



Institute of National Policy

Annual Report: Xenophobia, Radicalism, and Hate Crime

Year: 2016

Country: ITALY

Author: Dr. Anna Castriota

Introduction

Italy has recorded a number of 175.000 immigrants and refugees to the date of 7 December 2016 following the never ending Syrian refugees' crisis and the long-lasting influx of immigrants coming mainly from Africa, but also from the central north-east European regions and the Balkans.

The immigration problem has taken central stage in the political life of the country with specific political parties like the Lega Nord, the Movimento 5 Stelle (M5S), and movements of fascist and ultra-nationalist imprinting like CasaPound Italia, Forza Nuova or the most recent Libertà e Azione. There has been an increase of cases of xenophobia, homophobia and general intolerance against diversity in Italy, with particular forms of discrimination especially against Muslims , African citizens and the Roma and Sinti communities.

The Italian authorities seem to attempting to circumscribe the xenophobic and racist wave, or at least, to contain the episodes of intolerance that often are reported by the media, but they not always succeed; this is due to some ambiguities of the Italian Laws regarding the notion of 'discrimination of minorities' and by the complex Italian socio-political framework, as the recent ECRI report on Italy has well documented.¹

Italian public seems to have become more open and vocal regarding anti-immigrant and anti-Muslims feelings, especially thanks to the widespread use of social platforms like Facebook or Twitter, or using blogs and websites openly racist and xenophobic which publish daily fake news with false information on the authorities' policies on immigrants or alleged crimes committed by the latter. This hostile environment has created increased marginalisation of immigrant groups and has exacerbated the sense of frustration and hatred often translated into episodes of radicalisation. However, unemployment and an increased level of threshold poverty for many Italian families, have accelerated the process of political radicalisation of the poorest and lowest groups on the social scale, leaning toward ultra-nationalist and self-declared xenophobic parties and organisations. There is an overall mounting sense of anti-establishment to the advantage of populist and ultra-nationalist political realities.

¹ ECRI- European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance 5th report- adopted 18 March 2016 (published 7 June 2016) available on: <https://www.coe.int/ecri>

The violation of human rights remains an open problem with little effort by the Italian authorities to be solved. Among the most common violation of human rights on the territory in the year 2016, we still witness abuses by the police forces on non-Italian individuals and nationals alike; the over crowded Italian detention centres with detainees often kept in inhumane conditions and in derelict buildings, often host religious and political radicalisation. Furthermore, the Italian judicial system is slow and the legislation on the crime of defamation is often abused to protect official figures and politicians against the criticisms of the public and the media, breaching thus the freedom of speech principle. In addition, were recorded episodes of paedophilia and paedo-pornography, increasing violence against women (femicide) and cases of female genital mutilations.

There is the perception that prejudices against the ‘diverse’ whether we are talking of immigrants, foreigners, Jews or people of different sexual orientation, have increased and become more evident in the everyday life. In some constituencies, the policies applied by the local authorities (often representatives of the political party Lega Nord) have generated mistreatment of minorities, with particular regard to the Roma ethnic group. In the south of the country, the large East-European and African communities particularly, are often at the mercy of the local mafia, who exploits them with forced labour in the agricultural and manufactural sectors with little or no intervention of the official authorities.

The most impressive element emerged during the research work for this report, is the increased level of intolerance in the average Italian citizens, who are very often against immigrants and in specific, against the Muslim and Roma minorities. The population is overall becoming less ready to welcome foreigners in the country and more ready to claim the ‘sovereignty’ of the territory in virtue of a non better specified sense of ‘Italian identity’. Several factors are contributing to the current situation: the little or inexistent legislation on issues like discrimination, integration and immigration; the mounting success of populism of parties like the Lega Nord and the M5S with their anti-immigration and ultra-nationalism stances; and finally, an obsolete sub-culture fed with old prejudices and diffidence against the foreigner, or the diverse. At the time of the writing, the Italian parliament is discussing and voting on the *ius soli*, a law draft which would guarantee the Italian citizenship to children born in Italy but from foreign parents. This legislation proposal has generated huge controversy in the Parliament as well as amid the Italian populace, re-enforcing once more

the feeling that the country as a whole is becoming increasingly intolerant and not ready for multi-culturalism and respect of human and civil rights.

1. Law and Regulations adopted in 2016

If we take the Article 3 of the Italian Constitution, it states that every citizen has the right to equal social dignity without distinction of race, language or religion. Furthermore, the second paragraph of Article 3 affirms that the Italian State must work toward the elimination of any obstacle that stands in the way of the pursue of freedom and equality of all the citizens. However, as noticed in the 2016 ECRI report on Italy, the Italian authorities have done very little to pass a comprehensive legislation that would clearly address the problem of discrimination and equal treatment. The ECRI report found lacunae and inconsistencies particularly in the civil and administrative legislation.²

The inconsistencies found by the ECRI report, refer to the ambiguities of the ‘Reale Act’ (Act no. 654, 13/10/1975) amended in 1993 (25/06/1993) and since then known as the ‘Mancino Act’, further amended in 2006 (24/02/2006). This legislation refers to the incitement to racial discrimination, incitement to racial violence, and to the promotion of ideas based on racial superiority or regarding racial and ethnic hatred. The ‘Mancino Act’ was used to prosecute neo-fascist terrorism in the early 1990s and helped in containing the spreading of neo-Nazi groups. Part of the law in fact, considers a criminal act the setting up, running, participating or supporting any organization, group or movement whose purpose is an overt instigation to racial discrimination or violence. Furthermore, the ‘Mancino Act’ prohibits the public display of symbols of such organisations and considers an aggravation of any criminal act, its racist motivation.³

In addition to this piece of legislation, there is also Article 18/bis, paragraph 1 of the law no. 482, 1999, regarding linguistic and ethnic minorities that is a further amendment of the ‘Reale Act’ and that should prevent and contain intolerance and violent acts of racist nature against people belonging to linguistic minorities. Italy has in fact on its territory several linguistic and ethnic minorities due to centuries of migration history and borders re-designing. For instance, in the north-west of the country, the region Val D’Aosta hosts a

² Ibid. ECRI report, p. 1.

³ Legge Mancino, Consiglio dei Ministri, no. 205 (25 Giugno 1993); and no. 85 (24 Febbraio 2006).

community of French speakers due to the borders with France and the policies of annexation of territories that goes back to the 16th century. In the north-east of the country, the region Trentino Alto-Adige hosts German and Ladino speaking communities due to the annexation of those territories after the Italian victory of World War I. Finally, in the south east of the country and in the Calabria and Sicily regions, we find Albanian and Greek communities due to the migration in the fifteen centuries of those populations fleeing the Ottoman invasion of the Balkans.⁴

The problem here is that this law is not sufficient to prevent and combat racism and xenophobia on the sole ground of linguistic diversity. In other words, the motivation of linguistic diversity is too feeble legislative ground to oppose and contrast racist and xenophobic crimes. By contrast, the definition of ‘racial discrimination’ is as follows: “racial discrimination shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin”.⁵

The ‘Reale Act’ does not consider the above definition of racial discrimination and the subsequent amendment to the ‘Mancino Act’ in 2006, replaces the term ‘dissemination’ with the term ‘promotion’. This seems a “step backwards as it reduces the scope of the law and reduce the possibility of prosecution for racial crimes”, especially, hate speech on internet has very little chance to be prosecuted by the Italian authorities under such legislation on the matter, as it has been observed by the above quote of the ECRI report.⁶ The linguistic dispute between the two terms ‘dissemination’ and ‘promotion’ has been discussed several times by the Corte di Cassazione (the Italian correspondent of the Supreme Court): 2207, 2008 and 2012. On these occasions, the Corte di Cassazione concluded that there was “continuity of meaning between the two terms and that the idea of spreading racist ideas was already expressed in the term ‘dissemination’, which would imply the same ideas in different forms”.⁷

Also, it has been observed by the ECRI report, that in Italy there is a reduction of penalties for dissemination and promotion of racist ideas, especially when it is acts of defamation or

⁴ For a better understanding of the historic linguistic and ethnic minorities in Italy please see: Fiorenzo Toso, *Le Minoranze Linguistiche in Italia* (Bologna: Il Mulino Collana Universale paperbacks, 2008).

⁵ Article 1, International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in ECRI report, p. 2.

⁶ Ibid. ECRI report 2016, p. 2

⁷ ECRI report 2016, p. 3.

threats against minorities. In the Italian legislation on this matter, with the exception of condoning the crime of genocide (Law no. 982, 9/10/1967), the law does not specifically penalise the denial, minimisation or justification of crimes with a racist aim.

However, in April 2016, there has been an important law passed on the crime of the denial of the Holocaust. The Italian Senate ratified with 237 yes, 5 no, and 102 abstained, a law that punishes the denial of the Holocaust. With this new legislation those individuals or groups that publish material or publicly state the denial of the Holocaust, or make statements in this sense on the social media or blogs or websites, risk up to six years in prison and to pay a penalty fee of 6.000 euros. This law has been considered by many as a completion of the ‘Mancino Act’ (see above) that regulates the instigation to fascism and has been welcomed by Mr. Enzo Gattegna, president of the UCEI (Union of the Italian Jewish Communities) as a promising signal by the Italian authorities in the effort of monitoring one of the most devious forms of racism and discrimination against a specific minority. The legislation came also as an amendment to article 3 of the 13/03/1975 law based on the New York Convention of 7/3/1966 on racial discrimination, and intends to be a further step in opposing this type of hate speech.⁸

Regarding the Italian Civil Law on racial discrimination, the main provision is found in Act no. 300 of 1970 on employment and in specific, its article 15 against ‘discriminatory acts’. But it must be added that at the time (the 1970s) in Italy there was little migration being Italy in this period rather a land of migrants itself and mainly affected by internal migration from south to the north of the country. However, we need to wait until 1998, when a legislative decree comes into force to defend and represent the rights of minorities living in the country.

The ‘Turco- Napolitano Act’ and the legislative decrees no. 215 and 216 (2003), and particularly, the article 43, deals with the discriminations for racial, ethnic, national and religious motives and clarifies the matter for the Italian law. This legislation is mainly to resolve controversies regarding employment or other civil and administrative law matters but there is no provision for discrimination regarding colour or language. It must be added that Italy ratified the ILO Convention no. 43.3 of 1975 in 1981. This convention regulates the rights of foreign citizens living and working in Italy. At the time of the writing, the

⁸ <https://www.ilgiornale.it/news/politica/negare-lolocausto-ora-reato-si-rischiano-fino-a-6-anni-carcere-1269288.html>.

legislation on hate crime and on the general safeguarding of minorities living on the Italian soil, still enjoys the legislation briefly described above.

However, in the year 2016, the Italian authorities have introduced some changes to the current legislation that safeguards minorities' rights. For instance, it has been approved by the Italian parliament financial aid to help historic linguistic minorities settled on Italian territories (as explained above) with the order DPMC (4/10/2016) although the funds are insufficient⁹. In the same year, there have been several laws issued regarding immigrants living and working on Italian territory: Italian authorities have decided to grant humanitarian protection if the applicant has left his/her country of origin when still underage (law applied by the Turin Court on 19/12/2016).

Also, legislation has been passed regarding the regulation of the different types of visa contemplated by the Italian law in matter of foreign citizens living and working in the country. On 22/06/2016, it has been ratified in the Italian parliament the change in the legislation that regulates the temporary visa. With this amendment to the previous law on this matter, it is now possible to change the temporary visa permit in a permanent visa permit providing that the applicant can exhibit a regular permanent work contract, as established by the Interior Ministry with the executive order of 24/11/2016.

Another important law issued in 2016, is the law that contrasts illegal employment and exploitation of foreign labour forces (law n. 199/20/10/2016). The Italian authorities confirmed the European Court of Justice's sentence which forbids the expulsion from Italian soil of any illegal immigrant if the latter is the legal guardian of minors. (EUI C-304/14/13/09/2016).

Finally, in the year 2016, the Italian authorities have extended also to extra-communitarian mothers illegally resident in the country, the right to receive the 'baby bonus', a state financial contribution to the childcare welfare for single mothers".¹⁰ The current legislation on the naturalisation of foreign offspring born on Italian soil still contemplate the slow and bureaucratic iter to be undertaken once the minor born from foreign parents reaches the adult

⁹ <https://www.regioni.it/newsletter/n-3020/del-4-10-2016/tutela-minoranze-linguistiche-ok-a-decreti-ma-risorse-insufficienti-15/734/>.

¹⁰ <https://www.nuovicittadini-prefto.it/novita-legislative>.

age of 18. The current legislation on the naturalisation of foreign citizens is based on the principle of the *ius sanguinis* (the right by blood) and the current law draft named *ius soli* (right by birth) that would see the immigrants' children born on Italian soil becoming automatically Italian citizens, is at the moment still a controversial political and social issue.

However, it must be pointed out that although the Italian legislation on hate crime presents some lacunae and is not clear on the specificity of such type of crime, in 2016, there have been passed norms and regulations that tend to aid the foreign citizens present on the territory and have achieved an important step forward in the monitoring of hate speech by contrasting the racist and xenophobic agenda of Holocaust deniers with a law that punishes particularly this type of hate crime.

In conclusion, the legislation in matter of contrasting hate crime or the spreading of racist and xenophobic ideas, although obsolete and not strong enough to oppose the increased levels of intolerance, racism and ultra-nationalism currently experienced in the country, has been amended in an attempt to introduce more norms to protect and safeguard minorities, but there is still work to do. The absence of a proper and proactive legislation in this sense contributes to the consolidation and spreading of hate crime, especially when it is in the variable of hate speech on internet.

In addition, the civil and administrative law on hate crime has not been improved or amended since 2003¹¹ although the 2009 local legislation that contemplates the childbirth allowance only to Italian citizens has been extended in 2016 also to foreign mothers (see above).¹² Another point that should be highlighted here is that the Italian legal system does not allow associations or organisations to take judicial action on behalf of the victims. This makes difficult to have a complete understanding of the discrimination and racial abuse on the territory as often the victims are too scared to denounce the abuse. Finally, must be noted that the Italian law does not make any special provision to promote equality and prevent discrimination, although the authorities are attempting to implement some measures to prevent racism and xenophobia and in promoting immigrants' rights as seen above.

¹¹ On this point please see Association for Legal Studies on Immigration (AGSCI), 2013, pp. 58-61.

¹² Tribunale di Brescia, ordinanza 26/01/2009.

2. Law Enforcement

Discriminatory acts especially regarding non-nationals and the Roma community have been monitored with the creation of agencies like the UNAR or the OSCAD both dependent on the Ministry of the Interior, where the former should promote equality and contrast discrimination and hate crime and the latter should observe and report any act of racist and discriminatory nature supporting the SDI, which is the State Police data base for hate crime recording. The creation of those institutions can be appreciated but does not seem to be effective on the territory as they use different forms of monitoring and data collection and there seems to be little coordination between the different agencies.

For instance, the SDI does not publish its statistics every year, while the OSCAD seems not considering the hate speech as a crime. In other words, although the recent efforts by the Italian authorities to monitor and contain the problem, the legislation seems still insufficient for the purpose and more need to be done considering that Italy is among the five top countries in Europe for asylum applications. The controversial creation of so called ‘hotspots’, centres where migrants arriving in Italy illegally are gathered and kept until their legal status is clarified, have risen many perplexities on the modalities by which the Italian police conduct the checks on the people arriving on the Italian shores. The largest hotspot is the one in the island of Lampedusa.

The abuse of power by the police is related to an European norm that dictates to proceed with the fingerprints identification of migrants arriving in Italy, even “with the use of force”.¹³ According to this EU norm, migrants who arrive into Europe illegally have to go through an automated fingerprints identification procedure (EURODAC-regulation EU n.603/2013). The procedure implies that the migrant will be forced to remain until otherwise established by the European authorities, in the country where first his/her fingerprints were taken, making impossible thus for the individual to leave the country and move to another country of choice.

The procedure is re-enforced by representatives of the European Agency Frontex that are displaced in countries like Italy that often are the first port of arrival for migrants and asylum seekers mainly coming from the African continent.¹⁴ The institutional racism among the

¹³ https://www.ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites-homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/securing-eu-borders-legal-documents/docs/communication_-_progress_report_on_the_implementation...

¹⁴ <https://www.cronachediordinariorazzismo.org/con-la-forza-cambia-tutto/>.

Italian police creates an uneasy climate for refugees, migrants, or other minorities often victims of abuses and violence by the police forces. Also, the fact that police officers do not wear on their uniforms identification tags, makes even more difficult to identify them and make them accountable for any form of abuse.¹⁵

Unfortunately, it is difficult to get official data on this issue and even the NGOs or Human Rights organisations not always are able to provide reliable statistics as the victims of such abuses do not denounce or report. Furthermore, at the moment of the writing, a new law decree that will further fuel institutional racism is the ‘Minniti-Orlando’ law decree active from 17/08/2017, which contemplates the racial profiling of minority groups living in Italy.¹⁶ This will create an even more difficult environment for minorities and foreigners living in the country and will generate inevitably episodes of institutional racism. In addition, the fact that the Parliament has failed to introduce the crime of torture into the criminal code until 04/07/2017, and as requested by the UN convention since 1989, gives a clear signal of the political climate in the country.

3. Governmental Rhetoric Regarding Minorities and Radicals

The attitude of the Italian authorities toward minorities is various and ambivalent and declarations of the main representatives of political parties and institutions, both at a local and national level, reflect this profound divide between the openness of the left wing parties and the closeness and intolerance of the parties with specific right wing and nationalist hallmarks.

Since the summer of 2015, Italy has seen landing on its shores hundreds of migrants and refugees from Syria. The situation is still critical at the time of the writing of this report and has created a volatile political and social climate regarding the policy of hospitality and integration of immigrants applying for asylum in Italy. The recent wave of terrorist attacks by organisations like ISIS, has brought into the Italian political debate the theme of ‘national security’ often operating the equation immigrant/refugee/Muslim to terrorist with specific political parties using this fear of the citizens for their electoral purposes.

¹⁵ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/europe-and-central-asia/italy/report-italy>.

¹⁶ <https://www.internazionale.it/notizie/annalisa-camilli/2017/04/12/decreto-minniti-orlando-legge>. Author: Annalisa Camilli.

The current governing party (since 2013) is the Partito Democratico (PD), which is ideologically on the centre-left side of the political spectrum, and has attempted to carry out policies of integration and protection of minorities. It is sufficient to remember that with this government, Italy has had its first non-native Italian minister in the ‘Letta government’ (2013-2014) in the person of Mrs. Cecile Kyenge, and that at the time, were made many offensive remarks by several representatives of the Lega Nord party. The ‘Renzi Government’ (2014-2016) first and then the current ‘Gentiloni government’ (2016-current) have been cooperating for the safeguarding of minorities’ rights and for the migrants’ protection.

However, the parties of the centre-right like Lega Nord, Popolo della Libertà and to certain extent, the M5S, have started to adopt an increasingly intolerant attitude toward religious minorities like the Muslims and ethnic minorities like the Roma and more in general, toward immigrants. This hostile and discriminatory attitude by right-wing parties has found the approval and support of the general public (as the next section of the present report will show), and has thus found fertile ground in the political debate. The current left-wing government finds difficult to make the Italian electorate accepting the new rules and regulations in matter of immigration and hospitality policies with great advantages in electoral terms, for the right-wing and populist parties both at an institutional and social level.

If on one side, Gentiloni is positive and looks forward to the social mobility and how to fix the criteria for the legal entry in Italy,¹⁷ the Lega Nord and the Movimento 5 Stelle, describe an apocalyptic case scenario, feeding the Italian population’s collective imagination with the equation immigrants=criminals. In Italy virtually any right-wing political formation is anti-immigrant and anti-minorities. It must be stressed that for these political expressions, the Muslim faith is indivisible from the ethnic origin of its worshippers. Besides the Lega Nord and the Movimento 5 Stelle, other right wing parties with a specific and open anti-immigration agenda are: Il Popolo della Libertà; Fratelli d’Italia; La Destra; Grande Sud; and Partito dei Pensionati, to quote the most popular and therefore, effective with the electorate.

However, in the European Union meeting on 16 December 2016, the Italian prime minister Gentiloni stated that the immigrants and refugees crisis that Italy had to face since the

¹⁷ <https://www.prezi.com/15ks-6wgfjhj3/le-posizioni-dei-partiti-italiani-sull039immigrazione/>

summer 2015, was on its way to be solved thanks to the cooperation of France and Germany.¹⁸ In the drama of the refugees crisis though, Italy was initially left alone to face the humanitarian crisis as Renzi, the Italian previous prime minister declared on 16 September 2016: “ If the EU continues down this path, Italy will negotiate by herself with the African countries”.¹⁹

The social and political emergency that the humanitarian crisis of the immigrants has triggered in the last two years, created a heated political debate that saw the parliamentary opposition to push toward the suspension of the European Schengen agreement and the revision of the Dublin agreement, creating thus the premises for a more strict immigration policy. The declarations of the left wing party PD on this point express the disbelief of the moderate side of the Italian parliament with MPs like Pinotti who declared instead the need of more cooperation between NATO, the EU, and Russia to contain the problem, especially related to the problem of Islamic terrorism. While the MP Campana declaring on 25 January 2016, that the proposal of suspending Schengen was *de facto* putting into discussion the very same concept of European identity.

In the year 2016, the government party was struggling to win the opposition in the parliament on the issue of the refugees crisis as Pittella, the other MP of the PD, painstakingly attempted to convince the parliament on 6 July 2016, to vote on opening an humanitarian corridor for taking into Italy Syrian refugees.²⁰

The Italian main political authorities have discussed in 2016 about the so called “reato di clandestinità” (unlawful residency) that is punishable by law with up to 5.000 euros penalty and that has created a heated political debate generating perplexities on its efficacy to the point of debating its complete abolition. Even within the files and ranks of the leftist PD, this issue generated perplexities as the declaration of the PD responsible for the Justice, Mr. Ermini states: “ we should not de-penalise it completely, but it must be re-enforced especially against human traffickers and for those people who do not have the right to stay here”.²¹

¹⁸ <https://www.partitodemocratico.it/tag/immigrazione/> .

¹⁹ *ibid.* <https://www.partitodemocratico.it/tag/immigrazione/>.

²⁰ *ibid.* <https://www.partitodemocratico.it/tag/immigrazione/>.

²¹ <https://www.partitodemocratico.it/giustizia/reato-di-clandestinita/ermini-cosi-non-ha-senso-ma-va-abolito-solo-in-certi-casi/>.

Different tone is the one adopted by the right wing parliamentary representatives. In the last couple of years, the main issues discussed for electoral purposes by parties like the Lega Nord are immigration, Islamophobia and the legitimacy of foreign minorities to reside legally in the country. This has always been the Lega's strong political point since the very beginning of its formation.

However, if in the early 1990s the main minority to be targeted by the party was the Italian southern population migrating to the rich and industrial north of the country, by the beginning of the years 2000s, the main minorities to be targeted by the Lega have been the immigrants, with specific attention to African and Muslim communities, and the Roma minority. The party itself has the ambition to become a government party and therefore, under the current Matteo Salvini's leadership, the party has undergone through a radical renovation including also those categories of Italians that the initial ideology of the party discriminated ethnically.

Here we report few declarations of several representatives of the Lega Nord party as illustrative of its core ideology and the dangers that its political message contain for the peace and unity of the Italian socio-political structure. For instance, the Lega MP Massimiliano Fedriga declared on 22 February 2016 that “ [we need] to strip away the right to privacy [for immigrants and other minorities] with immediate expulsions from the territory and requisitioning of goods and property]”.²²

Furthermore, the official political manifesto of the Lega Nord that has not been changed since 2016, recites as follows: “ Only specific legislation can defend us from the invasion of illegal immigrants currently happening because of the incapacity of the couple Renzi-Alfano²³... with us in power the period of the rights of the illegal immigrants comes to an end. And we start instead the period of responsibilities....for the illegal immigrant that commits a crime, immediate expulsion without any possibility of appeal and the requisition of any property or goods”.²⁴ Furthermore, these guidelines are applied by the Lega Nord in municipalities and town halls that the party governs locally. The Lega Nord mayor of the city of Saronno (North of the country, in the Lombardy region) was sentenced to pay 10.000 euros by the civil law

²² <https://www.strenieriitalia.it/attualita/attualita-sp-754/Lega-nord-leggi-speciali-contro-gli-immigrati-per-difenderci-dall-invasione.html>.

²³ In the document the reference is to Matteo Renzi, Italian Prime Minister (2013-2016) and to the Minister of the Interior Angelino Alfano (2013-2016).

²⁴ [https://www.leganord.org/index.php/immigrazione-lineeguida al31/12/2016](https://www.leganord.org/index.php/immigrazione-lineeguida%20al31/12/2016).

authority for publishing posters in the city which would recite: “I don’t want male Africans nearby schools attended by our female students”. The news of the sanction was reported by the main daily ‘La Repubblica’ in the first months of 2017.²⁵ The Lega Nord supports the mainstream proposal common to other right-wing political realities, namely, that those minorities should be better off in their own countries of origin and therefore, the party promotes an ethnocentric attitude where the equal dignity of all minorities is acknowledged but immigration is not accepted and thus, tend to promote a policy of supporting the development of those foreign minorities’ countries’ economy and society.²⁶ However, at the same time, the party publishes on its official Facebook page slogans like “Let’s make illegal Islam’”.²⁷

In conclusion, the Italian governmental authorities’ official attitude toward minorities is currently of integration and protection; however, the right wing political parties, the Lega Nord above all, are strongly opposing any legislation or measure discussed in the parliament that may favour the policy of hospitality or improvement of the immigrants’ living and working conditions.

This is even more evident in those municipalities where the local administration is led by political representatives of the Lega Nord. The climate of intolerance toward minorities has increased quite dramatically and the general public tends to be diffident and intolerant toward Muslims especially. This general attitude in the country has been fuelled particularly in the year 2016 by the several terrorist attacks occurred in Europe, by Trump’s presidential election in the US, and by the more open and strong anti-immigrants and Islamophobic attitude undertaken by the Lega Nord, which is the third large party in the Italian political panorama. The possible perspective of shortcoming general election in September 2017 on in the Spring of 2018, will eventually see the political victory of a right wing coalition or a Lega-M5S coalition government, which will most likely propose further harsher immigration laws and a possible ‘Italexit’, being both parties extremely Eurosceptic.

²⁵ https://milano.repubblica.it/cronaca/2017/02/23/news/clandestini_lega_condanna_discriminazione_profughi-158956059.

²⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/LegaNordUfficiale/...11198372213925>.

²⁷ Ibid. <https://www.facebook.com/LegaNordUfficiale/...11198372213925>.

4. Public Opinion and Minorities

In the last decade, the attitude of the Italian public has changed dramatically on the themes of minorities. The elements that have contributed to such dramatic shift can be traced back in the recent wave of mass migration and refugees' crisis, and in the even more recent phenomenon of Islamic terrorism affecting several European countries like France, Germany, Belgium and Great Britain. Specifically, the minorities affected by this change of attitude by the Italian public are mainly Muslims, Africans, and Roma. On the other side, minorities like homosexuals or the Jewish community have experienced a lesser degree of intolerance by the overall Italian population.

In particular, more than half of the Italians do not feel comfortable anymore because they believe and seem to perceive a larger presence of immigrants on the territory. According to a survey made by the international research society YouGov, Italy is the first in Europe where the hostility against the immigrants' minority is more widespread nationwide. The YouGov formulated the following question: "The foreigners who live around you seem to you so many that this does not feel like your home anymore?" To this question, 52% of Italians has answered positively, against the 47% of the French, the 44% of the Germans, the 38% of the Spanish and the 37% of the British. The last in the chart, have been Poland, Lithuania and Rumania. And this is because in those countries the number of immigrants is very low and they are themselves countries that export migration.²⁸

However, the perception of the number of immigrants present on the territory does not correspond to the effective number actually living in Italy at the time of the survey.²⁹ Furthermore in 2016, another opinion polls/survey agency, the PewGlobal, conducted a survey on the way Italians view Muslims, Jews and Roma minorities. As already observed for similar surveys conducted in the previous years, the Roma were the most disliked minority, followed by the Muslims. Italy shares the same unfavourable view of the Roma minority with countries like Greece, Hungary and France. No more than a quarter expresses unfavourable view of Jews in most countries. The exception to this trend is Greece, where the 55% holds a negative opinion of the Jews as it can be read in the chart below:³⁰

²⁸ <https://www.ricercarepubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/2016/12/09/qui-troppi-stranieri-italia-prima-in-Europa-per-la-xenofobia10.html?ref=search>.

²⁹ <https://www.corrieredellemigrazioni.it>

³⁰ <https://www.pewglobal.org/2016/07/11/negative-views-of-minorities-refugees-common-in-eu>.

Many Europeans rate Roma, Muslims unfavorably

Unfavorable view of ___ in our country

	Roma*	Muslims	Jews
	%	%	%
Italy	82	69	24
Greece	67	65	55
Hungary	64	72	32
France	61	29	10
Spain	49	50	21
Poland	47	66	24
UK	45	28	7
Sweden	42	35	5
Germany	40	29	5
Netherlands	37	35	4
MEDIAN	48	43	16

*In UK, asked as "Gypsies or Roma."

Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey. Q36a-c.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

This data is alarming because according to the EU data, in Italy arrive less immigrants than for instance, in the UK or in Germany (the latter is the first country in Europe with the highest number of immigrants).

According to the data provided by the EU commissioner for migrations, Dimitris Avranopoulos, the 80% of foreigners who arrive in Italy are 'illegal' and 'economic' migrants and therefore, should be deported back. Furthermore, the mechanism of allocating refugees and asylum seekers, is not producing the desired results and in the year 2016, the transfer cases of immigrants from Italy to other European countries have been only 401. Since the beginning of the transfer programme, the transfer cases have been overall 1,406 on

34,953 scheduled. Basically, one out of twenty. According to the EU authorities, only one refugee present on Italian soil has been relocated within the EU.³¹

What are therefore, the reasons that lie behind this strong xenophobic response of the Italian public opinion? Academics and researchers have been studying and analysing extensively the change of attitude registered in the Italian population regarding minorities. Besides the already mentioned external causes like refugees' crisis and Islamic terrorism, the most shocking element is the profound ignorance that generates also a deep intolerance toward any form of diversity. Ignorance therefore, has generated Italian racism and Italy in 2016 detains the primacy of the most intolerant European country, especially regarding the Roma minority, as the chart above illustrates.

Italy has been considered the most ignorant country out of fourteen in another survey conducted by the IPSOSMORI in 2014.³² In this survey, the striking data was the deep degree of perception of the surrounding reality regarding for instance the number of immigrants and their effective number present on the territory. It must be said that the Italian media and specific political parties or movements, contribute to feed the fear and intolerance toward immigrants and other minorities. The media system tends to provide a description of the phenomenon as always "emergency" and using a vocabulary that exaggerates the effective number of refugees or migrants arriving in the country. Terms like 'invasion', 'exodus', 'overflowing' taken and amplified by right wing parties like the Lega Nord, or the M5S, contribute to re-enforce the misperception of the problem and generate fear and intolerance.

The Italian film director Andrea Segre, on his blog denounces the following situation: "we have fed the wisps of xenophobia and discrimination [...] maintaining that the several enemies of civilization needed to be sopped [...] and impeding to our country to be ready to the necessary and inevitable future of a new pluralist and intercultural citizenship".³³ The above quotation expresses quite correctly the social phenomenon that has affected Italy in the last 5 years and points out at the deep ethnographic process that the Italian society is going through. At the moment of the writing, the overall reaction of the Italian public toward

³¹ <https://www.cartadiroma.org/news/il-primato-del-razzismo-in-Italia-e-la-sfida-della-complessita>.

³² https://www.huffingtonpost.it/2014/11/02/italia-prima-indice-ignoranza-ipsosmori_n_6089298.html.

³³ <https://www.andreasegre.blogspot.co.uk/2013/05/ladroni-padroni-non-ci-ruberete-anche-la.html>.

minorities has even worsened as compared to the year 2016 that has been examined in the present report.

5. Religious and Political Radicalism in Italy

In Italy, there has been a progressive radicalisation of religious and political groups alike, with a peak in the last ten years. In this subsection of the present report we are going to look at the process of radicalisation that has affected mainly the Muslim minorities and the extent by which we can detect similar radicalism in ideas and behaviour in far-right groups and Christian movements alike present on the territory.

In Italy, the problem of radicalism-whether religious or political- has become evident in the last ten years, although the country has a history of radical ideological terrorism in the 1970s. However, Italy as well as other Western European countries, have experienced in the last decade the phenomenon of radicalism and the consequent exacerbation of the socio-political climate. Before starting our analysis of the level of religious and political radicalism related to the Italian Muslim minority, it is necessary to provide here a general definition of ‘freedom fighter’ as by the Security Council Resolution (2178/2014): “ individuals who travel to a State other than their State of residence or nationality for the purpose of the perpetration, planning and preparation of, or participation in, terrorist acts, or the providing or receiving of terrorist training”.³⁴ The definition of ‘Foreign Fighters’ (FF) is relevant in order to explain the process of radicalisation within the Italian Muslim community as this occurs primarily in a jihadist context.

For this purpose, Italy needs to be inserted in a wider European context, whereas the recruitment process has reached the overall estimated 30.000 unities of FF.³⁵ In Italy, the FF situation had less of an impact on the society than in other Western European countries. The reason for this is that Italy has always been more of a logistic base for the transnational jihadist movement. Until 2016, when we start to be aware of the first cases of radicalised Italian Muslims, or when the country became notoriously a place where the process of

³⁴ Lorenzo Vidino, “Foreign Terrorist Fighters: A Quantitative Analysis of Radicalization Risk Factors” on <https://www.itstime.it/w/wpt-content/uploads/2016/07/Italian-Foreign-Terrorist-Fighters-a-quantitative-analysis-of-radicalisation-risk-factors.pdf>.

³⁵ B. Boutin et al “The Foreign Fighters Phenomenon in the European Union, Profiles, Threats and Policies”, *International Centre for Counter Terrorism* on https://www.icct.nl/wp-content/upload/2016/03/ICCT-Report_Foreign-Fighters-Phenomenon-in-the-EU_1-April-2016_including-Annexlinks.pdf.

radicalisation seemed to occur mainly in prison, the Italian jihadists preferred to keep a low profile in order to not get into the Italian authorities' monitoring scheme.

Italian officials have considered three categories of individuals more at risk of radicalisation.

There categories are:

- 1) Italian citizens converted or second-generation diaspora Muslims
- 2) The so-called *sociological citizens* as in a definition by L. Vidino
- 3) Visitors, workers, or students temporarily living in Italy.³⁶

The overall Italian Muslim community for the year 2016, is 1.8% out of the 61 million population; said that, this data does not take into account the illegal immigrants that arrive primarily from the African continent. Always according to Vidino's paper, the number of FF in Italy in 2016 identified by the police were: 16 Italian citizens (converted or with dual citizenship); 15 sociological citizens, and 67 individuals from the third category for a total of 98 FF in 2016. While, 88 individuals involved with terrorist activities had already been expelled by the Italian authorities in 2015.³⁷

Interesting is the category of 'sociological citizen', a definition coined and introduced by L. Vidino that indicates those individuals who although foreign, live and work legally in another country, absorbing its lifestyle, customs and culture. The Italian authorities are quite efficient in monitoring and repressing the phenomenon of Muslim radicalisation; there is still a grey area where individuals, places and situations have been constantly monitored by the Italian counter-terrorism. Places like mosques or cultural centres, private houses or shops, or internet points with 200 sites 'of interest' and 300 individuals equally interesting for the Italian police.³⁸

In general, there are criteria that are used in order to sketch the ideal profile of the radicalised Western European (Italian) Muslim. Those criteria are as follow:

- Age
- Criminal records

³⁶ Ibid. (Vidino 2016), p. 3.

³⁷ Ibid. (Vidino 2016), p.3.

³⁸ C.Giudici "Garage, scantinati, kebab. Ecco I luoghi dove si prepara il terrore in Italia" *Il Foglio*, January 6, 2016 on [https:// www.ilfoglio.it/cronache/2016/01/16/garage-scantinati-kebab-ecco-i-luoghi-dove-si-prepara-il-terrore-in-italia____1-v-137105-rubriche_c422htm](https://www.ilfoglio.it/cronache/2016/01/16/garage-scantinati-kebab-ecco-i-luoghi-dove-si-prepara-il-terrore-in-italia____1-v-137105-rubriche_c422htm).

- Unemployment
- Attitude toward religion
- Technological skills
- Second or third generation Muslim diaspora.

It is a fact that the radicalisation process has more chances of success in teenagers or in the youth in their early 20s. The unemployment also creates another factor of marginalisation within the host community, creating the premises of radicalism. Religion becomes thus the reference for the individual's extremization process, and becomes also a political tool to channel his/her own life frustrations. Interesting data to be recorded is the high level of technological expertise; but this can be explained easily for the young age of the individuals radicalised.

Finally, but not less important, it is interesting to notice that the individuals more prone to be radicalised within the Muslim context, are the second or even third generation Muslims. This can be explained especially in an extreme intolerant country like Italy (see subsection 4 of the present report), as the new generation does not feel completely integrated in a culture that does not fully accept his/her colour or cultural origins (including religion).

Interesting is also the case of the converted individuals as it has been reported by M. Uhlmann, who often are very easy to radicalise more than individuals already belonging in this specific religion and culture. The process of conversion is often long and painstaking and often done because of romantic relationships (this is especially the case of converted women).³⁹ On this point is interesting to report here the case of Maria Giulia Sergio alias Fatima Az Zahra, married to an Albanian citizen, Aldo Kobuzi in 2014. The couple was married in the mosque in Treviglio (near Milan) by a Canadian woman recruiting on behalf of the ISIS. The next day, the couple left for Istanbul where they then took an internal flight that brought them to Syria, where they started to be trained as foreign fighters. From that point, Maria Giulia/Fatima has started indoctrinating all her Italian family and became a relevant figure in the Italian Radical Islamism. Her parents decided to sell everything and reach their daughter in Syria. The woman has been sentenced by the Italian authorities to ten

³⁹ M.Uhlmann, "Choosing Islam in Western European Societies. An Investigation of Different Concepts of Religious Re-affiliation" European University Institute R. Shuman Centre for Advanced Studies, Dec. 2015, pp. 5-11 on <https://www.cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/38204>.

years although she is still in Syria.⁴⁰ Maria Giulia/Fatima is the first ever recorded Italian Foreign Fighter for the ISIS.

To summarise, in Italy we have the following data regarding the religious and political radicalisation within the Muslim community: starting in 2014, we have the presence of 30 jihadists in Italy; in January 2015, the jihadists became 53 (+ 76%); and in May 2015, we have on the territory 74 jihadists (+39.6%). In September 2015, we have 87 jihadists (+17.5%) and finally, in 2016, we have the identification by Italian counter-terrorism of 98 individuals radicalised (+12.6%). Of this 98 individuals, 21 are from the Maghreb, and 9 from the Balkans.⁴¹ In February 2016, the Italian Carabinieri special unit, the ROS, have arrested Ajtjan Veapi, a Macedonian citizen investigated for recruiting terrorists on Italian territory.⁴²

Alongside the phenomenon of radical Islamism, is the Christian radicalism and the increasing popularity of far-right organisations, especially in the north of the country. The geographical unbalance in favour of the north, is easily explained as this part of Italy is more industrialised, economically developed and therefore, attracts more immigrants for work purposes. As a consequence, the counter reaction of the local population in forming religious and political answers on the territory is quite strong, considering also that the north is the stronghold of the Lega Nord party.

Starting with the religious radicalism within Italian Catholicism, it must be said that Pope Francis' attitude toward immigrants and people of other religious confessions has created response in the more traditional Catholic groups in Italy. In the country, the most traditional Catholics groups as well as part of the most conservative clergy, have created a solid networking of resistance to the modernity and globalism that Pope Francis seems to represent.

The contrast becomes more striking when the bone of content is the immigrants issue. In some situations, the most conservative and traditional groups have links with far-right

⁴⁰https://www.agi.it/cronaca/2016/12/19/news/chi_maria_giulia_serpio_la_29enne_campana_arruolata_nell'ISI_S-1322719.

⁴¹ A. Boucio "Italian Foreign Terrorist Fighters. Numbers, Features, and Case Studies", *International Security Observer*, Nov. 16, 2015 on <https://www.securityobserver.org/italian-foreign-terrorist-fighters-numbers-features-and-case-studies>; cfr. L. Vidino (2016), p. 8.

⁴² <https://www.mediterranaffairs.com/italian-counter-terrorism/>.

organizations and often overlap each other. The ultra-Catholic galaxy is quite diverse but the core is the aversion against this current Pope. In particular, the association “Fondazione Lepanto” (Lepanto Foundation) do not recognise valid the election of Pope Francis and therefore, refuse him obedience.⁴³

What is more interesting, as already mentioned above, is the ultra-Catholic anti-Pope Francis front on the issue of the immigrants and minorities. It has been the ecumenism and the openness of the current pontiff that has created an open refusal and criticism in those ultra-conservative catholic groups radicalising *de facto*, certain Catholic circles already clearly anti-Semitic and Islamophobic. And this besides the traditionalist position of those groups on more theological and doctrinal questions that do not interest our research. According to Prof. Agostino Giovagnali, chair of Contemporary History at the Catholic University, “There is an alliance between certain circles in the US and the European far-right”. This in particular regards the primacy of the religious freedom that seems compromised by the Vatican’s politics, especially in reference with the dialogue that the current Pope is attempting to establish with China.

Another interesting element is that all those ultra-catholic circles have a strong admiration for the president of Russia, Vladimir Putin by many considered as the perfect example of traditional Christian leader and champion of the Christian traditional values if compared to his Western homologues on this matter.⁴⁴ Professor Giovagnali refers to the networking established around these two elements: the primacy of religious freedom in relation to the situation of the Catholics in China, and referring to Putin as the perfect example of traditional Christian leader.

Interestingly enough, the cases of radicalization of the Catholic doctrine are more evident when criticising the Pope’s migration policy as the negative response to the Papal encyclic ‘Amor Laetitia’ on immigration and the invitation to welcome diversity, demonstrates with more than 45 theologians openly criticising it and 80 representatives of the high clergy opposing it. Among those more radical responses we can mention Cardinal Raymond Leo Burke, patron of the Order of the Knights of Malta and considered the leader of the

⁴³ <https://www.lastampa.it/2016/10/16/italia/cronache/quei-cattolici-controfrancesco-che-adorano-putin-lZpbcq1lilelZDnUxxlEpo/pagin.html>. Authors: Giacomo Galeazzi and Andrea Tornielli.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* <https://www.lastampa.it/2016/10/16/italia/cronache/quei-cattolici-controfrancesco-che-adorano-putin-lZpbcq1lilelZDnUxxlEpo/pagin.html>.

conservative wing of the Vatican, who besides the pure theological disputes, holds a strong position on immigration and openness to other religions, especially, Judaism and Islam. Cardinal Burke has in more than one occasion openly criticised Pope Francis for the alleged openness of the Pontiff in matter of religious ecumenism, especially in reference to the encyclic ‘Amor Laetitia’.⁴⁵

Finally, few words on how this religious radicalism and anti-papal attitude find the best expression on the web. There are in fact, many ultra-Catholic associations or blogs which are clearly radical in their contents and violent in the language and tones used. Some examples of those traditionalist Catholic associations are: www.sodalitium.it; www.magisterium.biz; [www.osservatorio anti-pagano.it](http://www.osservatorioanti-pagano.it); www.intermultiplicexunavox.it; <https://www.traditio.it>; <https://www.holywar.org/>. The last one, HolyWar association, is quite disturbing. The association is transnational with several groups in different countries like the UK, Germany, Italy, Spain, Poland, France and Sweden. After an examination of the Italian website, we can report strong anti-Semitism and racist language and contents with several articles in which there is a clear denial of the Holocaust. Also, on the website, is possible to read many comments and posts by readers, which are clearly Islamophobic, homophobic and close to positions that usually are found on neo-Nazi websites.⁴⁶ The group is a strong evidence of the process of radicalism among the already ultra-Catholic movements. What is interesting about this group is the strong-anti-Semitism detected and a radical unrealistic vision of Christianity, and most worryingly, the considered role of ‘holy’ warriors of its adepts against immigrants, homosexuals, Jews and Muslims.

Regarding political radicalism, is also worrying the increasing phenomenon of recruitment and radicalization of the Italian youth and part of the population by far-right movements, although the whole phenomenon does not follow a uniform path but is rather patchy. To explain better, it depends on the relevance on the territory of a specific far-right group. Officially, the anti-establishment, anti-immigrant front is covered by the Lega Nord and the Movimento 5 Stelle (M5S); however, on the ground we have a galaxy of far-right organisations that are radicalising the youth and the lowest social class strata.

⁴⁵ <https://www.catholicworldreport.com/.../cardinal-burke-no-i-am-not-saying-that-pope-francis-is-in-heresy/>.

⁴⁶ <https://www.holywar.org/indextradiz.html>.

The main far-right extra-parliamentary groups widespread all over the national territory are CasaPound (CP) and Forza Nuova (FN). The latter is less popular than the former being one of its main features, traditional Catholicism and therefore, attracting less number of people. In the big cities those groups tend to do badly compared to small centres. For instance, in the 2016 local elections, the FN official candidate to the mayor election in Rome, Alfredo Iorio, got only 3.000 votes (0.21%). In Turin, the FN candidate, Roberto Usseglio Visetta, did even worse with 690 votes (0.18%). It went better in small centres as in Codegliano Vigonago (2.000 inhabitants in the province of Varese, Lombardy region), where FN got more than 17% getting 3 local councillors. The same occurred in Portobuffole (800 inhabitants Treviso, Veneto region), Crotone (Reggio Calabria) a small town, where FN got 1.67%. Different is the discourse for CasaPound (CP) where in the 2016 local election, the movement got 6.67% with 3 local councillors in Rome and 14.000 votes (1.2%); considering that those results have doubled the votes the group had gained four years before.

In some of Rome boroughs, CP got even better results as for instance, in Ostia (2%) or in the XV Rome borough (2.28%), in the Tiburtina IV borough (2.4%) and the CP's main candidate to the 2016 Rome mayor election got 3.5%. But also in Latina (a small town in the Lazio region), the CP's candidate got 3% and in the Abruzzo region, the CP's candidates got 3% in the town of Lanciano, and 3.25% in the town of Sulmona. On this occasion and after the electoral results thus obtained by the movement, CP released the following statement on their website: "a result that pushes us to continue with determination on the path undertaken, the path of the defence of our Nation, of our cities, inches after inches: the movement is growing, is radicalising and proceed with pride".⁴⁷ CasaPound and Forza Nuova are only the tip of an iceberg as far-right anti-immigrant's groups and movements are gaining strength from the social unrest, the economic and financial crisis that Italy is facing and the arrival of a considerable number of immigrants and refugees in 2016.

As we will see in the next subsection, this is worrying the Italian authorities engaged in monitoring and containing the phenomenon of Islamic radicalism but also, committed to watch and contain the neo-fascist radicalization of the territory. On the phenomenon of the ultra-nationalism on the territory by an emerging far-right front, is interesting to see how the two main anti-immigrant, anti-European and ultra-nationalist populist parties have become

⁴⁷ <https://www.linkiesta.it/article/2016/06/07/destra-radicale-e-i-movimenti-nazionalisti-in-italia-non-ce-ancora-una/30662>. Author: Marco Sarti.

quite strong on the territory in 2016. It is worth to mention that the Lega Nord in particular has been oftentimes accused to receive financial aid for their political campaigns by Putin.

In 2016, the British daily ‘The Telegraph’ has revealed that according to a report of the US intelligence, Putin could be funding several far-right and ultra-nationalist parties in Europe.⁴⁸ According to the British newspaper, the American intelligence investigation of Russian financing European ultra-nationalist parties is to prove how eventually Russian money will promote these parties electoral success and as consequence, weakening the NATO’s and the EU’s structure and consequently in the latter case, lift the EU sanctions against Russia.

The Lega Nord is considered to be part of this plan together with the ultra-nationalist party ‘Golden Dawn’ in Greece, Jobbik in Hungary, Front National in France, to cite but few. Obviously the leader of the Lega, Salvini, denies such allegations. But also the M5S seems to be quite attracted by the figure of Putin as strong and capable political leader to the point that a delegation of M5S MPs have visited in autumn of 2016, the ‘United Russia’ group although they did not have any contact with any Russian state officials.⁴⁹ The M5S party is quite Eurosceptic and on a populist base that ideological speaking tend to the right. The party’s structure is rigidly hierarchical with the supreme leader in the person of the former stand up comedian Beppe Grillo. Since its foundation in 2009, the party has characterised itself for being strongly anti-establishment and anti-immigration with a dystopian view of the future. In the EU parliament, the party together with the Lega Nord, sit in the ultra-nationalist populist parties group ENF (European of Nations and Freedom).⁵⁰

On this point, is interesting to say few words on the leaders of these two mainstream ultra-nationalist parties: Matteo Salvini leader of the Lega Nord and Beppe Grillo leader of the M5S. Matteo Salvini is a young leader (44 years old) of the Lega Nord, a popular ultra-nationalist Italian party. He took over the founder of the LN, Umberto Bossi, in 2013 and since then he has been the leader of the party. His political campaign has soon been characterised by a strong anti-immigration and anti-Europe instances and he has openly expressed admiration for both Putin and Trump in more than one occasion. He has also

⁴⁸ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/russia/12103602/America-to-investigate-Russian-meddling-in-EU.html>.

⁴⁹ https://www.agi.it/estero/2016/11/24/news/non_solo_lega_e_m5s_tutti_i_partiti_che_guardano_a_mosca-1272589.

⁵⁰ https://www.corriere.it/politica/17_gennaio_12/sono-partito-feudale-volevano-fare-i-modesti- adesso-lotta-anti-euro-salvini-2a34cc1c-d839-11e6-9dfa-46bea8378d9f.shtml.

attempted to launch the party at a national level, considering the the LN has always been mainly circumscribed to the north of the country. With him as leader, the party has become overtly far-right and close to other kindred parties like the French Front National of Marine Le Pen. His personality is shaping the party's politics and ideology becoming increasingly more xenophobic and with strong anti-liberal democracy, anti-establishment and Eurosceptic feelings.⁵¹

The other new high profile leader of the M5S is Beppe Grillo. Grillo (68 years of age) was a former stand up comedian who entered in politics in 2009 with Giampiero Casaleggio, founding the Movimento 5 Stelle party. The British newspaper 'The Spectator' in an article of 2013, has dubbed him "Italy's new Mussolini".⁵² Undoubtedly, Grillo has a strong influence inside his party and is a rather charismatic character when giving public speeches or addressing the crowds in public rallies. His populism and strong charismatic personality have produced a large public consensus among the electorate and made thus the party popular in the country.⁵³

6. Italian Authorities and the Problem of Radicalism

Italian authorities are reacting positively to the problem of radicalism on the territory. As already specified in the previous subsection, there are several types of radicalism. Besides the worrying phenomenon of 'jihadism' present among the immigrants and Italian Muslim of second or third generation, there is also the problem posed by the increasing appeal that far-right organisations seem to exercise especially on the younger generations.

Italy has not suffered any jihadist terrorist attack insofar compared to other European countries like Belgium, France, Britain or Germany. This is due to several factors. One of the main factors is that the country has been always considered more of a logistic base for jihadist terrorism and a transient place for terrorists ready to move to other countries in Europe to carry out their attacks. The other factor is that the Italian counter-terrorism, intelligence and police forces have decades of experience in fighting terrorism and organised crime, considering the history of the country that in the 1970s experienced a violent season of terrorism and the long-lasting struggle against crime organisations like the mafia, the camorra

⁵¹ <https://www.biografieonline.it/biografia-matteo-salvini>.

⁵² <https://www.spectator.co.uk/2013/03/italys-new-duce/>

⁵³ <https://www.politico.eu/person/beppe-grillo/>.

or the 'ndrangheta in the south of the country. Italian police forces for instance, have a specific department (DIGOS) that deal with 'political crimes' and another department (DIA) that deals with organised crime. In the last years, where jihadism became the constant worry of Western Europe, these two departments have been cooperating together in order to better protect the country from possible attacks. The following is the organigram of the counter-terrorism authorities in Italy and can provide an idea on how the whole system of prevention and control of the territory functions. The Italian intelligence is headed by the Prime Minister, who is assisted by the inter-ministerial committee for the security of the Republic. Then, there is the so called 'Delegate Authority', an institutional body that acts as an intermediate figure mediating between the PM and the other branch called 'Information System of the Security of the Republic'. The Delegate Authority's engagement may be chaired by the Secretary of the State or by a Minister without portfolio, who cannot exercise other functions. The 'Information System for the Security of the Republic' is composed by the DIS (Department of Security of Information); the AISE (Agency of Information for the External Security); and the AISI (Agency of Information for internal Security).

The Minister of the interior has 2 main structures: The Crisis Unit (Law 133/2002) and the Committee of Counter-Terrorism Strategic Analysis (Law 06/05/2006). The latter supervises the national and internal terrorist menace; the coordination of the national investigation of the radical Muslims in order to prevent radicalisation and root causes conducive of terrorism. This structure also controls the activities regarding possible financial aids to international terrorism or organisations and it constantly monitors the internet activities.

Such structure is based on the strategy of 'repression and prevention', which means that the policing and monitoring of the territory is constant together with policies of cooperation with the Muslim communities present on the territory. In addition, since 2001, the Ministry of Economy, has been equipped with the Committee for Financial Security that is meant to prevent terrorist infiltration in the Italian mainstream financial system.⁵⁴ Furthermore, the Italian Penal Code provides a useful tool to prevent radicalisation (law 438/2001) as it has been equipped with measures against any form of illegal association according to the international counter-terrorism legislation. Italy has further improved the national security

⁵⁴ <https://www.mediterraneaffairs.com/Italian-counter-terrorism/> Author: Federico Solfrini.

system with a law approved in 2015, that contains a set of repressive tools to combat and control jihadism, radicalised individuals and terrorism facilitators.

This legislation follows the lines of the UN General Assembly resolution (Dec. 2015), which confirms the UN's resolution n. 2178 (2014) as approved by the Security Council. On this occasion, the Italian authorities have presented an 'action plan' draft law "Measures for the prevention of the Jihadist radicalization and extremism" which includes:

- 1) investigation of terrorism
- 2) setting investigative measures in the rule of law in respecting the right of expression within the context of public security
- 3) fostering public acceptance and inclusiveness of the national counter-terrorism strategy and the building of an online portal of information.

Again, as it can be observed from the guidelines of the Italian plan described above, the Italian formula in containing and contrast radicalisation in the country is the balanced combination of repression and prevention of counter-terrorism; and considering within this strategy of action, the cognitive and behavioural variables of the whole phenomenon of radicalisation on the territory.⁵⁵

The same strategy that the Italian authorities have been implementing in contrasting the process of radicalisation and Jihadism present on the territory, has been applied also to the far-right and its increasing appeal to the Italian youth with its consequent radicalisation. The Intelligence report we have for the year 2016, describes a worrying case scenario. It is increasing the number of youth and members of the low classes that become attracted by the far-right groups and organisations.

The major means of affiliation is the web and the social networks, or outside schools with slogans like "out foreigners from Italy". The organisations that has been observed by the Italian intelligence for the year 2016, are the following: Casa Pound and its students' association, Blocco Studentesco; Blocco Lavoratori Unitario e Ambientalista; LFCA (La Foresta che Avanza); Forza Nuova and in the area national-revolutionary, the group Militia; Lotta Europea and the Movimento Sociale per l'Europa. According to the Italian intelligence,

⁵⁵ Ibid. <https://www.mediterraneaffairs.com/Italian-counter-terrorism/> Author: Federico Solfrini.

the increase of far-right proselytism can be explained with the increased number of immigrants landing on the Italian shores, together with uncertainty for the future and the chronic financial and economic crisis that the country is experiencing. It is in fact not a coincidence that the social classes more exposed to the far-right appeal are the poorest on the social scale. The Italian authorities are therefore, monitoring also this other form of radicalism that has become more evident in the year 2016.⁵⁶

7. Public Opinion and the Problem of Radicalism

When talking of ‘radicalism’ Italians associate this term with terrorism and specifically, with jihadism. The major concern of the Italians seems to be more immigration linked to groups with different religion and cultural traditions. In reality, we have an unclear picture from the polls and surveys made in the year 2016, whereas, many Italians do not seem particularly concerned with the problem of radicalism on the territory but concerned with immigration as a possible source of instability and crime. This general attitude in the public may be explained by the fact that in Italy there has not been any terrorist attack yet and this element makes many to think that radicalism in Italy is not a problem. Even when the type of radicalism is political, i.e. the far right’s populism and ultra-nationalism, the percentage of Italians that seem really concerned about it is relatively small.

According to Nando Pagnoncelli, president of the IPSOS ITALIA (a survey agency), “ we witness a type of strabism: before a widespread fear of the effects of the economic crisis that seems endless, Italians feel relatively safe from the risks of possible terrorist attacks, that instead are experienced as distant, concerning others rather than them”.⁵⁷

For the average Italian therefore, the major concern is the economic situation of the country rather than a possible radicalisation of the territory; and the major problem is to be considered more the immigrants and other minorities rather than radicalism, whether religious or political. However, in opinion polls, emerged that on themes like immigration and populism, the concern of the public is augmenting; although, in the former case, the peak is lower than in 2015, and in the latter, is stable to the 10%. Regarding the threat of terrorism instead, the

⁵⁶ <https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/articoli/destra-radicale-a-roma/>.

⁵⁷ <https://www.ispionline.it/it/articoli/articolo/italia/gli-italiani-e-la-politica-estera-16144>.

change in data is quite significant: from the 35% in 2015, to 9% of 2016.⁵⁸ Obviously, the changing in the perception of progressively losing their identity, or of being ‘invaded’, makes the public’s perception of specific issues as influenced by the events that may occur while the opinion poll is conducted.

It is clear then that when asked about radicalism, the Italian public associate this to Islamic terrorism. According to another opinion poll, we have the following data: 66.5% of the Italian general public thinks that Italy is on average at risk of terrorist attacks, while the 27.2% thinks that Italy is at high risk of terrorist attacks. Only for the 6.3% think that the risk is null. The 54.3% fears terrorist attacks, the 45.7% instead does not fear any terrorist attack. Interesting is to notice that when the sample of Italian public is asked what they think are the causes of terrorism, the 32% answers that the cause is in the intervention of the Western powers in Syria and Iraq, while the 30.3% that the cause for this is religion. For the 23.6% terrorists are mentally insane, for the 10% this is the result of lack of integration; for the 3.9% the cause is poverty.⁵⁹

As observed by Carlo Gambescia on his blog, “according to 70% of Italians, terrorists are rather mentally insane or victims of the racist, capitalist and invading West. Furthermore, the stress on the ‘craziness’ exposes the collective incapacity to ‘think of war’ in a realistic way”.⁶⁰ However, we have a different picture of the Italian general public response as according to report conducted by the agency UNIPOLIS, which indicates instead that since 2010, the fear of terrorist attacks has augmented by the 37% in January 2015, to reach the 44% in January 2016.⁶¹ Another survey gives us the level of concern for possible terrorist attacks and how those are associated with the presence of immigrants on the territory. The chart reported below indicates the trend of the concern Italian general public seems to have regarding immigrants as a vehicle of radicalisation and terrorism. The question asked is “immigrants are a threat for the public order and people’s safety” and the survey cover a period between 1999 and 2017. We can easily see how the response of the people have changed in time to stabilise the trend to 35-40% in 2016.

⁵⁸ Ibid. <https://www.ispionline.it/it/articoli/articolo/italia/gli-italiani-e-la-politica-estera-16144> opinion poll conducted between 10th and 14th December 2016.

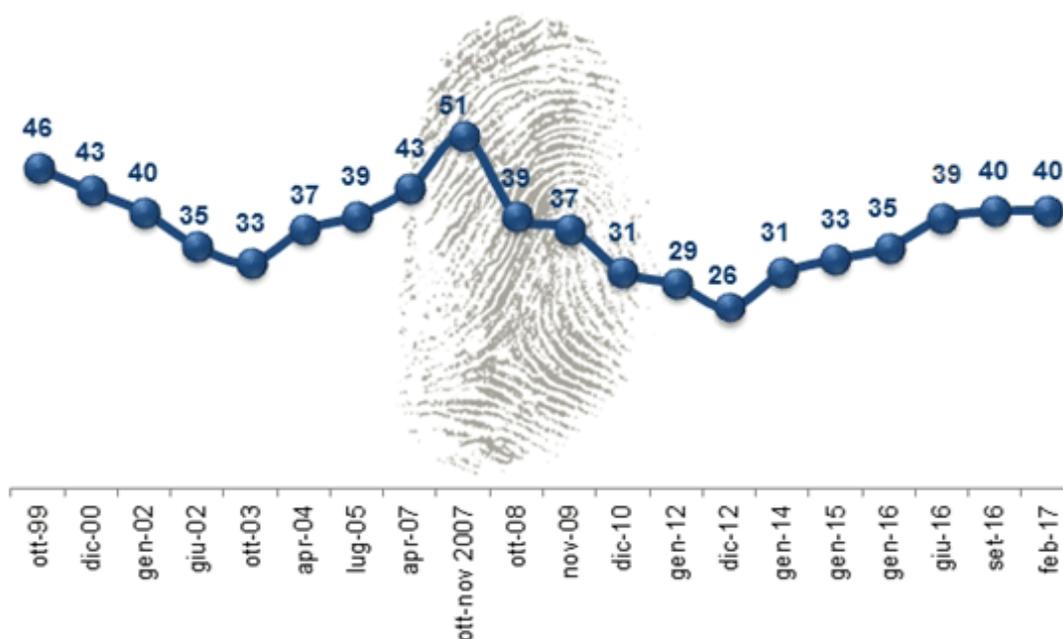
⁵⁹ <https://www.termometropolitico.it/1226582sondaggi-la-paura-degli-attentati-non-scombina-il-piano-vacanze-degli-italiani-html>.

⁶⁰ <https://www.carlogambesciametapolitics2puntozero.blogspot.co.uk/2016/07/gli-italiani-e-il-terrorismo-jihadista.html>.

⁶¹ <https://www.fondazioneunipolis.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/RAPPORTO-SICUREZZA2016B.pdf>.

IMMIGRAZIONE: UN PERICOLO PER LA SICUREZZA?

Quanto si sente d'accordo con la seguente affermazione: "Gli immigrati sono un pericolo per l'ordine pubblico e la sicurezza delle persone"? (valori % di chi si dice "moltissimo" o "molto" d'accordo)



Fonte: Sondaggio Demos & Pi, Febbraio 2017 (base: 1015 casi)

To summarise, the trend indicates an augmented fear of terrorist attacks that are considered as results of many and diverse geopolitical factors but also, strictly associated with immigration influx and the equation of immigrants= radicalisation, although there is quite a widespread trust in the Italian authorities in prevent terrorist attacks on the territory and protect the population.

8. Hate Crime in Italy: An Analysis

The question of hate crime in Italy is rather problematic for several reasons. In the country as by November 2016, there is a clear indication of growing violence, harassment, threats and xenophobic speech targeting asylum seekers, immigrants, homosexuals and all those actors that are defined 'pro-refugee'. Most interesting is the rise of hate speech on internet; social platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook or Twitter have seen a worrying increase of this type of

contents by the users of such means of communication. Another interesting element is that violence is not necessarily perpetrated by specific far-right group organisations but also by members of the general public and in some cases, by representatives of the police forces. There is a growing number of vigilante groups in the north of the country heavily influenced by the political presence on the territory of the Lega Nord, and in the south by the presence of far-right movements like CasaPound.

The evidence and data that is possible to retrieve is due to the monitoring work of few civil rights organisations, the official institutions UNAR, SDI, OSCAD, and and some anecdotal episodes reported by the media but still insufficient to provide a clear understanding of the situation. The anecdotal case of hate crime occurred in the summer of 2016 and widely reported by the media, refers to the killing of Emmanuel Chidi-Noudi, a Nigerian asylum seeker of 36 years of age, killed with a baton in the middle of the city centre of the town of Fermo (Marche region, central Italy) following a heated discussion with a passer by who had racially offended his wife. Or the other case of a Gambian student of 21 years of age racially assaulted in April 2016, in Palermo, Sicily, also in this case, by member of the public and not affiliated to any far-right organisations.⁶²

The major problems that seem to concern the issue of hate crime in Italy are the following:

- 1) Civil society perceives the Italian authorities' response to hate crime quite weak. Organisations that represent or defend minorities do not feel supported adequately by the Italian authorities.
- 2) In Italy there is a lack of systematic data collection of hate crimes episodes. As we will see in the course of this subsection, Italy lacks of a systematic data collection of hate crimes and hate speech episodes.
- 3) A low reporting number of hate crimes makes *de facto* this problem invisible. The number of victims for many reasons decide not to report is assumingly quite large, and those instead that decide to report or to make a formal complaint to the police authorities is still quite small. This is also because very often police are perceived as an enemy and there is mistrust for different reasons.

⁶² <https://www.togetherproject.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/italy.pdf>.

Among the EU member states, only Germany, Greece, Finland and the Netherlands have adopted a proper monitoring and collection data programme to control the problem of hate speech on their territory.⁶³

It is important to underline that in Italy there is not any institution officially in charge of collecting data, specifically on hate crime, and although OSCAD should be collecting data on discrimination and hate crime, in reality, this institution does not proceed with a systematic data collection by researching on the ground and looking for hate crime and violent discriminatory acts. Furthermore, according to the Italian law on this matter, under no circumstances reporting a hate crime to OSCAD can replace a formal complaint with the police.

There are two formal institutional sources of information who do not produce data specifically on hate crime but that can be used to have an idea of the phenomenon. One is the ISTAT agency (National Institute of Statistics) and the other one is the Ministry of Justice, who collects general statistics on investigations, legal prosecutions and police complaints. On this point, should be stressed that the Ministry of Justice cannot oblige the local general attorney's office (Procura della Repubblica) to collect data. In addition, the Italian legislation on hate crime is rather unclear as already explained in the first subsection of the present report. Although the 'Mancino Act' has provided to regulate the matter, there are many unclear areas that have not been solved. For instance, the Italian legislation does not prosecute hate crimes for sexual orientation and therefore, this type of hate crime is not accounted. Or, there is not clear definition of 'hate speech' and often racist, xenophobic or homophobic comments made on social networks do not get prosecuted because does not exist a specific legislation that consider those under the hate crime label.

As already stated above, another element to take into account is that very often hate crimes victims do not report to the police and this is for several reasons. In the case of illegal immigrants, they do not report to the police authorities if they are victims of a hate crime for fear of being deported or to lose the job that they have found illegally. Homosexuals do not report hate crimes of which are victims because it is not recognised

⁶³ <https://file://Users/Anna/Downloads/fra-2016-november-monthly-focus-hate-crime-eu.pdf>.

by the Italian law as such, as it has been already explained above. It has been calculated that only the 40% of the cases reported are fully investigated by the police.⁶⁴ Civil Society organisations are engaged in fighting discrimination and racism but are mainly involved in monitoring and advocating, and often rely on official institutional bodies to get data on hate crimes, while a system of supporting the victims of such crimes does not exist yet; and this makes even more difficult for hate crime victims to report.

The data reported here are not complete due to the phenomenon of under-reporting of the victims of hate crime and to some lacunae in the recording system of the Italian official authorities. Therefore, for our data on hate crime in Italy for the year 2016, we rely heavily on some statistics and data collected by several civil society groups and academic research reports. In the period between January and 5 July 2016, we have 212 cases of racism registered with 3 cases of murder and 1 of attempted murder that see as victims mainly Muslims.⁶⁵ In addition, we have 27 registered cases of hate crime on homosexuals.⁶⁶

Regarding the Roma and Sinti communities, there is change in the trend as the overall hate crime cases (in the declination of hate speech) have decreased going from the 265 cases in 2015, to 175 registered in 2016 and with 2 cases of violent crime. Regarding anti-Semitism, 2016 has registered 130 cases of hate crime and has counted circa 300 Facebook pages with clear anti-Semitic contents.⁶⁷ The majority of hate crime acts is consumed on the web with circa 2.100,000 cases of discriminatory and racist contents published on internet (mainly of Facebook, YouTube, Twitter).⁶⁸ In addition, the NGO 'Lunaria' has registered between 01/01/2007 and 30/06/2016, circa 5.369 cases of verbal racial abuse, physical violence, murders and damages against private property of xenophobic and racist nature.⁶⁹

In conclusion, hate crime in Italy does not seem to have the same relevance as it has in other European countries and this is for several reasons. The little education of the Italian populace in accepting and integrate minorities, the unclear legislation on the matter, the

⁶⁴ <https://www.osce.org/what-do-we-know>.

⁶⁵ <https://www.islamophobiaeurope.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/ITALY.pdf>. Author: Cristina Giacalone.

⁶⁶ <https://www.galop.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/The-hate-crime-Report-2016.pdf>.

⁶⁷ <https://www.osservatorioantisemi-c02.kxcdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/SintesiReportItalia2016.pdf>.

⁶⁸ <https://www.unar.it/unal/portal/?p=8483>. Published on 04/07/2017.

⁶⁹ <https://www.cronachediordinariorazzismo.org/il-razzismo-quotidiano-che-fingiamo-di-non-vedere/>.

growing xenophobic violence by members of the public, and the increasing hate speech widespread on social media, make hate crime an issue that the Italian authorities should address and solve before the whole country finds itself on the edge of social division and unrest.⁷⁰

9. Inter –ethnicity in Italy: the process of integration

In Italy the process of integration of ethnic minorities has to be considered according to two different systems and coordinates. One concerns the ethnic minorities already present on the territory in the year 2016, and the other concerns the new arrivals in the same year. In addition, it should also be considered the reaction of the autochthonous population to this process of integration and to what extent ultra-nationalist parties and movements oppose and obstruct such process.

Italy is one of the main ports in the Mediterranean for the arrivals of refugees and economic migrants together with Greece, Turkey, the Isle of Malta and Spain. In particular, in the year 2016, the migratory flux has continued creating a situation of emergency for the State infrastructures devoted to the hosting of refugees and migrants alike. Also, the wave of terrorist attacks in France and Belgium (2015-2016) have contributed to the resolution of control measures by the EU-including Italy- for security reasons.

Italy in 2016, opens up to the migratory flux, especially for humanitarian reasons with empowering the already existent SPRAR programme designed specifically for asylum seekers and refugees.⁷¹ However, in March 2016, Italy reached an agreement with Turkey to close the borders and divert the migratory flux to Turkey and Greece instead. Interesting is to notice that Italy distinguishes between migrants and refugees but allow that they can be relocated according to their nationality. For instance, migrants (whether economic migrants or refugees or asylum seekers) have right to be relocated in 75% of the European countries. According to this, Afghani, Libyans, Gambians, and Ethiopians can expressively ask asylum in Italy. In the first six months of 2016, the applications for asylum status have increased by 60%. An incredible high number of people has become *de facto* irregular without documents

⁷⁰ https://www.asgi.it/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/2016_ECRI_ITA-Cbc-V-2016-019-ITA-1.pdf.p.22.

⁷¹ ‘SPRAR’ (Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees) programme made by law n.189/2002, is made up of a local network of the country’s official institutions with volunteer organizations cooperation for the assistance of forced migrants. (see: <https://www.sprar.it/english>.)

or rights after going through the Italian system (see the centre for immigration: CARA) that has thus produced illegal immigration rather than integration.⁷²

According to Amnesty International, 99% of immigrants arrived in Italy in 2016, have been recorded through this new system called *hotspot*, as the country has created specific centres (hotspots) where to record any new arrival on the territory according to the EU “Juncker Plan” for the monitoring and control of the migration into European Union.⁷³ The creation of those hotspots has created problem of public order in cities like Rome, Ventimiglia (on the border with France), Milan, Como and Bolzano with a subsequent strengthening of far-right movements and ultra-nationalist parties locally. The new system adopted in 2016 by the Italian authorities contemplates as well as the recording of any new arrival but also the immediate expulsion if the individual does not match specific criteria. For this purpose, they have been created the so-called CIE (Centre of Internal Expulsion). In 2016, there have been set up 4 CIE, but the Minister of Interior, Minniti has announced the creation of a CIE for each region so to cover the whole national territory. In addition, it has been created a Border Control Guard to be supportive of the already European agency Frontex.⁷⁴

In all this, it is the volunteer organisations and the Christian Churches that are working toward a better integration plan for the new migrants arriving in Italy. The Catholic community of Sant’Egidio, the Chiesa Valdese and the evangelical church have conducted in 2016 a plan of integration for 500 refugees from Syria and the plan include the arrival of other 2.000 individuals from Syria under the same programme conditions, which include a visa under humanitarian circumstances and support by those volunteer organizations to integrate the thus arrived refugees in the country.⁷⁵

The 70% of the asylum seekers has been hosted in 2016 by the CAS (Extraordinary Hosting Centre). These are centres parallel to the CARA for economic migrants but that host mainly refugees and asylum seekers. However, the allocation of this new type of hosting structure is rather patchy on the territory and the very same organisation of the centre seems to be quite

⁷² <https://www.internazionale.it/opinione/annalisa-camilli/2016/12/26/migranti-europa-italia-2016>. Author: Annalisa Camilli.

⁷³ <https://www.internazionale.it/notizie/2016/11/03/italia-amnesty-international-migranti-torture>.

⁷⁴ Ibid. <https://www.internazionale.it/opinione/annalisa-camilli/2016/12/26/migranti-europa-italia-2016>. Author: Annalisa Camilli.

⁷⁵ Ibid. <https://www.internazionale.it/opinione/annalisa-camilli/2016/12/26/migranti-europa-italia-2016>. Author: Annalisa Camilli.

scatty and not well structured. This has also created problems of public order in the areas where they have been allocated. To give an idea of the disorganisation of the integration plan (SPRAR), it is enough to say that in 2016, on 8.000 Italian town halls that agreed to host migrants, only 1.800 accepted. Also, if they accept the SPRAR, they would not have a CAS centre on their territory and they will be paid 500 euros per migrant hosted.⁷⁶

The above brief illustration of the migratory policies adopted in 2016 to face the emergency of refugees and migrants, shows the disorganisation of the Italian authorities in facing the problem. This inefficiency of the authorities, has also created discontent, distrust and fear that degenerated in xenophobia and intolerance. If we take into account that at 1 January 2016, the migrants situation was as follows: 5 million and 54 thousand immigrants living on Italian soil, making them the 8.3% of the population, with an augmentation of 39 thousand compared to the year before (2015).

The Italian population amounted in 2016 to 55.6 million and lost circa 179 thousand Italian natives. The major nationalities on the Italian territory in 2016 were: Romania, Philippines, Albania, Morocco, Ukraine and China.⁷⁷ According to the CARITAS' recordings for the year 2016 in Italy the percentage of immigrants with residency permit was 48%; with working visa was 40%; under special humanitarian protection, 4.8%.⁷⁸

However, in the year 2016, the Italian authorities have published a plan of control and integration of migrants' minorities on the territory. The plan includes the following points:

- 1) Differentiate the migratory influx toward Europe once migrants land on Italian shores
- 2) Close cooperation with the EU and the adoption of the 'Plan Juncker'
- 3) Potentiate the SPRAR programme
- 4) Gradual hosting and integration of minors unaccompanied
- 5) Starting of initiatives to promote integration of individuals who are awaiting the clarification of their own status.
- 6) Support projects of volunteer work with migrants for their integration.

⁷⁶ Ibid. <https://www.internazionale.it/opinione/annalisa-camilli/2016/12/26/migranti-europa-italia-2016>. Author: Annalisa Camilli.

⁷⁷ https://www.scienze politiche.unical.it/bacheca/archivio/materiale/1530/CorsoProcessi%20aa2015_16/lezione%2011_12%20aprile%2016.pdf.

⁷⁸ Ibid. https://www.scienze politiche.unical.it/bacheca/archivio/materiale/1530/CorsoProcessi%20aa2015_16/lezione%2011_12%20aprile%2016.pdf.

- 7) Projects involving the use of European funds (FAMI) for the integration and hosting of migrants, asylum seekers and war refugees.⁷⁹

As the reader can see, the Italian authorities' plan to solve the migration problem for the year 2016 was rather ambitious and has not however, produced the results hoped for. At the moment of the writing the Italian authorities have communicated to the EU that are going to close the ports for those ships that are assisting boat people on their route; while the debate in the parliament on the *ius soli* (right by birth to acquire Italian citizenship) is quite heated and has also created a strong reaction in the Italian general public that does not seem to contemplate a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic nation, regardless the clumsy attempts of the Italian authorities to proceed down this path. The journey has just started.

10. Sport and Xenophobia in Italy

The ghost of Xenophobia is also quite alarmingly present in the Italian sport, especially football and this is also for the long-lasting presence of far-right organizations that often form the framework of the football teams' supporting groups. The 'ultras' as they are called, have all a history of violence and they often channel their political and ideological agenda into football.

In the year 2016 there have been 117 cases of violence, threats and racism against footballers who were of different ethnicity.⁸⁰ Compared to the football season 2014-2015, the 2015-2016 season has seen an increase of 52 cases of this kind. According to the research project named "calciatori sotto tiro" (targeted footballers) promoted by the Associazione Italiana Calciatori, the main target are footballers of African or Middle-Eastern origins.

Xenophobia and violence have been detected both in the Premiere League than in minor and non-professional sport realities. For instance in the year 2016 we have the 24% of xenophobic incidents in the Premiere League; 19% in the minor League C; and 12% in the minor League B and D.⁸¹ An example of racism in football is the incident that occurred on 4 February 2016 during the football match between Napoli AC and Lazio AC, when the

⁷⁹ <https://www.file:///Users/Anna/Downloads/Piano%20Accoglienza%202016%2011%20Marzo%202016.pdf>.

⁸⁰ <https://www.prideonline.it/2016/10/31/calcio-sempre-piu-violento-razzista/> Author: Marco Tosarelli.

⁸¹ Ibid. <https://www.prideonline.it/2016/10/31/calcio-sempre-piu-violento-razzista/> Author: Marco Tosarelli; cfr. <https://www.assocalciatori.it/struttura/calciatori-sotto-tiro>.

African origins footballer Koulibaly, player of the Napoli football team, was welcomed on the pitch by racist slogans by the Lazio team supporters. The referee had to suspend the match for few minutes to avoid an escalation of violence among the two teams' supporters.⁸² In addition, the Procura di Torino (Turin General Attorney) has initiated a probe on alleged mafia infiltrations in some groups of ultra' of the Premiere League football team Juventus AC, looking for a link between organised crime and far-right organisations.

Footballers of different ethnic origins often suffer of arson attacks on their cars or properties or receive threats on their family. The law n.205 (25 June 1993) already included in the 'Codice Giustizia Sportiva' (Code of Sport Justice) contemplates measures for those football teams and sport associations that in some ways, promote violence or racial discrimination. However, considering the constant growing of episodes of intolerance and xenophobia registered in the last five years (249), on 22 August 2014 has been adopted a law decree (law n.119) that contemplates the so-called DASPO, an absolute denial of accessing to sport infrastructures or stadiums by individuals responsible of acts of violence, racism and xenophobia. This further legal measure adopted in 2014, should re-enforce the safety in stadiums and contain the xenophobic violence often manifested in sport occasions. It must be added, that the introduction of the DASPO is to strengthen the already suspension of the match in case of severe episodes of violence occurring during the sport event as already applied by the FIGC (Federazione Italiana Giocatori Calcio).⁸³

In conclusion, being football one of the most popular sports in Italy, it reflects the general trend of the Italian population on foreigners or individuals that belong to different cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds. The fact that for instance, there are Premiere League football teams like Lazio AC, who notoriously have a strong far-right supporter network, tells how much need to be done by the official Italian sport associations in order to contain and eventually eliminate totally this aspect of Italian sport. The repression of these acts of xenophobic violence by the Italian authorities with laws and legal restrictions are welcome but more need to be done by the institutions to prevent such acts and to educate the younger generations of Italians to sport competition, fairness and tolerance but above all, to not discriminate on the base of ethnicity or of different cultures or religions.

⁸² https://www.corrieredellosport.it/news/calcio/serie-a/2016/02/04-8171577/cori_razzisti_koulibaly_grazie_allarbitro_e-ai_giocatori_laziali_keita_ti_ammiro/.

⁸³ https://www.asgi.it/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/2016_ECRI_ITA-CbC-V-2016-ITA-1.pdf.

11. Glorification of Nazi-fascism and Holocaust Denial in Italy

In Italy the legislation that punishes the glorification of Fascism is rather vague and incomplete. The ‘Scelba Act’ of 1952 forbade the constitution of fascist party but remained rather vague on the glorification of Mussolini’s regime and of Fascism as ideology. The very same historical fact that in Italy there was a neo-fascist party legally sitting in the Parliament from 1946 to 1993 tells how the Italians have not totally expelled fascism from their political system and collective memory.

Furthermore, the small village of Predappio, Mussolini’s birthplace is still a tourist place that recalls every year nostalgic individuals of the *Ventennio* with several souvenir shops that sell merchandise of fascist flavour. In our internet era, there are also 2 websites that were created in 2016 and where it is possible to purchase fascist gadgets from t-shirts with the effigy of the *Duce* to the whole uniform of the ‘camicie nere’ (black shirts), the notorious Fascist paramilitary group.⁸⁴ But besides Predappio or the websites that sell Fascist gadgets and souvenirs, what is more worrying is the number of Facebook pages that do praise Fascism, Mussolini and fascist ideology. In 2016, they have been counted up to 94 pages on Facebook that have such contents.⁸⁵ Not only that, but among these 94 Facebook pages inspired openly to Fascism, there is one particular page named ‘Fascismo’ that recalls its inspiration to fascist ideology and Fascism and counted in 2016, 29.000 ‘like’ while the page dedicated to Mussolini, counted 30.000 ‘like’.⁸⁶

In the spring 2016, In the town of Varese (Lombardy region), the Italian police has reported 13 individuals between 20 and 40 years of age that from the Facebook page ‘Neri Vessilli’ (Black Banners) were inciting and propagating racial hate, violence and xenophobia. In Venice, still in the year 2016, a high school teacher has posted on her Facebook page comments that incite to the killing of all Muslim children while praising and glorifying Fascism. There are also reports that see a group of ultra supporters of the Juventus AC

⁸⁴ <https://www.ilduce.net> and <https://www.ilventennio.it>

⁸⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/Consulta-Provinciale-Antifascista-di-Ravenna-Associazione-Culturale-66358754113901/>.

⁸⁶ <https://www.espresso.repubblica.it/attualita/2016/10/25/news/apologia-del-fascismo-la-legge-scelba-non-basta-1.286549>.

football team, doing the Fascist salute and chanting racist and xenophobic verses, as reported by the Italian journalist Maurizio Crosetti.⁸⁷

The ‘Scelba Act’ therefore, does not seem to provide enough norms and legislation to contain the far-right movements or the glorification of Fascism with its nostalgic revisionism that feeds the selling of fascist gadgets and that include 94 Facebook pages with clear ideological fascist blueprint. The EU has often rebuked Italy on its legislation on the matter but insofar nothing happened at the level of change of legislation. However, if the legislation regarding the glorification of Fascism shows some lacunae, the Italian legislation on the crime of ‘revisionism’ or denial of the Holocaust has instead been regulated by a new legislation (as already explained in subsection 1 of the present report).

This new law comes to improve the already existing legislation on this matter that goes back to 1975, and intends to oppose and stop any form of revisionism or denial of the Holocaust that is becoming more frequent especially on websites of fascist orientation.⁸⁸ The legislation has been welcomed as a further step in stopping the wide spreading of far-right groups and far-right intellectuals that are appealing especially the Italian youth from their Internet pages.

12. The Position of Human Rights Activists in Italy

The position of human rights activists has been worsening in the year 2016 as the growing intolerance toward immigrants has been augmenting quite considerably. Volunteer associations or groups are increasingly threatened and often find themselves in open quarrels and dispute with far-right groups or citizens’ committees that do not appreciate their involvement with migrants or refugees.

There is a considerable number of human rights associations both at national and local level. Most of the human rights groups are organised and supervised by the Catholic Church that is on the frontline for the assistance to the migrants and often cooperates with the Italian authorities within their hosting and integration programme. But also other Churches, religious

⁸⁷ Ibid. <https://www.espresso.repubblica.it/attualita/2016/10/25/news/apologia-del-fascismo-la-legge-scelba-non-basta-1.286549>.

⁸⁸ https://www.adkronos.com/fatti/politica/2016/06/08/shoah-camera-approva-ddl-negazionismo-reato_RgeXKFUGyxxqEqslxNyJL.html?refresh_ce.

denominations or lay organisations are working providing shelter, support and integration to minorities.

In the year 2016, Italy seemed split in two halves: one half made of Italian citizens either privately or part of one of the above mentioned associations, helping and genuinely providing comfort to the minorities of the Roma or the refugees and migrants arrived on Italian soil.

The other half, completely opposed to the programme of sheltering, supporting and integrating of migrants and refugees. This schizophrenia detected in the Italian population can be explained by many factors concurring to determine the more than palpable intolerance and xenophobia registered in the country. One of the main factor to determine this attitude in the populace has been the growing popularity of ultra-nationalist and populist parties like the Lega Nord, who has often fed the local communities with fear and xenophobic instances on the arrival of refugees and migrants or on how to ‘solve the problem’ of the Roma communities.

This has determined a heated and volatile socio-political climate that has generated episodes of racist intolerance and violence not only against the categories targeted but also against the human rights associations that were supporting those categories. Most of the incidents that saw as victims human rights associations or even simple private citizens who wished to help, occurred in the year 2016 when the Italian authorities introduced the SPRAP programme to face the influx of Syrian and Iraqi refugees and that was eventually extended also to other migrants’ categories like asylum seekers or economic migrants. As already explained in a previous subsection of the present report, the SPRAP programme contemplated a plan of relocation of migrants arriving on the Italian shores interesting town halls and private citizens, especially those who could offer infrastructures like hotels, to host migrants and refugees.

The whole programme was therefore under the attack by those far-right groups like CasaPound, ultra-nationalist parties like the Lega Nord and by private citizens who did not agree with this new initiative of the Italian institutions regarding the allocation of migrants. For instance, Giulio Salvi, owner of an hotel in Valtellina (Lombardy Region), received death threats by postal letter and on Facebook. Or Walter Sorbo, mayor of the small town of Palizzi

(Calabria region, south of the country), also received death threats on a project implying migrants' hosting and integration in the area.

There is also the arson attack at the Mark Hotel (near Macerata, Marche region) to be recorded as the hotel has been made available to host migrants. But most worryingly, is the planting of 4 bombs outside 4 different churches that were all involved in a programme of hosting and helping integrating migrants and refugees in the town of Fermo, the same town where has occurred the xenophobic crime of the death of Nigerian asylum seeker as referred in another subsection of the present report. Another episode of intolerance and xenophobia saw as the target a priest belonging to the association Giovanni XXIII, who wanted to host 60 refugees in some buildings that belonged to a local church. He received death threats and strong manifestation of intolerance by the local community. In the end, fearing for himself and the refugees' safety, he renounced to the project.⁸⁹

The episodes reported above are only a sample that indicates a growing problem in the perception and the prejudice against migrants in Italy as manifested in 2016. The human rights organisations and volunteer groups that intended to cooperate with the official institutions for the hosting and integration of migrants were often threatened and were victims of intimidations and physical and verbal abuse. The work on the field of those associations is therefore becoming increasingly difficult and complicated, leaving the country even more intolerant and prone to hate crime than in previous years.

Conclusion

The present report has attempted to provide an overview of the situation regarding the problem of xenophobia, hate crime and intolerance in Italy. The subsections in which the report has been subdivided into, tend to provide a picture of the problems that Italian authorities and civil societies alike are facing in matter of acceptance of the diversity and of the minorities and migrants' groups.

⁸⁹ <https://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2016/07/10/migranti-dalle-minacce-agli-incendi-fino-alla-proteste-violente-ecco-litalia-xenofoba-contro-chi-accoglie-profughi/2891834/>; cfr. <https://www.repubblica.it/argomenti/xenofobia>; cfr. <https://www.radiovaticana.va/news/2016/11/03/intervento.../1269722>.

In the course of the Report, the picture that emerges is a picture of a country much at the mercy of the populist and ultranationalist derive that parties like the Lega Nord and the M5S rightly represent.

The economic and financial crisis, the high level of unemployment together with an unresolved issue in matter of education to tolerance, diversity and acceptance of the other, have determined a volatile socio-political climate that has contributed to create pockets of xenophobia, intolerance and racism with the return of forms of neo-fascism, especially exemplified by far-right movements like CasaPound and Forza Nuova, for instance. This climate of intolerance has generated episodes of hate crimes and the mistrust in the police forces often impeded those who were victims to report such abuses. The legislation in matter of hate crime is rather vague and confused and does not provide a strong terrain on which initiate a proper repression and prevention of crimes linked to new forms of fascism.

Another aspect that has been analysed here is the process of religious and political radicalism, as Italy, like many other European countries, has to deal with the growing problem of jihadist recruitment by groups like ISIS. But also, in the report it has been highlighted the potential radicalism detected within certain circles of the Catholic community and the growing political legitimacy of overtly far-right groups like CasaPound.

The political class does not seem to be able to resolve the problem of the increasing intolerance of large part of the population toward refugees, asylum seekers or economic migrants but on the contrary, seem to be at the mercy of ultra-nationalist and populist forces. The legislation existing does not protect enough the more vulnerable categories of people like migrants and minorities. Finally, the glorification of fascism is on the rise thanks also to the use of the social media platforms that contributed even more to feed the ultra-nationalist populism of parties like the Lega Nord and the radicalisation on the territory of far-right realities.

The result of all this, is that xenophobic violence and hate crime are perpetrated by common members of the public and not just necessarily by members of far-right or neo-fascist organisations. This is the worrying element emerging from this report. The public opinion has been misled in feeling threatened by migrants and has reached a point where violence against the diverse is considered acceptable and felt as a necessary self-defence as many human

rights organisations that work with migrants, refugees and minorities have the opportunity to experience in their every day life.

Recommendations

There are several aspects that need to be addressed when looking at Italy and its issues with hate crime, xenophobia or more generally speaking, its intolerance toward the diverse, the minorities and in other words, toward the other.

What emerges is a lack of education in the Italian population on people, cultures and religions they are not familiar with. It would be therefore desirable a programme that would seriously educate the autochthonous population to the acceptance of the other.

The other recommendation I am inclined to make is that the Italian authorities should finally revise and issue a proper legislation that could regulate hate crime in all its declinations. Insofar, not much has been done in this sense. In Italy therefore, it is still easy to racially abuse somebody without a proper legislation that punishes this type of crime.

The other recommendation I would make, after researching and writing this report, is a better balanced media information on the problem of the migrants as at the moment, many Italians have a distorted perception of the real scope of the situation. Finally, my last recommendation goes to regulate the hate speech that often is detected in Parliamentary parties like the Lega Nord, who can be considered partly responsible of the volatile and intolerant climate present in Italy.

Oxford, July 2017