



Briefing

The Italian Roadmap 2015

Hotspots, readmissions, asylum procedures and the re-opening of detention centres

Yasha Maccanico

The following is an annotated translation of the [Italian Roadmap](#) produced on 28 September 2015, which also refers to eight attachments which are not available.

By way of introduction, it is worth noting that it illustrates the Italian Interior Ministry's position and plan for reception of migrants and refugees in the context of the current crisis in late September. Some preliminary comments are in order, including:

- The absence of any reference to access to legal representation or a right of appeal for those deemed "irregular" and/or excluded from the relocation and/or asylum procedures or those for the granting of international protection.
- The great plans for "relocations" appear increasingly uncertain and have currently stalled, considering the number of places offered by Member States to date, as reported by the Commission on 24 November 2015, which have been stuck at the figure of 3,216 (out of 160,000) for two weeks. See: [Member States' Support to Emergency Relocation Mechanism](#) (As at 24 November 2015).
- In the section on forced returns and cooperation with third countries, the document refers to both the "more for more" principle and the "laissez-passer" travel document procedure, both of which were dropped due to opposition by African states in the Valletta Conference on 11-12 November 2015.
- Contributions pledged by member states for the Africa Trust Fund, which the Roadmap (p. 13) describes as potentially useful for the purpose of setting up and implanting an AFIS (Automated Fingerprint Identification System) in third countries in Africa, are well below the required levels, as reported by the Commission on 27 November 2015. (See: [Member States' financial pledges since 23 September 2015, \(Communicated of 27 November 2015\)](#))

The Roadmap

On 28 September 2015, the Italian interior ministry published the [“Roadmap”](#). It was required to be drawn up within the framework of measures adopted under Council Decision (EU) 2015/1523 of 22 September 2015, “establishing provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and Greece”. The complementary measures the two countries were to adopt include submission of a roadmap

“which shall include adequate measures in the area of asylum, first reception and return, enhancing the capacity, quality and efficiency of its systems in these areas as well as measures to ensure appropriate implementation of this Decision. That Member State shall fully implement that roadmap.” (p. 37 of Decision 2015/1523)

Failure to do so may lead the Commission to suspend the application of the Decision for the benefit of Italy and Greece for three months (a decision which may be extended by a further three months). Drawn up in accordance with art. 8.1 of the Decision, the roadmap provides measures to:

“improve the capacity, quality and efficiency of the Italian system in the fields of asylum, early reception and repatriation;

or ensuring the correct measures for enacting the decision.” (p. 2 of the Roadmap, hereafter RM)

The Roadmap was also conceived to comply with legislative texts including legislative decree no. 142 of 18 August 2015, which transposed European Directives on asylum procedures and reception. The document notes that it also includes actions undertaken by Italy to face the influx of migrants which are also part of the requirements of the decisions adopted on relocation and hotspots. It is divided into four sections, focusing especially on “capacity” and asylum “procedures”, including relocation and integration. The sections are as follows:

Capacity of reception facilities (section 1, pp. 4-8)

The document notes that the Italian reception system’s overall capacity is 96,945, described as an “impressive increase” following the increase in arrivals throughout 2014 and in 2015. Early reception capacity has risen from 5,516 places in 2012 to “around 12,000” by mid-2015, including hotspots. This early reception capacity is distributed between facilities which were government-run centres, namely CARAs/CDAs (reception centres for asylum seekers/reception centres) and CSPAs (centres for rescue and first aid), whose conversion to so-called “regional hubs” is underway.

This conversion will result in capacity rising to 14,750 places in the first half of 2016, and to 15,550 by the end of 2016, with redistribution across the national territory envisaged, thus establishing the first reception system for asylum seekers using regional hubs. These were conceived as a key mechanism to enable the management of large-scale arrivals of third-country nationals. The hubs are open structures to be used in the early phases of reception to host third-country nationals registered and identified using photographs and the taking of fingerprints, who must fill the C3 form to request international protection. Their stay should last for between 7 and 30 days, before being moved to “second phase reception” in facilities which are part of the SPRAR (protection system for asylum seekers and refugees) network. Creation of the regional hub system

is underway, using former CARAs and with plans for other suitable facilities including former army barracks selected in the regions which are willing to implement the plan, following refurbishment and adaptations for their new purpose. The system should be completed by the end of 2016 and envisages having one regional hub in each Italian region.

The long-term reception for asylum seekers system involving the SPRAR is spread across the Italian territory and involves cooperation between national and local institutions, in particular between the interior ministry and local authorities. This longstanding system is identified as a “best practice”, and the model will continue as a basis for providing further accommodation capacity. **Italy’s continued effort to increase the SPRAR’s capacity led to successive increases, from 3,000 places in 2012, to 9,400 in 2013, 19,600 in 2014, up to a capacity of 22,000 places in 2015. An extraordinary call for tenders is underway to increase this capacity by a further 10,000 places, so as to reach a capacity of 32,000 places in early 2016. A further call for tenders for the 2016/2017 period is envisaged to reach a capacity of “at least 40,000” places for second phase (long-term) reception.** Extraordinary efforts have already been required to raise the capacity from 20,000 in 2014 to 32,000 in 2015/2016.

The SPRAR network is described as offering asylum seekers highly qualified reception with comfortable accommodation and services including education, professional training, Italian language courses, legal counsel, medical care and psychological support. SPRAR projects are normally funded using national funds yet, for the provision of further places, these are complemented by resources from the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). **Despite this, the “unprecedented” migration flows of 2014 have resulted in the accommodation of asylum seekers in flats or other available facilities, termed “Centres for Extraordinary Reception” (CASs). The system involving CASs currently has a capacity of 68,093 places.**

Italy has enacted the “hotspots” approach to manage “uninterrupted flows of third-country nationals towards the Italian coasts since 2014”, in accordance with the European Migration Agenda. It was implemented through a plan to channel arrivals towards selected ports (Pozzallo, Porto Empedocle and Trapani in mainland Sicily, and the island of Lampedusa) where procedures including “medical screening, pre-identification, registration, photo-identification and fingerprinting” are carried out. Italy has also made facilities available to host the EU’s Regional Task Force (EURTF) in Catania involving EU agencies, which operate jointly, to support the activities conducted in hotspots. The closed hotspot facilities have an overall capacity of 1,500 places to conduct the mentioned identification and screening activities, while two further closed hotspots for third-country nationals are envisaged in Augusta and Taranto by the end of 2015, with a view to bringing the hotspots system’s overall capacity above 2,500 places.

The procedures enacted in hotspot facilities include medical screening of every person upon arrival, followed by interviews by immigration authority officials who will fill a form indicating their personal details, photograph and basic information, including whether they wish to apply for international protection. People who may benefit from the relocation procedure will be informed about its modality and possible outcomes. **Involvement by EASO (European Asylum Support Office) officials is envisaged during this phase, which will involve “differentiation” between potential asylum seekers/candidates for relocation and people to be considered in an “irregular status”.**

Further to the mentioned activities and pre-identification interviews, some people may be interviewed by investigative police officers, with support from Frontex and Europol officers, to acquire information for “investigative and/or intelligence purposes”. Some people get in-depth interviews with because they are “liable to provide precious information” may be identified prior to their passage through hotspots (i.e. on rescue vessels or when they disembark). This operational framework has been operative for some time on the basis of strict cooperation between Frontex officials deployed to identify subjects to be interrogated and the Italian authorities, an approach which has been consolidated thanks to Europol’s support, for which the new EURTF in Catania is playing an important “coordination role”.

Following pre-identification procedures, everyone will be photo-identified, and logged in Eurodac, as CAT2 (for irregular entry) and registered in accordance with national and EU legislation, except for those who may be relocated and will be registered as CAT1 (asylum seekers), who have applied for international protection. They will subsequently formalise their application by filling in a “C3” form in the regional hubs where they will be transferred following the mentioned registration procedures. Asylum seekers liable to benefit from relocation procedures will fill the C3 form in English with assistance from experts from member states selected by EASO. Asylum seekers who do not qualify for relocation will only undergo photo-identification procedures as CAT1 and be able to fill C3 forms through officers of the Italian scientific police and staff in immigration authority offices. The latter, and EASO experts will be supported by 15/20 cultural mediators who will be recruited using EU funds. A technical-juridical assessment is underway to explore the technical possibility of converting CAT2 fingerprinting information cards into CAT1 (not applicable to people who may be relocated), in order to save time and human resources by avoiding duplication of efforts.

Upon completion of medical screening, pre-identification and investigative/intelligence activities, on the basis of their outcomes, people seeking international protection will be transferred to regional hubs throughout Italy. Those who fall within the relocation procedure’s remit will be transferred to dedicated regional hubs, **whereas those in an irregular situation who do not seek international protection will be transferred to CIEs (centres for identification and expulsion)** by bus or aeroplane, with police escorts. Transfers may also take place by boat (from Lampedusa), with co-financing from EU funds, for which DG Echo (humanitarian aid and civil protection) funding may be used. To guarantee speedy transfers, particularly from Lampedusa, the possibility of intensifying charter flights is envisaged, which would require a new framework decision and a public call for tenders. To ensure its logistic capacity over the next few months, Italy is considering requesting the activation of the European civil protection mechanism concerning charter flights.

The following personnel are required to undertake the activities listed above, for each hotspot:

- **6 immigration office staff (Italy)**
- **2 investigative police officers (Italy)**
- **2 scientific police officers to photograph the foreigners for their information record sheet (Italy)**
- **a team of 3 Frontex representatives for interviews**

- 6 cultural mediators
- 4 EASO experts
- 10 scientific police officers (Italy) for photo-identification and fingerprinting
- 10 experts from member states identified by Frontex or the EASO to support Italian personnel in photo-identification and fingerprinting activities
- 5 mobile units for photo-identification and fingerprinting in each hotspot area.

Based on the outcome of an ongoing evaluation concerning technical requirements, Italy will request emergency European financial support to improve the efficiency of its equipment and IT systems to be used for photo-identification and fingerprinting procedures.

The relocation procedure (section 2, pp. 8-11)

Regarding the relocation procedure, the document notes that Italy has drawn up a scheme (in coordination with Frontex and the EASO) to illustrate how it will work in Italy, taking into account advice from Italian and European experts. **The relocation procedure envisages transfers from Italy, Greece and Hungary of people who are in “evident need of international protection”, that is, citizens of countries whose requests for international protection have been granted in at least 75% of cases according to Eurostat data (at present, Syrians, Eritreans and Iraqis).**

After third-country nationals disembark in hotspots, early rescue activities including immediate assistance (necessary medical care, identification of vulnerable subjects, nourishment and clothing) and medical screening will be carried out by competent personnel. Frontex and Europol will carry out investigative activities. Personnel from the Public Security Department, alongside Frontex staff, will enact the first identification (the information sheet) operations during which the nationality of people liable to benefit from relocation procedures will be ascertained.

Everyone who disembarks will be registered, photo-identified and have their fingerprints taken by police officers with help from Frontex personnel. Registration consists in subjects having their personal details and fingerprints entered into the AFIS system (Automated Fingerprint Identification System, which is connected to the EU's Eurodac database). This activity requires two mobile units in hotspot areas with a capacity of up to 300 people and three mobile units for hotspot areas with a capacity of up to 500 people. Two Italian scientific police operators will conduct these activities with support from Frontex, which has been asked to deploy 10 operators, 2 for each hotspot.

Asylum seekers liable to benefit from relocation will be channelled in a dedicated flow and receive information concerning the relocation procedure. Targeted and detailed information will be provided by 3 EASO and 2 UNHCR experts, assisted by 3 cultural mediators on the option of applying for relocation, explaining the benefits associated with such a choice. People who decide for relocation and thus express their wish to request international protection will be entered into the Vestanet system as “CAT1” before being transferred to dedicated regional hubs within 24/48 hours. Such facilities envisage hosting relocation candidates following a “turnover” system whereby they will normally stay there for two months, which may be extended to three-and-a-half months.

People who do not belong to one of the nationalities listed above, but who nonetheless apply for international protection, will be transferred to one of the regional hubs, on the basis of availability to receive them and the most suitable conditions. Those who do not want to request asylum or refuse to be photo-identified, will be transferred to facilities where checks will continue, namely identification and expulsion centres (CIEs).

The regional hub facilities will host relocation candidates who, like all asylum seekers, must necessarily fill in the C3 form containing any additional information and useful material for the positive outcome of their relocation procedure. In each hub, they will be assisted by 5 EASO experts and 3 cultural mediators, preferably ones who can speak Italian. The C3 form, duly filled in, will be loaded onto the Vestanet system and transferred for subsequent “matchmaking” operations to be carried out in the “Dublin Unit” office in Rome. Matchmaking activities will be carried out with support from 10 EASO experts and liaison officers who will examine the characteristics and profiles of candidates for relocation (education, professional qualifications, foreign language skills...), matching them with member states’ availability for receiving them. After relocation candidates are accepted by the receiving member state, the interested party will be informed in the regional hub and operations to transfer them to their destination country will begin. The police, supported by EASO experts assigned to the Dublin Unit office, will draw up the so-called flight plan.

The interior ministry will coordinate activities concerning the relocation procedure. To avoid “secondary movements” by relocation candidates, the following measures will be enacted:

- a targeted information campaign on the relocation procedure, focusing on its relative advantages, including quick processing undertaken with support from UNHCR and EASO, in hotspots and regional hubs alike;
- collection of educational and schooling titles and certificates, professional qualifications and useful work capabilities to allow the quick transfer of relocation candidates;
- additional interviews to stimulate a positive attitude by relocation candidates towards their new country;
- targeted and ongoing information exchange with receiving member states through contact point officials.

These activities will be supported by UNHCR and EASO.

Repatriations (section 3, pp. 11-17)

The roadmap’s section on repatriations starts from Assisted Voluntary Returns (AVRs), calling for greater attention to be paid to this means of return in cases involving migrants who are not granted any form of international protection, in order to increase the overall number of repatriations. It notes an increase in their use between 2009 and 2014, when 923 AVRs were carried out, identifying them as a “worthy and dignified option” for third-country nationals who do not have a right to remain or whose application for international protection cannot be granted. In the 2008-2013 period, Italy has carried out information and training work with public and private operators concerning AVRs, in the framework of projects (RIRVA, RIFORMA, PARTIR) funded using the European Returns Fund. More recently, the PARTIR VI project involving the IOM has undertaken

information campaigns in facilities for the reception of asylum seekers in which a large number of rejected asylum seekers were present.

These efforts have shown that a better knowledge of the AVR option by staff working in reception centres could bring “positive results”, resulting in training programmes being included in the national Asylum Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). To heighten interest in the AVR option, the national AMIF programme envisages making financial contributions available for the reintegration of individuals and families in their home countries if they accept AVRs. Repatriation programmes include pre-departure guidance for returnees which includes assistance in finding employment opportunities, to undertake entrepreneurial activity and post-return monitoring. **The Italian national plan for 2014-2020 envisages carrying out 9,500 AVRs with reintegration plans attached to them**, and a call for tenders to select partners to carry out 3,000 AVRs in the 2016-2017 period is underway.

The second category of repatriations envisaged in the roadmap document are “forced returns” and cooperation with third countries is viewed as a means to improve the efficiency of the returns policy. The document notes that the Commission’s European Agenda on Migration of May 2015 views an effective returns policy as a key element to tackle the current “unprecedented” emergency in the Balkans and the Mediterranean and, in the medium and long term, to establish a “coherent and balanced” asylum and immigration management system.

In 2015 (until 15 September), 3,731 repatriation decisions were executed out of a total of 15,686. Moreover, 5,535 people were forbidden entry into the national territory. The main nationalities of people who were effectively repatriated are as follows: Tunisians (865), Albanians (850), Egyptians (487), Moroccans (449), Nigerians (212), Senegalese (83), Moldovans (64), Bangladeshis (48), Pakistanis (48) and Algerians (45). Most Tunisians, Egyptians and Nigerians were returned using charter flights, whereas other nationalities were deported in scheduled cargo flights.

For the purpose of obtaining significant results quickly and avoiding the long delays which negotiations to reach formal readmission agreements at a bilateral and EU level entail, the Italian Public Security Department has enacted targeted initiatives to establish forms of “operative cooperation” with the competent authorities of the main countries of origin. These will be formalised using “more flexible instruments”, such as “memoranda of understanding, operative protocols and so on”. Within this context, an operative agreement with Gambia was signed on 6 June 2015. Further, with support from the Italian diplomatic network, the Public Security Department has initiated productive dialogue with authorities from African and Asian countries (Ivory Coast, Ghana, Senegal, Bangladesh and Pakistan) from which consistent irregular immigration flows towards Italy have been noted.

These practical forms of cooperation to speed up repatriation procedures are flanked by technical assistance programmes for the benefit of signatory countries, involving the provision of equipment and training for their police forces, in order to encourage countries to cooperate in this field. The foreign affairs and international cooperation ministry is called upon to play a key role by making development aid programmes and cooperation activities available in sectors of interest for the countries concerned, following the so-called “more for more” principle (the more you cooperate, the more you will obtain).

Five million euros have been made available in 2015 to fund technical assistance programmes (equipment and training) for third countries which are willing to cooperate in forced return procedures, and a further 1,891,985.60 euros may be allocated for this purpose; five million euros are also reserved for these activities in 2016. These funds will be used to support cooperation on immigration and returns, as has been happening for some time with third countries including Egypt, Tunisia and Nigeria. Efforts will be made to obtain support from the European Commission, in view of the burden these costs entail for Italy. Moreover, the requests for technical assistance from the third countries concerned include the establishment of IT systems for obtaining, storing and comparing fingerprints (Automated Fingerprint Identification System, AFIS) whose high technological content would require levels of investment which can only be guaranteed with a contribution by the EU. Italy supports the “imminent” creation of a Trust Fund for this purpose.

The implementation of existing agreements on readmission and forced returns, and those which they hope will be reached following negotiations, will be carefully monitored to assess their efficiency and to enact corrections, in agreement with third-country counterparts. A dedicated working group has been set up for this purpose to assist the Central Directorate on Immigration and the Border Police in carrying out this monitoring activity. To improve cooperation in the specific sector of forced returns, the Public Security Department is considering deploying its own liaison officers in the interested countries. Financial support within the framework of the ISF 2 programme [Internal Security Fund, financial support for external borders and visas] may be sought for this purpose. The roadmap notes that, to improve existing cooperation with the Tunisian authorities, a liaison officer (expert in immigration) is being deployed to the Italian embassy in Tunis.

Regarding the execution of forced return activities and the European Council on Immigration’s decisions to carry out forced returns quickly, the document notes that local public security authorities have been active in adopting and enacting measures to remove irregular migrants or those whose residence permits have expired from the national territory, for some time. Yet, “objective difficulties” hinder the effectiveness of such efforts and procedures. These include 1) the capacity of identification and expulsion centres (CIEs) which take charge of individuals to be identified and expelled, 2) non-cooperation by authorities in countries of origin to identify their nationality and travel documents, and 3) the priority accorded to asylum procedures, “which may include instrumental claims by foreigners” who do not qualify for international protection.

On the first point, **an outline of the capacity of the Italian CIE network is outlined: Bari (112 places), Brindisi (83), Caltanissetta (96), Crotona (30), Rome (250), Turin (180) and Trapani (204). The overall capacity is 872 places, 716 for men and 156 for women, all of which are in the CIE in Rome.** The Roadmap states:

“A sustainable and efficient forced return policy, in accordance with the hotspot approach, implies an increase in the places available in national CIEs, by re-opening the Milan (132 places) and Gradisca d’Isonzo (248 places) CIEs, in which all the necessary procedures for the forced return of irregular migrants may be enacted.”

A “laissez-passer” procedure is envisaged to resolve the issue of countries requiring high identification standards for readmission. While identification of people’s nationality is sufficient for some countries, other countries of origin require the full identification of subjects by the competent authorities. Complying with this identification requirement is one of the obstacles to returns,

followed by the need to obtain travel documents to authorise return flights. Concrete cooperation by third countries' consular authorities is necessary to verify the nationality of returnees and to quickly issue requested *laissez-passer* documents, also for the purpose of not occupying available places in CIEs for too long, simultaneously reducing the risk of instrumental asylum applications.

The roadmap views the possibility of enacting return procedures using charter flights as crucial. This possibility must be included in readmission agreements, in view of the fact that third countries are often unwilling to accept people repatriated in this way. Frontex has expressed its willingness to facilitate repatriations using charter flights. Its role would not be limited to coordination and co-financing joint charter flights, but may also involve the financing of charter flights organised exclusively by Italy, while guaranteeing the training of police officers conducting functions as escorts on charter flights. Italy welcomes Frontex's involvement in this field and counts on the support which may be provided through the EU Action Plan on forced returns.

Regarding operative and financial support from European funding, the roadmap highlights discussions which are underway with Frontex to jointly define the possible forms of cooperation on returns. Bilateral discussions indicate that Frontex may be able to co-finance charter flights enacted by Italy to return Egyptian and Tunisian nationals due to entry bans, which should constitute an element of Italian border control activities. **Up to 16 September, Italy had carried out 33 return charter flights to Egypt and 26 to Tunisia repatriating a total of 1,082 people, 450 of them Egyptians and the remaining 632 Tunisians.**

Italy will consider using Frontex's identification task force involving experts/officials from destination countries of returnees to assist the competent Italian authorities in identification procedures to obtain the necessary travel documents from authorities in the third countries concerned. This procedure has already been tested with several countries.. **Police and other competent officials in the field of immigration from Nigeria and Gambia have been in Italy for some time to assist with pre-repatriation procedures.**

Italy is examining the possibility of participating in EU-funded projects to support repatriation procedures like EURINT and EURLO, although it deems that Frontex should play a greater coordination role in their implementation to improve their effectiveness and reduce the duplication of efforts. It asks for strong financial support from the EU for repatriations and would appreciate the opportunity to use EU funding for specific emergency procedures, considering that a call for tenders is underway concerning intercontinental charter flights.

The roadmap also reports Italy's efforts to dismantle criminal networks which promote irregular immigration. This involves close cooperation between the competent national police and law enforcement authorities, well-defined coordination between competent judicial authorities, reinforced investigative cooperation with third countries like Egypt and Turkey, and greater cooperation with the relevant EU agencies (Frontex and Europol). The experience of the EU's Regional Task Force in Catania is deemed noteworthy. Investigative efforts by the Italian police forces in 2014 and 2015 have led to the arrest of 906 "traffickers" involved in promoting irregular immigration by sea.

Asylum Procedures (section 4, pp. 17-22)

The territorial commissions for the recognition of international protection are described as the cornerstone of Italy's asylum system, examining and adopting decisions on applications. The number of such bodies has been growing in a constant and impressive manner, so much that their number on Italian territory doubled to 40 in the 2014-2015 period. 20 territorial commissions are currently operative, and there are 20 additional sections. The efficiency of this system may be gauged on the basis of the average time it takes to reach a decision: prior to 2015, the figure was 200 days, to which 50 days for the processing and notification of asylum applications by the police forces should be added, reaching a total of 250 days. The increased number of territorial commissions and the introduction of specific "rationalisation" measures have shortened the decision-making process, so that a final decision should be issued within 180 days, thus complying with the EU Directive on Asylum Procedures.

Implementation of a COI (Country of Origin Information) system is underway, following recommendations received from EASO. Italy has established a fruitful cooperation with EASO experts who assist the territorial commissions, consisting in the collection and distribution of "precious and reliable information" about countries of origin.

From January to August 2015, there was a 29.22% increase in the number of asylum applications in Italy compared with 2014, to which a backlog that should be processed by the end of 2015 must be added. The increase in the number of territorial commissions and the speeding up of procedures, with a 65% increase in final decisions issued, means that decisions should be reached on around 70,000 asylum applications in 2015, compared with 36,330 applications processed in 2014. As for jurisdictional appeals, which previously denied applicants the right to bring their cases before civil courts, new legislation which receives the provisions in European Directives has introduced legal deadlines for decisions concerning demands for appeals to have a suspensive effects on returns (within 5 days) and for issuing a final decision on appeals (six months). This means that a decrease in the duration of judicial procedures is expected, also considering the fact that the new legislation specifically provides that Italy must provide reception for asylum seekers until a first decision is reached.

New measures envisaged to deal with the increasing number of unaccompanied minors arriving in Italy include the setting up of a new reception system for minors coordinated by the interior ministry, as of 1 January 2015. The reception system for unaccompanied minors is structured on two levels. In the first level, straight after arrival, minors are largely transferred to dedicated centres funded by Italy as city and town councils have a duty under Italian law to provide reception to any unaccompanied minors found in their territory. They receive 45 euro per day from the government for each minor they provide accommodation to in such centres. To support this system, which has entailed the reception of 8,944 unaccompanied minors in such centres until 31 August 2015, the interior ministry's Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration has signed a convention with the European Commission. This convention to subsidise emergency measures (strengthening the reception centres for unaccompanied minors in Italian territory) was signed within the AMIF framework (emergency measures) to implement a dedicated reception system for unaccompanied minors in Italy after their arrival from 20 March to 17 December 2015.

It is a measure to strengthen the first reception phase, involving initial identification, evaluation of the minor's age, transfer from the place of entry or where they have been found to reception centres, also for purposes of family reunification and identifying vulnerable cases. Two calls for tenders have been issued by the interior ministry for projects for the temporary reception of unaccompanied minors in highly specialised structures to strengthen reception services, in association with partners including IOM, the Italian Red Cross, Save the Children, ANCI and UNHCR, and to ensure a smooth passage to the second reception phase within the SPRAR network. The implementation of 10 projects began on 20 March 2015 and a further 5 commenced on 3 June, ensuring the availability of 737 places per day for unaccompanied minors in highly specialised centres using 12m euros of European funding.

The second level of reception for unaccompanied minors provides for their transfer to reception centres within the framework of the SPRAR system, to enable their inclusion in local communities using specialised programmes. 941 places for unaccompanied minors are available within the SPRAR system. A call for tenders has been issued to increase this capacity to 1,941 places, which has received 104 bids whose evaluation is underway. Italy is also undertaking activities to increase the entire system for unaccompanied minor's capacity at both the first and second level. As first level reception is a priority, quick intervention in this field would be a positive step towards the goal of establishing a well-defined reception system organised in highly specialised centres (following arrival) and in the SPRAR centres (for second-level reception).

To further the action plan developed using EU funds which helped to set up highly specialised centres, first-level reception will be reinforced to reach a capacity five times higher than it is at present using national and local authority resources, from 737 to 3,750 places. Estimated costs, considering current expenses for first-level reception, would amount to 65m euros per year. This round-up concerns the measures implemented by the Italian government since January 2015, bearing in mind that dedicated reception centres run by local councils in Italy currently host almost 11,000 unaccompanied minors. Such centres will be modified to comply with the standards outlined above.

The plan aims to improve the processing of asylum applications by the national territorial commission to harmonise and quicken asylum procedures, focusing on their full automatisisation using IT systems. This process is undertaken through the Vestanet system which provides all the interested parties (police authorities, Dublin Units, territorial commission for the granting of international protection) a network for well-structured workflows and the automatic transfer of files in electronic formats. This IT-managed procedure also enables the automatic transfer of the processing of files concerning asylum applications between different territorial commissions, depending on their workloads, appeals, annulments and renewals.

As of September, a new integrated IT procedure has been developed to enable all the phases of the resettlement procedure, and software is also being developed to service the transfer procedure. A group of IT analysts is examining solutions to enable the territorial commissions to further improve their activity in terms of issuing final decisions and speeding up the processing of applications. Both Dublinet and Eurodac have been implemented as key elements of the asylum procedure. These are two essential outcomes as they see it are due to the investments made and additional capabilities acquired, and the entering and updating of fingerprint data is deemed of fundamental importance.

The development of Internet-based data exchange services means that communications between the Italian Dublin Unit and the scientific police concerning the Eurodac Code and real-time requests of fingerprint data for each Eurodac file have been entirely automated. In accordance with Eurodac Regulation 603/2013, since last July a new Internet-based service enables the Dublin Unit and scientific police to exchange information in real-time on applicants' dates of entry, those who are in hiding and final decisions reached.

Italy is developing an IT system for the management of reception which should be operative by the end of 2015, to plan a better organisation of reception. The system, conceived to manage the entire processing from migrants' arrival in Italy to their exit from reception centres, enables direct access to the SPRAR's database to all the interested parties, ensuring they are continuously in contact. This is viewed as a key element to improve asylum procedures.

This IT system to manage reception improves asylum procedures by connecting all the data on the reception of foreigners to the data entered in the Vestanet system, avoiding any duplication within a single IT system. The asylum procedure is speeded up due to the relevant data being entered in the reception system from the initial moment when applicants are identified; these data are connected with asylum files using a *Codice Identificativo Unico* (CUI, Unique Identification Code) which enables a more effective use of the Migrants' Database (BAI).

Italy is also adopting a National Integration Plan for the purpose of defining a single comprehensive strategy, envisaging effective instruments to enable beneficiaries of international protection to overcome their initial position of substantial disadvantage, promoting their integration and offering them equal opportunities of access to the Italian social and economic system. Based on the contribution by national and local authorities, this plan will concentrate primarily on aspects concerning the paths that beneficiaries may embark upon to attain a degree of autonomy. The plan should thus provide a contextual picture for national integration policies in the fields of accommodation and employment.

Greater involvement by local authorities, particularly social services, must be considered in order to promote the integration of people hosted in reception centres. Hence, access to accommodation should be promoted in accordance with applicable norms, and support must be provided through local volunteer associations for the transitional phase for asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection, as indicated by a circular issued by the head of the Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration on 27 November 2014.

The National Integration Plan is also meant to encourage the development of unified guidelines for the different regions for measures to promote facilitated access to medical care and professional training. In terms of employment guidance, useful work has been carried out by specialised operators in the employment market (competent regional agencies for employment and professional training) which support migrants' social and economic integration. A national steering group set up within the interior ministry is already working to perfect the reception system for people requesting international protection. The group is also tasked with drafting the National Reception Plan and setting the criteria for the regional distribution of reception centres. Operative regional working groups have been set up in the *prefettura* [offices of the *prefetto*, the government envoy in charge of functions including security] in regional capitals to enact the decisions adopted by the national working group.

The National Operative Plan (PON) for 2015 is structured around five key points: 1) analysis of the international landscape and its impact on migration flows towards Italy; 2) monitoring of the implementation of the 2014 Operative Plan; 3) collection of data until 31 December 2014 on the reception system; 4) an estimate for the year 2015, and calculation of requirements in terms of the system's receptive capacities, on the basis of the monitored turnover; and 5) analysis of the possible pathways for leaving reception centres.

The plan is viewed as a suitable instrument to enact any adjustments that may prove necessary, strengthening the reception system by using a flexible approach, for which a review based on new requirements is currently underway.

Source: [Roadmap Italiana, Ministero dell'Interno, 28.9.2015](#). [pdf]

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