

Towards an intercultural community

**2014-2016 THREE-YEAR PROGRAMME FOR SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF
FOREIGN CITIZENS (ART. 3, PARAGRAPH 2 OF R.L. 5/2004) approved
by Regional Board Resolution No. 156 of April 2, 2014**

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INTRODUCTION

“Towards an intercultural community”: this is the title chosen for the Emilia-Romagna regional programme that will be implemented over the next three years to further improve integration policies in favour of foreign nationals.

The initial basic assumption is that we are and we will continue to become an ever more diverse society in terms of background, language, culture and religion. This *métissage* will increasingly turn into an asset for our society, thanks to the contribution provided by migrants.

The experience gained over recent years confirms that this process does not occur spontaneously and that the outcome is not obvious. Medium-term governance policies are indeed required, to guarantee equal opportunities to all and to promote inclusive processes between old and new residents at a local level.

Although we are already aware of it, it should be pointed out once again that the contribution to regional wealth (GDP) by foreign nationals has now reached around 16% of the total and therefore the challenge to bounce back from the economic crisis must be faced together, by investing on quality and innovation, bearing in mind that the destiny of our whole community is at stake.

Hence, there is an imperative need to implement appropriate inclusion policies enabling immigrants to benefit from equal opportunities, on an equal footing with all the other residents, primarily through local community networks and relationship systems, i.e.: public administration (services), labour and representation (citizenship) networks as well as informal community and family networks.

In contrast, exclusion means not being connected to any of these networks, even beyond having a home or a job. For this reason, the use and access to networks becomes crucial through language and cultural mediation, information campaigns and desks.

In essence, these are the elements that have been integrated into the four main pillars of the regional programme, which will give rise to a multiplicity of priority actions, including Italian language courses and intercultural mediation and training initiatives, as well as information and awareness-raising campaigns about the rights and duties of these new citizens.

Vasco Errani

the President

FOREWORD

The Emilia-Romagna Regional government, through Regional Law no. 5/2004 on "Rules for the social integration of foreign migrant citizens," has acknowledged the migration phenomenon as a structural component of the regional context. Therefore, a specific regulation has been adopted by the Emilia-Romagna Regional authority to exercise its full competence, along with local authorities, in the domain of social integration of foreign citizens¹.

Demographic changes are characterized by an aging population, a declining working-age population, the demand for labour in specific segments and the existence of a consolidated welfare system: they have thus set the scene for future migration flows and trends in the Emilia-Romagna region.

In 2013 the regional population amounted to 4,471,104 residents, of which 547,552 with non-Italian citizenship and of these about 20% of citizens belonging to the European Union².

Despite a significant slowdown in growth since the onset of the economic crisis in 2008, the migration phenomenon has steadily increased, year after year. Hence, the incidence of non-Italian residents out of the total regional population has risen from 8.6% in 2008 to 12.2% in 2013.

Over the last decade (2003-2013) a growth of around 10% of the total population has occurred, almost entirely due to the presence of foreign citizens. The development of increasingly sophisticated population projections at national³ and regional⁴ level leads to forecasts of a further increase in the total regional population of around 5% by 2020, with an incidence of the foreign population that will exceed 17% of the total population (about 800,000 people).

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- 1 The Constitutional Court has repeatedly validated the regulatory framework of Regional Law n. 5 dated 24 March 2004. The questions of constitutionality raised by the Council of Ministers in May 2004 were declared inadmissible by the Supreme Court, through judgment no. 300 dated 7 July 2005 and subsequent judgment n. 50 dated 7 March 2008, which reaffirmed the full responsibility of the Regional and Local Authorities in the field of social integration of foreign nationals.
 - 2 It should be noted that under Art. 2 of R.L. 5/2004, "planned actions... are to be extended, subject to the EU and national rules and regulations, to citizens of the European Union, if not already recipients of more favorable benefits in compliance with the existing national and regional rules".
 - 3 According to the 2013 UN Population Report, over the next 40 years, approximately 130,000 immigrants shall be recorded every year in Italy.
 - 4 In particular, reference is made to the ongoing analysis within the framework of the MMWD (Making Migration Work for Development) project and to strategic planning instruments for South-East European Regions and Cities, a strategic project co-funded by the Transnational Cooperation Programme for South-East Europe (SEE), which will be concluded at the end of October 2014 and which brings together 21 partners, led by the Department of Social Affairs and Immigration of the Emilia-Romagna Region, in collaboration with the Regional Statistical Service (<http://www.migration4growth.eu/>).

By 2020, nearly one-third of the Italian population is estimated to be over 65 years old (27%), compared to 4% of over 65 year-old foreign nationals. About 60% of foreign residents are estimated to be under 40, with an expected incidence of around 28% in the 0-39 years age group⁵.

The regional society is therefore faced with a growing cultural diversity, linked, although not exclusively, to a stabilization of the migration phenomenon, which includes over 170 different nationalities. An increasingly diverse regional population (in terms of backgrounds, languages, cultures, religions, socio-economic conditions) raises the crucial issue of the need for a redefinition of a new citizenship agreement between migrants and natives and between new residents and local governments.

It is a quest for social cohesion through the enhancement of social capital, skills and capabilities of foreign nationals.

In this sense, public policies must be strengthened to invest in cultural dialogue and diversity, focusing on people and on their fundamental rights⁶.

Policies and measures taken in recent years have highlighted a few specific aspects of migrant conditions, starting from a special complex national legislation, a widespread need to learn the language as well as other urgent needs to receive guidance to access services and the persistence of the transnational dimension in their life projects.

At the same time, the increasing complexity of people's lives requires a greater capacity of distinction between different targets and needs in the wide world of migration (gender, age, legal status, qualifications, vulnerability, migration projects..) in order to put appropriate actions in place. Over the coming years, a challenge will have to be met to support welfare services in providing culturally competent and effective response to tackle the needs and/or phenomena of unprecedented complexity expressed by foreign nationals.

This is even more urgent in a context that is ever more characterized by unplanned migration (asylum seekers) or temporary migration (seasonal migrants), who require inter-institutional co-ordinated response between central and national actions both at regional and local levels.

The above-mentioned changes also imply the need for institutions to ensure the full recognition of rights to the whole population, preventing any form of exclusion and discrimination. These issues potentially concern all those who are perceived as individuals belonging to a "minority" or as "different", fragile

5 This estimate assumes of course that the rules for the acquisition of citizenship remains unchanged. A change in legislation of L. 91/92, especially related to the acquisition of citizenship for children born in Italy, would lead to a radical redefinition of numerical forecasts.

6 According to UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) "No one may invoke cultural diversity to infringe upon human rights guaranteed by international law, nor to limit their scope."

and marginal subjects. Investing in measures to ensure equal opportunities for all means launching an inclusion process of more disadvantaged social groups, based on specific identity and personal conditions. Furthermore, the current economic crisis scenario is likely to become a fertile ground for the growth of multiple forms of discrimination.

Exclusion is not only related to a single dimension, such as gender identity, skin colour, religious belief, sexual orientation or disability, but it may stem from the superposition of all these factors. The resulting social inequalities are difficult to prevent and remove because of their multidimensionality, complexity and risk of greater marginalisation.

This calls into question the need to ensure equality of access and use of services, access to goods and services and the implementation of programmes to combat all forms of discrimination.

This is also the reason why the Regional authority has already decided to extend the scope of action of its Anti-Discrimination Centre to all exclusion factors, as provided for by art. 21 of the "Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union".

According to the recent effectiveness assessment of R.L. 5/2004⁷, the Region has become more and more intercultural with a greater settlement stabilization by foreign immigrants, as shown by general behaviours of the two "subpopulations" (Italians and foreigners), which slowly and gradually seem to get closer.

From this point of view, while on the one hand, positive data on access to services, school attendance, welfare and healthcare services has been recorded, on the other hand, foreign workers have been affected by the economic downturn in the Italian economy just like Italian workers.

Along with the economic crisis, at the national level, the planned migration inflow due to work-related reasons has significantly declined, whereas the demand for care work provided by foreign caregivers and family reunification processes have apparently been less affected.

It is an unprecedented scenario in the history of national and regional migration. In a context in which the contribution by foreign workers in the creation of regional wealth (GDP) has now reached about 16% of the total⁸ - thus objectively becoming a structural element of local economy - it should, however, be noted that the steady decline in demand for labour and the simultaneous significant increase in the number of job seekers seem to

7 Report on the valuation clause with reference to R.L.: 5/2004 Standards for the social integration of foreign citizens (art. 20 of the R.L. 5/2004).

8 Source: 2013 Unioncamere Report.

determine a condition in which the supply of labour guaranteed by foreign workers already present in Italy is more than enough⁹.

Therefore, in the short term, a scenario characterized by stabilizing employment needs can be outlined. Priority investments are thus required for redeploying and retraining unemployed foreign workers, through active labour market policies, notably aimed at their re-integration in high innovation and development sectors¹⁰.

This means shifting the policy focus from incoming migration flows to the integration quality, thus fully recognizing integration as a decisive factor in regional investment policies. The Regional Observatory on migration contributes to this analysis in liaison with other regional assessment tools in the demographic, social, school and employment field.

On several occasions, Europe has highlighted that the issues of migration, social cohesion and regional development are closely related¹¹. The Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth refers to the actual and responsible integration of immigrants in the labour market.

Over the next 2014-2020 period, the new European Social Fund, the Asylum and Migration Fund and the "Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme" will be an opportunity to strengthen regional policies in view of integration.

Investing in integration policies, therefore, means investing in quality, by recognizing migration as a growth and development factor for the Emilia-Romagna region and the countries of origin.

The scenario that has been outlined above requires an upstream paradigm shift: migration should no longer be essentially regarded as a marginal "niche" question, which calls for some specific actions by a few community organizations (namely by the most aware and sensitive ones) that are ready to address the challenge.

This approach, although in good faith, is a resistance to the ongoing change process. It is up to the whole regional community to acquire a widespread intercultural awareness and responsibility, to develop a positive attitude towards diversity and to give solid guarantees regarding fundamental rights and equal opportunities.

9 See indications in the "Report on the labour market of foreign nationals in the second quarter of 2013," by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

10 See indications in the "Guidelines for the 2014-2016 three-year period" by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of 10 December 2013, and the assessment of the employment context of national foreign workers in the "9th 2013 CNEL Report on immigrants integration index in Italy".

11 See Communication from the EU Commission: European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals COM(2011) 445, Maximising migration impact on development COM(2013)292.

It is a question of acting in full consistency with the first European principle of integration policies and bearing in mind the principle that integration is “a two-way dynamic process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States”¹².

At regional level, this means adopting a multi-annual “cross-cutting” programming tool for the social integration of foreign nationals, which is able to link up and enhance the already existing regional multiannual programmes in several and individual sectors and to share a medium/long-term vision of the migration phenomenon.

The Regional authority is also responsible for providing promotion, coordination and support to thematic networks, to be regarded as opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge, sharing views and enhancing local initiatives. In terms of implementation, a true “bottom-up” approach must be supported and strengthened, in which local authorities may exercise governance functions for action planning and implementation, by involving a wide range of institutional and non institutional stakeholders (local authorities, third sector, schools, enterprises) always aiming at allowing migrants themselves to play an active role.

The local dimension is crucial, since identity and inclusion processes are closely linked to the quality of relationships established by people in their local community.

In this sense, it is necessary to reiterate that the national statutory framework¹³ on immigration, mainly focusing on admission issues, residence conditions and policies of law enforcement, removal and repatriation of persons residing without authorisation, unquestionably affects the effectiveness of local integration policies.

This is even more evident in today's unstable economic environment, which already poses problems of guaranteeing income for foreign households and maintaining conditions for legal residence. Against this background, the inclusion of women (now accounting for over 50% of total immigration) and of the new generation of children born and/or raised in Italy, undoubtedly accounts for some of the major challenges to be addressed over the coming years.

Foreign women may encounter several potential difficulties in the social inclusion process, ranging from a social isolation condition and a lack of opportunities to learn the Italian language, to difficulties related to the redefinition of their role in the family.

The current economic crisis is likely to further increase immigrants' difficulties in accessing the labour market.

12 “Common Basic Principles for immigrant integration policy in the European Union”, adopted by the Justice and Home Affairs Council in 19 November 2004.

13 Leg. Decree 286/1998 and subsequent amendments.

From this point of view, the set of local and regional policies should give priority to the issues of socio-economic integration of migrant women, the enhancement of their skills and their ability to mediate between genders, generations, contexts of origin and provenance.

With reference to the young men and women who have been studying and working in Italy for many years, it is necessary to support their responsible participation, active engagement in social, school and work activities, which will enhance their talents and skills. They can indeed help build a more creative and innovative society, at the regional level, which will be ready to live up to international challenges. They ask to be regarded as full-fledged citizens of this region, in all respects, like all their Italian peers, and to engage in social, cultural, political life, along with them, in furtherance of the development of the local and regional community.

The inclusive capacity of the education system and the ability to meet social mobility expectations, in particular to achieve a better social and economic status than that of their parents, are the strategic issues to be focused on with the new generations over the coming years, at the same time hoping that a national law reform related to citizenship acquisition can facilitate these important goals.

THE THREE-YEAR STRATEGIC PROGRAM: INCLUSION, EQUALITY AND RIGHTS AND CITIZENSHIP, ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

Four strategic priorities have been identified in the 2014-2016 regional planning: inclusion, equality and rights and citizenship, anti-discrimination. All the regional departments are called upon to provide their contribution, working in synergy towards the achievement of these goals, each one of them within their own field of competence.

The ultimate goal is to help strengthen the institutional network to host immigrants and to promote integration. The regional institutional network should be enabled to timely act, guide and follow up migrants since their arrival to the Region, with the support of all the peripheral State agencies, local authorities and the third sector organisations.

1) INCLUSION

Achieving a good level of social inclusion of migrants is both a goal and a process, which should be promoted and guided by the regional and local policies, through the creation of a plurality of multidimensional and closely related interventions (education, training, employment, social policies, healthcare, housing).

First of all, the Regional authority calls for the provision of an effective education for all, as the main social cohesion tool. The previous annual report data confirm the primacy at the national level of the Emilia-Romagna Region in terms of the percentage of school

attendance by foreign students¹⁴. The priority goal of the Regional authority is to combat early school leaving and to promote the fulfilment of the right/duty to education to qualify entry into the world of work. The Region also intends to continue to implement actions in furtherance of the right to education aimed at ensuring equal opportunities to education and training and support for proper educational performance to foreign students. The new vocational education and training (VET) statutory framework, set forth by R.L. n. 5 of 2011, aims to ensure the completion of compulsory education and the right/duty to education and training and it serves as an effective tool against early school leaving. Since its establishment, foreign students have accounted for approximately 30% of all pupils. The “2011/2013 programming guidelines for the educational system and labour”¹⁵ reaffirm the value of social inclusion, vocational and employment enhancement of immigrants, as a resource and an asset for the achievement of the regional economic development and social cohesion objectives and they identify work retention policies as a tool to prevent migrants from becoming trapped in an illegal status. Education and vocational training initiatives for the integration and reintegration of adults into the labour market will take into account the diverse and additional needs of immigrants, particularly for those who have greater difficulties of inclusion, ranging from the victims of trafficking and exploitation, to refugees and asylum seekers. Different work integration initiatives will also be promoted to respond to immigrants’ needs, taking into account their individual specific needs and difficulties, using suitable tools, such as guidance, training, job placements, work integration or reintegration in favour of asylum seekers (R.L.7/13 and implementing provisions).

With reference to the work context, according to the ongoing ISTAT survey on Labour Force, the Emilia-Romagna region is characterized by a large presence of non-EU workers (almost 13% of total employment in 2012), mainly concentrated in a few specific sectors (i.e. Industry, Community /Personal Services, Building, Hotels/Catering, Transport /Storage) and low-skilled jobs (more than 75% of immigrant workers are blue collars).

While overall employment has been affected by the crisis since 2008, foreign workforce has increased so as to substantially offset the employment decline in Italian workforce¹⁶. Yet, over the years, this has not prevented the decrease of the employment rate and the increase of the unemployment rate of foreign workers, due to an increase in the number of foreigners in working age (15-64 years) and also in the number of foreigners who for the first time

14 During the 2012/2013 school year, foreign students accounted for 15% of the total school population, compared to a national average of 8.8%.

15 Its extension was submitted to the Legislative Assembly by Resolution of the Regional Government nr. 1662/2013

16 From 2008 to 2012: – 68,000 Italian employees + 57,000 foreign employees.

decided to start working due to a significant drop in the household income¹⁷. Over seventy percent of employees do not exceed 45 years of age, with home-based caregiving work accounting for almost 50% of the total female employment.

The context described above seems to foreshadow a condition in which the supply of labour guaranteed by foreign workers already present in Italy seems to be more than enough in the coming years¹⁸. Regulatory instruments provided for the programming of qualified incoming workers, pursuant to art. 23 of Legislative Decree 286/98, have not so far been applied by companies, since they are considered to be too expensive and often difficult to implement. The Regional authority must therefore primarily invest on supplementary education and retraining processes of unemployed foreign workers, within the framework of more general active labour market policies, bearing the following key concepts in mind: administrative simplification, inter-institutional co-operation and "networking" between the public and private sector. Over the past few years the entrepreneurial vocation of foreign nationals has also increased, thus reaching around 8-10% of total individual business owners. No dedicated interventions and/or priority allocations are envisaged for enterprises led by foreigners, but their promotion, development and consolidation can be pursued through actions common to all firms, in order to ensure:

- Equal access to all business sectors and equal access to all business activities;
- Support for start-ups, enterprise consolidation and development through guarantee tools facilitating access to credit also for these companies;
- Constant monitoring of firm performance to identify their specific features and levels of social and economic integration achieved.

As far as the social dimension is concerned, the guidelines that have been set forth, in view of the implementation of the 2013/2014 Regional Health and Social Plan¹⁹, confirm the choices made by the 2008-2010 Regional Health and Social Plan, but also intend to update priorities in the light of the economic crisis. In particular, they envisage the promotion and revitalization of public policies for the integration of welfare and healthcare services as well as the involvement of other sectors (education, training, employment,

17 In 2012, the employment rate was 61.2%, lower than the total employment rate by 6.4 points. The employment rate, by gender, was also lower: 71.7% for males and 51.6% for females, namely 2.2 points and almost 10 points less respectively. In contrast, the unemployment rate was higher, double the level related to the overall population, accounting for 15.5%, respectively 14.1% for males and 17.3% for females.

18 See indications emerging from the "Report on the labour market of foreign nationals in the second quarter of 2013," by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

19 Resolution by the Legislative Assembly 117 dated June 18, 2013

urban planning, etc...), thus going well beyond a sector-specific programming vision.

In line with this approach, the central role to be played by each individual and the need for a person-centered system has been emphasized, shifting away from a general service supply system or individual specializations. Targeted welfare services and interventions specifically designed for foreign nationals are no longer a reality and they are by now regarded as a residual component of past welfare services addressed to all²⁰, which are now mainly targeted to the newly arrived and/or particularly vulnerable specific target groups (asylum seekers, unaccompanied minors, victims of trafficking, etc...) aimed at catering for special needs (learning the Italian language, mediation, guidance).

In this sense, special attention must be paid to the entry phase of family reunification (children and adults), which is a very sensitive and critical time that is likely to lead to an effective hosting and integration project, through networking between multiple agencies (prefectures, education, social services), even prior to the family's arrival to Italy.

As part of the priority areas identified by the aforementioned 2013/2014 Health and Social Plan a few emerging issues have been identified: the growing impoverishment process, the need to shape and build a sustainable future for youth, the need to support dependent persons, such as the elderly and the disabled, and the need to recognize and appreciate the growing multicultural context, to reinforce social cohesion, to ensure equal access, equal opportunities and to prevent potential discrimination and social unrest. In this sense, it is necessary to shift away from the old approach based on separate targeted specific goals towards, instead, a broad regional programme, taking into account the aforementioned emerging issues and enhancing the decision-making and action planning freedom and empowerment of associated Municipalities at district level. Programming resources shall be allocated by the Local Social Fund at district level. In compliance with the Health and Social Plan guidelines, this fund envisages the allocation of a minimum percentage of spending for a range of specific interventions aimed at fostering migrants' integration. Given the widening scope of the phenomenon, it will be necessary to respond to growing and diverse needs, also through the other main thematic priorities (rising impoverishment, childcare, family, youth issues). It will also be vital to coordinate the regional social planning within the framework of new programming opportunities and interventions, which will be implemented under the Asylum and Migration Fund. In this regard, the following priorities can be identified:

- Specific activities related to Italian language learning programs for adults;
- Intercultural mediation services and, more generally, territorial and community mediation experiences to prevent and combat social phenomena, such as urban ghettoisation;

²⁰ They account for approximately 1-2% on an annual basis of total social spending in the Municipalities of the Emilia-Romagna Region, source ISTAT.

- Information, guidance, advice relating to foreign immigration;
- Specific actions in schools aimed at children and their families, with particular attention to newly arrived students and to upper secondary school students, in order to combat early school leaving;
- The enhancement of different cultural identities of young people of foreign origin through active citizenship initiatives in schools and in the local community;
- Measures to promote cross-cultural activities (intercultural communication, intercultural centres, intercultural training for operators, enhancement of foreign languages), promotion of migrant associations and involvement in public life, as well as interventions aimed at specific target groups (asylum seekers and refugees, victims of trafficking, unaccompanied minors, women in conditions of social isolation).

The impoverishment process, which has affected the national and regional society, has increasingly concerned also a part of the migrant community.

A few factors contributing to this effect: from the employment point of view, foreign workers receive a significantly lower net income on average than Italian workers²¹, with a concentration in low-skilled jobs, while from the social point of view, there is a growing number of large single-income households, also characterized by a weak network of parental support. Net differences have therefore been recorded between Italians and foreigners as for the main indicators of economic difficulties, which have resulted into an increased access to public services catering for basic necessities²².

It is necessary to implement a whole set of mechanisms and measures in the social, labour, education and housing domain, to ensure that material difficulties are not even more exacerbated by social discomfort and isolation (which is a further sensitive issue for foreigners, since the loss of job could mean the loss of the right of residence).

The fight against poverty and social exclusion is a priority in the 2013-2014 Health and Social Plan. From this point of view, the set of planned interventions within the district (actions in support of income, employment and housing, actions to respond to emergency basic needs, provision of meals and clothing, etc...) will be addressed for nationals and foreigners, on an equal footing, as required by the specific regional statutory provisions (R.L. 2/2003).

21 According to an estimate of the Regional Agency for Public Health and Social Well-being foreign workers receive a lower salary by 20-25% than Italians.

22 Approximately 34% of foreign households are in a condition of material deprivation, compared with 7% of Italian households (source: Eurostat 2012, 2011-2012 Report on Policies against poverty and social exclusion by the Ministry of Social Affairs) and over 70% of people accessing so-called Emilia-Romagna Caritas "Listening Centres" is made up of foreigners.

In recent years, the presence of caregivers has significantly increased²³. The main criticism that is raised is related to the persistence of undeclared employment in this area, which may lead to cases of exploitation, isolation, violence, or inadequate care. The guidelines for the qualification and transition from undeclared to declared employment of family caregivers have been defined in the new programming of the Regional Fund for Care for Dependent Persons (FRNA). In the coming years it will be necessary to contact and involve family caregivers residing in the region to enhance their skills, to promote regular job contracts and inclusion in the local community and in the service network, by strengthening coordination and cooperation and engaging all public and private stakeholders concerned. In a context characterized by the growth in the number of children and foreign households²⁴, educational, preschools and school services are the first socialization context for children belonging to different cultures and often the first meeting point for families. Over the next three years it will be necessary to implement three operating steps:

- Implement the outcomes of major research work carried out in the past in order to qualify the training paths of staff working in the regional integrated pre-school services;
- Redesign the educational projects of all 0-3 childcare services in the light of regional guidelines introducing, among other assessment indicators, also the relational capacity of education staff towards families belonging to different cultures of origin;
- Design new multimedia material devoted to the integrated 0-6 service system, without neglecting aspects dedicated to intercultural issues.

Furthermore, a very important role can be played by family planning clinics and family support centres, which by now are mainly used by foreign families at least in fifty per cent of cases. Therefore, the 31 family centres present in the region shall have to further strengthen their activities, with the support of family planning clinics and community pediatric services, , in order to:

- Provide integrated, user-friendly and accessible information about all the available services and resources, institutional and informal opportunities for children and families;
- Promote and support parenting skills, to deal with the difficulties encountered in raising children in a different cultural context;

23 In 2011, at the regional level, according to INPS (the National Social Security Institution) database, contributions were paid to INPS for nearly 80,000 domestic workers, 63% of whom came from Eastern Europe, 12% from Italy and 6% from the Philippines.

24 124,718 foreign minors resided in the Emilia-Romagna region as of 01/01/2013, accounting for 17.5% of the overall under-age population, with a remarkable increase compared to 2008 (13.1%) and compared to the average foreign population accounting for 12.2% as against the overall population.

- Make meeting spaces available for foreign families and children as well as shared support projects for families at large.

As far as foreign teenagers are concerned, it is not easy for them to address all the new complex challenges, including the difficult task to work out their dual identity and membership to their families and cultures of origin and to the country in which they live.

In this regard, the Emilia-Romagna Regional Authority has approved the "Guidelines for wellbeing promotion and risk prevention in adolescence (Regional Government Decision RGD No 590/13) and it has addressed the issue of multicultural education in school, focusing on the importance of promoting a mutual dialogue and exchange between school and the different cultures, by enhancing the different languages of origin, and by involving families in the review of school curricula.

Furthermore, the Regional Authority has also developed and disseminated a document on the "best practices for the prevention of risky sexual behaviours among adolescents of foreign origin", in co-operation with youth services, which should be promoted in school health education activities. Starting from the assumption that people's health is deeply influenced by socio-economic factors and context, the system should continuously detect the foreign population's needs, by listening to them, collecting information, providing advice and guidance to facilitate service accessibility and usability, taking into account that the birth, care and growth of children are precious occasions to come in touch with the services and may thus become privileged areas of intervention.

In this context, it was considered appropriate, at regional level, to improve care of vulnerable children, by providing families with the opportunity to make the choice of the primary care paediatrician (RGD no. 2099/2013) for children under the age of 14 living in the region and for children of illegally residing immigrants (IRI). From this point of view, district Authorities must enforce the decision, in collaboration with directly involved associations, to promote access to the service network in a proactive manner. The Regional Health Service implements effective programs, as part of the prevention framework, in compliance with Essential Levels of Care (ELC /LEA) in public health through community health services. Active and free-of-charge services, extended to the whole population have always been one of the major strengths of the prevention programme.

However, the immigrant population's specific needs require an additional dedicated commitment. They include of course language and cultural barriers, so that for some nationalities prevention is not considered to be important. Therefore, one of the priority commitments for the Regional Authority is to implement prevention and health promotion policies aimed at bridging the gap and providing equal opportunities, also by designing specific, targeted actions in addition to programmes addressed to all. Both the 2011-2013 National and Regional Prevention Plans have set forth a few priority objectives, including the promotion of greater equality of treatment and access to services, ensuring the protection and care of the weakest brackets of the population and emphasizing the importance of prevention programmes, also aimed at population groups at risk. As a matter of fact, specific activities targeting the immigrant population, the Roma as well as the prison population are carried out both in the framework of vaccination,

cancer screening, and domestic accident prevention programmes. Furthermore, over the coming years, the Regional Authority also envisages to monitor and co-ordinate prevention efforts and health promotion activities that are going to be implemented in this region in favour of particularly vulnerable target groups, such as migrants and ethnic minorities.

Regarding women and childhood health, the Regional Authority has joined the national "parents plus" campaign aimed at the promotion of children's health in a cross-cultural perspective, through the distribution of brochures, information material in various languages, a DVD and specific training for professionals. This campaign is associated with the regional project called "Born to Read", which promotes early reading out aloud (children aged 0-6 years) and using information material in their languages and providing the disadvantaged population with easier access to libraries participating in the project, with particular attention to the migrant population (books in original languages). The "Regional Guidelines for the care of abused/ ill-treated children and adolescents" shall be implemented in the region, through Regional Government Decision RGD No 1677/2013.

The Regional Authority has joined the National Project for abortion prevention in the immigrant population of the National Institute of Health. The project has already been developed in two local health districts (Modena and Bologna) and the best practices that have been acquired shall be disseminated in all the regional family planning services by 2014. The national physiological pregnancy system guidelines have been transposed in the regional legislation and in 2014 training/information material shall be designed in a cross-cultural perspective.

Regional Family Planning Clinics shall also be staffed with language-cultural mediators to support women with communication problems. In addition, in most provincial chief towns, Family Planning Clinics shall be equipped with dedicated free and direct access spaces for newly migrated women and children to further facilitate access.²⁵

A steady increase has been recorded in the number of migrant users of mental health services, both in absolute terms and percentages. This area includes neuropsychiatry services, drug addiction treatment centres (SERT) and mental health services for adults²⁶.

A set of actions should be put in place to overcome a certain number of difficulties that still prevent migrant users from accessing services (fear of being reported to law enforcement authorities especially in the case of migrant persons residing without authorisation, fear of being stigmatised by their own communities, language barriers) as well as other difficulties experienced by care services themselves (difficulties in building support networks, weak linkages between emergency services and community services, insufficient knowledge of the approach to health and sickness in migrants' cultures of origin). Hence, the following actions would be necessary:

²⁵ In 2012, 25% of family clinic users were of foreign origin.

²⁶ In 2012, they accounted approximately for 14% of neuropsychiatry and adolescence services, 12% of (drug addiction treatment centres) Sert services and 6% of mental health services for adults.

- Enabling partnerships between drug addiction treatment centres (SERT), Local Authorities and the Third Sector to provide shared hosting and care by emergency services, welfare and healthcare services and the third sector;
- Promoting the involvement of the community, whenever possible, and/or people in the same course of treatment;
- Promoting information activities, providing multilingual brochures and leaflets to increase migrants' knowledge about the risks associated with the use of substances, the Italian legislation, welfare and healthcare facilities;
- Providing specific training to practitioners and increase the presence of language and cultural mediators in addiction treatment services.

In the field of housing and urban planning, the Emilia-Romagna Regional authority is equipped with an instrument to promote urban regeneration and to combat conditions of neglect and decay, through Regional Law R.L. no.19/1998 on "Rules on urban regeneration".

Regional Law no. 24/2001 "General rules on public housing" was issued by the Emilia-Romagna Regional Authority to promote policies and actions in the public housing sector, by making flats available for rent or through ownership schemes to support low-income households entitled to housing benefits, having difficulties in meeting their housing requirements on the free market.

With reference to the objectives pursued by the above-mentioned laws, and in particular to housing policy issues, it should be pointed out that access to public housing and other measures is also made available to foreign residents to promote access to subsidized rent or ownership schemes, in compliance with regional rules and regulations that guarantee equal treatment to both foreign and Italian citizens. No specific regional housing policy measures or interventions targeted to foreign immigrants are envisaged.

As far as housing problems are concerned, since 2011 the Emilia-Romagna Regional Authority has allocated increasingly larger amounts of resources to Provincial Authorities and chief towns to implement actions aimed at tackling housing difficulties and supporting low-income households through subsidized rents. Hence, Provincial Protocols have been signed by public institutions, the third sector and owners and tenants' associations. Over the coming years regional actions and subsidies shall be granted to both Italian citizens and legally residing foreign nationals.

In the next future, programmes already launched in previous years (urban regeneration programmes, District Contracts, Integrated programmes for the promotion of social housing and urban regeneration) will be further implemented, especially in those areas which require specific support and involvement actions targeted to the local community (especially in cases of neighbourhoods with a high rate of immigrants) in order to promote participation as well as conflict-solving and prevention.

These actions are intertwined with other initiatives put in place by regional security policies, which are frequently urged to take action to tackle conflict issues (including inter-ethnic issues) on the use of public space and the representation of "others" as dangerous. From this point of view, it is also necessary to train local law enforcement authorities towards a new culture to help agents better understand the needs and problems that might arise in a multicultural society.

A Regional/Municipal Framework Agreement has been developed to support urban safety and security actions at the local level, which also includes intercultural issues.

2) JUSTICE AND RIGHTS

With regard to access and use of services, art. 1 of Regional Law 5/2004 provides for equal opportunities for all to access services, thus ruling out the need to design targeted "separate" services exclusively reserved for certain target groups, except for special situations and times.

The need to remove language, cultural and organizational obstacles in taking charge and designing social and work inclusion paths for migrants appears to be even more compelling when applied to a wide range of socially vulnerable people, such as applicants and beneficiaries of international and humanitarian protection, unaccompanied minors, victims of trafficking, violence and/or forced marriages, and ex-offenders.

Each target group, although having their own regulatory and social specific features, requires an integrated strategic response to meet their specific needs. Specific interventions should be designed for each one of them in the general welfare, training and employment policy framework. In this sense, even assisted voluntary return programmes of third-country nationals to their country of origin should be promoted and supported, with a guarantee to fully protect the most vulnerable groups.

Over the past few years, the annual regional monitoring has consistently recorded a growth in the number of refugees present in the region²⁷ as well as a corresponding gradual growth in the set of specific hosting activities implemented by local authorities - although still insufficient – at the provincial level, in liaison with the national SPRAR (Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees) network funded by the Ministry of the Interior. In this framework characterized by a general greater awareness and hosting opportunities, a few problems still remain, and in particular:

- Unequal access to services and an incomplete link between specialized hosting projects (SPRAR) and local welfare policies;
- few social and employment inclusion prospects for beneficiaries of international and humanitarian protection.

27 According to the Regional Monitoring, by the end of 2012, 4,476 asylum seekers, refugees, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection and beneficiaries of humanitarian protection were recorded by law enforcement authorities, accounting for 14% more than the previous year and more than doubled if compared to 2006.

From this point of view, it is essential to:

- Establish a closer link between specialist hosting services and the broader local welfare system, opting for a widespread reception of asylum seekers and refugees throughout the regional territory;
- Promote a stable integration, starting from the acquisition of permanent residence data, access to training and active labour market policies, access to welfare and health services with a special focus on the conditions of victims of torture or violence;
- Continue the annual monitoring activity on the asylum situation in the Emilia-Romagna region;
- Update the 2004 Regional Protocol on Asylum, in line with the new European and national rules and regulations and with the commitments undertaken by the Regional government, local authorities, Institutional and non Institutional stakeholders, involved in these issues, for various, with a view to the development and further strengthening of a regional asylum and migrant integration system;
- Carry out trainers' training and information dissemination on international protection issues, in particular on the occasion of the International Day of Refugees (June 20);
- Set up a regional technical coordination unit on asylum issues, through the involvement of local authorities, third sector organizations and trade unions and, at the same, to provide its contribution in the framework of the Regional asylum forum presided over by the Prefecture of Bologna;
- Maintain a close link between theoretical and operational aspects of issues related to asylum, human trafficking and unaccompanied children, also through proposals for coordinated and joint multi-agency activities.

Over the past few years the migration phenomenon has also been characterized by an inflow of people into the region through forced human trafficking paths often leading to exploitation and prostitution.

For all these reasons, the Emilia-Romagna Region is seriously committed to combating and preventing human trafficking through the "Progetto Oltre la Strada" ("Beyond the Street Project"), namely an integrated system of welfare and health services to prevent and combat prostitution and trafficking in human beings, based on an agreement between the Emilia Romagna region, the public sector and the third sector, engaged in community-based networks, and other local stakeholders engaged in the field (law enforcement and judicial authorities) and many other stakeholders who can provide their contribution: health services, social and welfare services, unions, training providers, NGOs.

Through this extensive network, "Progetto Oltre la Strada" enables beneficiaries to:

- access protective measures laid down by national legislation (individualized assistance programmes, in accordance with Article 13 of Law 228/2003 and Article 18 of the Consolidated Immigration Act);

- benefit from the rights laid down by the European Union Directives regarding: the right to reception and support; the right to assistance before, during and after criminal proceedings; the right to compensation; the right to full social integration or assisted return.

The victims²⁸ taken in charge by the “*Oltre la Strada*” network are mainly women, although in recent years the number of men severely exploited in the workplace has substantially increased.

As far as women are concerned, they are mainly victims of trafficking and exploitation in the field of prostitution; however, an increasing number of women exploited in the workplace, with particular reference to caregivers, is now beginning to emerge.

Human trafficking victims suffer from various forms of subjection inflicted upon them (blackmail, indebtedness, violence, threats to their families in their countries of origin), fear, the irregularity conditions in which they often find themselves. They are consequently forced to keep their condition hidden, making it "invisible" to law enforcement and social services. The Regional services are therefore committed to taking active steps to detect these cases.

Over the last few years, in the light of these events, in addition to interventions for the identification and detection of potential victims of sexual exploitation carried out by street units, as part of social and health care prevention and harm reduction measures, further monitoring activities and first contacts have been implemented to detect indoor prostitution (apartments, night clubs, massage centres) through the so-called "Invisible project."

In order to identify and support human trafficking victims, a closer co-operation should be promoted between the Anti-Mafia District Bureau (Direzione Distrettuale Antimafia), responsible for the fight against slavery crimes, the Regional Directorate of Labour, responsible for labour exploitation issues, and the Bologna branch of the Territorial Commission for the Recognition of international Protection, to facilitate the identification of victims of trafficking and their inclusion into international protection schemes.

The imminent approval of the legislative decree transposing the European Directive 36/2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims shall enable authorities to:

- plan local and regional system interventions in the framework of national guidelines and a more effective governance system;

- strengthen the link between the protection system aimed at victims of trafficking and the protection system aimed at applicants and beneficiaries of international protection.

28 Every year, on average, 230 new applicants are taken in charge.

The arrival of unaccompanied minors (UM) to the Italian and regional territory can be regarded as a structural phenomenon in migration processes²⁹. In the light of the experience gained over the past few years by local authorities and communities concerned with the arrival of unaccompanied minors, in agreement with local stakeholders, it has been decided to draft a reception project that takes an overall view with respect to the multifactorial issue of migration of unaccompanied minors.

Over the next three years, in agreement with the plan implemented at the national and regional level, and in line with the provisions laid down by the European Commission Action Plan related to the issue of unaccompanied minors, a few main priority actions have been designed:

- Basic standards/guarantees to be applied throughout the regional territory in compliance with the national approach oriented towards an equitable geographical distribution;
- Social, work, school, training integration based on a close co-operation between labour, education and training policies and policies for the reception and integration of legal immigrants;
- Collection of data in a single national system (SIM).

With regard to imprisonment issues, the recent protocol signed by the national Government and by the Emilia-Romagna Regional Authority on January 27, 2014 for the implementation of measures targeting the humanization of punishment and social reintegration also concerns the foreign prison population, accounting for more than 50% of the total prison population.

The Protocol also focuses on the reception and the release from prison of convicts, which is a particularly important and sensitive time in the life of a prisoner. It also identifies specific measures for foreign prisoners, such as learning the Italian language, mediation and promotion of assisted voluntary return. The Regional Authority intends to enhance and strengthen these measures, in the framework of social programming, in the coming years.

Several actions are implemented in favour of detainees, such as the opening of information centres, the implementation of specific measures to support ex-offenders' social reintegration (social coaching, job training and job placement) and the implementation of measures to facilitate the reintegration of persons under criminal prosecution through Criminal Justice Social Work schemes. Foreign as well as Italian offenders may be the beneficiaries and users of these interventions. Yet, it may be difficult for foreign ex-offenders to actually benefit from these social reintegration and employment measures due to the high turnover of the foreign prison population and the order to leave the country at the end of detention for persons holding an expulsion order.

²⁹ According to data provided by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies on November 30, 2012, 5,580 unaccompanied minors were present in Italy and 604 in Emilia-Romagna.

Furthermore, pursuant to Regional Law 5/2004, the Regional Authority confirms its willingness to monitor the operation of so-called Identification and Expulsion Centres (Immigration detention facilities) (Art. 14, L. Decree no. 286/1998), to the extent of its competence, in liaison with Prefectures. As already pointed out in the introduction, in recent years, a growing migration feminisation process has been observed in the region, which makes it essential to raise awareness about gender equality issues and equal opportunities.

The combination of women and immigration issues therefore requires the implementation of a multiple set of regional policies (employment, education, access to welfare) and supervision by each authority involved. In line with European guidelines³⁰, it is therefore necessary to design an action for the development of foreign women's skills and talents. This also requires a new cultural paradigm based on the respect of women and their rights, which cannot be mitigated by any cultural or religious justification. A civic engagement at the local area is required, to combat all forms of violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

The recent introduction of legislation³¹ allowing the possibility of issuing a humanitarian residence permit for foreign women victims of domestic violence, is an important opportunity for engagement and implementation of protection measures through the local welfare system in liaison with the competent law enforcement authorities.

Awareness raising, training, active and non-stigmatizing involvement of migrant communities, implementation of a welfare system that is able to take care of foreign women's needs: these are the priority issues to focus on in the coming years.

Art. 19 of L.R. 5/2004 on "Return and reintegration into the countries of origin" was expected to support the Regional and local authorities to promote initiatives to encourage immigrants' voluntary return to their countries of origin, in compliance with existing legislation, in the framework of international cooperation projects. Whereas, the question of Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) has only recently been defined by National Operational Guidelines³².

The current situation makes it plausible to think that a part of foreigners are led to reconsider the return to their country of origin and regard it as an opportunity to regain a relatively balanced condition for themselves and their families, as a result of more or less sudden and traumatic events. We are going through a very sensitive time, which requires awareness and

30 European Parliament resolution on women's immigration: the role and place of immigrant women in the European Union.

31 Law no. 119/2013 which introduced Art. 18 b in the Consolidated Act on Immigration.

32 The Decree of the Ministry of Interior was issued on October 27, 2011 on the approval of the "Guidelines for the implementation of voluntary and assisted return programmes", which for the first time define the possible actions to be taken at the national level.

preparedness.

Therefore, training for local authorities and third sector practitioners becomes a priority, in order to enhance their skills and awareness about AVR measures, opportunities and practices.

Over the next three years, it seems appropriate to provide continuity and to further develop what has already been put in place, including actions envisaged under the Asylum and Migration Fund 2014-2020, in relation to:

- Training programmes and regulatory aspects related to AVR in the Emilia-Romagna region by providing support to the representatives and facilitators working with migrants;

- Encouraging the involvement of community-based and local authorities (i.e. Local Health authorities, charitable associations and NGOs) in AVR programmes also through the implementation of a network of community-based "AVR desks" in collaboration with prefectures competent for AVR programmes;

- Networking and awareness-raising at the national and regional level;

- Launching information campaigns and interventions, also through the so-called Local Immigration Councils, in order to involve the largest possible number of public and private stakeholders working with migrants.

3) CITIZENSHIP

In line with the European guidelines³³, the issue of involvement in the social and political processes of a community is a key element for an effective integration of foreign persons, since it lowers the risk of social exclusion and it leads to the involvement of the local community and to responsible attitude towards the problems and challenges that need to be tackled together with other Italian citizens.

If the legal issue of "citizenship" and the granting of the right to vote in local elections to foreigners is a matter of exclusive competence of the State, regional policies may instead promote a multiplicity of forms of "active citizenship", social relationships and participation, which can help increase the levels of social cohesion and prevent conflicts.

There are several ways and stakeholders that can contribute to achieving this goal: ranging from formal participation experiences to support to migrant associations, civil service, youth policies, the ability to have visibility and a voice in the communication world, cultural policies and intercultural centres, an active leading role played by migrants in sports and in international cooperation.

At regional level, the Regional Council for the social integration of foreign nationals has been established by the Regional authority (Art. 6 and 7 of R.L. 5/2004) as an inter-institutional open discussion forum on migration issues, in the regional planning framework. Support is provided to local experiences of participation in public life (Consultative Committees, Discussion Fora, additional Councillors), which, in different ways, and in spite of increasing

33 European Agenda for the Integration of third-country nationals, 2011

difficulties, have tried to provide an open space of discussion and exchange with the foreign population.

The Regional authority intends to continue supporting these forms of participation in public life, although being fully aware that only a national reform on citizenship issues of granting local voting rights to immigrants will provide a true opportunity for effective political participation of Third Country foreign nationals. In this sense, the Region government promotes the involvement of EU citizens in public affairs and regional policy, in particular by supporting information and awareness-raising campaigns about their right to vote in European Parliament and local elections.

Even associations promoted by foreign nationals may be an important resource for the local community and institutions, as they often give rise to concrete and positive opportunities for intercultural dialogue and exchanges.

A further opportunity derives from the civil service that is aimed at the defence of the homeland through civil, unarmed and peaceful activities, and the implementation of the constitutional duty of social solidarity. The R.L. no. 20/2003 provides for standards for the development and enhancement of the civil service. This is the first law of this kind in our country that has been designed with the aim of involving people in a lifelong civil service experience. This law has also given rise to regional civil service experiences addressed to young legal immigrants aged between 18 and 28 years, living in Italy, but also to minors, adults and seniors. Nearly a thousand people has so far been involved in the Regional Civil Service addressed to young EU and foreign citizens and it has provided them with a real opportunity for growth and social commitment along with their Italian counterparts. Hence, their involvement in the regional civil service of people in all stages of their lives, also with the participation of young EU and foreign nationals will be confirmed.

In recent years youth policies in Emilia-Romagna have been characterized by a large number of major innovations. Several regional multi-sectoral projects have been funded and implemented in the framework of agreements with the Youth Department of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers (GECO2), i.e.: creation of public socialisation spaces, set up of an integrated information system for young people, training and retraining to attract young people to the local cultural traditional arts and crafts, enhancement of youth creativity and talents and promotion of a culture of legality.

In these areas, a few targeted youth leadership processes also addressed to young people of foreign origin have been launched, meeting their demands to take an active part in a new increasingly more intercultural Italian social life.

The Regional authority is seriously committed to supporting initiatives and forms of association, at regional and local level, in collaboration with local authorities, addressed to both Italian and foreign young people, involved together in social and cultural activities.

Better than any other social component, the new generations express their demand for investment in cultural diversity as a resource and value for an intercultural community.

As far as this issue is concerned, the Emilia-Romagna Regional government has highlighted the strategic role played by intercultural communication (Art. 17 of Regional Law 5/2004) and it is committed to promoting the objectives set out in the three-year regional Memorandum of Understanding signed by a significant number of key players in the media and communication field on February 17, 2014.

In particular, this Memorandum of Understanding is intended to:

- Enhance the representation of immigrants and of the migration process in the media through further research and training;
- Promote youth self-representation, cultural interaction and *metisage*, also through media education activities within and without schools;
- Enhance intercultural media, by promoting collaboration with local key stakeholders (local mainstream media and institutions) and fostering a new form of public communication in an intercultural and gender perspective.
- Regional Law 5/2004 also envisages the set up of Intercultural Centres³⁴, which today constitute an important specialist resource at the disposal of local (public and private) stakeholders with a view to adopt a positive attitude towards diversity and strengthen fundamental rights and equal opportunities for all. They are intended as public places, where, often thanks to youth leadership, intercultural practice becomes a reality in a given local community, as well as a meeting point between individuals, associations and institutions. These places enable people to anticipate unprecedented issues and to meet the growing demand for knowledge of the language of origin, expressed by foreign families and their children. This desire should not be regarded merely as a sign of identity closure, but indeed as a sign of openness and search for trans-generational connections between their parents' country of origin and younger generations, with clear mutual benefits, both in terms of identity of boys and girls, but also in view of their future in an increasingly globalized social and economic scenario.
- The Region authority intends to confirm a coordinated and joint work with Intercultural Centres, by identifying and supporting system-wide actions aimed at strengthening and enhancing the skills and activities carried out by individual centres.
- The Emilia-Romagna Region has also developed specific objectives in the cultural sector aimed at positively responding to the need for dialogue, co-existence and the fight against racism. Three priority guidelines have been laid down by the main laws issued by the Cultural Department:

34 R.L. 5/2004 art. 17 defines Intercultural Centres as "places of mediation and dialogue between cultures, aimed at facilitating encounters and exchange between people from different backgrounds, as well as the design and implementation of initiatives intended to promote social integration".

- The general objectives of the 2012-2014 Regional Entertainment Programme include the "promotion of Performing Arts as a key element of individual growth and social cohesion". In this regard, one of the priority actions is to ensure cultural pluralism and balance, in the framework of high artistic quality performance production and distribution. Several artistic performance projects are funded by the Region, focusing on immigration and interculturalism.

- The cultural activity promotion programme for the period 2010-2012 (to be extended)³⁵ focuses on a few priorities, including the promotion of the most significant local cultural experiences, with a special attention to different emerging talents and specificities representing the multifaceted reality, targeting the broadest audience as possible, thus actively involving a wide variety of local stakeholders.

- The regional action programme related to libraries, archives, museums and cultural heritage for the period 2010-2012 (to be extended)³⁶ pursues a few general objectives, among which quality enhancement of museum, library and archive services, to facilitate access to information relating to cultural heritage and services, encouraging the intercultural exchange, with particular attention to specific target groups, such as, among others, the newly arrived citizens.

Sport has been recognized by the European Union³⁷ as an empowerment, education and socialization tool for all.

However, several legal and cultural constraints limit the access of migrants, refugees and young people to sport: access barriers imposed by federations regarding citizenship, lack of adequate information on sports organizations and facilities available, the persistence of stereotypes and prejudices that make it more difficult for foreigners to access the professional world of sports (referees, coaches, athletic trainers).

To overcome these problems, it is necessary to promote a solidarity network among various stakeholders, in particular local and national authorities, sports associations, sports federations and migrants' networks.

Sport values should also be promoted in connection to the global and intercultural education through projects in schools and sports clubs. The 2012-2014 policy document for cooperation with developing and

35 Resolutions by the Legislative Assembly no.270/2009 and no. 99/2012

36 Resolutions by the Legislative Assembly no. 269/2009 and no. 100/2012

37 White Paper on sport (2007)

transition countries³⁸ “aims to enhance the role played by migrants in cooperation process in the framework of initiatives and programmes to be implemented by the Emilia-Romagna Region in migrants’ countries of origin, involving both the most active regional communities and the civil society organizations and institutions of their countries of origin.

There is a need for greater consistency between migration and development policies in order to provide benefits to all the parties concerned (countries of origin, host countries, transit countries and migrants themselves).

The involvement of migrant associations will be encouraged and supported by the specific country fora or coordinating units focusing on regional priority areas.

In particular, the following projects will be promoted:

- strengthening skills development and certification towards the vocational qualifications and work integration of young people in the local economy;
- Promoting aware and informed mobility about the risks/opportunities related to the international labour market and the dissemination of knowledge about rights and procedures for legal migration;
- Combating child migration, through projects focusing on the prevention of early school leaving and human trafficking;
- Enhance the expertise acquired by migrants throughout their migration process that could be made available the community to encourage assisted voluntary return and/or international projects.

4) ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

A Regional Anti-Discrimination Centre has been set up since 2007, based on the proximity principle and on the involvement of a local network, which is able to detect, guide and remove any discrimination obstacle and generally invest on prevention and awareness. Since the beginning the choice has been to develop skills both of public and private entities - which by their nature and experience - are willing to take part in this action and to become a reference point for citizens who may be victims of discrimination. The Regional Anti-Discrimination network now counts on as many as 155 points distributed throughout the region, supported by local authorities, trade unions and the third sector. These 155 points are subdivided, according to their functions and powers, into so-called Connecting Nodes, Information Desks and One-Stop-Shops. Although inspired by art. 3, paragraph I of the Italian Constitution, whereby “all citizens are entitled to equal social dignity and are equal

38 Adopted by the Legislative Assembly by Resolution no. 84 of July 25, 2012

before the law, without distinction of sex, race, language, religion, political opinion, personal and social conditions”, the Regional Anti-Discrimination Centre draws inspiration from national law (Legislative Decree 286/98) and from regional law (Art. 9, R.L. 5/2004) on immigration, in addition to Art. 48 of L.R. 24/2009 ("Equal access to services").

Although during the first five years this network has mainly been an expression of public and private bodies working in the field of migration, an increasingly larger number of cases has emerged related to other forms of discrimination, especially gender, sexual orientation and disability.

Following the recent adoption of the "Guidelines for the structuring and operation of the Regional Anti-Discrimination Network"³⁹, the Regional authority has set the goal of improving the effectiveness and efficiency and enhancing the expertise of the Regional Anti-Discrimination Centre.

The experience made during the first five years of operation⁴⁰ showed that the time was ripe for extending its scope of action to other factors of discrimination set out in Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, including:

Gender, ethnicity, skin colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation.

The extension of the scope of action to other factors of discrimination is also consistent with the major area of activity of the Centre and of the regional network, which consists in awareness-raising and prevention to be addressed with a broad rather than sector-specific approach.

Following this evolution process of the Centre, further changes have been introduced in the regional network structure in order to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of management, monitoring and case reporting and notification, by promoting support to victims of discrimination and by enhancing all the different contributions and skills, according to an inter-institutional perspective. The objectives to be pursued in the three-year planning include:

³⁹ Approved by Resolution of the Regional Government.. 2014

⁴⁰ See participation as partner in the European project "Roma-Matrix" (R.G.D. no. 1901/2012) on discrimination against Roma and Sinti, the membership to the regional project "Strengthening the network on preventing and combating discrimination" as part of the 2007/2013 ESF Operational Programmes (R.G.D. no. 1228/2013) and the presentation of the project S.T.A.R., SPORTELLI TERRITORIALI ANTIDISCRIMINAZIONI IN RETE (Regional Network of Anti-Discrimination Desks) (R.G.D. 630/2013) to test a different structure and functions of the regional network points.

- The need to promote and strengthen prevention, education and awareness initiatives on the issues of equality and the fight against racism, both within schools and in the local community;
- Establishment of a new organisation of the Regional Anti-Discrimination Centre. It is intended to work as a network made up of nodes having extensive territorial jurisdiction, possibly at the district or provincial level, to cater for a wide variety of needs. These nodes should become increasingly more closely interconnected and work together in liaison with local welfare services;
- Removal of discrimination based on all the other factors of discrimination set out in Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, with a special focus on multiple discrimination;
- Special attention to institutional discrimination based on the interpretation of the existing rules and regulations, being a potential risk of excluding and preventing certain categories of citizens from fully enjoying their rights and accessing services on an equal footing.

THE THREE PRIORITY ACTIONS OF THE THREE-YEAR PROGRAMME

Three priority actions have been identified that can contribute to achieve the four above-mentioned strategic objectives, according to a cross-sectoral approach.

1. PROMOTION AND COORDINATION OF LOCAL ITALIAN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND LITERACY INITIATIVES

Based on the awareness that the knowledge of the Italian language and civic education are the first steps towards social inclusion of foreign nationals, Regional Law R.L. 5/2004, Article 14, paragraph 4 sets forth the promotion and implementation of Italian language learning and literacy initiatives for children and adults. From the point of view of institutional governance, a major step was the Protocol for the support and dissemination of the Italian language and civic education among foreign adults signed in June 2011 between the Regional Authority, the Prefecture of Bologna - on behalf of the Emilia-Romagna prefectures – the Regional Education Office, ANCI (National Association of Italian Municipalities) and UPI (Union of Italian Provinces) and the subsequent regional agreement between the Emilia-Romagna Regional Authority and the Third Sector Forum of Emilia-Romagna for the support and the dissemination of knowledge of the Italian language (September 2012). The underlying objective to be pursued is to set overall homogeneous, consistent and highly qualified common standards for the teaching of Italian language and civic training. This system is intended to meet learners' needs at best, including the most vulnerable ones, to enhance professionalism of Italian language teachers and to test new educational initiatives. That is why, it is necessary to:

- pay specific attention to women, elderly people and illiterates, as far as their language of origin is concerned. This goal is to be achieved through teaching and support initiatives aimed at fostering learners' attendance and performance and taking into account any situations of geographical and/or social isolation;
- value learning of the Italian language as an opportunity to acquire more general skills, covering the knowledge of fundamental principles underlying Italian civic culture, community life, within one's apartment building and neighbourhood, local community and welfare, education, environmental service organization, as well as safety rules at home and in the workplace;
- promote civic culture and language courses even beyond provisions laid down by Law 94/2009 (M.D. dated June 4, 2010 and Presidential Decree no. 179/2011), or subsequent A2 level courses and training modules for those who wish to apply for Italian citizenship for naturalization purposes;
- consider literacy courses as part of a qualification process and synergistic relationship between training and employment, in order to enable foreign persons to fully develop their skills;
- strengthen the institutional networks, both at regional and local level, including (Regional and Local) Education Offices, CTP/CPIA (Territorial Lifelong Learning Centres for Adult Education / Provincial Adult Education Institutions), Prefectures, Regional and Local Authorities, in order to respond more effectively to the various regulatory requirements for the formalization of civic education and the acquisition of language skills;
- identify and train both public and private third sector organizations in the design and provision of Italian language courses and civic education for foreign citizens;
- promote innovative teaching and training tools to be used for the teaching of Italian language courses and civic education (videos, e-learning, etc.).

2. INTER-CULTURAL MEDIATION AND EDUCATION

It is essential to enhance cultural skills of practitioners and intercultural mediation services⁴¹, which are regarded as indispensable tools.

As far as guidance services are concerned, it is important to facilitate their use (by enhancing both language and cultural communication skills), to strengthen civil servants' intercultural competencies, to facilitate relationships and to better identify needs, since they have been proven to be necessary conditions to ensure equal opportunities for all service users. Furthermore, it is necessary to enhance intercultural mediators' professional skills, as defined by the Regional authority in the framework of regional vocational qualifications⁴². With reference to the need to redefine "new citizenship agreements" at the local level, it is necessary to value the daily community-based mediation experience (in the recreational, residential, educational, labour and neighbourhood areas) through the implementation of civic networks managed by the competent institutions, social partners, Third Sector organisations, in which an important role may be played by intercultural mediators, youth of foreign origin, to be involved also through the Regional Civil Service experiences, schools, intercultural Centres and intercultural communication Centres. Over the next three year period, it will therefore be appropriate to:

- Strengthen intercultural mediation training and practice in guidance, information and reception services;
- Raise the expertise level of intercultural mediation services, by promoting the use of suitably qualified staff and encouraging continuing education, including "on-the-job" training, of already employed mediators;
- Promote equal opportunities of access to all primary services, with special attention to health and welfare services, through the use of trained and qualified mediators and by encouraging experimentation with proactive interventions targeted to specific types of migrant users;
- Develop cultural expertise within the services to be provided at every public administration level, with a special focus on Public Relations Office (URP), Social information desks, educational, health and social care services, local police;

41 R.L 5/2004 - Rules for the social integration of foreign citizens - Art. 1, paragraph 5, provides for intercultural mediation. Letters e) and p) of the aforementioned paragraph 5, mediators are referred to as fundamental tools to identify and remove economic, social and cultural obstacles in order to ensure and provide foreign citizens with equal access to housing, employment, education and vocational training, knowledge about the opportunities related to the start-up of self-employment and business activities, health care and welfare; and, within one's competences, to ensure equal opportunities for legal protection and social reintegration to foreign detainees".

42 Regional Government Deliberation RGD no. 141/2009 (which introduces modifications to update what had already been provided for by RGD no. 2212/2004 and n. 265/2005)

- Support "construction /reconstruction" pathways towards the design of new local "citizenship Agreements" also through community mediation interventions;
- Promote innovative project actions, also with reference to transnational or intercultural mediation activities to be carried out by using innovative methods and tools (TLC, ICT, etc.).

3. WIDESPREAD KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION ABOUT RIGHTS AND DUTIES RELATED TO THE CONDITION OF THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS

Over the years, the legislation regulating the presence of foreigners has reached multiple levels of complexity: on the one hand, both European, national, regional and local expertise levels have increased, on the other hand, though, sectoral disciplines related to specific targets have substantially increased (EU nationals, asylum seekers, victims of trafficking, holders of long-term residence permits, etc...), specific stages of the migration process have become more complex (i.e. family reunification, assisted voluntary return, etc.).

In addition, on several occasions, different sectoral regulations have been gradually introduced, adding new features in relation to the rights and duties of foreign people.

In the regional territory, many new information desks for foreigners have been set up to meet emerging needs and to provide adequate answers to often unprecedented questions by the immigrant population. Over 130 different municipal information desks have been opened in addition to other centres run by the Third Sector, Unions and employers' associations.

In this increasingly more complex context, in order to ensure and provide foreign nationals with adequate forms of knowledge and protection of their rights and duties laid down by legislation, it is necessary to promote a widespread skill acquisition process within primary services, and at the same time to promote the implementation and strengthening of a few highly specialized information desks.

From an operational point of view, it is therefore necessary to:

- Promote training interventions aimed at both professionals working in the service sector addressed to foreign nationals and civil servants working in primary public services, in general;
- Set up and strengthen co-ordination networks at the regional level between state institutions, local authorities and third sector associations, in order to qualify the offer of public services for third country citizens;
- Implement partnerships with the Regional Offices representing the central government (Prefectures, Police Headquarters, Inland Revenue Service, National Institute for Insurance Against Industrial

Accidents (INAIL), etc.) for the purpose of developing and distributing updated institutional information materials - including multimedia - of common interest;

- Encourage operational networking between the institutional foreign information desk network and the voluntary sector and business community information desk network (trade unions, charitable associations, NGOs, trade associations, etc.);

- Support the gradual information transfer process from the first level performed by foreign information desks to social security desks or other public offices who first come into contact with foreign persons (such as URP). At the same time, it is important to consolidate the second-level information desk network at the local or district level (also with reference to thematic networks, such as those concerned with asylum related issues) and to test a few highly specialized centres working at the wide area level, providing support to the entire regional information system.

PROMOTION, INTERNAL COORDINATION TOOLS AND MONITORING

In order to implement this programme, the Regional Government is committed to the promotion and support of highly innovative experimental initiatives, for the social integration of foreign nationals, also with the support of European programming funds.

The Regional Government promotes the implementation of the actions and objectives outlined in the three-year programme and, at the same time, constantly monitors it through an interdepartmental technical working group.

In particular, the aforementioned working group, which has contributed to the technical drafting of this three-year program, is entrusted with the:

- development of the monitoring process of the planned resources and actions using a well-defined grid of indicators;
 - drafting of a final report by 31/12/2015, by outlining the status of implementation of the objectives set by the programme and the outcomes of actions undertaken to achieve them;
 - design of a technical preparatory work aimed at fully meeting the data collection needs set forth by the assessment clause laid down by Regional Law 5/2004 (art. 20); furthermore, providing support for the drafting of the information report to be submitted by the Regional Government to the Legislative Assembly on a three year basis, about the implementation of the law and the results achieved in improving the social integration level of foreign nationals.
- The inter-departmental Technical Working Group cooperates with the Regional Council to promote the the social integration of foreign nationals, as laid down by art. 6 of R. L. 5/2004, in particular on the occasion of the submission of the Final Report on this programme and of the Report on the valuation clause.