



**MIGRALONA Regional Workshop
Skopje (MK), 14-15 March 2018**

**Position Paper on Shared Records & Conclusions
for a spread-out reception & integration of migrants in the WB region**

By providing follow-up to past initiatives focused on the territorial dimension of migration management, that since the top of the 2015 crisis were delivered by NALAS, MARRI, CEI and international organizations like in particular OSCE – OCEEA and UNDP, the MIGRALONA project, supported by the Italian Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, overviewed the state of the art of the reception and integration of migrants in the WB region through six workshops where over hundred-sixty representatives of relevant ministries, towns and municipalities with their associations, CSOs and local offices of the international organizations rallied for benchmarking their experiences with the model of the spread-out assistance of migrants implemented in Italy. The Participants to the Regional Workshop closing the MIGRALONA project shared the following records and conclusions.

Main features of the Italian system

Along with witnesses of mayors from Friuli Venezia Giulia and experts team of the International Consortium for Solidarity (ICS) of Trieste the followings were highlighted:

- the spread-out reception and integration system became the mainstream of Italian migration policy through years of experience on the negative impact and expensive performance of the concentration centres;
- the actors of the spread-out reception and integration system remain the State, the Municipalities and the CSOs providing specialized assistance; third parties, like the FVG Region does, can provide side support for pilot actions.
- two are the operational lines of the Italian system, one is top-down and the other is bottom-up:

- the top-down approach is managed directly by the Ministry of Home Affairs through the Prefectures, that are implementing the hospitality of incoming asylum seekers and migrants in the territory, possibly in agreement with the local authorities, and with the contracted support of specialized assistance by CSOs and/or social enterprises;
 - the bottom-up approach is the SPRAR programme where the Municipalities are invited to start their own projects for reception and integration in the framework of the SPRAR guidelines, standards, monitoring and reporting obligations issued and implemented by the Ministry of Home Affairs – Department for Civic Freedoms and Immigration.
- main character of the Italian system is to be open for reception of not only status refugees, but for asylum seekers, along with the proceedings of their application for international protection;
 - moreover, to manage the actual conditions of people in need the Italian legislation provides for additional status enabling migrants with a legal identity and thus with the right for assistance: these are the subsidiary protection and the humanitarian protection, that are delivered at the discretionary evaluation of appointed commissions;
 - the spread-out reception and integration system, SPRAR model in particular, creates new work places in the Municipalities, where it is implemented, and demand driven jobs for legal advice, translators, cultural mediators, psychologists, etc.
 - the Municipalities voluntary engaged in RAS hospitality benefit of financial incentives for cultural activities / renovation of public estate / improvement of infrastructure / upgrading or extension of personal services, etc.

WB common findings of MIGRALONA workshops

1. The closing of the Balkan Route in 2016 brought to substantially reduced figures of people from outside Europe looking for entering the WB region, whereas the internal migration of the region remains meaningful. Notwithstanding the claim of small figures of asylum seekers facing their borders control, the migration management is mostly stalled at the stage of the emergency time. Thus the potential for growth entangled with the sound management of migration flows is set aside and the costs of assistance have very little return to the involved communities. Moreover similar conditions feature also the reception of returnees, a part of fragmented financial support to some groups.
2. The registration of few hundred asylum seekers per year raises the issue of the criteria of border controls and rejection before any evaluation of the status of those looking for coming in. Moreover, in Serbia in particular, thousands of people are stuck up in major and smaller centres or wander the country without any submission of application for asylum. (XXX)

3. Humanitarian facilities were established in the last decade with substantial funding by the EU, international organizations and bilateral donors. Nice, effective reception centres for asylum seekers waiting for status are existing and financial support is delivered to status refugees. What is but lacking is a planned relationship between these measures and the bodies representing the territories where the facilities are deployed/delivered.
4. State measures for the support of voluntary hosting municipalities are apparently lacking. Most local governments are querying on the fact that the costs they bore for migrants assistance both in emergency time and in its aftermath were not restored until now by State money transfer. There are no political nor financial incentives to Local Governments to commit themselves in the cooperation with the relevant bodies dealing with migration.
5. Whereas the role of international organizations is generally praised by the State authorities and a number of WB citizens are professionally involved in their operations and in those of the main CSOs focused on migration management goals, there is evidence of a low development of locally rooted CSOs and social enterprises.

Shared conclusions for stakeholders consideration

- a. The current slow pressure of new comers is an opportunity that should be used to further upgrade the regulatory system and to strengthen the awareness and capacity both of public administrations at central and local level and of CSOs and the public at large.
- b. Moving from humanitarian aid into resilient integration of migrants, both people in need of protection, status refugees and returnees, should become a topic in the political agenda of the WB region: its mainstream would be the collaboration of the central level with the local governments.
- c. To cope with the demographic decline due to brain-drain and economic migration from the WB region, planned actions aiming to take advantage of migrants' contribution to the recovery and growth of the recipient communities should be designed and delivered.
- d. Feeding the resilience of communities impacted by the arrival of migrants implies awareness of human rights and capacity for local development building.
- e. The smooth integration of migrants in the WB region, can leverage on the role of skilled CSOs in the framework of improved public-private partnership.
- f. The collaboration between state and local public administrations can be fostered by the experience of civil society organizations provided that:
 - i. central planning of migrants destination is balanced (inhabitants/migrants rate);

- ii. consensus building needs careful transparent information about the SPAR system and its opportunities / benefits for the local community, thus setting the scene for testing the novelties in an open welcoming mood of the dwellers;
 - iii. professional competence is raised for the facilitation of intercultural relations;
 - iv. media are encouraged to cut hair to fear-mongering politics;
 - v. profiling, retraining and mobilization of migrants' skills for social and economic activities is in place.
- g. A system for assessing costs and decentralize the State budget for the expenditures addressed to reception and integration activities at local level should be established by standardizing the current average costs of individual assistance to the refugees borne by State administrations.
- h. The hosting Municipalities in the spread-out reception and integration system can be awarded with extraordinary funding per hosted capita by the central budget; even, this is not a guarantee of consensus.
- i. To face the problem of irregular people wandering the region, it could be considered to provide them, vulnerable groups in particular, with legal identity and related visibility beyond the obligations of international conventions.
- j. To improve the rate of RAS willing to stay in the WB region, the local attractivity can be improved through coordinated measures for social inclusion and for accessing labour and entrepreneurship.
- k. Twinning projects should be enhanced for exchanging good practices between central public administrations and among municipalities.
- l. The interest raised by the MIGRALONA project advocates for the design of a regional pilot action, where relevant State administrations together with good-wiling recipient Municipalities supported by skilled CSOs could experience the methodology of spread-out reception and integration by implementing concrete activities on the field.
A draft project concept is annexed.



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