



AMICALL

Research reports



## Country context paper – Italy

Andrea Pogliano, Roberta Valetti  
FIERI, Turin

June 2011

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With financial support from the European Commission



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## Research reports

**AMICALL: Attitudes to Migrants, Communication and Local Leadership**

**Country paper – The Italian context**

**Andrea Pogliano, Roberta Valetti**

**Turin, June 2011**



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## 1. A brief overview of foreign immigration in Italy

Italy has become a country of immigration in the XX century since the second half of the seventies. The first arrivals mainly came from some North African countries (Morocco and Tunisia), the former Italian colonies (Eritrea) and other countries characterized by a substantial presence of catholic missions (Cape Verde and the Philippines). These arrivals were clearly distinguished by gender: men came from North Africa, while women from the other countries mentioned above. Besides this distinction, there was a clear difference in terms of work placement: men were employed in the seasonal agricultural work, in fishing (the Tunisian in Sicily), or as pedlars; women were employed as domestic workers in some big cities of the centre-north of Italy. During the 80s arrivals from China, Peru, Senegal, and Nigeria became equally significant, and immigration finally developed into a media driven issue and fell into the public domain.

At the beginning of the 90s, after the collapse of the communist regimes, the first migrants from eastern Europe came to Italy: mainly from ex-Yugoslavia and Albania and, afterwards, from Romania, Ukraine and Moldova. In the new millennium, immigrants from eastern Europe have become the largest group of immigrants in Italy, with a strong increase occurred in the period immediately after 2007, when Bulgaria and Romania joined the European Union. In the 90s a substantial increase of arrivals was registered from Morocco. For many years the Moroccan community has been the first immigrant community in Italy. Nowadays it is the third (after Romanians and Albanians).

Census	Foreign residents
1971	121.715
1981	210.937
1991	356.159
2001	1.334.889

**Table 1: Census statistics on foreign residents in Italy**

The migration landscape started to change during the 90s also due to the increase of family reunifications, which have shown how often the migratory phenomenon meant a long stay in the receiving country, and to new categories of immigrants in need of protection and specific legal treatment who burst on the scene (unaccompanied minors, victims of human trafficking, asylum seekers). The phenomenon has got more and more complicated and steady, becoming a variable which make us rethink the present and future Italian society. Core sectors of the Italian economy, like construction and commerce, as well as strategic sectors like public health and social care cannot be considered without the fundamental role of immigrants any longer. Besides that, also the pension system can survive only thanks to the demographic support of the young immigrant population merged with a native population distinguished by the highest ageing rates in Europe.

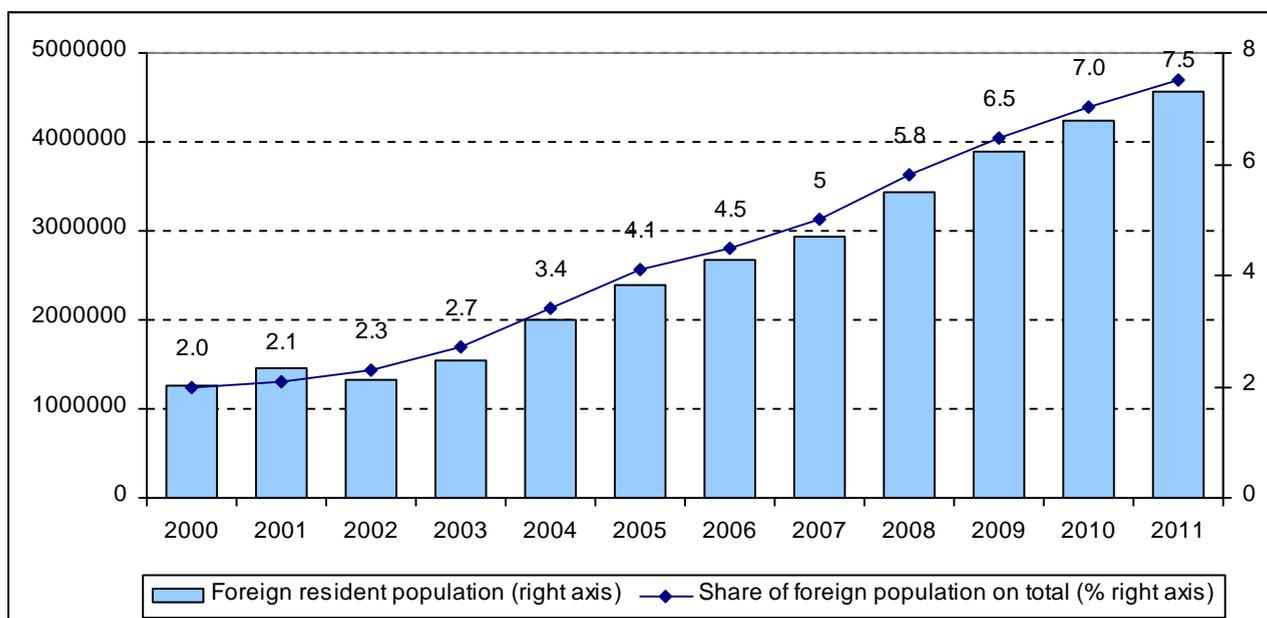
In comparison with a decade ago, the current situation appears as the result of a strongly significant increase of female and family migrations and of the number of immigrant children and teenagers (who came to Italy with their family, or who were reunified or born in Italy) in the Italian schools. Nevertheless, there is a still considerable number of arrivals of single men (especially from Senegal and Tunisia) and women (from the Philippines, Brazil, Peru, Ukraine, Poland, Somalia, Ethiopia). The substantial flows of Romanian, Ukraine and Polish people have brought a change also in terms of religious belonging, making Christianity the most widespread religion in Italy among immigrants, followed by Islam. The other religions altogether represent only about 15% .

Today Romanians are the largest immigrant community in Italy, with 887.763 residents, representing 21% of foreign residents as at 1<sup>st</sup> January 2010. Nonetheless, in 2009 the trend of flows from Romania registered a decrease in comparison with the years before. As pointed out by ISTAT:

‘It seems that the strong migration drive determined by the entry of Romania and Bulgaria into the European Union is diminishing’ (ISTAT ‘*La popolazione straniera residente in Italia al 1° gennaio 2010*’: 4).

As at 1<sup>st</sup> January 2010, foreign residents represent 7% of the total residents in Italy; about half of them comes from eastern Europe (EU and extra EU); more than 60% of foreigners live in the north of the country; only 13% in the south Regions. Minors are 22% of foreign residents, while second generations (to be intended as individuals born in Italy from foreign citizens) represent 13.5% of foreign residents.

Finally, it should be noted that Italian nationality has always been acquired mostly by marriage, while naturalisations based on residence have always been low. But, in 2009 the balance between the two modes was reversed and acquisitions by residence outnumbered naturalisations based on marriage.



**Figure 1: Italy: Stocks and shares of the foreign population (January of each year).**

Source: Istat, population registers.

Work	Family	Religion	Elective residence	Study	Asylum	Asylum seeken	Humanitarian	Health	Other	Total
1.387063	1.424680	26.177	12.525	46.836	12.271	11.178	30.061	7.110	29.588	2.987489

**Table 2: Non EU citizens: reasons for residence permit.**

Source: Istat, population registers, 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009

Age	Total	%
0-6	64	1,4
7-14	583	13,1
15	558	12,6
16	1.104	24,9
17	2.129	48
Tot	4.438	100

**Table 3: Unaccompanied foreign minors at the end of December 2010.**

Source: Ministry of Interior

## 2. A glimpse at the history of integration policies

The history of immigration and immigrant policies in Italy can be divided into three phases.

The first phase (until 1998) is marked by the almost total absence of a state policy and by political interventions aimed at ‘controlling the emergence’, made not homogeneously at national level by local entities, and, even before, by private-social organizations and the third sector (especially catholic associations dealing with social assistance). The first national law was Law No. 943/1986. This conceived immigrants only as dependent workers with a family, who were allowed full access to social and sanitary services, to education and housing, actually excluding the majority of immigrants residing in Italy and failing to provide the necessary tools and resources to ensure them the enjoyment of the rights set by the law itself. The following Law no. 39/1990, although without containing substantial innovations on integration issues, cleared the way for some important changes: it was followed by circulars C.M. 440/1991 and C.M. 119/1995 issued by the Ministry of Public Education, and by decree-law D.L. 485/1995. They actually changed the existing procedures followed at local level by many LRAs, schools and hospitals, especially in the north of Italy, into state regulations. These procedures concerned the admission of irregular foreign minors to compulsory education and the widening of essential clinical and hospital assistance to irregular migrants, besides access to preventive medicine programmes and maternity leave.

The second phase is characterised by the first organic law on immigration, Law no. 40/1998, then merged into the Single Act no. 286 of July 25, 1998 (*Testo Unico sull’immigrazione*). The law had a double purpose: stricter harshness towards undocumented immigrants (creation of Temporary Reception Centres to ease repatriations) and extension of social rights to regular immigrants. The following rights were sanctioned at last: equal access to social rights between regular immigrants and Italian citizens; access to fundamental social rights for irregular immigrants (Ponzo 2009; Ricucci, CLIP Research report, 2009). Moreover, the Single Act founded the National Fund for migration policies to benefit Regions, it created a protection and socio-occupational recovery system for the victims of human trafficking and special programmes of social assistance and integration.

The third phase is featured by the return to a centre-right coalition government. Besides Law no. 189/2002, which partially reformed the Single Act sharpening punishments for irregular immigrants and reducing ‘the welfare access of [regular] immigrants indirectly’<sup>1</sup> (Ponzo 2009: 18-9), this phase is also marked by the choice made in 2001 of merging the National Fund for Migration Policies into the National Fund for Social Policies, and by the removal of the duty for Regions to allocate part of the Fund to immigrant policies, occurred through the Financial Law 2003 (Law no. 289/2002). Finally, Law no. 198/2002 created the Asylum National Programme (*Programma Nazionale Asilo - PNA*) and gave life to the Protection System for Asylum Seekers (*Sistema di Protezione per Richiedenti Asilo - SPRAR*).

To sum up, the delay of the Italian Government in making laws on this matter, during a period in which the classical models (assimilationist, multicultural, liberalistic, pluralistic) were deeply called into question, together with factors like the weak Italian national identity and the weaknesses of the welfare system, negatively interfered with the definition of a dominant integration philosophy in the Country. As said above, the first phase was dominated by integration policies developed at local level following a bottom-up process, and the lack of territorial homogeneity of these policies itself has also hindered the growth of a national view. Even after 1998 the role of local policies remains central (see below, paragraph 4) and the lack of territorial homogeneity is still visible today.

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<sup>1</sup> Among measures that indirectly curtail access to welfare there is: “the duty of the employer to ensure the foreign employee accommodation and payment of costs for repatriation in case of dismissal, the reduction of the length of the residence permit in case of unemployment, the requisite of being employed and having a two-year residence permit for access to housing” (Ponzo 2009: 19).

According to Tiziana Caponio: ‘speaking about integration models never appears to be so difficult as it is in relation to the new immigration countries of southern Europe, where flows mainly developed irregularly and spontaneously, with little interest by the national public institutions and a *de facto* delegation of integration and reception interventions to local administrations and civil society organisations’ (Caponio 2009: 27).

Also Law no. 40/1998 does not refer to a model but puts forward the need to recognize diversity and equal opportunities. The ‘model of reasonable integration’, outlined by Zincone in the report of the National Committee for the Integration of Immigrants in Italy (Zincone 2000), then reviewed in Zincone 2009, comes out from the critical analysis of classical models.

According to the last findings of the MIPEX index, Italy is placed 10<sup>th</sup> out of 31, near to countries like the US, Spain (to which Italy has given its first place as country of new immigration), Luxembourg, Germany and UK, despite the fact that ‘equality policies remain the weakest in Europe [and] government is inactive on voting rights and citizenship reform’ (<http://www.mipex.eu/italy>). In comparison with the other countries, according to the MIPEX indicators, the weakest points are education and political participation. The strongest points are mobility of the labour market and family reunification, although decree-law D.L. 187/2010 on security has recently increased the costs of papers for reunification and raised requirements for access to housing.

### **3. Anti-immigrant movements and attitudes towards immigration: some basic facts**

When talking about attitudes towards immigrants, we must take into consideration the following actors:

- political leaders and parties intended as actors and spokesmen committed in influencing these attitudes;
- media, especially *news media* with a high circulation;
- the active audience, that is, those parts of the civil society who are asked for opinions and treated as sources of information by media;
- the public opinion, interviewed for internal and international surveys, such as the *Transatlantic Trends*.

As far as anti-immigrant political movements are concerned, *Lega Nord*, born in 1991 from the merging of regional leagues and movements in the north of Italy, established itself as a leading political party in the 1992 elections, after the corruption trials known as *Tangentopoli* which put an end to the first Republic. Nowadays this party is in power: it governs three ministers, among which the Ministry of Interior. In political elections, *Lega Nord* went from 4.58% in 2006 to 8.30% in 2008. In the 2010 regional elections *Lega Nord* was the leading party in Veneto with 35.16% of votes, the second party in Lombardy with 26.21% of votes, the third in Piedmont, Emilia Romagna and Liguria with respectively 16.74%, 13.68%, and 10.22% of votes. At the moment it governs two big Regions of the north of Italy, Piedmont and Veneto. The strong power this party has been gaining in the Berlusconi government over the last few years has made the government itself and pro-government newspapers and TV news take on attitudes in tune with *Lega Nord* electoral marketing, focused on issues like the fight against illegal immigration and the refusal to grant new rights to immigrants. In the centre and south of Italy, where the presence of *Lega Nord* is much less significant, there are nonetheless extreme right parties and movements such as *Movimento Sociale Italiano* (MSI), *La Destra* and *Forza Nuova*, which, despite getting few votes, are strongly committed to promoting xenophobic messages.

As far as daily journalism is concerned (both press and television), since the 90s the main sources of information taken into consideration by media to nourish news about intolerance and simmering conflicts between native citizens and foreign residents have been neighbourhood committees, made up of citizens, often shopkeepers, protesting against the urban blight of the major cities in northern

Italy, and 'insecurity entrepreneurs', intended as movements and political parties working to foster the birth and consolidation of these committees (Maneri 1998). The reasons for the creation of committees have historically been related to the presence of prostitutes on the streets, drug pushing, the commercial competition among immigrant pedlars, the squatting of buildings, the presence of Muslims on the streets during the Friday prayer, the fear for the building of mosques. In these cases, the news is in the media agenda for many days thanks to the presence of these committees and 'insecurity entrepreneurs'. They release interviews and outline the situation for first, speaking about the immigrants of the neighbourhood as a problem.

More in general, all the studies aimed at analysing the content of media have shown how immigration is clearly treated as a problem, especially in relation to three issues: crime/deviance, the presence of Muslim citizens, and, of course, clandestine arrivals by sea. Over the 90s the enemy was mostly identified as Albanian, while in the new millennium Albanians almost disappear from crime chronicles in favour of Romanians (especially during the years of the entry of Romania in the EU). Immigrants are mentioned as 'enemies of security'. African immigrants, especially from Sub-Saharan Africa, are linked to deviance (drug pushing and prostitution related to illegal conditions), while immigrants from the Arab Muslim world are associated to 'the danger of terrorism'. As mentioned in Gariglio, Pogliano, Zanini (2010), the main feature of journalistic reports on immigration in Italy over the last thirty years by now has been the tendency to build stereotypes, to isolate 'groups of immigrants', time after time presenting one group as more threatening than others. Family, school integration of young immigrants, employment and housing are clearly underrepresented issues in comparison with the topics of clandestinity, irregular work, the presence of single men, the squatting of buildings, crime and prostitution. The general framework is changing only on some media, as in the majority of them the immigration issue is unwilling to adapt to the transformations occurred in the Italian society long since.

We must point out that in Italy there are many 'oppositions' to a media discourse that has been petrified over time on the frames of invasion and insecurity. Oppositions come from both the catholic and left-wing politically oriented lay world, from many associations and voluntary organisations, but also from the right-wing, thanks to the new collocation of Gianfranco Fini, President of the Chamber of Deputies, former leader of *Alleanza Nazionale* (AN), who has publicly endorsed the extension of citizenship and political rights (see the *Sarubbi-Granata* Bill), being criticized by his party colleagues and by pro-government newspapers. As for the Catholic world, we mention the most widespread weekly newspaper *Famiglia Cristiana* and the media influence of priests who are very committed in neighbourhoods with a high concentration of immigrants, besides archbishops and cardinals among which we mention the archbishop of Milan, Dionigi Tettamanzi. These social actors have often been involved to publicly uphold opinions and values in opposition with the ones endorsed by supporters of *Lega Nord* and extreme right parties.

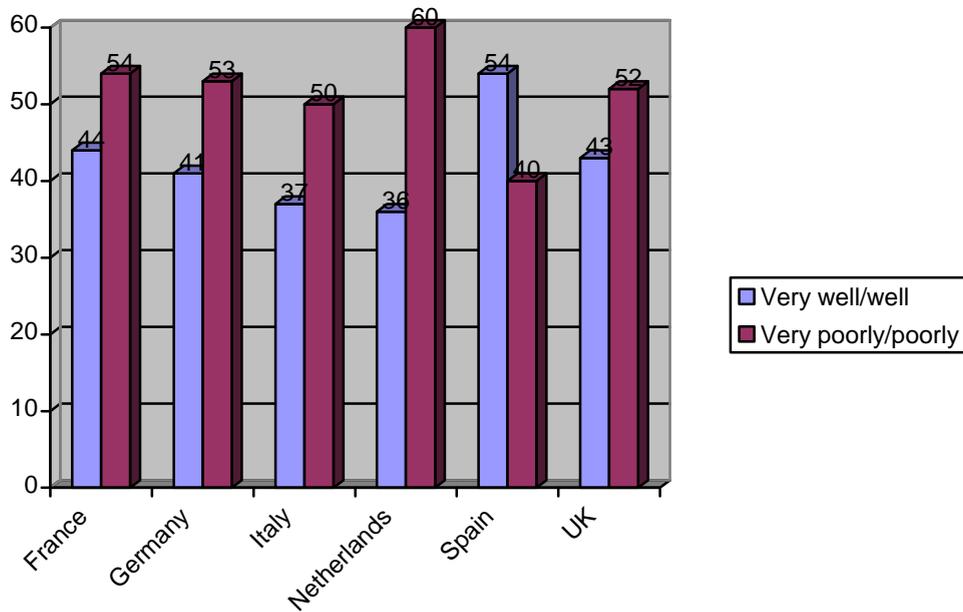
It is also worth mentioning the project *Carta di Roma*, the ethical code passed on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2008 by the journalists association and the observatory of *Carta di Roma (Osservatorio della Carta di Roma)* of the University "La Sapienza". *Carta di Roma* ratifies the request for 'accurate, responsible and non-sensationalist information' about asylum seekers, refugees, victims of human trafficking and migrants.

We can also mention recent communication campaigns carried out by displaying advertisements against racism and discriminations at national level: the 2009 *Arci (Associazione Ricreativa e Culturale Italiana)* campaign '*Non aver paura*' and the 2011 Waldesian Church campaign '*Fratelli d'Italia*'.

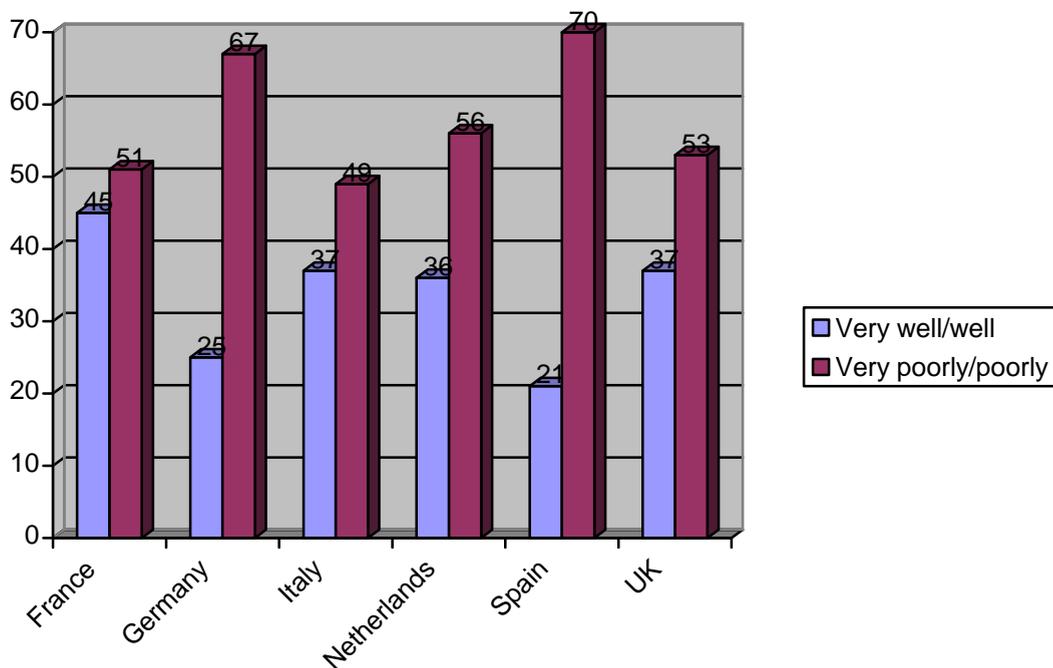
Despite the media tendency to refer to immigration as a menace and despite the existence of anti-immigrant movements and political parties, the comparative survey *Transatlantic Trends Immigration* (TTI) shows that the Italian public opinion does not register particularly high levels of intolerance towards immigrants, if considered in comparison with the other countries surveyed.

As for the perception of immigrant integration, although half of the sample thinks that immigrants are integrating poorly into society, Italian people feel less pessimistic than most of the other

countries surveyed. Also, it should be noted that among these countries, Italian public opinion avoids large distinctions between immigrants in general and Muslims in regards to integration, despite the media-political pressure on this issue (figures 2 and 3).



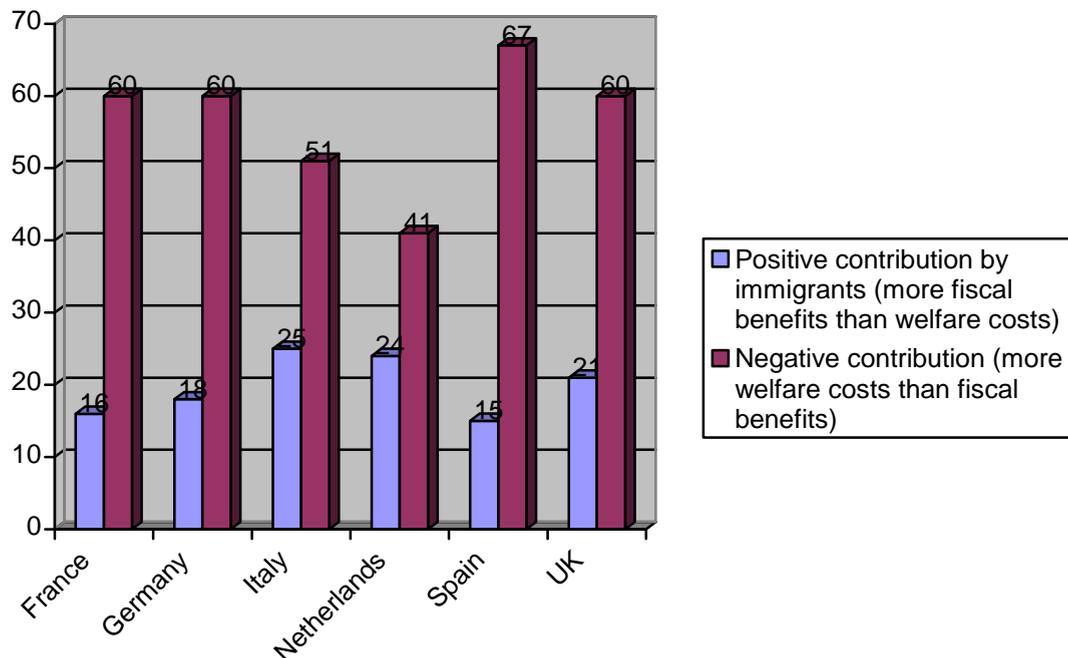
**Figure 2: (based on TTI 2010, Table Q28b – only 2010 data): “How well do you think that immigrants are integrating in the national society?”.**



**Figure 3: (based on TTI 2010, Table Q28b – only 2010 data): “How well do you think that muslim immigrants are integrating in the national society?”.**

The majority of Italian people believe that immigrants are a fiscal drain benefiting more from health and welfare services than they contribute in taxes, although experts show that the situation is

extremely different. And again this negative perception appears to be less negative than in the majority of the other countries polled (figure 4).



**Figure 4: (based on TTI 2010, Table Q25 – only 2010 data): “Do immigrants (in general) contribute more in taxes than they benefit from health and welfare services, or the other way round?”.**

However, we must add that these data are placed within an opinion framework where the majority of Italians thinks that there are too many immigrants anyway (TTI 2010, Table Q4b), showing, in this respect, the highest percentage in comparison with the other countries considered, except the UK. Moreover, moving from opinions to the personal and relational dimensions, it should be observed that Italy seems to be the country registering the lowest contacts between immigrants and natives (figure 5).

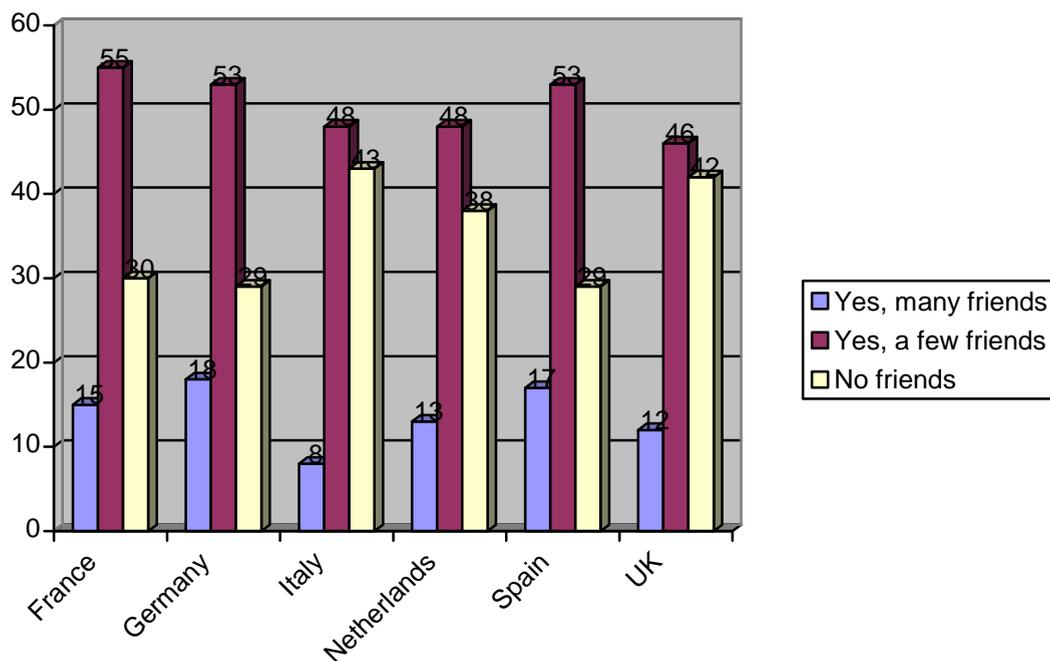


Figure 5: (based on TTI 2010, Table Q30 – only 2010 data): “Do you have friends who were born in another country?”

#### 4. Who does what in the integration field

When talking about the three phases of the history of immigration policies in Italy we have already touched on the troublesome issue of the relationships between central State, Region and local level<sup>2</sup> in the management and implementation of immigrant policies. The first phase lasted until 1998. It saw the birth of immigrant policies at local level with the aim of controlling the emergence, and the collaboration of the social private sector with Municipalities, especially in the north of Italy. Things changed at last in 1998 when the Single Act (*Testo Unico*) clearly outlined a two-level system: Regions are given the task to identify the aims, to program and coordinate interventions, while Municipalities are entrusted with the draft of projects, in collaboration with local associations, and the following implementation of policies. Afterwards, Law No. 328/2000 introduced an additional level of mediation: Provinces, which have the task of coordinating plans for local social policies (*piani territoriali*) established by the ‘leading’ Municipalities.

As we have already said, the Financial Law 2003 (Law No. 289/2002) removed the duty for Regions to allocate part of the National Fund for Social Policies to immigrant policies. This means that the choice whether allocating part of the funds for immigration policies or not is now autonomously made by each Region. This important form of autonomy has gone hand in hand with an even more important reduction of the national resources intended for the Fund for Social Policies. Nevertheless, despite the redefinition of the institutional and financial framework, Regions have kept a three-year plan of interventions for immigrants, as it was originally determined by the 1998 Single Act.

<sup>2</sup> For local level we mean the Municipality, although there is another level which is only present in medium-big cities, that is districts (*Circoscrizioni*). They include territorial units usually made of various quarters (Turin, which has about one million inhabitants, is divided into 10 districts). As far as local integration policies are concerned, districts usually have a marginal role, although in a few cases they have been promoters or important partners of local projects.

In the three Regions selected for the AMICALL project we observe three different models aimed at regulating relationships within LRAs. In Piedmont, it is the Region to delegate Provinces in planning integrated plans on immigration. In Emilia-Romagna the central unit is the Municipality. In Lombardy Local Health Agencies (*Aziende Sanitarie Locali* - ASL) develop integrated plans within their various related socio-health departments (Caponio 2009). Just in the three selected Regions, a role of growing importance is played by Banking Foundations, whose contribution becomes essential in light of the shrinkage of national public resources (*Compagnia di San Paolo* and *Fondazione CRT* in Piedmont; *Fondazione Unidea* of Unicredit in Lombardy; *Fondazione Del Monte* in Emilia Romagna).

Therefore, we can outline a pyramid-like model on the top of which we identify the National Fund and the Regions committed in choosing how much to allocate for immigrant policies. Below are the Provinces and ASL (for Lombardy), whose role is to develop and coordinate plans with Municipalities, which, in turns, cooperate with voluntary organisations, the third sector, and trade unions.

Finally, we must investigate the role of the Local Councils for Immigration (*Consigli Territoriali per l'immigrazione* - CT), 'introduced by Law no. 40/1998, with the purpose of analysing needs and promoting interventions at local level. According to art. 3, CT are consultative bodies which involve all local institutions dealing with immigration, stakeholders, trade union representatives and employer associations in order to discuss and improve the social integration of migrants' (Caponio 2009: 33). Institutive Decree D.P.C.M. 18 December 1999 gave the presidency of CT to prefects with the purpose of making them operational institutions. Nevertheless, the Single Act does not say whether decisions taken by CT are binding on the institutions and the social actors involved, and does not provide for a fund devoted to the implementation of the approved initiatives. But, in 2007 the Ministry of the Interior has relaunched the role of CT, allocating the resources of the fund *Fondo Lire UNRRA* to them.

Furthermore, it is worth considering that also in the field of policies in support of specific categories of migrants (victims of human trafficking, unaccompanied minors, etc.) a central role has been given to LRAs since the 1998 Single Act (especially to Municipalities). Also, Law No. 198/2002 founded the Asylum National Programme (*Programma Nazionale Asilo* - PNA) and gave life to the Protection System for Asylum Seekers (*Sistema di Protezione per Richiedenti Asilo* - SPRAR), assigning to local entities also specific competences on the reception of refugees and asylum seekers. The operational unit of SPRAR is represented by the National Association of the Italian Municipalities (*Associazione Nazionale dei Comuni Italiani* - ANCI). As a result, Municipalities become core actors in outlining projects, supplying services, but also in coordinating interventions at national level.

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