


by CENSIS



First Annual Report on the Protection System for Asylum-Seekers and Refugees 2005

Summary



Edizioni Anci Servizi



CENSIS

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PRESENTATION OF THE ENGLISH VERSION

According to UNHCR data, during the past five years the number of asylum applications in the various EU countries has fallen by no less than 46% and the countries “historically” inundated with requests for asylum (Great Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, etc) have seen a marked reduction in applications and the presence of asylum-seekers and refugees.

The situation in Italy, however, has gone against this trend with the number of asylum applications remaining basically stable (a decrease of only three percentage points). This has played an important role in ensuring that Italy continued to maintain its efforts – during the above reference period – aimed at closing the gap with respect to countries with a longer history of immigration and asylum. We are all aware of Italy’s achievements in response to the landings in the south of the country but fewer people are aware that these efforts also took the form of the Protection System for Asylum-Seekers and Refugees (SPRAR).

To increase the visibility of the Protection System it was decided to present it in this first report which is also being published in an English version intended to satisfy the curiosity of all those in Europe interested in the developments of the right to asylum in Italy. This English version is intended to make available to the many European actors the description of the construction of a public reception system for asylum-seekers and refugees involving measures for reception, information, integration and voluntary repatriation. We are pleased to share the features that led to the creation of an extremely original and cutting-edge system: a system based on a high level of collaboration between public and private spheres, capable of guaranteeing vertical as well as horizontal governance that is, above all, diffused and deeply rooted all over the country thanks to the widespread voluntary participation of local authorities.

We hope that the Italian experience will arouse interest, and that it will be subjected to analysis, not in the least because it is the product of a well-

structured combination of national and European community resources. Although national resources played a major role in the construction of SPRAR they were accompanied by those of the European Refugee Fund (both sources finance the National Fund for Asylum Policies and Services); while various experimental projects drew upon the resources of the European Social Fund (Equal programme/Asylum Seeker Theme) as well as the funds of the ERF Community Actions directly administrated by the Commission.

The following pages contain Protection System data for 2005 in the attempt to at least partially compensate for the scarce knowledge and structural lack of data on the asylum phenomenon in Italy. This document is the first Report on the Protection System which the promoting bodies have decided to present annually in order to make the most significant features and data relative to the system available to the public. Clearly structured, it will not only focus on the main statistics (nationality, gender, age, ways of entry, type of residence permit, etc) but also on the system's weak areas as well as analysing various thematic and local case studies, all within an international and European reference framework.

This information was collected together with other data using the Databank of the Protection System's Central Service, and jointly processed by ANCI (the National Association of Italian Municipalities) and CENSIS - Centre for Social Policy Studies. CENSIS is one of the leading Italian research institutes and has studied the asylum phenomenon for many years, while ANCI – another unique feature of the Italian system – is one of the key actors in Italian asylum policies and services. As a matter of fact law 189/2002 assigns to ANCI the management of the Central Service activated by the Ministry of the Interior in order to facilitate the coordination of local reception services by means of information, promotion, consultancy, monitoring and technical support activities for local authorities.

Mr. Nadan Petrovic

Head of the SPRAR Central Service



INTRODUCTION

BY FABIO STURANI

(Mayor of Ancona - Deputy President of ANCI with responsibility for the Immigration Office)

and

Luca Pacini

(Head of the ANCI Immigration and Asylum Office)

The publication of this first Annual Report provides an opportunity for taking stock of these years of intense, complex but silent work that led to the creation of the Protection System for asylum-seekers and refugees, as well as an occasion for a wider reflection on the state of the right to asylum in Italy. It represents an important occasion for understanding the evolution of a phenomenon that has undergone major changes in Italy in recent years and for explaining how our country reacted to these changes by producing an “Italian model” to safeguard the right to asylum, a model whose repeatability in other geographical and specific contexts might be worth evaluating.

Since the early 90s the Italian asylum-seeking scene has been radically transformed, going from a few hundred applications for asylum to 9,000 applications in 2005. The Italian legal system reacted by means of major regulatory innovations, a response also dictated by the need to put the European directives into effect.

The new legal instruments were accompanied by the transformation of the management of reception services. These services were almost entirely run by non-profit organisations, but we are now witnessing a growing tendency for local and government authorities to assume responsibility, an evolution based on great cooperation between all the institutional actors involved, as well as between the actors and the non-profit sector.

The driving force behind the coordination of local authorities was the National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI) which proposed itself as the Ministry of the Interior’s main coordinator and partner in developing and then implementing the national asylum strategy. It also played a



fundamental operative role via the Italian System's Central Coordination Service.

The Protection System for asylum-seekers and refugees is the most advanced expression of a transformation that, in the space of only a few years, brought Italy in line with other European countries whose protection and application of asylum rights were more consolidated.

For an in-depth well-reasoned description of the system and the results it has achieved, you are invited to study the Report; all this brief introduction aims to do is take a look at its progress, and its strengths and flaws, and put forward concrete proposals for the system's further development in a way that does not delude the expectations it has aroused.

Firstly, *joining a centrally coordinated national network* guarantees minimum quality standards for all local projects thanks to the necessary start-up and ongoing support supplied by the Central Service in the form of training and day-to-day consultancy. National Systems provide strength and security, especially for smaller local authorities.

The involvement of local authorities is on a strictly voluntary basis. And it is this feature distinguishing the Italian System from all the other European systems that has caused the number of local authorities - municipal corporations in particular - asking to join the network to grow year by year. This is a vital feature guaranteeing the quality of actions because it ensures membership and unreserved dedication to the initiative on the one hand, and facilitates the creation of local networks, through the strong input of the local authorities, networks required to support the individual local projects, especially refugee integration projects. Voluntary membership also eliminates *a priori* eventual tensions often fed by the dissatisfaction of the institutions themselves.

The *operative approach* is based on the *sharing and integration of the competences* of the Central Administration - the Ministry of the Interior, in particular - of the Local Authority and of the Non-Profit Organisations. Unlike in the past, however, each actor is now responsible for their own particular area thus implementing the recently introduced consitutional principles that award local authorities prime responsibility for administrative functions. The structure of the System was a precursor for a new relationship between the State and Local Authorities whereby the latter are allocated demanding new responsibilities and functions that require



active support from the State until the Municipalities are capable of fully doing so.

During recent years, we have developed and implemented good practices in institutional relations and building networks of different actors that can be applied to other social policies implemented at local level, beginning with those addressing foreign nationals. Good examples are the delicate and complex issue of unaccompanied foreign minors and human trafficking, or the renewal of permits of stay recently addressed by ANCI together with the Ministry of the Interior with the transfer of responsibility for renewal from the Questure (Police Headquarters) to Local Authorities.

The activation of projects in areas with numerous applications as well as areas with low numbers of immigrants *raises the awareness of the local community* about the theme of asylum, and consequently about the more general theme of immigration. This aspect is of vital importance during the present time because the rapidly increasing presence of foreign nationals in Italy inevitably leads to tensions.

Finally, participation in the protection system can *benefit the local area* by helping institutional actors to update and acquire the new competences and knowledge needed to deal with issues that they may be tackling for the first time.

The System's strengths must be consolidated to ensure that the commitment of local authorities is not in vain.

An essential step involves *increasing financial resources* to enable the reception capacities to be expanded and allow the Protection System to upgrade the places available to respond to real needs in view of the asylum applications made annually (approximately 9,000 in 2005) and the number of recognised refugees and humanitarian entrants present in Italy (approximately 21,000).

The strength of the process that led to the creation of the Italian asylum-seeker and refugee reception system lies in the fact that it is the outcome of a shared route where all actors involved have contributed on the basis of their specific nature. To safeguard this approach we need to review the recent decree implementing Council Directive 2003/9/EC of 27 January 2003 laying down minimum standards for the reception of asylum-seekers. The aforementioned decree proposes a centralised approach ill-suited to the



autonomy of local authorities and contrary to the voluntary nature of their participation in the protection system and the decentralised local reception model.

Italy's current asylum regulations draw upon three national instruments: the Protection System; the Identification Centres, and the individual economic contribution institute. In order for these instruments to operate together in harmony we need to develop effective forms of coordination and cooperation, something the Local Authorities have declared themselves willing to do. This process needs to begin with a major overhaul of the current Identification Centre system; in fact their set-up and vicinity to the CPTs (Temporary Stay Centres) raises serious doubts especially with regard to rights.

Another aspect that cannot be ignored is the glaring lack of an organic asylum law that constitute the general legal framework to which the continuously increasing numbers of regulations would refer. While this is not the place for a detailed discussion of proposals, we should mention that a framework law on asylum in Italy drawing upon the important results of recent years could only confirm the importance of the role of local authorities and their fruitful collaboration with Central Administration, and maintain the centrality of ANCI's coordination work, and develop the potential of the Protection System for Asylum-Seekers and Refugees.

To conclude, although Italy has recently tackled the problem concerning the reception and integration of asylum-seekers and refugees it has managed to bring about an original experience hinging on the cooperation between central and local institutions and permitting the construction of a national network comprising numerous local terminals. We hope that by bringing this original approach to the attention of an international public we can provide food for thought. We are convinced that local authorities' participation in managing social phenomena is a model that can be used in other spheres, not just at national level but also at European level, enhancing the qualities of the local authority as grassroots institution capable of sharing needs, problems and solutions with the community.





Part One

THE CONTEXT

1. THE ITALIAN LAW REGULATING THE RIGHT TO ASYLUM

1.1. The national laws

Italy is the only country in the European Union still lacking an organic law regulating the right to asylum even though the Italian Constitution is in the forefront in this area: Art. 10(3) establishes that foreigners “*prevented from exercising the democratic liberties guaranteed by the Italian Constitution*” are granted “*right of asylum in the territory of Republic of Italy, in accordance with the conditions laid down by law*”.

Despite the undeniable importance of the right to asylum the national immigration laws barely touch upon this theme. The first law to do so was the 1990 *Martelli law* (L. 39/1990), Article 1 of which regulates the recognition of refugee status under the Geneva Convention. It was followed by the relative Implementation Decree (*D.P.R. 136/1990*) defining various aspects of the recognition procedure.

Article 1 is currently the only part of the *Martelli Law* still in force, the rest having been repealed *in toto* following its replacement by the *Turco - Napolitano law* (L.40/98), which was in turn modified by the *Bossi-Fini law* (L.189/2002).

The latter, together with the *Implementation regulation for procedures for the recognition of refugee status* - D.P.R. 303/2004 (enforced on 21 April 2005) takes up and completes Article 1 of Law 39/90, introducing important innovations in articles 31 and 32.

Article 32 of the Bossi-Fini law establishes:

- the *Protection System for Asylum-Seekers and Refugees* (SPRAR) – coordinated by the *Central Service*, activated by the Ministry of the Interior and entrusted to ANCI (Association of Municipalities) – and the *National Fund for Asylum Policies and Services* (FNPSA);

- a dual asylum procedure: *simplified*, for all asylum-seekers compulsorily held in the identification and temporary stay centres¹; *ordinary*, for all asylum-seekers not subject to compulsory detention²;
- seven *Territorial Commissions* (with offices in Gorizia, Milano, Roma, Foggia, Siracusa, Crotone and Trapani) granting refugee status. The existing Central Commission for the recognition of refugee status, was transformed into a *National Commission for the Right to Asylum* responsible for coordination, guidance, updating territorial commission members and gathering statistical data;
- the *Identification Centres*³, that are present within the same areas of Territorial Commissions, where asylum-seekers subject to the simplified procedure can be hosted for the period during which their request is being examined.

¹ A simplified procedure has been introduced (art.1-*ter*) for the assessment of the application for recognition of refugee status for those *compulsorily* held in identification centres in the following cases (art.1 -*bis*, comma 2):

- a) Following an application for asylum by a foreigner who has been detained for evading or attempting to evade border controls or immediately afterwards, or who lacks a regular permit of stay;
- b) Following an application for asylum by foreigners issued with an expulsion order (destinatario di un provvedimento di espulsione) or refusal of entry (respingimento).

² Asylum-seekers *may* be detained in identification centres in the following circumstances (art.1 -*bis*, comma 1):

- a) In order to verify or determine the foreigner's nationality or identity, if they are not carrying travel or personal identity documents, or if they have presented false documents on arrival;
- b) In order to check the grounds on which their asylum application is based;
- c) While they are awaiting the outcome of the proceedings concerning the recognition of the right to be admitted to Italy.

In case of non-mandatory detention, the Chief of Police may order a stay period in the centre of up to a maximum of 20 days.

³ Identification centres were established under Art. 32 sub-section 3 of Law 89/2002, and subsequently regulated by the Presidential Decree (D.P.R.) 303/2004.

1.2. Regional laws and protocols

Although the Italian Constitution awards the State exclusive legislative powers over immigration and the legal status of foreigners, the Regions are entitled to make use of their own legislative instruments to facilitate the promotion, within their jurisdiction, of policies for the reception and social integration of foreigners.

The first Region to draw up a specific law regulating actions involving immigrants (Art. 2 included asylum-seekers, refugees and displaced persons in this category) was *Emilia Romagna*, with the Regional Law No. 5 of 24 March 2004 “Regulations for the social integration of immigrant foreign citizens”.

This law represented a considerable step forward with respect to the national legislative situation, because it included asylum-seekers and refugees among foreigners entitled to access social integration services like education, health care, employment and professional training, as well as language courses.

It should be underlined that under the law the Municipalities are required to play an essential role in the social integration of foreign citizens.

A similar though even more innovative approach was adopted by the autonomous region of *Friuli Venezia Giulia* with its *Regional Law No. 5 of 4th March 2005* “Regulations for the reception and social integration of foreign immigrant citizens”.

The regional law of Friuli Venezia Giulia also includes displaced persons, asylum-seekers and refugees among those benefiting from these actions (Art. 2), as well as dedicating an entire paragraph (Art. 14) to provisions concerning protection programmes for the latter.

Other highly effective instruments are the *Regional Protocols* which establish agreements between various actors (usually the regional administration; local authorities and other institutional actors; protection associations and bodies; the “Forum del terzo settore”, or Italian non profit association; unions) for the development of action plans and programmes responding to the various needs emerging at local level.

Completed or on-going protocols include the “*Asylum-seeker and Refugee Agreement Protocol between the Region of Emilia Romagna and Local Authorities*”, in force since the summer of 2004.

Friuli Venezia Giulia has also produced a draft protocol based on the Emilia Romagna model.

6th November 2003 saw the approval of the “*Procedural protocol for the reception of asylum-seekers in the Province of Trento*” aimed at the “formalised definition of the structure and organisation of the Trento system for the reception of political asylum-seekers through the description of actions, roles and competences of the actors involved in the sector and of their relations”.

Table 1 – The principal laws governing the right to asylum

<i>State</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Constitution (1948)- Art. 10(3)• Law 39/1990 (Martelli law) - D.P.R. 136/1990• Immigration Consolidation Act L. 286/1998• Law 189/2002 – D.P.R. 303/2004• DLgs 140/2005
<i>Regions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emilia Romagna: L.R. n. 5 “Regulations for the social integration of immigrant foreign citizens” (24th March 2004)• Friuli Venezia Giulia: L.R. n. 5 “Regulations for the reception and social integration of foreign immigrant citizens” (4th March 2005)• “Procedural protocol for the reception of asylum-seekers in the Province of Trento” (2003)• “Asylum-seeker and Refugee Agreement Protocol between the Region of Emilia Romagna and Local Authorities” (2004)• Agreement protocol in Friuli Venezia Giulia

Source: Censis data processing

2. THE EVOLUTION OF THE PHENOMENON

In 2005 237,690 requests for asylum were presented in the 25 European Union countries, continuing the negative trend of recent years (438,990 requests in 2001, - 46%) (Table1).

Table 1 - Asylum requests presented in the 25 EU Countries- 2001-2005 (a.v. and % var.%)

State	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	% var. 01-05
Austria	30,140	39,350	32,360	24,630	22,470	-25
Belgium	24,550	18,810	16,940	15,360	15,960	-35
Czech Republic	18,090	8,480	11,400	5,460	4,020	-78
Cyprus	1,770	950	4,410	9,860	7,770	339
Denmark	12,510	6,070	4,590	3,240	2,260	-82
Estonia	10	10	10	10	10	0
Finland	1,650	3,440	3,220	3,860	3,560	116
France	54,290	58,970	59,770	58,550	50,050	-8
Germany	88,290	71,130	50,560	35,610	28,910	-67
Greece	5,500	5,660	8,180	4,470	9,050	65
Ireland	10,330	11,630	7,900	4,770	4,320	-58
Italy	9,620	16,020	13,460	9,720	9,350	-3
Latvia	10	30	10	10	20	100
Lithuania	260	290	180	170	120	-54
Luxembourg	690	1,040	1,550	1,580	800	16
Malta	120	350	570	1,000	1,170	875
Netherlands	32,580	18,670	13,400	9,780	12,350	-62
Poland	4,530	5,170	6,910	8,080	5,440	20
Portugal	230	250	90	110	110	-52
United Kingdom	91,600	103,080	60,050	40,620	30,460	-67
Slovakian Republic	8,150	9,700	10,360	11,390	3,490	-57
Slovenia	1,510	700	1,100	1,280	1,600	6
Spain	9,490	6,310	5,920	5,540	5,260	-45
Sweden	23,520	33,020	31,350	23,160	17,530	-25
Hungary	9,550	6,410	2,400	1,600	1,610	-83
TOTAL	438,990	425,540	346,690	279,690	237,840	-46

Source: Censis processing of data UNHCR “Asylum levels and trends in industrialized countries, 2005”

As far as the single Member states are concerned, in 2004 France received a greater number of asylum requests than any other country in either Europe or the world; it maintained its leadership in 2005 when it received 50,050 requests. At European level, it is followed by Great Britain, with 30,460 requests, 9% of the total asylum requests in industrialised countries, and Germany with 28,910 requests.

Italy, with 9,350 requests, occupies the middle ground among Member Countries; during the 5 years considered, the number of requests received in our country has remained virtually constant (-3%), with the exception of a rise in 2002 (16,020 requests presented) and in 2003 (13,460 requests).

As Table 2 shows refugees are distributed in a highly irregular manner within the EU territory. On the one hand, there are nations hosting high numbers of refugees with a high impact on population (first and foremost, Germany with over 700,000 refugees, or 8.46 for every 1000 inhabitants), and on the other, countries with relatively low levels, both in terms of absolute values as well as compared to the resident population. This is the case of east and south European countries, including Italy where there are 0.39 refugees per thousand inhabitants.

Table 2 - Refugees in EU Countries, 2004 and 2005 (a.v., % var. and per 1000 inhabitants)

State	2004	2005	% var. 04-05	Refugees per 1000 inhabitants
Austria	17,795	21,230	19.3	2.59
Belgium	13,529	15,282	11.5	1.47
Czech Republic	1,144	1,802	57.5	0.18
Cyprus	531	701	32.0	0.84
Denmark	65,310	44,374	-32.1	8.22
Estonia	11	7	-36.4	0.01
Finland	11,325	11,809	4.3	2.27
France	139,852	137,316	-1.8	2.27
Germany	876,622	700,016	-20.1	8.46
Greece	2,489	2,390	-4.0	0.22
Ireland	7,201	7,113	-1.2	1.73
Italy	15,674	20,675	31.9	0.36
Latvia	11	11	0.0	0.00
Lithuania	403	531	31.8	0.16
Luxembourg	1,590	1,822	14.6	3.92
Malta	1,558	1,939	24.5	4.82
Netherlands	126,805	118,189	-6.8	7.25
Poland	2,507	4,604	83.6	0.12
Portugal	377	363	-3.7	0.03
United Kingdom	289,054	293,459	1.5	4.92
Slovakian Republic	409	368	-10.0	0.07
Slovenia	304	251	-17.4	0.13
Spain	5,635	5,374	-4.6	0.12
Sweden	73,408	74,915	2.1	8.32
Hungary	7,708	8,046	4.4	0.80
Total	1,661,252	1,472,587	-11,4	3,21

Source: Censis processing of "Global refugee trends" 2004 and 2005- UNHCR; "State of world population report 2005" - UNFPA

From 1990 to 2000 most asylum requests in Italy were presented by Albanians (21,300 asylum requests) and former Yugoslavia (12,197). Many asylum-seekers came from Iraq (12,132).

Since 2003, Africa has come to the fore: Table 3 shows that in that same year most asylum requests in Italy were from Somalia (1,743), and that the number of requests from Liberia and Eritrea were unprecedented compared to previous years (1,550 for Liberia, and just a few less, 1,230, for Eritrea).

Table 3 - Principle countries of origin of asylum-seekers in Italy – 1990-2005

Year	Country of Origin				
1990-2000	Albania 21,300	former Yugoslavia 12,197	Iraq 12,132	Romania 6,114	Turkey 4,250
2001	Iraq 1,985	Turkey 1,690	former Yugoslavia 1,526	Sri Lanka 555	Romania 501
2002	Iraq 1,944	Liberia 1,660	Sri Lanka 1,526	former Yugoslavia 1,418	Pakistan 1,256
2003	Somalia 1,743	Liberia 1,550	Serbia- Montenegro 1,510	Eritrea 1,230	Pakistan 787
2004	Serbia- Montenegro 1,989	Romania 1,161	Nigeria 930	Eritrea 831	Sudan 486
2005	Eritrea 1,153	Ethiopia 458	Ivory Coast 440	Togo 327	Pakistan 252

Source: Censis processing of National Commission data

In 2003 numerous asylum requests also came from Serbia-Montenegro (1,510 requests), which also produced the most asylum-seekers in 2004. Other countries producing high numbers of asylum seekers in that year were Romania, Nigeria, Eritrea and Sudan.

In the last year taken into consideration the African nations occupied first place in the sad charts of countries producing the most asylum-seekers; two countries in the Horn of Africa, Eritrea, with 1,153 requests, and Ethiopia,

with 458, and two west African countries, Ivory Coast (440 requests) and Togo (327 requests). In recent years, considerable numbers of asylum-seekers have been coming from Pakistan.

Part Two

THE PROTECTION SYSTEM

1. THE ITALIAN MODEL OF PROTECTION AND ASSISTENCE FOR ASYLUM-SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

1.1. From Joint Action project to the Protection System for Asylum-Seekers and Refugees

The Joint Action project cofunded by the European Commission represented the concrete answer to the need for a refugee and asylum-seeker reception system based on a decentralised action at local level in Italy. Its aim is to create an initial network for asylum-seekers run by a network of associations involving various bodies and organisations⁴ present at local level in 31 Municipalities distributed in 10 Italian regions and coordinated by the Italian Refugee Council (CIR).

The project sparked off an interesting idea that was consolidated in time: the creation of a network assigning tasks and responsibilities at local level but with a *central organisation nucleus* coordinating actors and actions.

Although the actors involved included *local administrations* they were not yet involved in a systematic manner.

Joint Action undoubtedly played an important role in creating the foundations for today's Protection System but it had major limits and weaknesses, such as the fragmentation of initiatives and the patchy way services are supplied. In 2000 a project financed with European funds and promoted by ICS, UNHCR and Censis was launched with the aim of causing such problems to emerge. The *Nausicaa* project was intended to map the existing services while promoting the construction of more stable networks at local level.

⁴ Associazione cristiana dei lavoratori Italiani (Acli), Casa dei diritti sociali (Cds), Centro Italiano per l'educazione allo sviluppo (Cies), Caritas, Cisl, Ctm – Movimondo, Federazione delle chiese evangeliche (Fcei), Consorzio Italiano di solidarietà (ICS) e Uil.

Joint Action and the Nausicaa projects became the basis of the National Asylum Programme (*PNA*), officially launched on 10th October 2000 with the drawing up of an Agreement Protocol signed by the Ministry of the Interior, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI).

Right from the start the PNA's programmatic aims followed and integrated the guidelines put forward by the European Refugee Fund (ERF)⁵. These aims included the following in particular: the *constitution of an integrated network of reception services* for asylum-seekers, refugees and persons seeking humanitarian protection or temporary protection; the *promotion of specific measures to favour socio-economic integration*; the *creation of voluntary repatriation programmes and assistance for reintegration of migrants in their countries of origin* with the support of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

Three promoters – each with specific tasks and responsibilities – were in charge of running the PNA:

- the *Ministry of the Interior* provided guidance for legislation and government programmes as well as coordination with the European Commission relative to confunding requests presented to the ERF;
- the UNHCR provided guidance relative to the rights and protection of asylum-seekers and refugees;
- ANCI was in charge of organisational aspects, from coordination with the Municipalities responsible for the projects, to acting as a link for Municipalities and promoters of agreements and conventions with non profit agencies.

A *Central Secretariat* managed by ANCI was responsible for coordinating PNA activities.

Right from the beginning the PNA was not only subjected to the approval of the European Commission for access to ERF funding but also to the Prime

⁵ See glossary.

Minister's Office in order to obtain financing from the state-managed "Otto per mille IRPEF"⁶ fund.

Unlike the innovative Joint Action, the PNA succeeded in its intent of constructing a national network based on the commitment of local authorities. Thanks to factors like the voluntary nature of participation, the development of potential and features characterising the different areas involved, the sharing of responsibilities, and the integration of services offered. The PNA managed to obtain significant results during its period of activity.

These results led to a further recognition of the value and importance of the Italian model: a highly decentralised offer of integrated services that was centrally coordinated leading to the creation of a national reception and protection system for asylum-seekers and refugees

Article 32, 1-*sexies* of law 189/02 (the so-called *Bossi-Fini law*) modified Article 1 of law 39/90 establishing the *Protection System for Asylum-Seekers and Refugees* (SPRAR), a more organic and institutional version of the PNA. At the same time Article 32, 1-*septies*, established the *National Fund for asylum policies and services* (FNPSA), cofunded by the ERF, which places specific ordinary resources at the disposal of SPRAR activities. The same article also establishes the *Central Service*, to be managed by ANCI, with responsibilities concerning information, promotion, consultancy, monitoring and technical support for the local authorities involved in the protection system.

Within the protection system *project standards have gradually been raised*: there is an increasing tendency to expect minimum requirements in the reception sector and to boost integration measures to the maximum also by sharing experiences implemented in various local areas.

Permanent links connect local projects thanks to the Central Service, making it possible to diffuse and transfer to all those interested solutions, good practices and innovative procedures adopted in other parts of the network so that they can be reproduced elsewhere (obviously taking into account the specific nature of the different local areas). This enables projects to grow together and to reduce differences at local level to a minimum. The

⁶ See glossary.

mechanism described above results from the ongoing need to find a balance between the *standardisation of services and the promotion of local characteristics* which is one of the cornerstones of the system.

The focus of SPRAR activities is the decision to *promote and make the best possible use of resources and services already present at local level* and also used by Italian citizens, avoiding the need for creating purpose-built facilities. This decision was dictated by the conviction that there was a risk of creating excessively self-referential services that would only have damaged the users' prospects of integration at local level.

Table 1- Main features of Joint Action, PNA and SPRAR

	Joint Action	Pna	Sprar
<i>Duration</i>	July 1999 to December 2000	July 2001 to July 2003	From 2003 to the present day
<i>Articles of organisation</i>	Approval of the Joint Action project by the European Commission	Agreement protocol between Ministry of the Interior, UNHCR and ANCI	Art. 32 of Law 189/02
<i>Coordination</i>	Cir, Ics, UNHCR	Ministry of the Interior, UNHCR and ANCI	Ministry of the Interior and ANCI
<i>Administration</i>	Cir	Central Secretariat	Central Service
<i>Funding</i>	European Commission +Ministry of the Interior	Prime Minister's Office (Fondi 8 per mille), European Refugee Fund	80% from the National fund for asylum policies and services (which includes ERF); remaining 20% from local authorities, Prime Minister's Office (Fondi 8 per mille)
<i>Type of network</i>	Non-profit sector	Public/non-profit sector	Public sector
<i>Service uniformity</i>	Low	Medium	High

Source: Censis data-processing

1.2. The system's leading actors

A brief illustration of the roles and functions of the leading actors involved will permit a better understanding of the system's aims, of the way it works, and of its strong points and potential.

The Ministry of the Interior

From the end of the '90s onwards, it was the task of the Ministry of the Interior, in collaboration with UNHCR and ANCI, to build a network of reception services at local level for asylum-seekers, refugees and humanitarian entrants; to promote specific social integration measures; to develop, with the support of IOM, programmes for voluntary repatriation and reintegration in migrants' countries of origin.

Following the launch of the National Asylum Programme, the Ministry acted as *institutional guarantor*, delegating the operational aspects to ANCI.

Novadays the Ministry of the Interior is responsible for defining the criteria for access to the National Fund for Asylum Policies and Services (*FNPSA*) and for managing the relative resources. To this end, it issues an annual Decree for the financing of reception and protection services within the limits of the available resources.

The Ministry of the Interior is also responsible for the coordination and economic management of the other actions belonging to the national asylum system: the Identification Centres and the "first assistance" contribution⁷.

The Central Service

The Central Service was established by Art. 32 of law 189/02 and formally activated by the Ministry of the Interior on 24 July 2003, following the signing of the Convention entrusting its management to ANCI; it has a coordinating role within the SPRAR network.

Under the aforementioned law, the Central Service⁸ is responsible for the coordination and technical support of activities linked to local projects.

This law allocates the following functions to the Central Service:

⁷ For more information on the Identification Centres and "first assistance" contribution see the chapter on the relative legislation.

⁸ ANCI draws upon the collaboration of various bodies to run the activities of the Central Service; they include IOM (under the protocol establishing the Decentralised Intervention System, or SID) Formautonomie spa and Anci Servizi srl.

- *monitoring of the presence* of asylum-seekers, refugees and humanitarian entrants in Italy;
- *creation* of a databank with information on local actions for asylum-seekers and refugees;
- support for the *dissemination of information* about such actions;
- *technical assistance to local authorities*, also in setting up services;
- *promotion and implementation*, in agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, of *repatriation programmes* through IOM or other national or international humanitarian bodies.

The Central Service also acts as a link between the local operational level and the Ministry of Interior which is responsible for controlling and monitoring the results obtained by the services and the fulfilment of the procedural activities connected to the allocation and administration of the ERF.

The Databank and monitoring function

The management of the databank is one of the tasks allocated to the Central Service and permits monitoring of the presence at local level of the various categories of person being assisted and of the situation of the local projects in terms of persons received, services activated and places available in local facilities.

The information contained in the databank serves a dual purpose:

- it permits the *constant monitoring of services developed and offered by SPRAR projects and of the number and type of beneficiaries served*;
- *it allows real-time monitoring of the possibility of introducing new beneficiaries*.

The databank plays a vital role because it is one of the few sources providing an accurate picture of the current asylum situation in Italy. It also acts as a link between reception needs communicated by the various local areas and the system's response capacity.

Consultancy and technical assistance for local projects and operator training

Assistance activities guaranteed by the Central Service to the single projects mainly regard management and organisational aspects. The Service also provides information on the regulations in this sector, on the use of funding, on the ways to create an adequate local network, on the most suitable instruments for achieving quality targets and personalising services.

Monitoring and more project-specific consultancy are carried out by means of regular on-site visits. During 2005 52 visits were made to local projects.

The Central Service also focuses on the *training of operators* involved in projects, who periodically receive updates and in-depth information on different topics - also chosen according to needs and requests expressed at local level - to give them the competences needed to guarantee minimum reception and integration standards.

Other indications useful for projects are contained in the “Handbook for the activation and management of reception and integration services for asylum-seekers, refugees and beneficiaries of humanitarian protection” produced by the Central Service in collaboration with non profit experts⁹.

Information and awareness-raising activities

The Central Service is responsible for favouring the diffusion of information on the system’s activities, and for raising the awareness of institutions at local, national and international level and of public opinion on the theme of asylum. In order to do so it draws upon a range of instruments that can be adapted to the varying needs. This Report is one such instrument.

⁹ The handbook – available in Italian – can be consulted or downloaded from the Central Service web site (www.serviziocentrale.it).

Voluntary assisted repatriation

Article 32 of Law 189/2002 states that one of the tasks entrusted to the Central Service is that of promoting repatriation activities in collaboration with IOM or other international organisations. In 2005 a convention with this aim was signed by IOM and ANCI.

In 2005 a total of 172 voluntary repatriations took place; 53 involved beneficiaries included in one of the Protection System's projects while 119 were asylum-seekers or refugees outside the System. These repatriations involved 30 families and 74 individuals; reintegration in the country of origin was provided for in 104 cases.

ANCI and the Network of Municipalities

It is here, in the Municipality, following the beneficiary's entry into the Protection System, that the fundamental passage from protected person to *citizen playing an active role in integrating* takes place.

This process is made possible thanks to the use of an *integrated model* which absorbs and improves the different experiences of the public and private non-profit sectors present at local level as well as recognising the crucial role played by Municipalities as social welfare service suppliers and main reference for the local service network. The SPRAR model therefore represents one of the most interesting experiences of the implementation of the principle of *subsidiarity* that was expressly introduced in the Italian legislation with the amendment to Title V of the Italian Constitution. In fact, Municipalities' closeness to local areas and citizens is the result of their greater proximity to local issues than any other institutional actor.

The local authority network set up when the PNA was founded has consolidated and expanded itself over the years, guaranteeing *continuous and sustainable* actions.

At the same time a decision was made to promote the local areas by creating a network comprising other public and private bodies equipped to offer beneficiaries a protection, reception and integration network.

The *voluntary nature* of the Municipalities' participation in SPRAR is an extremely important aspect distinguishing the *participative and shared* system set up in Italy from systems created in other EU countries. The fact that local authorities *choose* to become part of the assistance system means that they also share its aims. This concept is superior to both the top-down approach where central government imposes a model on the various bodies involved and to the bottom-up approach where local areas or single bodies impose their needs to the detriment of a coherent shared strategy.

Following its access to funding the promoting Municipality becomes the project *holder* meaning it is responsible for administrative and financial management, coordination and integration of actions eventually assigned to third parties, and as a result, for the complete success of the proposed project.

The Protection System was also able to draw upon the support of ANCI, the association promoting and linking Italian Municipalities that offered itself as a *guarantor and reference* for local authorities that are project holders.

The Ministry of the Interior confirmed ANCI's important role by identifying it as the authority delegated to the management of resources allocated to Italy by the European Refugee Fund and directly responding to the European Commission.

Commitment within the Protection System also led to a greater awareness of asylum- and immigration-related issues within ANCI itself: in 2001 the association activated a special Asylum and Immigration Office.

1.3. The managing authorities and the local network

Some of the merit for the existence of functional protection system guaranteeing the supply of reception and integration services in Italy must undoubtedly go to the non-profit associations that played a decisive role in setting up the Joint Action project and the PNA, as well as in promoting the PNA and Protection System. The associations continue to make a vital contribution to the management of activities and the support for local authority project holders.

Most of the associations collaborating with local authorities in local project management activities refer to a series of national protection bodies present throughout the country like Caritas, ARCI, ICS, and, to a lesser extent, CIR. These bodies receive the grassroots support of numerous local associations.

Since PNA was founded, relations between local authorities and managing authorities have taken various shapes, although they are mainly inspired by two models:

- a) strengthening of existing relations between the local authority and association by means of an agreement whereby the association manages all reception and integration activities on behalf of the local authority;
- b) the local authority entrusts a part of the activities to the managing authority according to its specific competences.

2. THE SYSTEM'S SERVICES AND BENEFICIARIES

2.1. An overview

One of the tasks of the Central Service laid down by Law 189/2002 consists of creating a databank of actions carried out at local level for asylum-seekers, refugees and humanitarian entrants. The databank is currently being managed by a specific sector of the Central Service and is continuously updated by the operators working on the single local projects.

A further task entrusted to the Central Service is to provide a full report on the presence of asylum-seekers, refugees and humanitarian entrants within the territory of local authorities belonging to the System.

Table 1 – Categories of PNA and SPRAR beneficiaries

PNA AND SPRAR BENEFICIARIES	
Asylum-seekers	Asylum-seekers are persons who have left their countries of origin and have made an application for refugee status. Until a decision has been made about their refugee status application they are to be considered asylum-seekers.
Refugees	Refugees are persons who have “well-grounded fears of persecution due to race, religion, citizenship, membership of a social group or political opinions”, who are outside the country of their nationality and who are unable, or due to such fear, unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country. This definition was introduced by Article 1 of the Geneva Convention and adopted by the implementation law No. 722 of 1954 of the Italian legal system.
Humanitarian entrants	The granting of a permit of stay for Humanitarian Protection implements the <i>non-refoulement</i> principle and is used in cases where foreign citizens do not meet the criteria of Article 1 of the Geneva Convention for the recognition of refugee status but where there are real and serious threats to their safety should they return to their country of origin.

This monitoring system, currently ongoing, is guaranteed through the gathering of information supplied by the *Prefetture-Utg* (Government

Territorial Offices) and by other bodies (local projects, local authorities, protection bodies) and through initial links with various Identification Centres.

The results of this activity show that in 2005 the Central Service was able to monitor 6,007 persons comprising asylum-seekers (55%), refugees (14%) and humanitarian entrants (31%) (Table1).

4,654 of these 6,007 persons entered the system as beneficiaries of projects run by local authorities.

Table 1 - The Central Service's monitoring activity, 2005 (a.v.)

	Asylum-seekers	Refugees	Humanitarian entrants	Total
Total number of persons received	2,461	728	1465	4.654
<i>In Roma</i>	584	172	162	918
<i>In Milano</i>	321	8	18	347
Waiting list	763	74	357	1,194
Renouncers	57	5	25	87
Untraceable	40	4	28	72
Total	3,321	811	1,875	6,007

Source: Censis processing of Central Service data

Taking into account only the network of the protection system projects and their characteristics, we can see that in 2005 81 local authorities belonged to the system and that they were all project holders (78 Municipalities – including the metropolitan areas of Roma and Milano; 1 union of municipalities, 1 “mountain community” and 1 provincial consortium).

Table 2- The Protection System for asylum-seekers and refugees, 2005

The local authorities	81 local authorities involved, comprising: 78 Municipalities 1 union of municipalities 1 mountain community 1 provincial consortium of social services
The projects	81 projects
Places available	3,028 places: - ranging from a minimum of 15 to a maximum of 586 places
Areas covered	55 Italian provinces (out of total of 103)

Source: Censis processing of Central Service data

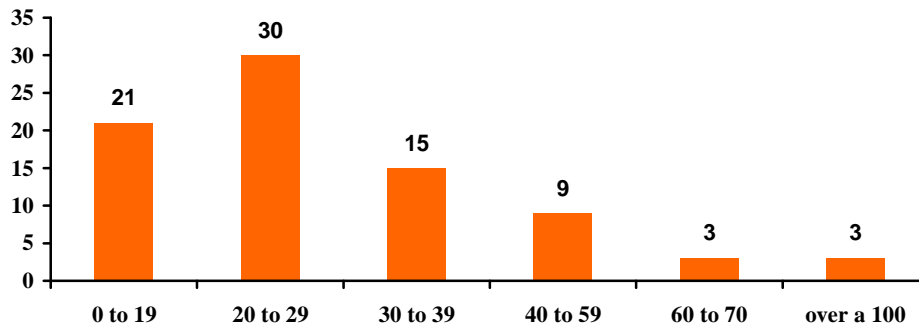
Analysing the 81 Municipalities belonging to the network according to size it can be seen that services are mainly present in medium-large Municipalities (28 Municipalities have 30,000-100,000 inhabitants, 11 from 100,000-250,000 inhabitants) but that they are also present in 11 large Municipalities and in 11 small centres (Table 3).

Table 3 - Municipalities belonging to the Protection System, according to size, 2005 (a.v.)

Size	Municipalities	n.
>250,000 inhabitants	Bari, Bologna, Catania, Firenze, Genova, Milano, Napoli, Roma, Torino, Venezia, Verona	11
From 100,001 to 250,000 inhabitants	Ancona, Brescia, Foggia, Forlì, Modena, Parma, Perugia, Ravenna, Siracusa, Taranto, Trieste	11
Da 30.001 to 100,000 inhabitants	Acireale, Agrigento, Asti, Barletta, Bitonto, Cassino, Como, Cosenza, Cremona, Gorizia, Grottaglie, Lecco, Lodi, Lucera, Macerata, Manfredonia, Matera, Monopoli, Ostuni, Pisa, Pordenone, Ragusa, Rieti, Rosignano Marittima, Rovigo, Udine, Varese, Viterbo	28
From 5,001 to 30,000 inhabitants	Aviano, Borgo S. Lorenzo, Caronno Pertusella, Codroipo, Comiso, Fidenza, Foiano della Chiana, Isola di Capo Rizzuto, Ivrea, Malo, Narni, Poggio a Caiano, Pontedera, S. Pietro Vernotico, Sessa Aurunca, Sesto Calende, Sezze, Todi, Trepuzzi, Alta Sabina union of municipalities	20
<5,000 inhabitants	Alice Bel Colle, Badolato, Bassano Romano, Breno, Celleno, Chiesanuova, Comunità montana Alto Astico, Galliciano, Riace, Roccaporga, Serrapetrona	11

Source: Censis processing of Central Service data

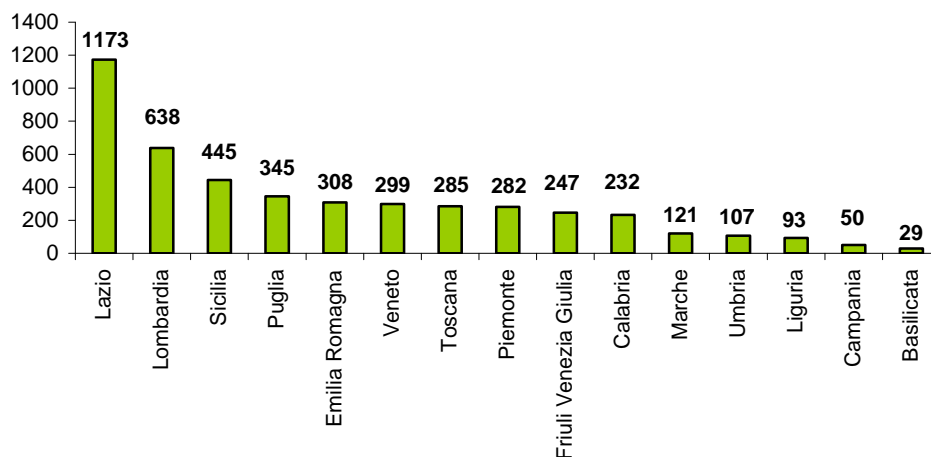
In 2005 a total of 3,028 reception places were made available; 2,217 in local projects, 586 in Roma and 225 in Milano. The majority of local authorities make 15 to 39 places available to the system (Chart 1).

Chart 1 – Distribution of projects by number of places, 2005

Source: Central Service

In 2005 a total of 4,654 beneficiaries were received into projects run by local authorities belonging to the SPRAR network: 3,389 in local projects and 1,265 in projects in Roma and Milano. A high number of beneficiaries were received in Venezia (230 beneficiaries), Agrigento (226), Torino (143), and Modena (103).

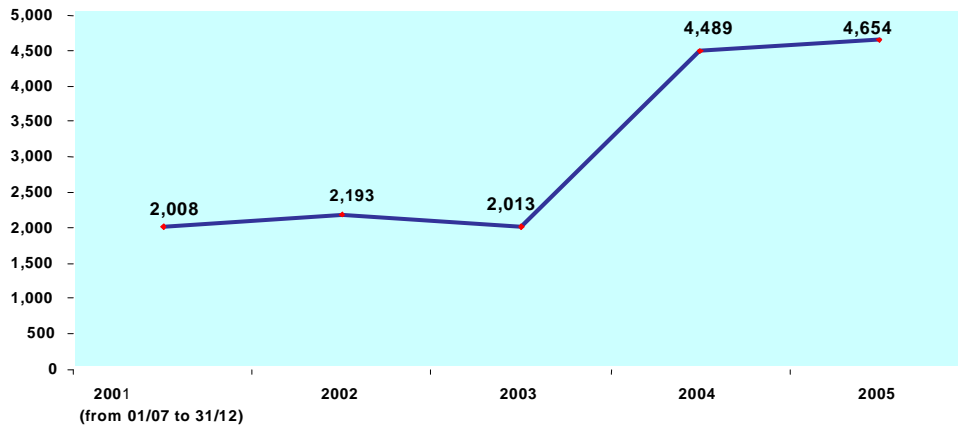
Lazio is the region with the greatest number of beneficiaries (1,173), followed by Lombardia (638), Sicilia (445) and Puglia (345) (Chart 2).

Chart 2 - Beneficiaries received by region, 2005

Source: Central Service

Moreover, from 2001 to 2005 10,969 persons were received into local authority projects, showing constant growth over the years (Chart 3).

Chart 3- Total number of beneficiaries received in the Protection System projects from 1/7/2001 to 31/12/2005



Source: Central Service

2.2. Beneficiary characteristics

The socio-demographic profile

In 2005 there was an absolute majority of male beneficiaries: the 3,330 male asylum-seekers and refugees represent 71.6% of the total beneficiaries (Table 4).

Table 4 - Beneficiaries received by gender, 2005 (a.v. and % val.)

	Female		Male		Total	
	a.v.	% val.	a.v.	% val.	a.v.	% val.
Total beneficiaries	1,324	28.4	3,330	71.6	4,654	100.0
In Roma	264	28.8	654	71.2	918	100.0
In Milano	86	24.8	261	75.2	347	100.0

Source: Censis processing of Central Service data

This preponderance of males is without equal in the other European states where the number of males and females is more balanced. Another characteristic of beneficiaries is that most of them are either young or extremely young. The majority of beneficiaries received in 2005 were aged from 31 to 40 (30.2% of the total) followed by the 26 to 30 age range (Table 5).

Table 5 - Beneficiaries received by age, 2005 (a.v. and % val.)

Age range	Total	% val.
0 to 17	856	18.5
18 to 25	998	21.4
26 to 30	1,103	23.7
31 to 40	1,407	30.2
41 to 99	290	6.2
Total	4,654	100.0

Source: Censis processing of Central Service data

31 unaccompanied minors (28 males and 3 females) were present in local projects (excluding Roma and Milano) and were hosted in three special projects for minors in Chiesanuova, Roccagorga and S. Pietro Vernotico (Table 6).

Table 6 - Unaccompanied minors received in local projects by nationality and gender, 2005 (a.v..)

Nationality	Female	Male	Total
Eritrea	2	13	15
Ethiopia	1	8	9
Bangladesh	0	2	2
Iraq	0	2	2
Pakistan	0	1	1
Sudan	0	1	1
Turkey	0	1	1
Total	3	28	31

Excluding Roma and Milano

Source: Censis processing of Central Service data

The countries of origin

Analysis of data according to continent of origin shows that no less than 3,192 beneficiaries (68.6% of the total) come from Africa, 817 (17.6% come from east European countries, 578 from Asia (12.4%) and 67 from Latin America (1.4%) (Table 7).

Table 7 - Geographic area of origin of beneficiaries, 2005 (a.v. and % val.)

Continent	Beneficiaries	% val.
Africa	3,189	68.5
Europe	808	17.4
Asia	592	12.7
Latin America	65	1.4
Total	4,654	100.0

Source: Censis processing of Central Service data

Most beneficiaries come from countries suffering long-standing violent conflict (like the Horn of Africa) or from nations that do not respect fundamental human rights. The choice of seeking refuge in Italy is also related to the vicinity and presence of close political and economic relations between various countries of origin and Italy: this is the case of Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia (the three main nationalities received in the protection system).

The five main nationalities of those received include large numbers of persons from the Horn of Africa: the largest national groups come from Eritrea (956 persons, 20.5% of the total), Somalia (408, 8.8%), Ethiopia (387, 8.3%), Turkey (274, 5.9%), Sudan (249, 5.4%); for a total of 2,274 beneficiaries, representing 48.9% of the total (Table 8).

Table 8 - Beneficiaries belonging to the first five nationalities, by gender - 2005
(a.v. and % val.)

	Male		Female		Total	
	a.v.	% val.	a.v.	% val.	a.v.	% val.
Eritrea	596	62.3	360	37.7	956	20.5
Somalia	304	74.5	104	25.5	408	8.8
Ethiopia	231	59.7	156	40.3	387	8.3
Turkey	187	68.2	87	31.8	274	5.9
Sudan	228	91.6	21	8.4	249	5.4
Total first 5 nations	1,546	68.0	728	32.0	2,274	48.9
Other countries	1,784	75.0	596	25.0	2,380	51.1
Total	3,330	71.6	1,324	28.4	4,654	100.0

Source: Censis processing of Central Service data

Status

Analysis of beneficiaries according to type of permit of stay reveals a majority of asylum-seekers (2,641, 52.9%), followed by those with permits of stay for humanitarian protection (1,465, 31.5%) and refugees (728, 15.6%) (Table 9). Interestingly, in 2004, when there was a total of 4,489 beneficiaries, asylum-seekers accounted for 80.2% of the total, 11.7% had a

permit of stay for humanitarian protection while 8.1% were refugees (Table 9).

Table 9 - Beneficiaries by type of permit of stay, 2004-2005 (a.v. and % val.)

Type of permit of stay	2004		2005	
	a.v.	% val.	a.v.	% val.
Asylum-seekers	3,599	80.2	2,461	52.9
Refugees	364	8.1	728	15.6
Humanitarian protection	526	11.7	1,465	31.5
Total	4,489	100.0	4,654	100.0

Source: Censis processing of Central Service data

The change in percentages of asylum-seekers, refugees and humanitarian entrants (RARU) present in Italy in 2004 and 2005 was undoubtedly influenced by the change in organisational procedures introduced by law 189/2002 and implemented in April 2005. The creation of Territorial Commissions led to considerable reductions in the time required to process asylum-seekers' applications thus also shortening the status-recognition procedure¹⁰.

The journey: from arriving in Italy to leaving the system

Data on how beneficiaries arrived in Italy and left the system (does not include all beneficiaries) shows that 82% of beneficiaries arrived by sea, 13% returned to Italy from other European countries in accordance with the Dublin Convention, 4% was born in Italy and for 1% no information was available.

Although the guidelines drawn up at the beginning of the National Asylum Programme indicated that beneficiaries should remain in projects for no longer than 6 months, the time required to process asylum requests by the Central Commission caused the reception period to be extended until the

¹⁰ For more information see Chapter on the relevant legislation.

request had at least be examined (until 2005). This explains why the average stay of the 1,752 beneficiaries leaving the system in 2005 was 320 days, with 534 beneficiaries (30.5% of the total) remaining in the projects for over a year and 594 (33.9%) for a period between 6 months and a year (Table 10).

Table 10 - Beneficiaries leaving the system, by days of stay, 2005
(a.v. and % val.)

Days of stay	Beneficiaries	% val.
0-60 days	224	12.8
60-180 days	400	22.8
180-364 days	594	33.9
Over 364 days	534	30.5
Total	1,752	100.0

Source: Censis processing of Central Service data

The 1,752 individuals who left the projects (37.6% of the total) left for the following reasons:

- 51% (894 beneficiaries) left because they were sufficiently *integrated* in the wider community (Table 11);
- 22% (385 beneficiaries) *voluntarily abandoned* the local project;
- 19.9% (349 as an absolute value) were asked to leave the reception facilities and begin an independent life following the *expiry of the reception period*;
- 4.1% of beneficiaries (71 as an absolute value) were *expelled* because of their unacceptable behaviour;
- finally, 3% of beneficiaries (53) chose *voluntary repatriation*.

It should be highlighted that the percentage of those leaving following complete integration was 15% higher in 2005 than the previous year.

Table 11 - Beneficiaries leaving the system in 2005, by reasons, 2005 (a.v. and % val.).

Reasons	a. v.	% val.
Integration	894	51.0
Abandonment	385	22.0
Expulsion	71	4.1
Expiry of deadlines	349	19.9
Repatriation	53	3.0
Total	1,752	100.0

Unaccompanied minors

31 unaccompanied minors (28 males and 3 females) were present in the local projects (excluding Milano and Roma) and hosted in three special projects for unaccompanied minors in Chiesanuova, Roccagorga and S. Pietro Vernotico (Table 12).

The numbers of unaccompanied minors seeking asylum are far lower than adult asylum-seekers from the same geographic areas. For some years there has been an attempt to systematically assess the number of unaccompanied minors seeking asylum in Italy. This is a very difficult task because many of the minors involved are irregular immigrants frequently moving from place to place and uncertain legal status, because of the inaccuracy of age determination methods and systems registering immigrant minors as well as the complex nature of the regulations dealing with this specific category. The longer procedures for the presentation of applications by unaccompanied foreign minors resulting from Law 189/2002 mean that the minors tend to move around the country during the long period between the presentation of requests for asylum and the activation of the procedure once the competent authority has identified the tutor. These real difficulties represent an obstacle to effective access to status recognition procedures and consequently to the protection system services specifically targeted at unaccompanied foreign minors seeking asylum.

Table 11 -Unaccompanied minors received in local projects, by nationality and gender, 2005 (a. v.)

Nationality	Female	Male	Total
Eritrea	2	13	15
Ethiopia	1	8	9
Bangladesh	0	2	2
Iraq	0	2	2
Pakistan	0	1	1
Sudan	0	1	1
Turkey	0	1	1
Total	3	28	31

Excluding Rome and Milan

Source: Censis processing of Central Service data

Minors remain in the charge of local authorities but with the status of unaccompanied foreign minors; they thus enter a process that does not guarantee them the protection they require as asylum-seekers. This is a particularly thorny issue because although protection and reception is guaranteed as long as they are under 18 (Italian law does not allow foreign minors to be expelled from the country), after that age their continued regular stay is anything but certain.

2.3. Services supplied

In 2005 the local projects (excluding Roma and Milano) supplied 24,948 services, an average of 17 per beneficiary. The majority of services supplied in 2005 were welfare-related (5,985, or 24.0%) - help in handling administrative procedures and literacy courses - followed by specialist health services (4,894, 19.6%).

The percentage of beneficiaries benefiting from health services and schooling is higher among the women, while more men than women benefit from work placement activities.

Table 12 - Type of services supplied by gender, 2005 (a.v. and % val.)

Services	Male		Female		Total	
	a.v.	% val.	a.v.	% val.	a.v.	% val.
Welfare	4,237	24.5	1,748	22.8	5,985	24.0
Specialist health services	3,023	17.6	1,871	24.3	4,894	19.6
Linguistic-cultural mediation	2,734	15.8	1,248	16.3	3,982	16.0
Legal guidance	2,120	12.3	833	10.9	2,953	11.8
Work placement services	2,094	12.1	590	7.7	2,684	10.7
Multicultural activities	1,351	7.8	545	7.1	1,896	7.6
Accommodation services	955	5.5	385	5.0	1,340	5.4
Schooling	382	2.2	361	4.7	743	3.0
Training services	382	2.2	89	1.2	471	1.9
Total	17,278	100.0	7,670	100.0	24,948	100.0

Source: Censis processing of Central Service data

If we analyse the most frequently used services according to the status of the system beneficiaries, a selective picture of use emerges: for example, asylum-seekers who are only just starting out in the reception process and whose legal situation has yet to be determined make the greatest use of legal support services (Table 13), while refugees, who have usually been in Italy for a longer time and have greater integration prospects, make greater use of work placement services and schooling services for minors.

Table 13 -Type of service supplied by type of permit of stay, 2005 (a.v.)

	Humanitarian protection		Asylum-seekers		Refugees		Total	
	a.v.	% val.	a.v.	% val.	a.v.	% val.	a.v.	% val.
Spec. health services	2,200	19.4	1,790	19.4	904	20.8	4,894	19.6
Welfare	2,845	25.2	2,259	24.5	881	20.2	5,985	24.0
Multicultural activities	791	7.0	762	8.2	343	7.9	1,896	7.6

Schooling	282	2.5	257	2.8	204	4.7	743	3.0
Linguistic/cultural mediation	1,916	16.9	1,391	15.0	675	15.5	3,982	16.0
Legal guidance	1,117	9.8	1,437	15.5	399	9.2	2,953	11.8
Accommodation services	647	5.7	364	3.9	329	7.6	1,340	5.4
Work placement services	1,412	12.4	740	8.0	532	12.2	2,684	10.8
Training services	143	1.2	246	2.7	82	1.9	471	1.8
Total	11,353	100.0	9,246	100.0	4,349	100.0	24,948	100.0

Source: Censis processing of Central Service data

3. LOCAL PROJECTS

3.1. Results of the analysis

The Report includes an in-depth analysis of the characteristics and results of some of the projects activated within the protection system. The aim is to supply a “grassroots” vision of the system’s strengths and weaknesses and of the way participation in the national reception network is perceived.

The following projects have been analysed:

- *Torino*, metropolitan area in north Italy with 900,608 inhabitants in 2005 (52.3% female, 470,939 as an absolute value); it is Italy’s fourth largest city in terms of population and among the first in terms of economic activity. Torino, provincial and regional capital (Piemonte), is situated in the north-west of the country and is one of Italy’s foremost scientific and cultural poles. The city is famous for its engineering industry and is home to the FIAT plant. In 2005 76,807 foreigners were resident in the city (8.5% of the population, an increase of 106.6% in the 2000-2005 period);

- *Perugia*, medium-sized municipality in central Italy with 161,390 inhabitants in 2005 (52.3% females, 84,464 as an absolute value); provincial and regional capital (Umbria), it is an art city and home to Italy’s largest university for foreigners. There are 13,838 active enterprises, 27% in industry and 62.7% in the service sector. In 2005 Perugia had 14,044 resident foreigners (8.7% of the total population, an increase of 54.6% for the 2000-2005 period);

- *Trepuzzi* is a medium-small municipality in south Italy with 14,525 inhabitants in 2005 (52.4% female, 7,612 as an absolute value); it is situated in Puglia, in the province of Lecce. In 2005 there were 122 resident foreigners (0.8% of the total population), with an increase of 35.6% in the 2000-2005 period. There were 862 active enterprises in 2005, 35.2% in industry (the construction sector in particular), 54.8% in the service sector (trade in particular).

Table 1 - Main project characteristics, 2005

Project holder	Municipality of Torino	Municipality of Perugia	Municipality of Trepuzzi
Project manager/s	Coop. Progetto Tenda Coop Il Riparo	Coop. Perugia	ARCI territoriale di Lecce
Year of entry to the system	2001	2001	2004
Number of places funded	65	27	15
Number of beneficiaries received	143	57	25
Number of beneficiaries integrated	20	9	6

Source: Censis processing of Central Service data

Shared features

All three projects follow the provisions established by guidelines on reception, integration and protection measures for beneficiaries, reaching good performance levels.

In 2005 20 beneficiaries were integrated in Torino, 9 in Perugia, and 6 in Trepuzzi.

The main factors guaranteeing successful integration seem to lie in the *capacity of the project holder and project manager to identify shared operating procedures* where each of the actors involved collaborates and learns from the experience and unique character of the other; in the activation of *local networks with the main local bodies (both public and private)* ensuring that beneficiaries' needs are met in an effective manner; in the *presence of operators with high levels of professionalism and motivation*, who are well-informed about the local situation and resources, and are well-equipped to inter-relate at local level.

Distinguishing features

The *distinguishing features* of the three project models mainly emerge with respect to the following: *promotion*, or the initial motive for the project launch; the *organisational model*, or the allocation of roles and tasks among the project holder (municipalities) and managing authorities (associations, etc...); the *type* of beneficiaries hosted.

Table 2 – Distinguishing features

	Torino	Perugia	Trepuzzi
Motive for entry to the PNA-SPRAR network	Top-down. Decision made by the Municipality in response to local needs	Top-down. Political choice made by the Municipality	Bottom-up. ARCI involved the Municipality in the decision to enter the system
Project's organisational model	Joint management of activities by Municipality and managing authorities	Joint management of activities by Municipality and project manager	Municipality delegates to project manager
Type of beneficiaries hosted	Singles and one-parent families	Singles and families	Singles, families and one-parent families

Source: Censis data processing

The project management model depends on the type of entry to the system: the Municipalities of *Torino and Perugia* have specific roles and tasks to carry out in the management of services and planning of procedures for the beneficiaries; in *Trepuzzi* the Municipality only joined the system in 2004 and delegates many of the choices relative to individual paths and service supply to the managing authority while providing fundamental support in resolving practical everyday and one-off problems.

The type of residential facility available determines the type of beneficiary that can be hosted: in *Torino* singles and one-parent families, in *Perugia*, singles and families, in *Trepuzzi* singles, one-parent families and families.

The Protection System seen by the local projects: strengths and weaknesses

In-depth analyses of the projects revealed a number of factors that can be considered the system's strengths:

- *joining a centrally coordinated national network* guarantees minimum quality standards thanks to the exchange between network members and initial and ongoing support supplied by the Central Service;
- *the involvement and responsibility of the local authority* guarantee and facilitate the institutional relations needed to expand the support network to include single local projects;
- *the operational approach*, focussing on sharing and integrating roles and competences within local authorities and the non-profit sector can be applied to other social policies implemented at local level;
- project activation *raises the awareness of the local community* about the theme of asylum, and consequently about the more general theme of immigration;
- participation in the protection system can *benefit the local area* by helping institutional actors facing new issues to update and acquire new skills/information.

The most evident weaknesses lie in the inability to supply places satisfying entry requests.

Other problem areas concern:

- *the delay in crediting funds* making it impossible to plan actions properly and rendering the entire system precarious also with regard to the possibility of supplying various useful and necessary services;
- *the lack of a standard procedure in the "Questure"*; Italian Police Headquarters take a long time to deal with cases, times vary considerably from office to office as do procedures and practices.

3.2. Perugia

The context

In the recent past, Perugia was a “haven” for Persian/Iranian citizens, mainly intellectuals and political dissidents who had left their country in the aftermath of the 1978 revolution. However it was not until 2001 that the Municipality of Perugia activated specific services for asylum-seekers and refugees; the reasons lay in the scarcity of asylum-seekers and refugees as well as the decision of the administration to invest financial and planning resources in building an integrated service system for all *citizens*, regardless of their nationality. In 1996 the Municipality did however fund a “first assistance” centre for immigrants.

Entry into the PNA and birth of the Project

In 2001 the Municipality of Perugia joined the PNA because it shared its general aims and intended to make its own contribution to the construction of a national network for the reception, assistance, and protection of asylum-seekers, refugees and persons entitled to humanitarian protection. The municipal corporation decided to join with a *decentralised reception and integration proposal within the first strategic national action for asylum-seekers and refugees*.

The Municipality of Perugia’s decision was inspired by a proactive institutional desire to participate rather than in response to a local emergency.

The construction of the theoretical and methodological reference system underlying the preliminary plan of 2001 was carried out by the Municipality of Perugia, while the practical aspect relating to service supply was developed by the Municipality in collaboration with its project partner, Cooperativa Perusia. The first project started up in mid-July 2001 and by the end of the first month of activity 27 people had been received.

In the past years, despite the turnover in the Municipality’s political and ruling class, it continued to work in this direction, revealing its solidarity and commitment to reaching a good level of social cohesion.

The project structure

The reception procedure

The reception procedure involves several stages. The *first stage* is undertaken together with the mediator/interpreter and is aimed at *creating a dialogue* with the beneficiaries in order to get to know them and supply preliminary legal information as well as an explanation about the project and the process they are about to undertake. After about a week beneficiaries sign a *reception contract* whereby they undertake to respect the rules of the facility, regularly attend the Italian course, respect the terms of the individual project (which is developed during the subsequent stages) and leave the facilities by the end of the contract period.

The true *reception project is gradually developed over a longer period of time*. During the following two months, operators have frequent talks with the beneficiaries aimed at understanding their expectations and finding out about their skills and abilities; together they plan an integration process. Each project involves personalised activities that take the shape of training and work placement.

The reception activities

The protection system beneficiaries are housed in a wing of the “First assistance” centre; there are 9 units each with three beds and a bathroom. There is also a common room and a kitchen area.

The project offers temporary around-the-clock accommodation in the facilities, board and kitchen access. Guests compile a daily shopping list which the operators use to do shopping in a local supermarket. The centre has a verbal agreement with the store as well as with a laundry and a service cooperative which carries out extraordinary cleaning in the reception facilities.

Beneficiaries are supplied with laundry, a personal wash kit and a cleaning kit. They receive a daily allowance of €2.50 to cover minor personal expenses.

The protection system’s guests are required to attend literacy and Italian language courses.

All beneficiaries are registered with the National Health Service and *treatment and medical assistance are guaranteed by the local GP* who has kindly offered to visit the facility once a week.

Psychological support is provided daily by qualified operators but should specialised assistance be required the cooperative has access to a *Local Mental Health Centre specialist* who can also speak English.

The schooling of minors in nursery schools or primary schools takes place with the collaboration of Cidis Alisei¹¹ which is responsible for enrolment, while municipal school bus supplies transport. The cooperative operators support minors in their schooling and accompany their parents to meetings with the school teachers.

Legal guidance, social service and social-intercultural mediation are supplied by the cooperative operators who provide beneficiaries with information on Italian and European asylum legislation. Asylum-seekers receive support during the preliminary phase and are later accompanied to the competent Commission for their interview.

Integration activities

In addition to reception services, the project also provides activities aimed at the social and economic integration of beneficiaries.

As far as *work placement* is concerned the cooperative carries out an initial skills assessment at the beginning of the reception procedure; a more detailed assessment is carried out later just before beneficiaries begin work placement.

The project collaborates with other organisations for training activities like courses on welding, lathe-working techniques and for warehouse staff.

Work placement draws upon the entire range of instruments available, involving both institutions and private organisations. An important contribution is made by informal information and collaboration networks with entrepreneurs, businesses, unions and associations.

¹¹ Cidis Alisei is an NGO operating at international level in the field of cooperation, humanitarian aid, development education and at national level in the social policies sector.

As far as *housing* is concerned, the operators provide support through their own contacts or via estate agencies.

There are also *social and leisure activities*. On various occasions throughout the year, as well as on the World Day of the Refugee the Centre holds an open day for local residents and organises parties and multiethnic buffets.

The operators

A total of 7 Cooperativa Perusia operators work on the project: one coordinator; two reception operators; one cultural mediator; one legal operator; one cleaner; one Italian teacher.

Each operator has received specific training and has fixed duties.

The beneficiaries

The first beneficiaries hosted by the Perugia project were asylum-seekers, while today's guests are mainly humanitarian entrants. They are singles or small families (housing units have only three beds). 27 places have been funded from the project's launch until 2005; the number of beneficiaries using the project has increased over the years (Table 1).

Table 1 – Project features – 2001-2005

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Places funded	27	27	27	27	27
Beneficiaries received	26	36	40	54	57
Beneficiaries integrated	0	23	5	20	9

Source: Censis processing of Central Service data

The guests' nationalities have changed over the years, also as a reflection of international political crises, and the main countries represented in 2005 were Afghanistan, Ivory Coast, Eritrea, Kosovo and Ethiopia. At the moment most of the guests are men under 30.

3.3. Torino¹²

The context

For over 25 years the Foreigners' Office of the Municipality of Torino has been providing reception, information and integration activities for foreign citizens as well as asylum-seekers and refugees or humanitarian entrants.

¹² The case study was carried out thanks to the collaboration of Roberto Samperi – head of the Foreigners' Office of the Municipality of Torino, Salvatore Bottari – professional educator for the Municipality of Torino; Enza Caparello – Hopeland project women's coordinator, Municipality of Torino; Alessandra Zappini – IntegRARsi project head; Mina Lo Bianco - Progetto Tenda cooperative manager; Nicoletta Nusso - Il Riparo cooperative manager.

Over the years Torino's municipal corporation has benefited from the presence of associations playing an extremely active role in the immigration sector and in the field of social need. Thanks to this collaboration between the public and private spheres the social voluntary sector and private social actors have sprung in to action.

Entry into the PNA and birth of the Project

In 2001 the Municipality of Turin joined the PNA with the Hopeland project. The decision to join the National Asylum Programme came from the head and operators of the Municipality of Turin's Foreigners' Office who saw in the PNA an opportunity at *local level*, because it provided the chance of accessing additional resources for more services, as well as at *national level* because it would create an expanded network.

Preliminary planning involved the formalisation of tested action methods and models as well as the opening of a new reception centre for women asylum-seekers and refugees.

For the Municipality of Torino joining the PNA represented a fundamental step from *a local network project to sharing good practices with a national network*.

Project structure

Initially the Hopeland project provided reception for men in existing facilities as well as opening a reception centre for women. Over the years additional actions for beneficiaries have been provided thanks to the opening, in 2003, of the *Sportello Rifugio* (refugee help-desk), a service monitoring the individual path of each beneficiary involving some of the leading actors in Turin's social sphere.

The reception procedure

Beneficiaries sent by the Central Service or presenting themselves of their own accord can contact the operators via the *Sportello Rifugio*, either by phone or in person, before being admitted to the reception facilities. Their admission entitles them to a series of benefits including support in accessing

local services, health services, bus tickets and luncheon vouchers, legal and psychological help, Italian language courses, training and work placement.

The reception activities

The Hopeland project beneficiaries are housed in three buildings with a total of 65 places: the men's residential structure; a reception community for single women and women with children; two rooms in a reception facility.

The support process built up around the individual beneficiary draws upon other services supplied by the Sportello Rifugio: *information activities*, social support and access to local services, *accompanying beneficiaries* and cultural mediation, *psychological support* and accompanying beneficiaries to specialist health facilities, *enrolment and accompanying* of minors to school, *language tutoring*, health assistance, *legal consultancy and help*, *assistance for vulnerable categories*, also with the help of ethnopsychologists and ethnopsychiatrists capable of intervening whenever psychological problems are encountered.

Integration activities

As far as *work placement* is concerned the project provides for an initial support activity for skills assessment and drawing up a curriculum.

Training activities involve the enrolment of beneficiaries in courses held at Professional Training Centres or other training facilities; training usually takes place in the construction, electrical, engineering and food industries.

The Foreigners' Office of the Municipality of Torino promotes apprenticeships. Some of the women involved have found jobs in the cultural mediation, crafts and cleaning sectors, while men usually find jobs in small construction and engineering firms and in the hotel sector.

With regard to *housing* the project promotes information services, provides help in finding independent housing solutions by accompanying beneficiaries to estate agencies as well as collaborating with the Municipality's housing support agencies, creating guarantee funds for property owners who agree to rent homes to foreigners.

Hopeland has promoted measures for the *social integration* of beneficiaries that include cultural activities and awareness-raising activities targeted at local residents.

Finally, the Hopeland project supplies information and consultancy on voluntary repatriation programmes in collaboration with IOM.

The operators

Since the project launch operators have always participated in training meetings organised by the Central Service. These meetings help operators acquire specific professional skills relative to the administration of the system (operating methods, use of the databank) as well as to working with asylum-seekers and refugees (educational aspects, studies on female torture victims, etc.).

The sharing and transfer of information gathered during the various training courses have allowed the various operators involved in the project to define a common language and operating approach ensuring more uniform actions.

3.4. The beneficiaries

Funded places in the Hopeland project went from 30 to 65 between 2001 and 2005; during the same period of time, the beneficiaries admitted to the protection system project of Torino increased from 31 to 143, while those who became fully integrated in Torino or other provinces numbered 10 in 2002, 5 in 2003, 11 in 2004 and 20 in 2005 (Table 3).

Table 3 - Hopeland project features – 2001-2005

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Places funded	30	30	30	30	65

Beneficiaries received	31	54	68	139	143
Beneficiaries integrated	0	10	5	11	20

Source: Censis processing of Central Service data

In 2005, the beneficiaries admitted to the project came mainly from five countries: Nigeria, Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Sudan. There were 99 men (69%) and 44 women, 62% were young people aged under 30 and 31% were aged from 30 to 40.

4. TREPUIZZI¹³

The context

Trepuzzi is a medium-small sized municipality at the end of the Apulian peninsula. The municipality had never experienced specifically asylum-related emergencies and therefore had never developed articulated policies directly targeting asylum-seekers and refugees until the launch of the project in 2004.

For the Municipality of Trepuzzi entry to the protection system represented a positive step towards the topic of asylum leading to a gradual increase in awareness as well as a growth in interest in the protection of the rights of immigrants in general, in addition to those of asylum-seekers and refugees: recently a proposal has been made to set up a municipal council for foreign citizens.

Entry into the PNA and birth of the Project

The Municipality of Trepuzzi joined the protection system in 2004 with the Refuge project. The aim was to create synergies between non-profit bodies, institutional actors and the Trepuzzi job market, so that 15 beneficiaries admitted (asylum-seekers, refugees and humanitarian entrants) could be fully settled.

ARCI played a vital role in securing Trepuzzi's admission to the system.

The Municipality of Trepuzzi showed that it was capable of commitment in a previously neglected area, drawing upon the skills and competences supplied by ARCI over the years, and entrusting the realisation and management of the various services to that same body.

¹³ The case study was carried out thanks to the collaboration of Anna Caputo – Head of the Refuge project for ARCI territoriale di Lecce and of Giuseppe Barrotta- Manager of the Municipality of Trepuzzi's financial services and municipal coordinator for the Refuge project.

The project structure

Refuge is a project for “ordinary categories” but reserves a number of reception places for vulnerable categories, in particular single parents (pregnant mothers or mothers with minors).

Right from the start the *Refuge* project aroused great interest at local level and was able to count upon positive collaborations with other organisations: such widespread local interest made it possible to create occasions for the beneficiaries and locals to meet, with events and initiatives that have increased in time.

The reception procedure

Persons admitted to the Trepuzzi facilities follow a fixed procedure. The potential beneficiaries take part in an *entry interview* during the course of which operators are required to communicate the regulations and conditions of their stay and present them with the *Reception regulations and contract* which all beneficiaries must sign.

Beneficiaries are informed about the roles of the operators and activities offered (literacy courses, professional training, apprenticeships) which the guests are required to attend.

A personalised integration process is gradually developed during the course of talks between the operators and beneficiaries, taking full account of the skills, requirements and difficulties of the single person involved.

Operators usually remain in touch after beneficiaries leave the project, even if they move to other areas of Italy.

Reception activities

The protection system beneficiaries are housed in three apartments: one for families, one for single men and one for single women with children; they each have five beds, kitchen, bathroom, bedrooms and living areas to ensure both privacy and the possibility for beneficiaries to meet and socialise.

Board is guaranteed thanks to an agreement with a local supermarket and the supply of weekly shopping vouchers.

The project's specific task is to ensure access to local health, schooling, literacy and legal guidance services.

As far as the formal aspects of health and welfare are concerned, all guests are registered with the National Health Service and have the right to access public health facilities, emergency services, hospitalisation and doctors' surgeries.

Given the vulnerability of asylum-seekers, refugees and humanitarian entrants it was decided to involve a *psychologist* in the project who will undergo specialised training.

As far as *compulsory schooling for minors* is concerned, an *Agreement Protocol* has been drawn up with Trepuzzi's primary school which has undertaken to activate cultural mediation courses and awareness-raising projects on cultural diversity.

Agreement protocols have also been drawn up with the local Adult Learning Centres (Centri Territoriali Permanenti per l'educazione degli adulti) for literacy and Italian language courses.

The *legal guidance* service supports all guests from the moment of admission until they have become fully independent. A personalised approach is used to supply beneficiaries with information and assistance in handling administrative and legal procedures.

Various encounters have been organised with the authorities – including the Questura of Lecce (provincial police headquarters) – with the aim of facilitating and speeding up procedures for beneficiaries.

Integration activities

All the projects in the protection system must be able to develop a *personalised plan* respecting beneficiaries' personal aspirations and preferences as far as possible, and promoting experiences, skills and knowledge acquired in their countries of origin, or in the period prior to admission to the project.

While Refuge project operators focus on work placement their main concern is to find professional training appropriate to the specific needs of the single

beneficiary. Professional training courses for mechanics and lathe-workers were held in a technical institute in Lecce and were attended by the younger men who wanted qualifications they could immediately put to use on the job market. The Municipality itself has organised professional courses like gardening and pruning courses or construction and restoration of drystone walls, a characteristic feature of the Salento area.

A vital role was played by *on-the-job training courses* with local firms. Entry to the job market is also facilitated by support services for the drawing up curricula and skills audits, as well as for enrolment at the local employment agencies.

Refuge also offers beneficiaries the tools needed to become independent and find *housing solutions*. The project aims to empower beneficiaries in using and running a household and making efficient use of resources. The project uses local estate agencies and IACP (Italian council flats board) housing lists in its property search.

The Refuge project has set up *innovative personalised support approaches* for guests with difficulties, drawing upon the skills and practical experience of an expert specialised in working with children and adults with inter-relational problems. This led to the launch of a *creative painting course* focussing on the individual character and specific nature of the life experience of those involved.

Numerous awareness-raising initiatives have been held in schools and Trepuzzi's citizens have attended a number of themed evenings held by the project's guests involving the distribution of informative materials, music and buffet.

The operators

One of the main merits of the Refuge project is to have succeeded in creating, training and motivating a skilled team: the *project's permanent operators* comprise a coordinator-manager; a legal advisor; a social worker; a cultural mediator; a databank manager who has a psychology degree and wide experience in the social policies sector.

The project also draws upon the skills of a series of consultants depending on the needs of the various beneficiaries.

The beneficiaries

15 places were funded in the Refuge project in both 2004 and 2005. Due to turnover, 25 people were hosted last year (11 single men, 1 single woman, 3 women with children, 1 unaccompanied minor (over 16)). The remaining guests were members of the 3 families hosted during the course of the year.

In 2005 the first country of origin of guests was Eritrea, but the project has also hosted guests from Somalia, Afghanistan, Ivory Coast, and Bangladesh.

In 2005 5 of the 11 people who had left the project managed to settle in the wider community, finding jobs in companies or the personal service sector.

CONCLUSIONS

The establishment of a widespread public national protection system , that guarantees minimum standards for all local projects, undoubtedly represents a major step ahead in the evolution of Italy's reception and integration measures for refugees, asylum-seekers and humanitarian entrants.

Nonetheless it is crucial to keep the debate alive among institutional actors and associations involved in protecting the rights of asylum-seekers, refugees and humanitarian entrants.

Given the planned expansion and improvement of the System it is fundamental that we maintain the *methodological and organisational model* that has characterised this experience so far, by confirming: *the key role of local authorities* who must continue to guarantee the continuity and stability of actions; *shared responsibilities at the various levels of local and central government* implementing the principle of subsidiarity and decentralised actions; *integration of services offered* through the involvement of a variety of actors and stakeholders at local and central level, finalised at the creation of a network ensuring efficiency, security and protection.

We also need to reflect on a number of critical areas highlighted in the Report with the aim of identifying possible ways of improving them:

- *expand the System's reception capacity* by increasing the *funds available* which could be defined on the basis of a calculation similar to the one used by Eurostat to assign the resources of the European Refugee Fund to the EU Member States in proportion to the quantitative reality of the phenomenon in each country and therefore to the real needs;
- *increase the stability of the System* by going from an annual plan to a multi-year plan. Three-year planning would bring it in line with the planning in closely related sectors like immigration and social policies as well as with community asylum planning;
- *create greater coordination between the various operative instruments* belonging to the Italian asylum system. The current Identification Centres model requires upgrading through the activation of legal aid, language and literacy courses, counselling and assisted voluntary

repatriation in the centres in accordance with the reference regulations. The activation of these services by the Central Service and/or Local authorities, in collaboration with the protection bodies, will also contribute to the gradual attainment of the wider aim of creating close links between these centres and the system's local projects. The personal financial contribution could be used as complementary instrument rather than as a form of residual support both in qualitative and quantitative terms;

- *structure and formalise the dialogue between the Protection System and other institutions* dealing with asylum, re-thinking the involvement of the Regions and Prefectural Office in terms of approach and contents, and defining relations with protection bodies;
- *establish a consultative assembly* seeing the participation of the institutions and associations playing an active role in planning and implementing sectoral actions, with the aim of supporting institutional planning with specific proposals aimed at improving Italy's asylum system in both legislative and organisational terms;
- *organise a greater complementarity between assistance and integration instruments* to guarantee asylum-seekers, refugees and humanitarian entrants real access and use of public services and the instruments provided for by the national regulations for integration within the labour market;
- *provide the resources and instruments required to bring about the specialisation of the System*, in particular in relation to welfare, care of unaccompanied minors seeking asylum, and the at risk categories with complex needs that must be answered by means of suitable competences and instruments.

These pressing demands require swift intervention to respond to the principle needs of asylum-seekers and refugees in Italy, and of the public and private bodies making up the Italian asylum system. This would allow our country to consolidate a process of innovation bringing its Protection System for asylum-seekers and refugees in line with the European systems drawing upon greater experience in this sector.