,934). It is, therefore, as stated in the report, more permanent and structural. Although the rate of growth in the last year was very high (17 per cent) however, the percentage of foreign people is still lower than in Germany, Spain, the UK or France.

3 E. Allasino, E. Reyneri, A. Venturini G. Zincone, "La discriminazione dei lavoratori immigrati nel mercato del lavoro in Italia", *International Migration Papers 67 - I*, ILO, 2004.

4 See L. Frey, R. Livraghi, A. Venturini, A. Righi, L. Tronti, "The jobs and effects of migrant workers in Italy: Three essays", *International Migration Papers II*, Ginevra, 2005.



“Immigrants typically experience a combination of precarious conditions - both objective and subjective: atypical employment relationships, in small businesses, mainly in sectors characterised by high mobility, spatial dispersion, seasonal work, (construction, agriculture, catering, tourism), work in the black economy and irregular work.”

Overview

Discrimination and precarious working conditions

It is well known that the Italian labour market continuously absorbs and needs new migrant labour, especially in some sectors. The real working conditions of those migrants is less well known, however. Discrimination and racism against migrant workers, who are often silent victims of these phenomena, are even more hidden and only known if they have made the news headlines or have been part of someone's direct experience⁵. Both “direct” and “indirect” discrimination are widespread; discrimination takes place when entering the labour market and also while working. Besides simple discrimination, multiple discrimination occurs when different factors are combined: nationality, gender and length of stay in Italy, age, religion and so on. Other forms of discrimination against foreign workers by colleagues and employers are racism and xenophobia.

In Italy, discrimination in the workplace and unequal working conditions seem to be part of a more comprehensive process of segmentation and the increasing precariousness of the labour market. This process leads to lower protection for foreign employees who constitute a particularly “vulnerable” group of workers. In spite of formal equality sanctioned by law and collective agreements, the working conditions of immigrants employed by Italian firms remain poor in every way. Discrimination at work - in the labour market as well in the workplace - is in fact serious and long lasting.

There are different forms of discrimination in the labour market, that can occur during the various macro-phases of the work cycle: access, conditions and type of workplace, termination of employment. As for the first macro-phase, besides various legal constraints, there is still strong reticence about “allowing” immigrants to access jobs for which there is a high supply of Italian nationals or prestigious and highly skilled jobs. The majority of foreigners, even those with a high level of human capital, enter in the low-wage labour market⁶.

The work context and the nationality of the worker seem to be important for their interaction with the external environment; these two elements play an important role in the integration in the labour market. The original economic and social backgrounds as well as previous experience gained during the migration process also play an active role. A knowledge of Italian is considered important not only to combat discriminatory attitudes of various kinds, but also to facilitate inclusion and relations in the surrounding environment.

Immigrants typically experience a combination of precarious conditions - both objective and subjective: atypical employment relationships, in small businesses, mainly in sectors characterised by high mobility, spatial dispersion, seasonal work, (construction, agriculture, catering, tourism), work in the black economy and irregular work.

The gap between the wages of native and immigrant workers is still wide and growing (about 40 per cent lower). Immigrant worker face adverse conditions in a labour market where labour costs tend to be reduced more and more as a means of helping enterprises increase their competitiveness. There has been an increase in industrial accidents affecting immigrant workers (+8.7 per cent) and decrease for Italians (-3.4 per cent).

5 See <http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/decent-work-agenda/lang--en/index.htm>

6 A. Megale, G. Mottura, E. Galossi, (Eds.), “Immigrazione e sindacato. Discriminazione, precarietà, sicurezza”, V Rapporto IRES,, Ediesse, 2008

The gap between legal rights and the real working conditions experienced by immigrants was the most frequent complaint heard during the interviews (see the IRES' video for the project).

The most common forms of discrimination revealed by IRES research concern:

- **Recognition of qualifications and job level.** The majority of foreigners work at the lowest levels, even though they actually carry out tasks that, according to the respective collective agreements, fall into higher job categories⁷. This gap between foreign workers' potential and their professional achievement can be ascribed in part to the difficulties immigrants find in getting recognition for their university and professional qualifications, especially if these have been obtained in the country of origin.
- **Compliance with contracts and working conditions.** The forms of discrimination commonly identified include notably: an excessive use of overtime which is usually paid "cash in hand". The use of foreign workers to carry out the hardest tasks or to cover less desirable shifts (night, holiday, weekend shifts etc.). Failure to pay or irregular payment of the severance indemnity (TFR), which is often not paid out to workers. Moreover, the gap between the wages of native and immigrant workers is still wide and growing.
- **Termination of employment contracts.** The research shows there are differences in the enforcement of employment laws for native and foreign workers in various sectors, especially for dismissal.
- **Training and safety.** Investment in training and safety is the first thing to be neglected by firms; this happens in particular in those sectors where there is a higher presence of foreign labour. Immigrant workers face adverse conditions in a labour market where labour costs tend to be steadily reduced to increase competitiveness.
- **Career development.** Finally, discrimination can also be found in career prospects. This mirrors the phenomena just mentioned and it is a process where the reticence of the native population to apply a genuine equal opportunities system plays an important role. Immigrants who are less vulnerable to discrimination seem to be those with more skills and knowledge.

The double discrimination against foreign women should also be emphasised. Women seem to be concentrated even more than men in a few occupational sectors. Care giving and housework are usually the only job opportunities for the majority of women workers who decided to leave their country to work. Moreover, in these sectors there can be conditions that further discriminate workers. There are no opportunities for career advancement and undeclared work is frequent. In these sectors it is very hard to unionise workers, working hours and conditions are extremely flexible and often depend on the needs of the employer; moreover, wages are often quite low and social security and assistance contributions are at the minimum (if met at all).

⁷ A. Megale, G. Mottura, E. Galossi, (Eds.), "Immigrazione e sindacato. Discriminazione, precarietà, sicurezza", V Rapporto IRES,, Ediesse, 2008

The legal framework

Legislative changes affecting the working conditions of migrants have been frequent in recent years and not without contradictions, reflecting the political and cultural profile of governing coalitions. The first innovative change was the Consolidation Act (Testo Unico) governing immigration and the condition of the foreigner (**d.lgs. 286/98**) passed by a centre-left government. The law contains a number of key measures affecting labour regulations, concerning “social integration, discrimination and the institution of a fund for migration policies”. These, among other things, include:

- the civil rights enjoyed by Italian citizens to be applied to all;
- the principle of non-discrimination, covering “distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference” because of race, colour, ancestry or ethnic origins, convictions or religion;
- the general principle of the “equal treatment of the immigrant worker with Italian or EU workers”;
- recruitment through sub-contracting, where conditions are not “worse than those established by applicable national contracts”;
- the respect by employers of “wages and insurance laid down in the applicable law and industry wide contract”;
- the application of article 36 of the Constitution concerning the right to a wage that is sufficient to conduct a dignified life with one’s family.

Significant and highly restrictive changes were introduced by the centre-right government, with the so called **Bossi-Fini Law**, in particular the establishment of a legal link between the residence permit and the employment contract. This link makes foreign workers highly susceptible to blackmail in the workplace, which in turn leads to dumping and precariousness in the rest of the workforce. The legislation that regulates the employment relationships of foreign citizens is particularly unsuited to the changes that have taken place in the labour market over the last few years, with a blurring of the traditional duality between dependent employment and self-employment and the increase in fixed-term and atypical work. In this context, immigration law can have a very punitive effect on the foreign workforce.

This approach is bound to have negative consequences for the immigrant working population in terms of the normative and contractual framework. Its success will depend, however, on the way integration policies are implemented in relation to sometimes repressive regulations restricting migration planned flows. “If planned immigration flows are restricted in such a way as to force the great majority of immigrants into hiding, de facto all but barring their access to rights and equal treatment, illegal immigration will become the instrument, alongside other sectors of irregular work, for the balkanisation of the labour market”⁸. The prevailing attitude of centre right governments over the past ten years has been to strengthen the restrictive aspect of migration policies, which has in turn engendered greater precariousness among workers with regular contracts. In practical terms, the Bossi-Fini law – and its highly controversial work-related residence permit – has made legal immigration practically impossible⁹.

Collective bargaining and more generally industrial relations are among the regulations that establish a protection scheme for foreign workers. Some basic conditions may exist to make anti-discrimination norms established by the Community and national legislator effective. Unfortunately, until now trade union sources admit that “the bargaining experience has not been very influential”. This constraint concerns all levels of the Italian system of industrial relations – national, company and local levels.

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8 Garofalo G. M. e McBritton M. (2000), “Immigrazione e lavoro: note al T.U. 25 Luglio 1998, n. 286; in Riv. Giur. Lav.,” n. 3, p. 514.

9 Su questi aspetti il, F. Carchedi, F. Carrera, G. Mottura (eds.), “Immigrazione e sindacato. Lavoro, cittadinanza e territori”, VI Rapporto IRES, Ediesse, 2010.

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Industrial relations Preventing discrimination

Notwithstanding the formal equality that has been endorsed by laws and nationwide contracts, the working conditions of non-EU citizens employed by Italian enterprises continue to be inadequate in many key aspects. Discrimination at work or in the market and in contracts is a strong and persistent critical issue to overcome. Not only public institutions are called into play but also those intermediate entities, such as trade unions, that provide democratic and pedagogical supervision for enterprises and workers.

In our interviews with migrant workers and trade union officials the conditions under which newly arrived migrants were clearly a cause for concern – both as injustices against the workers themselves and also the risk that increased deregulation posed to the established pay and conditions of the existing workforce.

Among the regulatory frameworks that contribute at various levels to the protection of foreign workers, collective bargaining could play an important role. It can be used to set out some of the basic conditions to ensure the greater effectiveness of the anti-discrimination framework defined by lawmakers. Studies on its specific impact have been sporadic in Italy. The Italian collective bargaining system is a two-level negotiation: nation- and industry-wide and company/plant level, with the former having primacy.

There are more than 400 national industry-wide collective agreements and they cover – at least potentially – the whole dependent work force. In reality, the level of coverage is commonly estimated to be around 70 per cent, which is still quite high for a country where collective agreements are not automatically extended to cover all workers in the industry or enterprise concerned.

According to the IRES and other more recent research¹⁰, roughly 50 of these national industry-wide collective agreements (about 10 per cent) include some kind of special provision for migrant workers. So far these are to be found mainly in: food and agriculture, construction, textiles and engineering. They are more widespread in the manufacturing sectors than in the tertiary sector; more in small and medium-sized, crafts and cooperatives enterprises, than in large enterprises.

Even more surprising, only 1 per cent of the company level collective agreements contain some kind of reference to the migrant condition. It should also be noted that there is little data and information on this subject – as on company level collective bargaining in general – it is normally local¹¹ and not always properly updated.

Some meaningful tripartite collective agreements have been signed at the local level over the last decade concerning social services: regional (Veneto, Friuli), provincial (Turin, Como), metropolitan (Milan, Rome), district (Prato, Pisa Santa Croce, Reggio Emilia).

The trade unions have debated the reasons for this lack of attention to the potential, specific conditions of the migrant work force. One of the possible explanations is that – according to Italian legislation on immigration – all employees have equal rights, legal and economic, recognised by the legislation and through collective bargaining, no matter where they come from. Hence there is a binding legal framework, which should mean there is no reason for further positive discrimination in collective agreements.

¹⁰ S. Leonardi, G. Mottura, “Immigrazione e sindacato. Lavoro, rappresentanza, contrattazione”, Ediesse/IRES, 2003; F. Bentivogli, A. Geria “Immigrati, tutela contrattuale, associazionismo”, in Caritas/Migrantes, Immigrazione. Dossier Statistico 2005, Idos, 2006;

¹¹ See, S. Cozzi, G. Mottura, M. Rinaldini, “Una indagine sul rapporto tra sindacato e immigrazione in Emilia Romagna”, in “Quaderni di rassegna sindacale”, n. 2/2008. For a recent survey on decentralized bargaining and immigration, made in the Lombardy region, IRES-CGIL, “A new frontier for bargaining. The second-level bargaining, and immigrants”, Milan, 2011

The provisions aimed at better integration most frequently found in collective agreements concern:

- Oral and written information on prevention against accidents and professional illnesses, using bilingual material with suitable international symbols;
- Negotiated management of holidays and planning leave to return to the home country; Recognition of the right to the observance of the main religious holidays;
- Diversification of meals served in the office canteen¹²;
- Creation of bilateral bodies of the social partners with the task of monitoring the sector labour market dynamics and the foreseen presence of third-country workers

The question that arises however is why has collective bargaining paid so little attention to migrant work? In our opinion, the answers are many and multifaceted.

- 1)** Statistics and methodology. The company level agreements kept at the CNEL¹³ archives show that most of the enterprises concerned were medium- and large-sized where the presence of immigrant workers is not significant. In addition, the classification does not take into account – and, in fact, cannot take into account – the informal and individual solutions that are applied when dealing with issues specifically related to non-EU workers.
- 2)** Chronic difficulty faced by trade unions in ensuring membership and representation, especially in those sectors that are more exposed to flexibility and non-permanent jobs. The conditions of immigrant workers are generally a distillation of precariousness: substandard and underpaid employment contracts in small-sized companies operating in sectors featuring seasonal work, high mobility, territorial dispersion and the plague of undeclared work. Against this backdrop, there is little wonder that workers will not choose to commit themselves to trade union activities. But where work occurs in a regulated environment and is relatively stable, trade union membership among immigrant workers is significant (40 per cent), with levels that are above the national average.
- 3)** A politico-legal explanation, which is connected to the fact that, following the passing of the 1998 immigration consolidating act, social partners have gradually come to consider immigrant work as having been entirely “normalised”. It is now the law that enforces a series of basic mandatory principles, such as the fundamental rights of the individual, the forbidding of discrimination and wage and legal equality as prescribed by applicable laws and nationwide contracts.
- 4)** A limit to trade union action. On the one hand, it is undeniable that the law and trade union action provide a general framework of protection and safeguards. On the other hand the inclusion of contractual clauses concerning migrant workers’ conditions in some agreements and not in others, especially in sectors where immigrant work is very significant, does indicate that within the trade union movement there are different approaches. Clearly, collective bargaining may be flexible and combine universal protection and reasonable specificities of treatment. Once a common platform of rights and protections that are not subject to variation by agreement is defined, there are other aspects that can be improved through collective bargaining.

¹² See A. De Oto, “Precetti religiosi e mondo del lavoro: un’analisi giuridica”, Ediesse, 2007.

¹³ Consiglio Nazionale dell’Economia e Lavoro

Good practice

A targeted trade union approach

Contractual protection makes up a significant though not exclusive part of trade union action in favour of immigrant workers. We have observed that in areas where the presence of immigrant workers is highest – seasonal work in agriculture or in the tourism industry, in some industrial districts in central and north-eastern Italy, in some large metropolitan areas – trade unions increasingly tend to tailor their specific action by organising initiatives that respond to local conditions and not simply by strictly applying protection defined in the contracts.

Italian trade unions confederations have been very actively engaged, over the years, in fostering the integration of third-country migrants. Such an engagement, and effort, has been articulated at different levels, in terms of:

- 1)** membership policies and services designed specifically for the migrant population
- 2)** collective bargaining on specific provisions related to the working and life needs and expectations of the migrant workers
- 3)** political mobilisation and campaigns for legislative improvements and facilities for the third-country migrants.

Targeted services are one of the most relevant activities of Italian unions in contributing to the integration of migrants. These services – offered by most of the sectoral unions (especially construction; metallurgy; food and agriculture; transport), either at national and local level – include notably:

- Information campaigns about legislation and rights, particularly widespread in the construction and agriculture sectors, where workers are more subject to abuses and irregular work. It is “street unionism”. In places where there is a very high level of criminality and illegal economy – like Caserta and Villa Literno (Campania) – where migrant workers are particularly abused, there’s a CGIL caravan, that travels around to highlight illegal hiring, illegal employment and the invisible work that migrant labourers are too often dramatically forced into. It is a mobile garrison for rights and legality. A similar initiative was undertaken by the food and agriculture union federation FLAI-CGIL, in Sicily, at the end of September 2011, in the countryside around Ragusa-Vittoria-Pachino.
- The organisation of Italian language courses, which is the most common element in the industry-wide national agreements that mention migrant workers, and those of some companies, such as Arpa, in the ceramics industry.
- Enterprise-level agreements which grant the right to enjoy long vacations once a year to visit their country of origin (e.g. Electrolux, in the North-East)
- The recognition of certain religious requirements: the canteen menu, the holidays or the creation of a room for prayer (e.g. in Serralunga in the rubber-plastic sector)
- Local social plans, agreed with the public administration at the territorial level: housing; transport; other opportunities (typical of the territorial tripartite agreements)

- Legal assistance in the event of any form of discrimination and translation in the migrants' languages of the laws and other useful administrative acts, related to local welfare systems. Now every trade union territorial structure has a specialised office for immigration problems.
- The use of trade unions' offices and rooms for social activities.

Policy coherence at a territorial level as well as the initiatives by the migrant workers' trade union organisations can be expected to produce even more significant results than the negotiation of the contract itself.

The workers we interviewed appreciated the effort on the part of trade unions to implement more efficient initiatives to combat discrimination at work and to achieve greater social exclusion.

Significantly, in a number of industrial districts membership among immigrant workers has risen sharply in these past years, recording unionisation levels that were higher than those among traditional workers. Unitary union representations (RSU) now feature a significant presence of foreign workers, who often even form the majority. Foreign workers, in a few but recurrent cases, have even risen through the ranks to take decision-making positions in some categories and territories. Where present, trade union delegates, in addition to their specific roles, act not only as "cultural mediators" in relations between foreign workers (both members and non-members) and trade union organisations, but also draw attention within the latter to issues specifically related to immigration (racism, discrimination, citizen rights, specific requirements, etc.).

Recent action by the unions includes important awareness-raising campaigns on rights and protections, such as proposals to amend the legislation extending the right to vote in local elections to foreigners, seek citizenship by birthright (*jus soli*) for the children of immigrants born in Italy, and combat this form of labour exploitation through legislation against "illegal hiring".

Last but not least, Italian trade unions have international ties with several national unions in the countries many migrant workers come from. Particularly active from this point of view are the construction workers unions. The sectoral organisations within CISL (Fical-Cisl), and above all UIL (Feneal-Uiil) have opened offices in the Balkan region, particularly in Romania, as part of cooperation and development projects with those countries. In turn, the aim was to also establish a first contact with potential immigrants - and therefore members - in Italy. However, the CGIL is very cautious, fearing that such practises will merely increase emigration rather than capacity-building work and labour in their own countries. The Fillea-Cgil has signed agreements with the Confederation of Democratic Trade Unions of Morocco (CDT) and the General Union of Tunisian Workers (UGTT), while the sectoral union federation of the commerce and services of CGIL (Filcams) has signed similar commitments with the UGTT.

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Thanks to these agreements it was possible to organise some union training courses in Italy - Milan and Palermo - and in Morocco, with two main objectives:

- 1)** to transfer knowledge and skills in the field of industrial relations in the construction sector, in order to promote the development of collective bargaining in Morocco and Tunisia;
- 2)** to inform and train groups of workers willing to move to Italy in order to look for and find employment in the construction sector.

In the first case the target group was consisted of a dozen union officials and the themes of the course - which lasted a month and was held in Milan - focused on the issues of workplace safety, collective bargaining, union representation, the Italian system of bilateral agencies.

In the second case the target consisted of a group of workers, identified in collaboration with the Moroccan public body for employment, and the goal was to learn about Italian rules and systems, labour rights and industrial relations. As a result, the union has established an internal department that deals with specific emigration and immigration issues.

At this time, similar cooperation is planned with Romania, Serbia, Slovenia and Albania. Moreover, CGIL also has offices (INCA) abroad, to support those workers returning to their homeland after working in Italy. New offices have now been opened in Senegal, Tunisia and Morocco for migrants who accrued pension rights on Italian soil.



Conclusions

The gap between law and reality

Migrant flows into the country corresponded to the demands of families as well as industries and services in the different regions. The immigrant population is on average younger than the domestic one and therefore has a positive effect on the demographic balance (about one-sixth of total new births) and the composition of the labour force; most of these people are far from retirement and pay annually over seven billion in social security contributions; they provide greater flexibility to companies; they create their own employment opportunities, independently, with 228,540 small business owners; they take care of their families, the elderly and sick.

Nevertheless, migrant workers are paying a higher price for the effects of the crisis in terms of total unemployment and precariousness. The workers interviewed deplored the gap between the formal equality of rights recognised by law and collective agreements, and the actual reality of their and their colleagues working and living conditions.

All these people have special needs and claims at the workplace level but also as citizens. Collective bargaining is certainly the most appropriate tool where – at the different levels – rules and norms can better combine universal rights and standards with appropriate approaches and specific measures to the affirmative actions.

The Italian trade union confederations have been particularly sensitive to the issues surrounding the integration of third-country nationals. They've been using their social strength and political recognition in order to give voice to the need for representation of the migrant population. As part of civil society, unions are on the front line in order to push the political establishment to adopt public and legal measures which can facilitate integration and combat all forms of discrimination related to nationality, race, religion, language.

About the project

“Making Industrial Relations work for Decent Work” is a one-year project which looks to intensify the cooperation and mutual learning of relevant actors - employers, unions, NGOs, think tanks and workers – to identify the role as well as the tools and models needed for effective industrial relations, with the ultimate aim of combating precarious employment and realising decent working conditions and quality jobs for all.

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All “Making Industrial Relations work for Decent Work” pilot studies are available on www.solidar.org

SOLIDAR is a European network of 56 NGOs active in over 90 countries working to advance social justice in Europe and worldwide. SOLIDAR voices the concerns of its member organisations to the EU and international institutions across the policy sectors social affairs, international cooperation and lifelong learning.

Authors: Emanuele Galossi, Salvo Leonardi, Francesca Carrera (IRES)

Responsible editor: Conny Reuter

Editor: Sara Hammerton

Project Coordinators:

Adeline Otto and
Francesco Zoia Bolzonello

Publication Coordinator:

Abigail Goundry

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Recommendations

- **A change of approach.** Immigration must no longer be tackled within the framework of the fight against criminality and terrorism and therefore systematically dealt with by means of prohibition. Separating immigration from the issue of criminality and terrorism will serve to tackle both issues better, as well as educating public opinion. Against a backdrop of the increasing precariousness of the job market, the regulations governing work and residence permits for foreign workers have brought about substantial segregation of the labour market that is totally unacceptable not least for the distorting effect this produces on the workforce as a whole.
- **Regularisation.** Pursue those mechanisms that lead to the legal entry of foreign workers in Italy in order to allow supply to match demand, removing the clause whereby an employment contract can be given only if the worker has a residence permit. This would be possible by introducing a more flexible system of regularisation through the issuing of a six-month temporary residence permit that would allow holders to look for a job, as proposed by the European Parliament in Strasbourg.
- **Integration.** Social, cultural and civil inclusion is crucial. Rights and responsibilities where local authorities play a key role within the framework of national legislation that ensures welfare, education, housing, family reunification, health and pensions. The cornerstone of this new notion of citizenship is the granting of voting rights at an administrative level. For as long as immigrants do not deal with politics, politics will not deal with them, or will deal with them in a totally partial or inadequate way.
- **Welfare reform.** The welfare and pension system should be reformed in order to ensure equal opportunities for immigrants, through the possibility of taking into account the social charges and contributions paid in the country of origin (or other immigration countries), using international conventions.



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