

THE WAY OUT

By Claudia Di Pasquale – Giuliano Marrucci – Giulio Valesini

MILENA GABANELLI IN STUDIO

In the last few years, in the last few months and days, Europe has been witnessing the biggest migration of people since World War Two; people fleeing from poverty and war to which the West has also contributed. The masses have arrived and more will continue to arrive, and we must find a way to manage them. What is clear is that aside from the meetings where everyone declares their good intentions and says we can't close our doors, in reality all countries are fobbing the problem off onto their neighbours. And we are at the end of this chain. Now, without trying to alarm people or be too emotional, we are the most exposed country and the risk of instability must be averted. Of course, nothing is easy; for this episode, together with Claudia Di Pasquale, Giulio Valesini and Giuliano Marrucci we have tried to imagine how we can turn a calamity into an advantage for asylum seekers, for us and for Europe. A solid, even severe project but, in our eyes, civil and, most of all, feasible. Before getting to it though we need to fully understand the entire situation, starting in the Middle East, where this is the current status quo.

VOICE OFF-CAMERA

Syria.

Since 2011 civil war against the Assad regime, violence and persecution perpetrated by ISIS, Russian, French and American bombs. Out of a population of 22 million, 4.8 million have fled. 1 million to Lebanon, 600,000 to Jordan, 2.5 million to Turkey, and from there half a million asylum seekers have headed for Europe: Serbia, Germany and Sweden.

Iraq.

Violence and ethnic persecution perpetrated by ISIS. A population of 35 million, 3.5 million of which have fled with 157,000 requesting asylum in Europe.

Afghanistan.

War between the Taleban and the Afghan army, religious extremism, persecution by ISIS. Population of 32 million. 2.6 million refugees. 274,000 asylum seekers in Europe, mainly Germany.

Pakistan.

185 million. Taleban guerrilla warfare, terrorism and ethnic violence have produced 262,000 refugees. 73,000 asylum seekers. 10,000 requests to come to Italy.

MILENA GABANELLI IN STUDIO

OK. The route taken by Syrians, Iraqis, Pakistanis and Afghans is that of heading for Turkey and then going from Turkey to Greece, then to Macedonia, and then Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary, Austria and Germany, and from there onto Sweden and Norway. Last year around 1.5 million crossed these borders; the majority were asylum seekers but there were also some in search of a better life.

Whatever the case, this was the reaction in the Balkans and Europe.

GIULIANO MARRUCCI OFF-CAMERA

January 2014, Bulgaria is the first country to secure its borders. On the Turkish border it erected a 3-metre high barbed wire wall that is now 100 kilometres long. Hungary began building a wall on its border with Serbia in November 2015. It is 4 metres high and 175 kilometres long. Austrian-Slovenian border, also in November 2015: 4 kilometres of barbed wire that can become 30 km in just a few days. December 2015,

Slovenian-Croatian border: 166 kilometres of barbed wire. In March 2016 Macedonia closes its Greek border, definitively closing off the Balkan route. Greece are the losers. Close to the Macedonian barbed wire is the Idomeni camp. Designed as a place of transit for 500 people, there are now 10,000 people there. This is a makeshift camp in a service area between Idomeni and Thessaloniki. This is another one. And this is the Port of Piraeus. In total: 54,000. Will they remain camped here forever?

YIANNIS BOURNOS – HEAD OF FOREIGN POLICY SYRIZA

The majority should be relocated to other European countries. But after 6 months they have only taken 900 people.

GIULIANO MARRUCCI OFF-CAMERA

They arrive in Greece by sea from Turkey. But since 20 March all those that arrive here should be sent back and slowly relocated in Europe. This is the agreement signed by Brussels with Turkey. European negotiators were convinced by their numerous visits to camps like this one in Nizip where refugees live in containers with private bathrooms. There are schools, from nursery to secondary school, a little clinic, two supermarkets, spaces for practising sport and even a mosque.

MARTINE VILLENEUVE - COUNTRY DIRECTOR DRC TURKEY

They are 5-star camps, there is no doubt, but they can only host 10% of the refugees. The others have to sort themselves out in the cities.

GIULIANO MARRUCCI OFF-CAMERA

In Istanbul, the number of registered Syrians alone comes to almost 400,000 and the majority live in dilapidated neighbourhoods such as this one in Suleymanie, or this one in Tarlabash.

MARTINE VILLENEUVE - COUNTRY DIRECTOR DRC TURKEY

They arrive in the city with nothing and often even send their children out to work. For a couple of months they have been able to obtain work permits but it is a long process that falls on the shoulders of employers, who therefore opt to hire Turks if they need someone.

GIULIANO MARRUCCI OFF-CAMERA

There are currently 3 million refugees in Turkey and after the agreement with Europe they have to stay here. But the flow of new arrivals continues. This is the border with Syria.

POLICEMAN

You obviously didn't understand, you can't film here. You have to delete everything you have recorded.

GIULIANO MARRUCCI OFF-CAMERA

What they don't want to advertise is the fact that they have also secured their border. Over there is the war but here you're not getting past anymore.

SYRIAN WOMAN

My son tried to cross the border 3 times but they always sent him back. The last time he managed to get across but the police started shooting. So far 16 people have been killed trying to cross the border.

MUSTAFA TOPRAK – PREFECT OF SMYRNA (IZMIR)

You ask us to stop the refugees from reaching Europe but to keep the borders open for those that want to escape from Syria. But we can't deal with another invasion! The only possible solution is to create a security zone in Syria and to host people escaping the bombing there. I would like to remind you that in the last 5 years we have managed this major emergency without anyone's help and that Europe only became aware of the war when it started seeing hundreds of thousands of desperate people arriving. Let us be clear: we won't be lectured by anyone!

GIULIANO MARRUCCI OFF-CAMERA

On 20 March, Turkey dictated its conditions to Europe: 6 billion euro to manage the arrival of refugees, the reopening of negotiations for Turkey to join the EU and no visas for Turkish citizens.

BULENT KENES – FORMER LEAD EDITOR ZAMAN

These negotiations fell by the wayside in 2011 and now that there is an unprecedented attack on press freedom going on in Turkey we decide to go back to the negotiating table. It's unbelievable!

GIULIANO MARRUCCI OFF-CAMERA

Political dissidents and journalists end up in jail. This building is home to the head offices of Zaman, the leading opposition newspaper, and 2 months ago it went into receivership in scenes involving batons and fire hydrants.

BULENT KENES – FORMER LEAD EDITOR ZAMAN

Since Erdogan has renewed his interest in political Islam, the paper started to heavily criticise the government. The police began keeping tabs on readers and applying pressure to bars and shops that bought it for their customers. And in the end, it was closed down.

GIULIANO MARRUCCI OFF-CAMERA

But the best political result for Erdogan is the promise that from June Turkish citizens can enter Europe without a visa, despite the unceasing escalation in violence. There are those that sympathise with ISIS and attack the Kurds, and there are also militant Kurds that target Turks. All people who, on the basis of the new agreement, can comfortably enter Europe without a visa. Meanwhile Greece, bound by international treaties, must process asylum requests one by one before sending asylum seekers back to Turkey. To help with the workload Europe says "we'll send you an army of officials".

SPYROS GALINOS – MAYOR OF LESBOS

There were supposed to be 400 of them but nobody has arrived yet.

GIULIANO MARRUCCI OFF-CAMERA

And then there is the fact that, as well as Syrians, Iraqis and Afghans are also arriving in Greece. And as they receive no international protection in Turkey they cannot be sent back yet.

MICHELE TELARO – HEAD OF MSF PROJECT LESBOS

Unless they decide, in order to make this agreement work, to make a law that formally allows Greece to send everyone back, but at that point they'll be submerged by legal appeals.

YIANNIS BOURNOS – HEAD OF FOREIGN POLICY SYRIZA

To make this agreement work Turkey must respect the commitment it has made, carrying out the checks.

GIULIANO MARRUCCI OFF-CAMERA

For now Turkey is respecting its commitments and in the last month the number of migrants arriving has fallen to practically zero. In the meantime, however, Europe has begun to express its disapproval of Turks entering without visas and Erdogan has made it known that if this is the case the checks will stop. And, with the camps in Greece bursting and the Macedonian border closed, what would we do then?

SAIMIR TAHIRI – ALBANIAN MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR

The Greek-Albanian border would be one of the most likely alternatives for those that want to reach Europe at all costs. So the risk of there being a sudden increase in arrivals in Albania is very real. For this reason we have developed a contingency plan with the other countries involved, beginning with Italy.

GIULIANO MARRUCCI

Can you tell me what kind of measures we are talking about?

SAIMIR TAHIRI – ALBANIAN MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR

The exchange of information and the ability to register the digital fingerprints and all of the personal information of those that arrive.

GIULIANO MARRUCCI

So if I went to the Kakavia border crossing now I could see all of these things, yes?

SAIMIR TAHIRI – ALBANIAN MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR

Sure, you would be able to see that we are ready to tackle any emergency.

GIULIANO MARRUCCI

But when, after 6 hours in the car and any number of potholes, we finally arrive at the Kakavia border crossing...

POLICE OFFICER

We don't have any information to give you.

GIULIANO MARRUCCI

Your Interior Minister told me that I could see how you identify migrants if the flow should switch to this border.

POLICE OFFICER

I'm not authorised to give you any information... if you want I can tell you how things work out here... but nothing else.

GIULIANO MARRUCCI

Can you at least tell me if you have biometric data machines?

POLICE OFFICER

That's enough, don't insist. I'm not saying any more.

MILENA GABANELLI IN STUDIO

Germany wanted the deal with Turkey. And Europe, us included, said "OK": keep the Syrians there and slowly sort them. In exchange: 6 billion euro and the possibility for

Turkish citizens to enter Europe without visas as of June. We have made an agreement with a country that puts dissidents and journalists it doesn't like behind bars, and which is full of extremist groups. Now that June is getting nearer many countries are realising that they don't like this visas thing too much. In this event Erdogan will reopen the borders and everyone will head once more to Greece, where there are already Pakistanis, Afghans and Iraqis. And they probably won't stay in Greece, which doesn't have two pennies to rub together. They will probably pass through Albania and then onto Italy. OK. But Turkey has also secured its border with Syria where the war continues and from where Syrians continue to flee. We can't rule out them taking the Mediterranean route. And so where are we going to put up our barbed wire?

ENRICO CREDENDINO - HEAD OF OPERATION SOPHIA

We don't have anything to close. You can close the land borders. The sea borders are liquid borders, immense. They must be adequately patrolled.

GIULIO VALESINI OFF-CAMERA

The Italian aircraft carrier Cavour comes under the command of the European Sophia mission, which since October has patrolled the waters between Italy and Libya. The aim is to arrest the smugglers that manage the flow of immigrants from North Africa to the Sicilian coast.

ENRICO CREDENDINO - HEAD OF OPERATION SOPHIA

This is the main area from which migrants head to Italy.

GIULIO VALESINI

How many people are ready to come to Italy?

ENRICO CREDENDINO - HEAD OF OPERATION SOPHIA

From between a minimum of 150,000 up to 500,000. But let's say that at least 150,000 people are ready to leave Libya.

GIULIO VALESINI

To come to Italy.

ENRICO CREDENDINO - HEAD OF OPERATION SOPHIA

To come to Italy.

GIULIO VALESINI OFF-CAMERA

The boats of migrants are seen by the air patrols. From the helicopters that leave the Cavour aircraft carrier you can see the port of Tripoli and the Libyan coast. Since June the mission has assisted 13,000 migrants and arrested 70 smugglers.

GIULIO VALESINI

With the closure of the Balkans route what can we expect?

ENRICO CREDENDINO - HEAD OF OPERATION SOPHIA

The closure of the route in the East will lead to an increase in the number of migrants which, let's say, from the Middle East via Sudan will return to Libya, but also directly, probably from Syria and the Lebanon, going south of Crete towards Italy. And perhaps the opening of the route from Albania to Italy.

GIULIO VALESINI

How many people could potentially arrive in Italy via this route?

ENRICO CREDENDINO - HEAD OF OPERATION SOPHIA

If the numbers are the same as last year, last year around a million people arrived in Europe so if we expect the same numbers this is the number we can expect.

GIULIO VALESINI

The Polish president said: "We need a European border police force". How can you create a border police force for the sea: what do you do, create a cordon of ships?

ENRICO CREDENDINO - HEAD OF OPERATION SOPHIA

It isn't feasible.

MILENA GABANELLI IN STUDIO

The aim of the European mission is to: arrest smugglers, sink the ship, bring the migrants to Italy, identify the asylum seekers, send back the others. Now there are discussions as to whether to carry out this identification process directly on board the ships instead of disembarking everybody. It is an idea, even if it is a bit complicated because, as we will see, it is difficult to say "you yes and you no". So we have to decide how long to keep them at sea and how many ships are needed. For the moment we are only at the discussion stage. In the meantime we have to seriously consider and get organised ahead of time in the event that this million people that would have taken the Balkans route decides to head for the Mediterranean, because this route is already quite busy. Conflict in Africa continues to grow and this is the current situation.

VOICE OFF-CAMERA

Nigeria: there is growing instability because of the kidnapping and attacks carried out by terrorist group Boko Haram, which is connected with ISIS. Population of 177 million. They flee towards the Sahara, arrive in Libya and then to Italy by sea. 50,000 asylum seekers and economic migrants.

South Sudan: Population of 12 million. Ethnic violence for years. 750,000 have fled to neighbouring countries. 230,000 asylum seekers that arrive in Libya via the Sahara and then head to Italy.

Somalia: Population of 10 million. 1 million forced to flee by terrorist organisation al Shabab. 35,000 asylum seekers.

Central African Republic: Population of 5 million. 470,000 fleeing from guerrilla warfare between rebel groups. 2,000 asylum seekers.

Libya: 6 million. 434,000 people displaced by the civil war. Who knows where they'll go.

Yemen: 26 million. Civil war and terrorism. 2,000 asylum seekers.

Congo: Population of 75 million. 535,000 people fleeing from the violence of rebel groups intent on controlling its resources. 13,000 asylum seekers. They take the Libyan route, arriving in Italy from there.

Eritrea: 5.4 million inhabitants. 5,000 people flee every month from terrorism and the violence of the regime. 71,000 asylum seekers. The route: Sudan, Libya, Italy.

MILENA GABANELLI IN STUDIO

The numbers regard asylum seekers, who we have a duty to take in, but, as we have seen, many people are also fleeing from poverty. In 2015 alone 154,000 migrants arrived in Italy, almost 30,000 in the first months of 2016 and now a new boatload arrives every day. Some have stayed here and until a few months ago some headed

for Northern Europe. Now things have changed here too: even those that tried to get in from Russia can no longer get through.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

One of the routes for arriving in Northern Europe is the Arctic. The Russian/Norwegian border is in Storskog. Until November it was open. Now it is closed.

MERETE NORDHUS – VOLUNTARY WORKER “WELCOME TO THE ARCTIC”

Last autumn around 5,500 refugees entered Norway via this border. Many Syrian families preferred this route because it is safer. But too many arrived for the Government and so the border was closed.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

So Norway wants to send them back to Russia?

MERETE NORDHUS – VOLUNTARY WORKER “WELCOME TO THE ARCTIC”

Yes, but Russia doesn't protect the Syrians.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

In the meantime many refugees are waiting at this camp in Kirkenes, close to the border.

INGJERD SCHOU – HOYRE CONSERVATIVE PARTY MP

The problem is that the refugees only want to go to Northern Europe and Scandinavia. As a result we had to close the border with Russia, otherwise everyone will arrive here.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

In Norway it works like this: Oslo, shelter for minors. They stay here for 3-4 months.

IRIS HADZIOSMANOVIC – NORWEGIAN PEOPLE'S AID SHELTER HOME FOR MINORS

Every day the children clean their room after breakfast. Then they attend their Norwegian course. Then they attend courses on health and European law. Then there are sports activities. It is crucial to keep them busy throughout the day.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

Families and adults are sheltered in this former hospital. It can host up to 350 asylum seekers.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

What do you do during the day?

ASYLUM SEEKER

Lots of activities and also courses only for women.

KETIL BLINGE – DIRECTOR OF THE REFSTAD HERO SHELTER

The State has established a programme that must be followed and respected: there are courses on the laws and rules of Norway, on hygiene and health, on sexuality and they are mandatory. If you don't attend they can cut off the support you receive every month as a refugee.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

What does the women's safety course consist of?

KETIL BLINGE – DIRECTOR OF THE REFSTAD HERO SHELTER

It is a course against sexual violence and abuse. Perhaps not everyone knows that women are more free here. We explain that there is gender equality here and that men and women are equal. We don't want to impose our values but those who come here must respect them.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

The other route for refugees heading to Northern Europe is the one that goes through Austria, Germany and Denmark, through to Sweden. Refugees dream of getting here.

KHALED – SYRIAN REFUGEE

There is business here. If you are a refugee they help you study the language, to find a job, to have a home. And you can obtain asylum in three months.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

Mohammad is a Syrian journalist who arrived in Sweden two years ago.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

How much does it cost to rent this apartment?

MOHAMMAD AL BALOUT – SYRIAN JOURNALIST

About 680 euro a month.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

Do you pay it?

MOHAMMAD AL BALOUT – SYRIAN JOURNALIST

I pay 40%. The Government helps me pay the rest for 2 years and also gives me 600 euro a month to study Swedish, English and attend a course on how society works here. Then, if you want, there are also professional courses such as learning to become a barber, beautician, lorry driver or gardener. In all, 8 hours a day, 5 days a week. But every month you must prove that you have attended the lessons.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

And if you don't attend these courses?

MOHAMMAD AL BALOUT – SYRIAN JOURNALIST

They cut off your support. I'm about to be taken on as a journalist and after just a year I'll have paid back the Swedish Government through my taxes.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

From Syria he took the Mediterranean route, arriving in Trapani by boat and then driving to Denmark. From there he got to Sweden by train across the Oresund bridge.

MOHAMMAD AL BALOUT – SYRIAN JOURNALIST

When I arrived there were no controls. Nobody asked where I was going or to see any documents. Now everything has changed.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

Now things are different. You get the train in Copenhagen but before getting to the Swedish border you have to get off, change platform and this is where the first check on all passengers takes place.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

Why are you taking a photo of my ID card?

POLICE OFFICER

The Swedish Government doesn't want any more refugees entering the country so we have to check everyone.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

The train then crosses Oresund bridge and arrives in Sweden.

POLICE OFFICER

Your ID card please.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

This guy doesn't have a valid document, the police stop him and send him back to Denmark. Even if you try to get into Sweden by car, at the end of the bridge the police stop everyone.

POLICE OFFICER

Why are you going to Sweden?

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

For work, I am a journalist.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

After waiting for almost half an hour they return our documents and finally let us pass.

MARIA FERM - SPOKESWOMAN FOR THE SWEDISH GREEN PARTY

This is the only thing we can do to continue to guarantee asylum seekers a good welcome system.

CARINA OHLSSON – MP SWEDISH SOCIAL DEMOCRAT PARTY

Around 170,000 refugees arrived in Sweden in 2015 alone and when they arrive they are all included in our welfare system. We have had to create hundreds of new classes to send minors to school. But the municipalities don't know what to do anymore, there are too many. The conclusion was the decision to introduce border controls.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

Meanwhile, in little Denmark, around 25,000 refugees arrived in 2015. 500 are in this former barracks, where every family has its own room and bathroom with locks on the door. There is a school, a crèche, a pool room and bar.

SARA - IRANIAN ASYLUM SEEKER

I am Christian and I escaped from Iran. They used to stop me there because I didn't wear a veil, if I wore nail polish, if I laughed in the street. In Denmark if a man hits his wife or sister they arrest him; in Iran if a husband kills his wife it is OK. That's why I left.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

Meanwhile the anti-immigrant right-wing faction influences Government policy.

KENNETH KRISTENSEN BERTH – MP DANISH PEOPLE’S PARTY

Today the police can confiscate money and possessions worth over 1,350 euro from the refugees that arrive. In this way, they pay for the shelter in our centres. And from now on, border controls. In my opinion all European countries should close their borders. Schengen is dead.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

If a refugee arrives at the Danish border with no documents what happens?

KENNETH KRISTENSEN BERTH – MP DANISH PEOPLE’S PARTY

We probably send them back to Germany.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

But Italy can’t close its borders, migrants are able to arrive here. Is it an Italian problem?

KENNETH KRISTENSEN BERTH – MP DANISH PEOPLE’S PARTY

Yes. It is an Italian problem.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

Only our problem?

KENNETH KRISTENSEN BERTH – MP DANISH PEOPLE’S PARTY

Only yours.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

After Merkel opened the German borders in 2015, a million refugees arrived in the space of a couple of months. To house them they used all possible abandoned buildings, former barracks, former schools, hospitals, gyms and even former offices. Like these...

SUSANNE HERMENAU – SPOKESWOMAN PRISOD SHELTER BERLIN

After being in Germany for three months the asylum seekers can live in a proper flat, with the rent paid by the State, or in a centre like this one. Where they receive monthly support of 300 euro, can work and attend German courses.

BRIGITTE VON TAEUFFENBACH – VOLKSHOCHSCHULE INSTITUTE, AUGSBURG

This course lasts 900 hours. We teach how to read and write in German, while 60 hours are dedicated to studying German society as well as its political and cultural system. Meanwhile, this is the course that provides guidance on the job market. 40 hours a week for six months and a six-week apprenticeship.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

Meanwhile in Berlin the situation is getting out of hand: they have put 2,000 refugees in the hangars of the former Tempelhof airport where they have placed all these containers. There are 90 showers for 2,000 people.

SASCHA LANGENBACH – SPOKESPERSON BERLIN SENATE

It is clear that the situation is what it is because of the very high number of arrivals. In Berlin alone there are 55,000 people requesting asylum and in 2015 we spent 300-400 million euro to accommodate them.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

Munich is the gateway to Southern Germany. Here too there are 2,000 asylum seekers in a former barracks. The Justice Minister comes here to hold a lesson.

WINFRIED BAUSBACK - JUSTICE MINISTER OF BAVARIA

You come from very different countries but now you are in Germany and you have to know the German laws that you must respect. Husband and wife have the same rights, there is freedom of religion and you cannot hit children.

WINFRIED BAUSBACK - JUSTICE MINISTER OF BAVARIA

Schengen doesn't work like it did, that is a fact, so we have to control our borders. There are already controls in the main border towns like Salzburg but they aren't sufficient. Germany's goal is to limit the arrival of refugees.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

Do you regret opening your doors to the refugees?

MARIAN WENDT- MP CDU GERMANY

We are already discussing the second package of asylum restrictions and how to make expulsions easier. We can't offer homes to 40, 50 thousand people a month.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

Are you thinking of closing the border with Austria?

MARIAN WENDT- MP CDU GERMANY

If it's necessary. The closure of the Turkish-Greek border already resolves lots of problems for us. But we know that closing the Balkan route means increasing the number of refugees that will sail from Libya to Italy.

MILENA GABANELLI IN STUDIO

We are happy that they know this. In the meantime Austria has closed its border with Slovenia. And with Italy... We were there just three days ago. After the break.

BREAK

MILENA GABANELLI IN STUDIO

We are at the Italian-Austrian border, "but what are you worried about? We are putting up a few poles because if necessary we are ready to erect a fence". OK. What we are seeing was filmed on Wednesday.

WOLFGANG SOBOTKA - INTERIOR MINISTER AUSTRIA

We are preparing identification centres in Brenner and only if necessary will we put up a fence. For now we are putting down the posts so we can put up a fence if the situation becomes extreme.

GIULIO VALESINI OFF-CAMERA

At the Brenner border the Austrian Government has the posts ready for the fence that will serve to increase the controls on the flow of migrants arriving from Italy.

FULVIO COSLOVI - PROVINCIAL SECRETARY COISP

The fence will go up. Afterwards we'll see what controls they carry out and how many, of course.

GIULIO VALESINI OFF-CAMERA

But the Austrian-Italian border can also be crossed by train. At the railway station, police and the army get on board trains that leave and arrive from Germany and Austria. And the numbers between those entering and leaving Italy don't add up.

GIULIO VALESINI

What relationship is there between the immigrants that head back towards Italy and those that leave Italy towards Central Europe?

FULVIO COSLOVI - PROVINCIAL SECRETARY COISP

During the autumn and winter the ratio was three to one. It means that for every one immigrant that wanted to go to Austria we received three from Austria. Now the ratio is one to two. Since the start of the year we have asked Austria to take back almost 800 people.

GIULIO VALESINI

You told them to "take them back".

FULVIO COSLOVI - PROVINCIAL SECRETARY COISP

Take them back. They have taken back some, about a quarter. Around 200.

GIULIO VALESINI

So Austria took back those that were identified in Austria. For the others they said: "you deal with it".

FULVIO COSLOVI - PROVINCIAL SECRETARY COISP

Exactly. These are the people that took the Balkans route last summer, who requested asylum in Germany and Northern Europe and were refused, and then asked to leave the country. So these are people that have never been to Italy.

MILENA GABANELLI IN STUDIO

In short they are sending us those that come from Northern Europe, that were not welcomed into the care cycle because they are economic migrants that don't know how to get home. So the only barbed wire we could put up would be on our Austrian border. The UN will come to the aid of those that live trapped between the two rows of barbed wire. That's what we could do. But we haven't resolved anything because the majority arrive via the sea. Thousands of column inches in the papers, thousands of hours of TV coverage, we are all well aware of every single story. But what are we actually doing? In most cases, the management of the situation in Italy is the responsibility of the prefectures, who delegate cooperatives, some of which very conscientious, others less so. Others steal. The general impression is that things could get out of hand at any time. So. Let's see how things work and then let's try and imagine what the best course of action would be.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

The procedure is that of identifying the migrants and photo-documenting them. Some refuse and leave, but we don't know where they go. The welcome plan manages 111,000 places all over Italy at a cost of over a billion euro. We have housed them in

former hotels, such as this one near Trapani. Today it hosts 85 asylum seekers. Management: Gruppo Insieme cooperative.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

Did you take part in a tender? Or were you directly appointed by the prefecture?

CHIARA MIRRIONE – GRUPPO INSIEME COOPERATIVE

I think we were directly appointed, yes.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

Who is the owner of Gruppo Insieme?

CHIARA MIRRIONE – GRUPPO INSIEME COOPERATIVE

Gruppo Insieme is owned by Vito Scozzari.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

Vito Scozzari is the brother of Giuseppe Scozzari, due to stand trial in Gorizia for conspiracy, public contract fraud and fraud against a public entity.

CHIARA MIRRIONE – GRUPPO INSIEME COOPERATIVE

Well it seems that he has been committed for trial according to procedure.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

His former employee Vito Accardo has also been committed for trial. Who today runs another former hotel that houses around a hundred asylum seekers. A few kilometres away there is another former tourist resort, today a centre for migrants. The director is Roberto Cordaro who was investigated by the Public Prosecutor's Office of Marsala for money laundering. In Castellammare del Golfo, this other shelter was closed also because of its poor hygiene conditions. It was managed by the Letizia cooperative. The director was Lorenzo La Rocca but he tells us it wasn't his.

LORENZO LA ROCCA – FORMER DIRECTOR LETIZIA COOPERATIVE

I was only, what do you call it... a figurehead for Norino Fratello, but he was the real owner.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

Who is Norino Fratello?

LORENZO LA ROCCA – FORMER DIRECTOR LETIZIA COOPERATIVE

A former UDC MP.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

Former regional MP Norino Fratello also negotiated a plea bargain for an 18-month sentence for collusion with the mafia.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

But who is employed?

LORENZO LA ROCCA – FORMER DIRECTOR LETIZIA COOPERATIVE

A few friends of the councillor are employed, a few friends of friends, in the end politics is always involved, always.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

The best-known scandal, involved in the Mafia Capitale investigation, was the tender for the management of Cara di Mineo, won by a group of businesses.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

What do these cooperatives do today?

GIUSEPPE CARUSO – JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION CASCINA GLOBAL SERVICE

What do they do? They continue to manage the consortium.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

What has changed for you since the Mafia Capitale investigation?

ROBERTO ROCCUZZO – NUOVO CARA MINEO CONSORTIUM

Nothing!

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

As many as 2,600 asylum seekers are hosted here.

ASYLUM SEEKER

I've lived here for almost two years.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

What do you do during the day?

ASYLUM SEEKER

Nothing, I eat and sleep.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

Here there are 400 villas and plenty of space for classrooms and training courses. But the Italian course is held in this container.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

And how many hours does the course occupy each week?

OPERATOR

Each class does 4 hours a week.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

This workshop is held in this little room.

OPERATOR

We hold it twice a week for 2 hours a day.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

How many people attend it?

OPERATOR

Usually 10 people, today there are 4.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

In most cases these people do nothing all day and, at the most, do four hours of Italian a week.

EDOARDO PATRIARCA – VICE CHAIRMAN SHELTER INQUEST COMMISSION

That is right. As a country we can't afford this time dedicated to doing nothing, and we can't offer it to immigrants either.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

In Messina there is this campsite with 250 places.

ASYLUM SEEKER

As you can see when it rains here the water comes in.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

What do you do here during the day?

ASYLUM SEEKER

We eat and sleep, that's all.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

Until last year it was managed by one of the cooperatives involved in the Mafia Capitale inquest. The same cooperative also managed the former Gasparro barracks in Messina. Today there are 200 asylum seekers here, all in the canteen rooms.

ASYLUM SEEKER

I sleep here at night.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

And during the day?

ASYLUM SEEKER

I sleep a bit, I go out and I sit here.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

According to the prefecture, the quality standards of the user space are observed.

MARIA ANTONIETTA CERNIGLIA – INTERIM VICE PREFECT MESSINA

Obviously I'm not the one that provides this information but the relevant experts.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

Yet here there are three barracks, one next to the other, with over 30 buildings.

SERGIO DE COLA – PUBLIC WORKS COUNCILLOR MESSINA

These aren't in bad shape at all. They are 70's buildings and former lodgings.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

Here are the former lodgings: these are the external spaces, these are the rooms, this is the former canteen. For now nobody has thought of using these buildings as shelters. Then there are these four buildings.

SERGIO DE COLA – PUBLIC WORKS COUNCILLOR MESSINA

These are in good condition, with the exception of one, the last one if I'm not mistaken, which has some structural damage. I visited them about a year ago and they are in good condition.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

How much do you think it would cost to fix them up...

SERGIO DE COLA – PUBLIC WORKS COUNCILLOR MESSINA

3-400,000 euro each to renovate them well, but probably even less. This is a conservative estimate, I reckon 300,000 euro a pavilion.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

How quickly could they be renovated?

SERGIO DE COLA – PUBLIC WORKS COUNCILLOR MESSINA

Six months would probably be a feasible timeframe.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

What are the expected timeframes?

MARIA ANTONIETTA CERNIGLIA – INTERIM VICE PREFECT MESSINA

They told us around 28 months from the publication of the tender.

PAOLO BERDINI – TOWN PLANNER

This is a conservation project. This means that the work is very quick, there are no obstacles from a procedural perspective. The only obstacle I see is the political will, the cultural will to pursue a project that on the other hand interests the entire economy.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

Let's imagine changing film and changing management. In Messina we can quickly renovate the buildings in better condition, create dignified lodgings, classrooms to teach the language, workshops for training and host 450 refugees from the city. And there are around a hundred abandoned barracks across Italy. For example this is the former Sani barracks in Bologna. 50,000 m², twenty or so buildings, some are lodgings, others are warehouses and storage rooms.

SILVIO MANFREDINI – ENGINEER

It could certainly be renovated for civilian use, the spaces are nice, attractive.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

What do you see here? What could be developed?

SILVIO MANFREDINI – ENGINEER

Classrooms. Part of it could also be dedicated to children. Here there are spaces for everything.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

How many people could be accommodated in your opinion?

SILVIO MANFREDINI – ENGINEER

Oh, well lots. Lots means hundreds. It means 500 upwards...

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

We start hosting them in the buildings that require less maintenance while we continue to renovate the rest. The same goes for the former Battisti barracks in Sulmona, in Abruzzo, which closed just 3 years ago. 16,000 square metres. These

pavilions can act as lodgings while these can become classrooms for language and European culture lessons and job training. Serini barracks near Brescia: an 18,000 square metre indoor area, large spaces, furniture in good conditions where we can do all that is necessary. Then there is Friuli Venezia Giulia, which is full of barracks. In Tarvisio, the La Marmora barracks was closed just two years ago.

VITTORIO ZAPPALORTO – PREFECT OF UDINE

Let's say that this is now free, from this point of view.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

There is no project at the present time.

VITTORIO ZAPPALORTO – PREFECT OF UDINE

There is no project.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

When the refugees arrive in Friuli where do they arrive from?

VITTORIO ZAPPALORTO – PREFECT OF UDINE

The majority arrive from Tarvisio.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

Here there is already everything. Kitchens. Canteen. Lots of rooms. The bathrooms seem like they have just been cleaned. People would be much less scared if the refugees were hosted here instead of having to sleep on the floor at Udine railway station, as is the case.

PAOLO BERDINI – TOWN PLANNER ROMA TRE UNIVERSITY

If I re-fit properties that have been abandoned I don't just put the disadvantaged part of society in there, as a large part of the public believes: "I only put immigrants in there", no! I house the culture expert there, I put the language teacher there, the health carers. Afterwards, when this emergency is over, I have a public property that is still efficient and I can do what I want with it.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

The prefecture has opened a barracks in Udine. And entrusted it to the Red Cross without any tender.

FABIO DI LENARDO – RED CROSS UDINE

We started with 80 places, then it was 140, 200, 300 and up to 500.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

In just a year, one of the six buildings has been renovated so about a hundred refugees are in here while another 400 live in the Civil Protection department tents. What has prevented these other two properties from being renovated straight away?

VITTORIO ZAPPALORTO – PREFECT OF UDINE

These centres should host people for a maximum of 15 days. So investing in these centres and turning them into residential centres conflicts with the idea of shelter homes.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

But how many people stay here for 15 days?

VITTORIO ZAPPALORTO – PREFECT OF UDINE

None, nobody. They stay here for months.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

And when they leave others arrive. It has been like this for years and will be like this for many more years. Treviso, former Serena barracks, abandoned 5 years ago. Here, the opening of the barracks was decided in two days.

PIETRO SIGNORIELLO – INTERIM VICE PREFECT TREVISO

We started using this structure as an emergency measure basically at the end of July. We are gradually carrying out further work on some areas as and when anomalies are reported.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

Alongside there is also this large park with old abandoned warehouses where it would be possible to set up all the activities you want. This barracks with over 400 people is managed by a company that designs electrical and mechanical systems, Nova Marghera Facility.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

What has a company that manages electrical and mechanical systems got to do with housing migrants? I don't get it.

GIAN LORENZO MARINESE – NOVA MARGHERA FACILITY

It is to do with the entrepreneur and the personal attitudes of the person that manages the company.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

Rather than attitudes what is needed is a general reorganisation project because even the parishes can no longer deal with the extent of the flow of people.

DON PIERLUIGI DI PIAZZA - ERNESTO BALDUCCI SHELTER

If more people arrive, given what is happening at the borders, what will happen if there isn't a preventive, established plan in place? What is needed is a major project, a major project, a well thought-out and serious project, even severe in its approach. I feel that this is missing in our country.

DOMENICO MANZIONE – UNDER SECRETARY MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR

I can tell you that Austria, with whom we have finished talking, until now has envisaged 300,000 people arriving on Italian soil.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

If this wave of people arrives, where will you put them? What places can we use?

DOMENICO MANZIONE – UNDER SECRETARY MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR

This is a hypothesis which...

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

What has been done so far to prevent us from having to take emergency action?

DOMENICO MANZIONE – UNDER SECRETARY MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR

300,000 people all in one go can only be managed with emergency measures.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

So in your opinion the current system works well?

DOMENICO MANZIONE – UNDER SECRETARY MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR

No. The current system doesn't work at all. Of course not..

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

Do away with this system and publicly manage the shelter system?

DOMENICO MANZIONE – UNDER SECRETARY MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR

That could be an idea. I think that it would require a level of resources that, at the present time, we are not able to provide. There could certainly be an alternative project whereby the State completely manages the shelter system and therefore uses its own property, employees...

MILENA GABANELLI IN STUDIO

With its own funds, which are designed for other things. OK, the idea is this: and we don't have alternatives because everything is closed around us, let's try and turn it round, we will deal with sheltering, public management, Europe pays us and then every country takes their share, already trained and identified. This way we would be far more authoritative and credible than Turkey and, as we will see, there will be benefits for everyone.

In the meantime, where do we put them? There is no lack of space, from the resorts confiscated from the mafia, to former hospitals and, as we've seen, the immense legacy of the army barracks.

OK, let's try taking one and seeing what it can become.

The dormitories already exist and can be adjusted, separating the men's area from the women's area. Using plasterboard you can create smaller rooms for families. There is a canteen for all residents and, in the other buildings, of which there are lots, you set up the classrooms for daily courses in Italian, English, German, you teach the rules of European democracy, for example that women are equal to men here, with the obligation to attend and strict rules.

Then, as there is plenty of space in the barracks, the classrooms can also be prefabs positioned outside, where training courses for learning a trade can be held. With an infirmary and a doctor in each of these places. Then all the buildings must have solar panels so they are self-sufficient and, given that the State is the manager, it can also supply low-cost zero-impact energy to nearby neighbourhoods. Depending on their size, in these places you can host between 300 and 1000 people and, after a maximum of six months the asylum seeker must leave with a status and a CV, who they are, what they are able to do, what qualifications they have. How much does it cost to organise all of this? On the assumption that around 200,000 people arrive every year, we need to identify 400 places and the cost, very approximately, of making these places inhabitable is around 2 billion euro. Because we have seen that some could be used immediately, others only partially, others need to be completely renovated, but afterwards we would have a legacy that has been redeveloped and whose value has been increased. Then there is the annual cost of the personnel to hire full time staff, around 25,000 teachers, trainers, psychologists, at an annual cost of 750 million euro. There are the doctors, one for each place, around 400 doctors, at a cost of €15 million, and then there is the maintenance, which means food, electricity, water, gas, heating, maintenance, an annual cost of around €1.4 billion. The residents have to take care of the kitchens and the cleaning. The total annual spending for all of this is 2.165 billion euro. Of course we have done some

calculations, talking to each other, but they are rough estimates, to be examined more closely. But they are a starting point. Now if we organise things like this there are multiple benefits, we think, beginning with the greater perception of safety, greater social wealth because as well as laying the basis for their integration it is also work for our teachers, our trainers, doctors and construction. The condition is that Europe supplies some funds and then takes its share, already trained and already identified and it doesn't have to spend any more money, the Member States no longer have to spend money on this process. So, is Europe willing to play its part in setting up a project like this? We asked representatives from various countries beginning with the European Commission.

DIMITRIS AVRAMOPOULOS – EUROPEAN COMMISSIONER IMMIGRATION

If Italy established an overall national plan and the Government made it theirs by officially presenting it to the relevant European bodies, it would certainly be welcomed very positively. We would discuss in detail if more money is necessary, the money is there. I'm sorry that some countries don't take their share, but they are obliged to. I want to underline that Europe is present and the ideas that also come from civil society are taken into serious consideration and if they are concrete we provide the necessary help to implement them.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

If Italy took care of the first phase of providing shelter, would Sweden then be prepared to host a quota of the refugees?

CARINA OHLSSON – MP SWEDISH SOCIAL DEMOCRAT PARTY

Certainly. The responsibility must be shared by all European States. The problem is those that simply say "no", end of story.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

Do you think that if Italy took care of the first phase of providing shelter, Denmark would be prepared to take a quota of the refugees?

KENNETH KRISTENSEN BERTH – MP DANISH PEOPLE'S PARTY

No.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

No?

KENNETH KRISTENSEN BERTH – MP DANISH PEOPLE'S PARTY

Never.

INGJERD SCHOU – HOYRE CONSERVATIVE PARTY MP

We are looking after 30,000 refugees. I think we have already done our bit. We will continue to honour our responsibilities as long as all other European States are made to honour theirs.

MARIAN WENDT - MP CDU GERMANY

We agree with this approach. We'll take our quote of refugees if all other countries take theirs.

MILENA GABANELLI IN STUDIO

Ok, well aside from the representative of the more radical Danish right, it seems as if the necessary conditions to implement such a project exist. The European

Commissioner said that "if your Government adopts an across-the-board project and presents it in the relevant places, we will examine it, the money is there". So Mr. President take his word for it! After which, here we are talking about asylum seekers, but there is the question regarding economic migrants, who account for 60% of those that have arrived in Italy so far. And here things are more complex because we can't look after all of them, unfortunately. Italy and Europe's position on this is to return them to their homes. But this isn't easy because distinguishing them is difficult, they don't arrive with passports in their hands. The current mechanism in Italy works like this.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

Fiumicino airport. The border police are waiting for a Moroccan guy to arrive from Sicily who must be deported because he is an illegal immigrant. He is escorted by 4 policemen. He is then placed on another flight heading for Casablanca and the entire team of police gets on board with him. They will later have to return to Italy.

VITTORIO PISANI – IMMIGRATION SERVICE DIRECTOR STATE POLICE

Enforced deportation has its cost, which is the air travel cost of the migrant. There is obviously the cost of the police staff that had to accompany him at the Italian border. There is the cost of the return plane tickets of the two policemen that generally escort the migrant to their country of origin. You filmed the deportation of a Moroccan citizen if I remember right...

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

Yes, four policemen escorted him.

VITTORIO PISANI – IMMIGRATION SERVICE DIRECTOR STATE POLICE

Four of them left?

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

Yes.

VITTORIO PISANI – IMMIGRATION SERVICE DIRECTOR STATE POLICE

If four of them left it was obviously because of the migrant's previous offences, he was highly dangerous.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

When there are collective deportations charter flights are used. But this only happens with Nigeria, Tunisia and Egypt.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

And in the case of a charter flight how many staff leave with the people?

VITTORIO PISANI – IMMIGRATION SERVICE DIRECTOR STATE POLICE

Generally each person being deported is accompanied by two escorts so if we have a charter flight with 30 people on it, 30 immigrants, we'll have 60 police officers.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

In 2015 only 46% of the 34,000 illegal immigrants were deported. At a cost of €35 million.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

What about all the others?

VITTORIO PISANI – IMMIGRATION SERVICE DIRECTOR STATE POLICE

They are probably still living illegally in Italy or they may be living illegally not in Italy but in Europe.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

This happens because when a migrant arrives in Italy, this is what occurs. Batch arrived from the Gambia and ended up in the hotspot of Lampedusa.

BATCH - ASYLUM SEEKER

There they asked for my name, age and nationality. After four days they took me to Agrigento. They left me at the station with a sheet of paper saying that I had to leave Italy within 7 days.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

What means did you have in order to be able to leave? Did you have money, a document?

BATCH - ASYLUM SEEKER

I didn't have anything. It was impossible for me to return home.

FULVIO VASSALLO PALEOLOGO – DIRECTOR L'ALTRO DIRITTO ASSOCIATION - SICILY

Of course those without documents or money can't leave Italy within 7 days.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

So these people never go home.

FULVIO VASSALLO PALEOLOGO – DIRECTOR L'ALTRO DIRITTO ASSOCIATION - SICILY

Basically they will never go home. This is the statistic now.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

In the end, there are around 20,000 illegal immigrants at large because they don't have the money to buy a ticket or because they don't have any documents. Many appeal because they declare themselves to be asylum seekers and go before a judge.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

Let's imagine that in the end even the judge says "you do not have the right to request asylum in Italy", in this case is the person sent back home or not?

VITTORIO PISANI – IMMIGRATION SERVICE DIRECTOR STATE POLICE

We go back to the previous phase. A deportation order is certainly made.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

We go back to a piece of paper that says you have to leave within 15 days. Few leave. Some stay and are caught, and end up in an identification and expulsion centre (CIE). And the story repeats itself.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

This is the second time you've been in a CIE?

MIGRANT

No, three times.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

Three times.

MIGRANT

Yes. Three times.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

And each time they've issued you with an expulsion order to leave?

MIGRANT

Yes.

MIGRANT

I come from Turin.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

From the identification and expulsion centre in Turin.

MIGRANT

Yes. Before they sent me to Bari.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

To the Bari expulsion centre?

MIGRANT

Yes.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

When they made you leave Bari what did they say to you? Did they give you a sheet of paper? What did they give you?

MIGRANT

They gave me a sheet of paper saying I had 5 days to leave Italy.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

But you didn't leave.

MIGRANT

I don't have any money. How can I get to my country?

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

Out of 1739 foreigners at the Ponte Galeria CIE in 2015, 575 were repatriated, less than 30%.

VITTORIO PISANI – IMMIGRATION SERVICE DIRECTOR STATE POLICE

The physical repatriation process depends on the level of cooperation with the country of origin...

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

You mean to repatriate someone there has to be an agreement with the country of origin?

VITTORIO PISANI – IMMIGRATION SERVICE DIRECTOR STATE POLICE

An agreement with the country of origin may not be necessary if the person in question has a travel document...

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

Of course... but as nobody has this document it is mandatory to have this agreement.

VITTORIO PISANI – IMMIGRATION SERVICE DIRECTOR STATE POLICE

A cooperation agreement is mandatory.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

Like with Sudan?

VITTORIO PISANI – IMMIGRATION SERVICE DIRECTOR STATE POLICE

Negotiations are at a preliminary phase.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

With Mali?

VITTORIO PISANI – IMMIGRATION SERVICE DIRECTOR STATE POLICE

We don't have a cooperation agreement with Mali.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

With Somalia?

VITTORIO PISANI – IMMIGRATION SERVICE DIRECTOR STATE POLICE

We don't have a cooperation agreement with Somalia.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

How much do agreements with these countries cost?

VITTORIO PISANI – IMMIGRATION SERVICE DIRECTOR STATE POLICE

Our cost for international cooperation is 5 million euro.

SALVATORE FACHILE – LAWYER ASGI (ASSOCIATION FOR JURIDICAL STUDIES ON IMMIGRATION)

You make an agreement, you pay a price, economic and political, as it was for Turkey, in exchange for a tradable item. Foreign citizens become tradable items. For this reason it is essential that these agreements always pass through Parliament. Because the executive cannot decide what is traded for what with other foreign countries.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

How much do these bilateral agreements to make repatriations cost?

DOMENICO MANZIONE – UNDER SECRETARY MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR

Well if you ask me, as I work exclusively in immigration and not development cooperation, I would answer you by saying that you should perhaps ask the Foreign Minister for the overall cost.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

I put the question to the Foreign Office who, however, wrote to us telling us to contact the Home Office. What is certain is that the EU has allocated 1.8 billion euro for cooperation projects.

MILENA GABANELLI IN STUDIO

Italy and Europe's idea is that of saying "let's invest in poor countries so they don't come and look for work here". That's fair enough, but it depends on what agreements you make and with whom... In the meantime we have illegal immigrants here and others will continue to arrive and what will happen is that they will end up in the gangmaster system, the victims of exploitation or, in the worst case scenario, will be involved in robbery and drug dealing, setting out on the path to prison with all that that involves. Until now mainly sub-Saharan Africans have arrived in Italy who aren't fleeing from warring countries but perhaps from guerrilla warfare, and so it is important to evaluate them case by case to establish who is requesting asylum, who has the right to asylum and who doesn't, and it can take up to 2 years. Why?

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

Let's go back to the guy from Gambia, who landed in Lampedusa.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

Did they ask you why you had come to Italy?

BATCH - ASYLUM SEEKER

Yes.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

And how did you answer?

BATCH - ASYLUM SEEKER

I said my life wasn't safe in the Gambia. And they turned me away. But thanks to a lawyer I appealed.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

How long can a process of this type take?

FAUSTO MELLUSO – ARCI PALERMO

For a process of this type it takes a couple of months to obtain a suspension. A decision is then issued in the next few months. After these two months have passed they go to the police station so they can apply for asylum as their rejection has been overturned. For the answer to their request for asylum...

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

How much time passes?

FAUSTO MELLUSO – ARCI PALERMO

Nine months, a year.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

So if the Commission says that I don't have the right to asylum or another form of protection?

SALVATORE FACHILE – LAWYER ASGI (ASSOCIATION FOR JURIDICAL STUDIES ON IMMIGRATION)

To any form of protection... you can appeal to the Civil Court. The Civil Court obviously takes some time. Generally it takes about a year to receive a response from the Judge.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE OFF-CAMERA

In the meantime the immigrants remain in the shelters while the courts are submerged by appeals. Currently there are 24,000 pending appeals and to process them all it has been calculated that it would take 39 judges dedicated solely to this task. At the moment there are only 10. The Court of Rome, for example, requested three.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

And these three judges? Do they have them?

GABRIELE ERASMO - JUDGE

Just one, me. For now.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

How many appeals are you processing?

GABRIELE ERASMO - JUDGE

Only ordinary procedures, we're talking about 500 appeals. And many others will arrive for sure in the near future.

CLAUDIA DI PASQUALE

The claimant that appeals loses. It is established that they can't stay in Italy. What happens?

GABRIELE ERASMO - JUDGE

They can appeal.

MILENA GABANELLI IN STUDIO

And we go back to the start. So, it would take a few months to establish who has the right to stay and who doesn't, allocating 39 judges only to this, of course they must be replaced so the courts don't empty out, and this also has a cost, estimated at around 3 million euro a year. In short, this process will continue for many years, it will be very long and we think that one of the ways to tackle and manage the issue of asylum seekers is to take a business view where the cooperatives, the associations provide support but the overall framework is public with European supervision. Fully aware that the role of the governments is to avoid conflict, not to create it, and that of the UN is to play an active role and not just espouse its good intentions. Otherwise walls won't be enough to secure the relative, moderate peace and safety we have managed to build in the last 70 years.