



International migration and relations with third countries: European and US approaches

Jan Niessen and Yongmi Schibel (eds.)

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Jonathan Chaloff, Censis
Flavia Piperno, Cespi

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Jonathan Chaloff, Censis (Section 1)
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Italy was long a sending country of immigrants. More than 25 million Italians left the country to work abroad, both in Europe and further afield, between 1865 and 1973, when, with the oil crisis, this emigration came to a halt. Towards the end of the 1980s, Italy began to receive foreign labour. This inflow increased over the 1990s – the balance of remittances became negative only in 1997 – and the population of foreign workers in Italy is now close to two million.

The foreign policy priority during the period of mass emigration were the outward flows and the protection of Italian migrants abroad. The inward flows are now becoming a priority in Italian foreign policy, and most of the attention is devoted to the fight against illegal migration into the country. At the same time, some bilateral agreements specifically dealing with labour have been signed.

Institutional interests within the Italian government determine different impulses in policy: influence on policy comes from the Prime Minister's office, the Ministries of Labour (Welfare), Foreign Affairs and the Interior. In some cases, these ministries are held by members of different political parties with varying opinions, and in any case they must respond to demands from different constituencies (employers' associations and federations, trade unions, even civil society).

1. The Justice and Home Affairs agenda

Bilateral agreements on readmission

Before 1974, all agreements regarded Italian emigrants; after 1995, all agreements regarded foreign immigrants (Table 1).

Italian foreign policy regarding migration over the past five years has been to seek to sign bilateral agreements on *readmission*, rather than to support *labour migration*. This has been a constant reflected in the concerns of all ministries, not only the Ministry of Interior.

The 2002 law, which made major changes to the 1998 framework immigration law, introduced an explicit foreign policy priority in rewarding countries which “actively collaborate in the fight against undocumented migration” to Italy.¹ The mechanisms of this “reward” are closely related to the quota system.

The quota system allows for a reward in Italian foreign policy, and therefore deserves brief mention. Under the present Italian law – Framework Law 286/98, modified by Law 189/02 – authorisation is requested for single foreign workers by the employer (or, in certain circumstances such as seasonal labour, by an employers' association). The request can be nominative, for a specific worker known to the employer, or anonymous, in which case the labour office is supposed to refer to registries through Italian consulates abroad. Authorisation is given by the local office of the Ministry of Labour, within the limits of the local quota and once the job offer has been listed nationally for a 20-day period. The authorisation is transmitted to the consulate

¹ Art. 1, par. 2, Law 189/02.

abroad which issues a Schengen work visa² for the appropriate period of the contract, but in any case for no more than two years. The employer must demonstrate the availability of adequate housing and post a bond to guarantee any repatriation costs in the event that the foreign worker loses the right to remain in Italy.

This has meant that discussion of management of foreign labour flows has essentially become a discussion of the quota system. The 1998 framework law introduced a quota system for foreign labour, requiring the Prime Minister to publish an annual decree stating the maximum number of foreign workers whose entry would be authorised. This national quota can be divided according to at least **three** parameters:³ type of labour, with the usual divisions being seasonal, contract (dependent) and independent work; job category, with occasional subquotas given to certain categories (nurses, technology workers); nationalities, with certain subquotas reserved for citizens of specific nationalities.

It is this last parameter which is most closely related to the bilateral agreements signed until the present. In fact, "co-operation in the fight against illegal migration" is a condition for preferential quotas for nationalities. Nonetheless, this preference is not formally assigned in the bilateral agreements on readmission. The Italian Foreign Ministry is careful not to make this exchange explicit in the agreements, despite the requests from the sending countries for a clear promise of preferential quotas.

Starting in 2002, seasonal work permits were issued *only* to citizens of EU candidate countries (1st and 2nd round), those countries with which seasonal labour agreements have been signed (Albania and Tunisia) and those who had seasonal work permits the prior year (a "grandfather clause" allowing past workers to return).⁴

The decision-making process for determining the size and distribution of quotas involves a number of different participants. The Ministry of Labour has become the centre of discussion, while in the past the decisions were made in interministerial consultation. In fact each Ministry has its own requests and priorities. The Ministry of Labour meets with employers' associations and with trade unions, the social parties. At the same time, the local and regional labour offices of the Ministry provide their own estimates on the demand for foreign labour at a local level. Usually these local offices meet with the local representatives of the social parties to develop estimates of labour requirements. This means that social parties are able to influence the estimates at both a local and national level. Estimates of demand for foreign labour are then made, taking into account the local employment situation. This was the reason for which the south of the country received no quotas in 2000 and 2001, despite a demand for agricultural workers.

Once the total number of workers has been approved, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs expresses its judgement regarding the preferences for specific nationalities. Finally, the Prime Minister issues a decree with the definitive number and the categories and nationalities of the foreign workers who may enter.

The priority in foreign policy has been to sign agreements on readmission, especially along the priority axes of North Africa and the Balkan states. Bilateral agreements on readmission have been signed them with most neighbouring and nearby countries. Such agreements must be approved by the Italian parliament. The 1998 law states

² Italy has been in the Schengen system since 27 October 1997.

³ An additional parameter is applied to the quota after it has been published: the overall quota is divided by the Ministry of Labour into subquotas for the 20 regions, which then allocate the quotas to 104 provinces.

⁴ In 2003, Croatians, Serbians and Montenegrins were also made eligible for seasonal work permits.

that “the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior must promote the appropriate measures of agreement with relevant countries to accelerate identification and issuance of documents necessary to improve the effectiveness of the measures foreseen by this law”.

These readmission agreements follow more or less the same format; the person to be expelled is anyone who “does not meet or who no longer meets the conditions for entry and for stay in the territory of the contracting party”. In most cases, Italy was able to sign agreements in which persons could be sent back – and admitted by – the countries of which they were “presumed” to be citizens. Presumption of citizenship is the presence of documents – even photocopies, self-declarations, and “reliable testimony”. In some cases this is qualified; in the case of Morocco and Tunisia, Italy was unable to sign agreements for the readmission of “presumed” nationals and must conduct a complex identification procedure before these persons can be readmitted.

A total of 28 readmission agreements were signed by 2001. Of these, 24 were ratified and are came into force; they are listed in Table 2.

Second Generation Agreements

Any agreement on migration signed after a readmission agreement is considered a “second generation agreement”.

The first category of second generation agreements is specifically related to labour migration. Until now these agreements have only involved seasonal work. The first country to sign such an agreement was Albania in 1997; this agreement was signed together with the readmission agreement. The only other country to have signed such an agreement with Italy is Tunisia (15/5/2000). Tunisia had already addressed the question of readmission in an exchange of notes on 6/8/1998.

Another agreement which falls under the heading of second generation agreements is the launch of the Digital Registry of Foreign Workers (AILE). This system, first tested with Albania in a pilot project between the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the IOM, was meant to provide a list of foreign workers available for emigration to Italy under the anonymous request system. The AILE includes basic information on training, skills and objectives of these foreign workers. The same principle underlies the registry of foreign workers open to Tunisians and to Moroccans.

The Ministry of Labour has since launched a much more limited and much more effective database for seasonal workers (SILES). This system registers eligible seasonal workers – either those with past experience or those from authorised countries, and allows employers to draw on this pool for rapid recruitment.

The third kind of second generation agreement is for training and recruitment of foreign labour. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has prioritised this kind of activity in its development policy. Programmes would be agreed upon in a bilateral statement and the funding would be passed through Italian NGOs, training firms and employers’ associations. This kind of co-operation has been slow to start; Italian Regions have had more success in outlining their priorities and funding such projects (see part 2).

As stated above, those countries which are actively involved in the fight against illegal migration to Italy may be rewarded with preferential quotas within the quota system. This was already an official policy position long before it was enshrined in the 2002 immigration law. In 1998, during the centre-left coalition government, the Minister of the Interior stated: “It is Italy’s intention to promote this sort of

collaboration, by setting it as a prerequisite condition for the allocation of a preferential quota of legal entry work permits on a country basis”.

The preferential quotas for specific nationalities represent only a fraction of the overall quota and have never exceeded 22% (Table 3). The list of countries which have received preferential quotas has expanded over the past few years, and it is also worth noting that the quota for Morocco was reduced in 2001, due to dissatisfaction over the level of co-operation forthcoming from the Moroccan authorities. The preferential quota assigned to Egypt for 2003 was due, not to a specific readmission agreement, but more to the active collaboration by the Egyptian authorities in reducing migration flows through the Suez Canal, the usual transit route for Italy-bound Bangladeshis and Sri Lankans.

Another form of second generation agreement, codified in the 2002 law, and of great interest to employers, is the possibility of supporting training programmes in the country of origin for workers who would then have priority in immigration to Italy. Such training courses have existed in the past. The Ministry of Labour signed an agreement with the Association of Italian Construction Companies (ANCE) in 2001 for the training of construction workers in Poland and in Tunisia, who would then be able to enter Italy.⁵ A similar agreement between the Ministry of Labour and the industrial association (Confindustria) for training and immigration involved only Tunisia and the regions of Veneto, Emilia Romagna and Liguria. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs programmes support for training courses in Albania, Tunisia and Morocco. These courses are conducted with funding from the Ministry and run by NGOs at a local level.

Bilateral agreements for working holidays have been signed with New Zealand and Australia, but these can hardly be considered “origin countries” for migrants.⁶

Italian return policies

There are many different forms of “expulsion” from Italy (Table 4); only a fraction are “repatriation”. These expulsions do not include repatriation assistance. There has been some experience in Italy with assisted repatriation, generally within the framework of specific events. These included the repatriation of Bosnian refugees in the late 1990’s⁷, as well as an ongoing programme for assisted repatriation of Kosovars run by the IOM and funded by the Italian Ministries of Interior and Foreign Affairs. There are also specific social intervention initiatives (i.e., projects for trafficked women). In addition, assisted repatriation is an option for unaccompanied minors, and is entrusted to International Social Service.⁸

It is worth noting that Italy does not have a large pool of rejected asylum seekers: the number of asylum seekers is far less than the number of incoming undocumented workers. In 2002, for example, when about 700,000 undocumented foreigners applied for the regularisation, no more than 10,000 applications were made for asylum.

⁵ See Ministry of Labour circulars 84, 91 and 98/2001.

⁶ The agreement with New Zealand has been in force since 7 February 2001. While up to 250 such visas can be issued annually, only a handful of people take advantage of it.

⁷ The IOM ran two projects for Bosnians: a programme which offered jobs in the public and private sector to 500 professionals from November 1996 and a resettlement programme with ICS, the Italian Prime Minister’s Office and Foreign Ministry, UNOPS and WHO, which repatriated 267 people between September 1997 and September 1998.

⁸ D.P.C.M. 535/99.

Table 1. Selected bilateral agreements and diplomatic exchanges between Italy and other countries on labour and migration, 1946-2001

Date	Country	Subject
23/06/46	Belgium	Agreement to send 2000 workers weekly, in exchange for 200 kg of coal for each working day by an Italian in the mines.
14/01/47	UK	agreement and exchange of notes for recruitment of Italian workers for UK steel mills
26/01/48	Argentina	agreement on emigration
04/12/48	Netherlands	agreement on enlistment of Italian labour for Dutch mines
08/10/49	Brazil	agreement for increased collaboration, regulation of peace treaty questions and increase in immigration
01/12/49	Chile	Modus vivendi for emigration
21/03/51	France	agreement on emigration; administrative agreement on emigration in France of Italian seasonal workers
15/06/51	France	3 emigration agreements. 1) medical selection of Italian candidates for emigration in France; 2) agreement on financial transfers by emigrants; 3) agreement on family benefit payments in Italy
25/06/52	Argentina	protocol on emigration of Italian farmers in Argentina
05/03/54	Belgium	protocol for the recruitment of Italian workers for the Belgian coal mines
04/06/54	Netherlands	agreement for the exchange of apprentices
16/01/57	Luxembourg	agreement for emigration of Italian workers
25/11/57	Argentina	commercial and financial agreement protocol on emigration and credit
11/12/57	Belgium	protocol for the regulation of the working conditions of Italian miners in Belgium and for the reactivation of emigration of Italian workers to Belgian mines
27/03/58	France	agreement on frontier workers
06/08/60	Netherlands	agreement on recruitment and employment of Italian workers
09/12/60	Brazil	agreement on emigration
10/08/64	Switzerland	agreement on emigration of Italian workers in Switzerland
26/09/67	Australia	treaty on emigration and settlement; "Understanding on financially assisted emigration from Italy to Australia"
20/09/71	Canada	exchange of notes on emigration
19/03/73	Brazil	administration agreement for application of articles from the 1960 agreement
30/01/74	Brazil	additional protocol for the 1960 agreement
03/03/95	Tunisia	exchange of notes on conditions of stay and work for Tunisians in Italy and vice versa
18/11/97	Albania	agreement between Italy and Albania on seasonal workers
15/05/00	Tunisia	agreement between Italy and Tunisia on seasonal workers
07/01/01	New Zealand	agreement between Italy and New Zealand on work holidays

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Acli, other.

Table 2. Readmission agreements signed by Italy, 1991-2001

Country	Year
Poland	1991
Slovenia	1996
Macedonia, Romania, Georgia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Yugoslavia, Croatia, France, Austria, Albania	1997
Morocco, Tunisia, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Switzerland	1998
Spain, Greece	1999
Algeria, Nigeria	2000
Malta	2001

Source: Pastore F., "L'obbligo di riammissione in diritto internazionale: sviluppi recenti," in *Rivista di diritto internazionale*, Vol. 81, no. 4, 1998, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Table 3. Preferential quotas for specific nationalities within the quota system, 1998-2003

	Preferential Quotas											Argentina*	% of total quota
	Albania	Morocco	Tunisia	Somalia	Egypt	Nigeria	Moldova	Sri Lanka	Bangladesh	Other	Total		
1998	3000	1500	1500							0	6000		10.3
1999	3000	1500	1500							0	6000		10.3
2000	6000	3000	3000							6000	18000		21.7
2001	6000	1500	3000	500						4000	15000		16.8
2002	3000	2000	2000	0	1000	500	500	1000		0	10000	4000	17.6
2003	1000	500	600	0	300	200	200	500	300	5900	9500	200	12.2
2004	3000	2500	3000	0	1500	2000	1500	1500	1500	3900	20400	0	25.6

* Argentinian citizens of "Italian descent" (direct descendent, up to 3 generations)

Source: Ministry of Labour

Table 4. Expulsion of undocumented foreigners, 1998-2002

	Year				
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Turned back at the border	29.593	36.937	30.871	} 41.058	37.656
Rejected by the <i>Questura</i>	15.564	11.500	11.350		6.139
Expelled	1.567				
Expelled and accompanied to the border	6.979	12.036	15.002		24.799
Expelled by decree of the law enforcement authorities	432	520	396		427
Foreigners repatriated	8.621	11.399	8.438	12.751	17.019
All undocumented foreigners expelled	62.756	72.392	66.057	75.448	88.501
<i>Foreigners ordered to leave the country (foglio di via)</i>	44.121	40.489	64.734	58.171	53.125
Total	106.877	112.881	130.791	133.619	141.626

Source: Ministry of Interior, 2003

2. Migration for development

Development for containing migration

Between 2000 and 2002, Italian official development assistance (ODA) recorded a certain increase (from 0.13% to 0.20% of GNI), but it still remains far below the EU average (0.33%). Moreover, as can be seen from the last three annual reports published by the Department for Development Cooperation (DGCS) of the Foreign Affairs Ministry⁹, Italian development policy lags behind in linking migration and development: the two issues are quite rarely connected and most of the time in a very superficial way, no explicit reference to co-development is made and migrants' organisations are not recognised as possible partners in development cooperation. As a matter of fact, with a few exceptions that will be analysed below, during the last three years, development has been related to migration exclusively as a containment tool, targeting some of the areas which put the strongest migratory pressure on Italy, i.e. Morocco, Albania, Tunisia, and Egypt (respectively the first, second, sixth and fifteenth countries of emigration towards Italy).¹⁰

In 2002, as far as Mediterranean and Middle-Eastern countries are concerned, particularly Tunisia and Morocco, the DGCS affirmed that: "Recognising the important role played by the private sector and above all by small and medium enterprises (SME) with regard to wealth production and distribution, job creation and poverty reduction, and its positive effect on migratory pressure containment, the DGCS set up an action plan which increases on the one hand the SME competitiveness, and on the other allows our economic system to take advantage of the economic opportunities that can be developed in those countries"¹¹. Unfortunately, in this regard, local development and even economic integration goals do not foresee migrants' participation within a mobility-friendly space. Push factors can be alleviated and migratory flows deterred by this policy, but foreign citizens remain the object of external measures and do not fulfil the role of development agents. A similar approach is pursued in the Balkans and in particular in Albania; in 2001, the DGCS stated that: "the Italian cooperation supports the economic transition and the political democratisation in the Balkans, with the objective of favouring the region's stability which is particularly relevant for our political and economic interest with regard to emigration and security".¹²

Such an approach can be seen as the expression of the traditional logic "let's help them at home" that aims at addressing the root causes of migration through increased growth and political stabilization in the source country.¹³ However, offering aid in exchange for migration containment can also be seen as a face of the conditionality policy. Albania - one of the major recipients of Italian ODA (€600 m between 1991 and 2004) - is considered a good example of this, as revealed by the 2002 DGCS report "As far as Italy is concerned, we should emphasize that our

⁹ http://www.esteri.it/ita/4_28_66_79.asp

¹⁰ The other countries where Italian ODA have been addressed to migratory flows management - this time with the purpose of combating human trafficking - are Mali, Nigeria and Senegal.

¹¹ Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Direzione generale per la cooperazione allo sviluppo, *Relazione annuale sull'attuazione della politica di cooperazione allo sviluppo nel 2002*, p.17.

¹² Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Direzione generale per la cooperazione allo sviluppo, *Relazione annuale sull'attuazione della politica di cooperazione allo sviluppo nel 2001*, p.140.

¹³ F.Pastore, "More development for less migration or better migration for more development? Shifting priorities in the European debate", *Migraction Europa*, CeSPI, December 2003; the article can be downloaded from the website: <http://www.cespi.it/PASTORE/MIG-boll-elenco.htm>

cooperation effort, in particular in the field of security and defence, has found tight correspondence in the contraction (about 60%) of clandestine immigrant flows: this is evidenced by the positive Albanian social and economic reaction to the Italian development policy".¹⁴

In the first paragraph we have shown how the quota mechanism is used as an incentive to push emigration countries towards tighter collaboration with the Italian government. In this respect, it is also worth remembering that "migratory conditionality" was supported by Italy during the Seville summit and that such a strategy is explicitly considered in the first article of the immigration bill (189/2002 generally known as Bossi-Fini from the names of the two Italian government members who created it) which affirms that: "the Italian government, in the drafting and subsequent revision of bilateral cooperation programmes with no humanitarian purposes and addressed towards non-EU countries, also considers the cooperation offered by emigration countries with regard to illegal migratory flow prevention and opposition to criminal organizations dealing with drugs, weapons and human trafficking (...)". Moreover, in article 17 of the same bill the possibility of using the quota mechanism as an incentive for promoting the collaboration of countries of origin is also sanctioned: "In the planning of quotas it is possible to foresee a numerical restriction to the entrance of workers belonging to those states which do not actively collaborate in hindering clandestine immigration or in the readmission of their citizens who are subject to readmission measures".

Development for enhancing migration

As mentioned previously, during recent years, a few innovative pilot projects linking migration and development have been tested, and it is promising that the two major projects are still on-going. However, a comprehensive formalisation of this approach is still missing at the central institutional level, and migration and development projects are, therefore, quite scattered and isolated.

In 1999, the Development Department of the Foreign Affairs Ministry presented a research paper to the EU Commission entitled "Promoting local development through small size enterprise clusters: the role of migrants", where migrants were seen as development agents, in a position to establish and develop SMEs in their countries of origin.¹⁵ This was one of the first attempts by Italy in this direction, but unfortunately the research paper did not have a significant impact on subsequent national development strategy and its contents have remained widely ignored.

Other projects have been carried out in Afghanistan, aiming at the return of qualified emigrants, and in Senegal in collaboration with Italian NGOs. The Senegal project is particularly interesting as, for the first time, migrants have been considered as promoters of a local development strategy and aid has been, at least in part, dictated by their requests.¹⁶

The two latest and most relevant projects enhancing the migration-development nexus are currently ongoing in Sub-Saharan Africa and Egypt. The first one is IOM's MIDA (Migration for Development in Africa), a broad framework-programme implemented autonomously in a number of destination countries. In 2003, an Italian MIDA was launched in order to define a strategy for resource mobilization (human,

¹⁴ Ministero degli Affari Esteri, 2002, op.cit., p.141.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.27.

¹⁶ Ministero degli Affari Esteri, 2001, op.cit., p.126 and Ministero degli Affari Esteri, 2002, op.cit., p.176.

technical, financial) to benefit target sectors in the country of origin, by enhancing the active engagement, as development agents, of African nationals residing in Italy. Information on community/individual skills, investment capacities and plans to support their communities of origin have been collected and registered in a database. The project addresses, in particular, those migrants willing to set up micro-enterprises and job-creating activities in their area of origin; at the same time it entails some research work intended to a) identify viable synergies with development projects initiated/sponsored by Italian institutions, in order to foster direct participation in African economic development by Sub-Saharan nationals living in Italy, and b) explore possible alternative mechanisms of money/remittances transfer from the diasporas to respective countries, possibly highlighting viable financial products that will attract migrants' remittances.

The second project, Integrated Migration Information System (IMIS), is also coordinated by IOM. Its objective is to establish a mechanism for matching the Egyptian supply of, and the Italian demand, for labour. At the same time, it aims to identify the Egyptian community in Italy and enhance its associations with the objective of:

- Turning brain-drain into a resource for development through targeted measures fostering virtual returns and brain circulation.
- Drafting a new strategy for remittances and foreign investment management with the aim of enabling Egyptian migrants to contribute with their savings to local development projects.
- Assessing new ways to encourage direct involvement of migrants in local development projects.
- Analysing trading networks (ethnic and non ethnic) in order to explore opportunities for know-how transfers, training and for increasing exports of Egyptian products through migrants.

The most innovative aspect of these projects, which could really introduce a paradigm shift, is that development is not simply considered as a tool for addressing the root causes of migration and mitigating the push-factors that induce migrants to move out of their origin countries; on the contrary, it is seen as complementary to a certain degree of mobility. What potentially emerges is a "new policy approach that takes international mobility as an unsuppressible dimension of development, not just a "side effect", but more deeply a fundamental facet, one might even dare say an essential condition, for economic and social development. In this perspective a central goal becomes to manage mobility, in order to maximize its positive impact in terms of development, or *co-development*".¹⁷ The other innovative aspect is the attempt by the Italian development cooperation to identify and support migrants' constituency groups with an interest in development (which in Italy are still weak), recognising their role as partners in the definition of development goals and fostering their capabilities as transnational vectors of development, independent from the issue of their return.

¹⁷ F. Pastore, op.cit. p.3.

The debate on remittances

Remittances constitute another key issue around which the Italian debate on migration and development has recently revolved. Due to their constant increase¹⁸ and to the new concerns about security (as, in some cases, informal money transfer channels have been suspected of being used to finance international terrorism), remittances have moved progressively higher on the agenda of Italian policy makers, government and banking institutions.

Although no project dealing with remittances has so far been funded by the Department for Development Cooperation, the Italian government is aiming at introducing and leading a debate on remittance enhancement at the next G-8 summit that will be held in June 2004. Within this framework, Italy will present a concept paper with the purpose of stimulating the debate on the possible implementation of policies aimed at: fostering the transfer of remittances through banking channels; strengthening linkage between remittances, economic growth, investment and income distribution in immigrants' countries of origin; and enhancing remittances through welfare-oriented mechanisms.

In addition, the Italian banking system, which until very recently had paid little attention to the migrant customer¹⁹, is now beginning to create financial products tailored to the foreigner communities in Italy. Promoting formal channelling of remittances obviously constitutes a core element of this strategy. The organization of an important conference on: "Migrant banking in Italy. Migrants' remittances and development" (June 2004, Italy), promoted by the Italian Banking Association (ABI), in which important politicians, development cooperation officers and banking institutions will participate, is quite indicative of this new trend.

Among the most interesting pilot-projects launched by Italian banking institutions in this field, are the agreement between Banca Intesa and Banque de l'Habitat in Tunisia and the agreement between Intesa BCI Rete Ambro Veneta and the Société Générale des Banques au Sénégal (SGBS). As Banque de l'Habitat specialises in loans for land or houses, under the terms of the first agreement, Tunisian migrants settled in Italy not only have the possibility of transferring their money safely and at low cost, but also of accessing special schemes that can facilitate the construction or the purchase of a flat. The agreement between Intesa BCI Rete Ambro Veneta and the SGBS allows for a quick and low/fixed cost (€2.58 per operation) transfer of remittances. Moreover, in Senegal, SGBS cooperates with other banks in order to reach a higher number of recipients and does not require the opening of a current account to withdraw the funds sent by migrants.²⁰

¹⁸ In 2002, remittances sent from Italy through banking channels amounted to €790 million, growing at an annual rate of 21% and in 1998, for the first time, outflows of remittances exceeded inflows.

¹⁹ In 2001, the Giordano dell'Amore foundation (Renato Libanora, *Immigrati e servizi bancari. Risultati di una ricerca condotta a Roma e Milano*, Fondazione Giordano dell'Amore, 2002) calculated that only one third of the migrants who held a residence permit had a current account with a bank and, therefore, had access to standard banking services. As shown by a study carried out by A. Giglioli (Diario 7 giugno 2002, p.14), another element proving the scarce commitment of banking institutions in the field of remittances is the extraordinary expansion of private money transfer agencies in Italy. In eight years, Western Union, which opened in Italy for the first time in 1994, opened 5,000 branches, and in 2002, Italy was regarded by the money transfer agency as the second more profitable market after the USA.

²⁰ E. Castagnone, "Il punto di vista dei migranti senegalesi. Un'inchiesta realizzata in Piemonte" in Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale (CeSPI), *Le rimesse come strumento di integrazione tra Italia e Africa. I risultati di una consultazione con operatori bancari italiani e di*

Other banks do not offer *ad hoc* services as described above but incentives to the formal canalization of remittances including this service in a wider range of “social banking” products (normal financial services with especially favourable conditions to non-EC nationals working and living with regular permits in Italy).

Concerning remittances, it is also worth bearing in mind some interesting pilot-projects established by the Italian ethical banking and cooperative banking circuit (Banca Etica and Banche di Credito Cooperativo).

A significant case is that of Banca Etica (Ethical Bank) of Padova which, on the basis of a proposal by the NGO ACS-Associazione Cooperazione allo Sviluppo, has declared itself ready to open a collective current account to channel the savings sent home by the Bengali community at a lower than average cost. In this project, rates would be further reduced thanks to the contribution of the Italian Federation of Bankers and Insurers (FIBA) of Padova. The money sent by individual immigrants would be recorded and faxed to the local partner bank so as to allow recipients to collect it directly. A similar project has been developed by the BCC (Banca di Credito Cooperativo - Co-operative Credit Bank) of Treviglio in partnership with the NGO ACRA in order to channel the savings sent home by the Senegalese community resident in Milan and Bergamo.²¹

Migration and development at the regional level

The late and still immature approach to co-development policies by the Foreign Affairs Ministry is partially compensated at the local institutional level. As a matter of fact, in recent years, sub-national governments have played an increasingly important role in both migration and decentralised cooperation. In many cases, at least during an initial phase, the role of regions and municipalities in migration matters has been the result of the difficulties experienced by the Italian central government in drawing up appropriate and effective hospitality and integration policies. Regions have been induced to engage more actively in this field also as a consequence of Italy's late development as a country of immigration. Significant migration flows have begun to affect Italy in coincidence with the post-fordist period and the related segmentation of labour markets and labour demand; this segmentation has entailed, in turn, a trend towards a regionally differentiated need for migrant workforce. Such a need, with all its implications, is clearly more difficult to foresee, monitor and manage at the central level. A further element is associated with the geographical feature of Italy as a border-country, which adds to the sense of urgency of some inward migration waves that regions were called to deal with (as during the Kosovo war).

Since the 1990s, local governments have also intensified and institutionalised their international cooperation activities, in particular towards the Mediterranean and the Balkan areas (Albania, former Yugoslavia, Morocco, Tunisia, Palestine), devising in some cases quite innovative partnership initiatives with Least Developed Countries.

alcune interviste a migranti senegalesi ed etiopi, MIDA, Rome, February 2004; S. Ceschi, *Sistema bancario italiano e migranti*, Bancaria editrice, Roma, forthcoming.

²¹ F. Piperno, “Remittances enhancement for the local development in Albania: constraints and opportunities” Working Paper n° 4, Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale (CeSPI) Roma, 2003; E. Uruçi e I. Gedeshi, “Remittances management in Albania”, Working Paper n° 5, Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale (CeSPI) Roma, 2003; M. Fiorini, “Istituzioni, prodotti finanziari e cooperazione per la valorizzazione delle rimesse in Tunisia”, Working Paper n° 3, Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale (CeSPI) Roma, 2003; these papers can be downloaded from the website: <http://www.cespi.it/PASTORE/MIG-boll-elenco.htm>

These two aspects of policy planning at the regional level (migration and development) are often structurally connected and, as a result, a broad range of pilot schemes in the area of co-development have been attempted.²² The vitality of local governments – often opposed to the weakness of the central government – is in part a common feature with Spain and has brought some analysts to talk about a “Southern European model”.

The main sectorial areas of action by Italian decentralised cooperation are the following²³:

- a) workforce training, selection and recruitment projects
- b) mandatory and voluntary return
- c) projects to create employment and reduce migratory pressure
- d) projects for the optimal use of remittances

Projects concerning migrants’ training and return are implemented by most Italian regions and are also foreseen by almost all migratory and development regional laws. Furthermore, workforce training, selection and recruitment projects can be framed in the Italian immigration bill (189/2002) which explicitly favours the entry of emigrants who have completed a professional training in the country of origin (art.17).

Significant, although quantitatively limited, examples in this field come from the Veneto region, which selected 23 workers in Albania who had already been trained in the building sector and, once in Italy, placed them in local companies for a six-month traineeship. At the end of the project, some 82% of the beneficiaries were working in the sector for which they had been trained.

The Lombardia region is recruiting 170 Tunisian job seekers through a regional labour agency that will match labour supply in the Tunisian regions of Gafsa and Kasserine with labour demand in Lombardia. Under this scheme, 19 Tunisian citizens (bricklayers, plumbers, electricians) have to date emigrated to Italy and have been employed by Italian entrepreneurs.

Another recruitment scheme has been adopted by the Lazio Region, which published, in 2001, a tender for a six-month training course in Tunisia. Selected participants (about 120), after succeeding in a final exam, received a visa to Italy (out of the special quotas issued for Tunisia) and were supported in their search for employment.

²² Some regions have also linked migration and development at the legislative level. Laws of the Veneto and Tuscany regions consider migrants and their associations as partners in development policies; the migratory law of the Campania region affirms the possibility of identifying social, economic and welfare activities in partnership with sending countries. Finally, a migration and development approach is explicitly foreseen by the Tuscany and Marche development action plans. In particular, the Tuscany plan declares that supporting local development can entail “a better connection between migratory and development policies” and that this nexus should be pursued also because of the “increasing interdependence and reciprocal interest in collaboration and growth by citizens of the different countries”.

²³ O. Frattolillo and A. Stocchiero, *Le regioni e le province autonome italiane tra cooperazione e immigrazione*, Programma di ricerca MigraCtion, Centro Studi Politica Internazionale (CeSPI), June 2002.

Such projects have been criticised for their excessive unilateral approach that would not sufficiently consider the impact of recruitment on the immigrants countries of origin; as a matter of fact, policies of this kind can facilitate immigrant integration in the host countries, but if they are not accompanied by a strategy aimed at increasing brain circulation and training supply in emigration countries, they risk channelling dramatically skills from the poorest areas towards the richest. Some regions have attempted to counterbalance these risks through some innovative schemes. The Emilia Romagna region, for instance, has recently commissioned a feasibility study to analyse the possibility of matching recruitment with migrant circulation and return. An interesting example of this strategy is a project funded by Emilia Romagna in Morocco (Khouribga). The project, managed by the NGO Nextia, aims at the development of the local agricultural market through the establishment of cooperatives, labour training in Morocco and Emilia Romagna, the promotion of agreements between local and Emilia Romagna firms and, in this context, the support to qualified migrants' return to undertake entrepreneurial initiatives. Under this scheme, agricultural development is pursued both in Khouribga and Emilia Romagna and training is designed within an integrated perspective that responds to the labour demand of both the recipient country and the country of origin.

Return is the second major area of interest for the Italian local governments. The most innovative projects have linked the promotion of voluntary return for entrepreneurial purposes to the possibility of setting up transnational economic partnerships. Within this framework it is worth mentioning the "AGFOL" project, supported by the Veneto region in 1995. Within this scheme, 30 Albanian immigrants have been selected and trained through a professional course and traineeships in companies in Veneto in order to learn how to set up their own companies or launch joint ventures in their country of origin. The 1997 pyramid schemes crisis has negatively affected the project, but some returnees were successful and are still managing relatively large companies. A similar scheme has been implemented in Senegal and Albania by the Tuscany region and in Morocco by the Province of Bolzano. The latter is particularly interesting as it aims not only at training returnees (10-20 people) in the agricultural and breeding sector, but also at assisting them at the local level by setting up an agricultural firm that will serve as a pilot centre providing updated skills and technologies.

Voluntary and mandatory return projects have also been addressed at weak categories of migrants, such as trafficking victims, minors, refugees and former prisoners. The project for the return of refugees in Prijedor, co-funded by the Province of Trento, is remarkable for its integrated approach: its objective is to facilitate migrants' return through a diplomatic negotiation with local institutions and the improvement of the social conditions and infrastructure in the country of origin (this included the establishment of a centre for the young and elderly people and a hospital, and a plan to build safe accommodation for Serbian refugees).

There are still few examples of programmes assisting the social and economic reintegration of illegal migrants. For this reason, the project "Alnima", promoted by the European Commission within the budgetary line B7/667 and co-financed by the Piemonte region, is quite innovative. "Alnima" assists the return of Moroccan and Albanian prisoners and Nigerian trafficking victims (overall 120 beneficiaries). In particular, migrants who are completing a period of detention in Italy will receive six-month training in prison (chosen on the basis of a local labour market assessment carried out previously), while in the countries of origin, they will receive a subsidy for completing in-firm traineeships or further professional training. Micro-credit will be granted to selected returnees who are willing to set up their own business. The budget allocated to every single beneficiary is €1,500.

The last two sectors of commitment in the field of migration and development are in the area of migration management and remittances enhancement.

Within the framework of the former is a project undertaken by the Piemonte region in Morocco in order to create job opportunities in the country of origin and thus contain migratory flows. The most interesting feature of this project is the enhancement of the migratory chain linking the Chaouia-Ourdigha Region in Morocco (targeted by the project) and Piemonte. Chaouia-Ourdigha migrants were consulted in the project identification phase and opportunities for their voluntary return were opened. A similar project was carried out by Lombardy in Tunisia.

Concerning remittances, only a few pilot projects have been attempted so far. The most interesting is funded by Tuscany and coordinated by the NGO COSPE in Khenifra (Morocco). Through an agreement with the *Monte dei Paschi* Bank (and in particular its Livorno branch²⁴) immigrants' savings are transferred to a bank in Khenifra that, in turn, sends the money to a correspondent micro credit organization that has tellers in five villages of the area. Under this scheme, people who are not bank customers can also withdraw money as they are not required to open a current account. The transfer service is particularly inexpensive for migrants and relatively quick (although variable, it takes an average of 5 days). Moreover, micro-credit indirectly fosters the possibility of gearing remittances towards local investments.

In spite of a significant amount of experimentation, Italian regional co-development programmes suffer from a series of structural shortcomings. The most frequent are associated with isolated actions, excessive sectorialisation, lack of continuity (due to the lack of long-term planning) and inadequate coordination with programmes and activities with similar objectives undertaken by other regions or central institutions. One of the overall problems is the lack of specialised staff and the scarce coordination and promotion of migrant associations. Furthermore, the budget allocated for migratory flows management is still very low and, consequently, concentrated on urgent needs, such as migrants' integration and assistance; this implies that co-development projects based on a transnational approach are numerically limited, and the number of beneficiaries is therefore reduced.

In general terms, two main areas of activities should be developed further by Italian decentralised cooperation:

- cooperation programmes between regions (in particular, but not exclusively, between regions directly concerned by migratory flows) aiming at the systematic exchange of experiences, good practice and innovative methods for the local management of integration, also through shared training schemes for local executives and managers.
- "neighbourhood partnerships" between regions of origin and destination aiming at the promotion of conducive conditions for the spontaneous development of circular migration patterns and types of migratory "commutarism".

The possibility of promoting regional partnerships with Mediterranean and Balkan countries, in the framework of the Barcelona process and the EU proximity policy, in relation also to the co-development of migratory flows, has been debated in four international conferences during the Italian presidency of European Union. These initiatives were organised by the Conference of the presidents of the Italian regions in

²⁴ In Livorno, there is a high concentration of migrants coming from Khenifra.

agreement with the central government and were held in Ancona, Bari, Perugia and Palermo between October and November 2003.²⁵

Some of the main recommendations that emerged from the conferences concerned the possibility of implementing policies for matching labour supply and demand (promoting at the same time brain circulation and increased training supply in emigration countries); fostering interregional partnerships and mobility-friendly spaces (also through multiple visas and new regional competences as guarantors of migrants' entry), enhancing migrants' participation in development projects, enhancing identification and implementation, and exchanging information on migration management between regions. This constitutes quite an ambitious agenda, but the declaration of intent by some regions to move forward in this direction allows for some optimism in this respect.

3. Migration, mobility and trade

GATS mode 4 has not been an important topic of discussion in the Italian context, and has even more rarely been discussed in terms of its impact on developing countries. The Italian position towards the EU's initial offer, including the first Commission draft, was favourable, although some sensitive issues remain due to the priorities of the different ministries involved.

The Trade Ministry is in the lead on negotiations regarding GATS mode 4. It must consult with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Interior Ministry, and the Ministry of Labour, all of which meet regularly in a specific focus group. Some opposition to mode 4 has arisen around the fact that Italian legislation is not in line with the EU initial offer in its provisions on independent contractors: in fact, the list of approved professional categories (as listed in art. 27 of the 1998 law) would have to be expanded. Italy would therefore have to change its law if the initial offer were to be applied as it is (the fact that the 2002 Bossi-Fini law is still awaiting an applicatory regulation provides a window of opportunity to extend art. 27). Italian legislation is however more far-reaching than the initial offer with regard to provisions on intra-corporate transferees. A further point of concern has been that by its nature as a permanent and general commitment, GATS mode 4 operates outside of the Italian quota system. It is therefore seen by some of the departments implementing the quota system as undermining the coherence of this key policy.

The process of inter-ministerial negotiation has shaped the Italian position on GATS mode 4 more than interaction with social partners or other parts of civil society. Trade unions have been vocal mainly through European federations such as ETUC, rather than intervening directly with national policymakers. Moreover, the minimum wage provisions included in the EU initial offer served to defuse some trade union criticism.

Professional associations have emphasised the importance of verifying qualifications, while employers have been mostly silent on mode 4. The Trade Ministry has pointed out the potential positive impact on developing countries, but this did not find an echo in the wider debate. In the context of the WTO service negotiations, therefore, migration and development have not so far been linked.

²⁵ Papers presented at the Bari Conference can be downloaded from the web site: <http://www.cespi.it/PASTORE/partenariato-polmig.htm>

Migration Policy Group
Rue Belliard 205, box 1
B-1040 Brussels
Tel. +32 2 230 5930
Fax. +32 2 280 0925
email: info@migpolgroup.com
www.migpolgroup.com