

The security of exclusion

Centres of Italy October 2019



 **openpolis**

act:onaïd
— REALIZZA IL CAMBIAMENTO —

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Photo Credit: Guglielmo Mangiapane (Reuters)

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Part one

HOW THE SECURITY DECREE HAS SUFFOCATED THE RECEPTION SYSTEM

The hypertrophy of the extraordinary reception system for asylum seekers and refugees to the detriment of the ordinary system, the practice of calls for tender without tenders still followed by too many prefectures, the signs of an advancement of the model of small centres widespread in the territories, especially in the northern regions, the opacity of the system and the difficulty of accessing essential information. These were the findings that emerged from the first 2018 report "[Centres of Italy. Calls, managers, and costs of](#)" "receiving asylum seekers and refugees". A long task of data collection with the objective of creating an information system that ActionAid and Openpolis make available to those who - in institutions and associations, in the media, in the world of research and in the community in the broadest sense - are interested in building an independent observatory to monitor the reception system in Italy.

At the beginning of October last year, the first Conte Cabinet launched a plan to transform the reception system for migrants in Italy with the so-called "Security Decree". Today, one year later, the birth of the Conte II Cabinet, in the changed political context, is accompanied by the intention to further change, more or less decisively, what has just been changed.

The 2019 edition of Centres of Italy aims to evaluate, starting from this first chapter, the consequences that the new regulations are beginning to produce on the reception system as a whole. In the following chapters, we will then go on to observe the relative impact on the territory, and in the cities, cross-referencing data and stories from the field.

Overall, the emerging political line is increasingly oriented towards winning immediate consensus rather than seeking useful strategies to regulate the migration phenomenon. In particular, the obsessive emphasis on the invasion of the migrants who are putting pressure on our borders evokes a fact that simply does not exist.

All the data, on the contrary, indicate a progressive reversal of the past trend. From the drastic drop in arrivals, to the downturn in asylum applications and the consequent reduction in admissions to the reception system.

The Conte I Cabinet's response to this general downward trend in real flows and in the number of those entitled to be received was to implement a decisive crackdown on the reception and integration system.

The [abolition of humanitarian protection](#) - the most widespread form of protection for those who applied for asylum in Italy before the Security Decree was issued - is increasingly expanding the group of illegal foreigners. Which becomes a real emergency, with the relative detrimental human, social and widespread illegality consequences. An emergency for which, in the absence of a regularisation mechanism, the repatriation solution appears, in the most optimistic case, to be an illusion.

The new tendering rules for the management of the centres, intended to rationalise the system and cut the costs and services of inclusion, come up against the difficulty, also of a political nature, that the managers have in complying with them and that the prefectures have in applying them. There have been a number of

The drop in flows

8,000

migrants landed in 2019, the lowest figure since 2010

30,000

asylum applications in 2019. They were about twice as many in 2018

100,000

foreigners in reception, 30,000 fewer than in 2018

The explosion of illegal migrants

+40,000

the estimated number of illegal migrants in 2019 due to the abolition of humanitarian protection.

680,000

the number illegal migrants in Italy estimated by the end of 2019.

5,615

the migrants repatriated in 2018: it would take over 100 years to repatriate them all.

deserted calls for tenders, some that have had to be repeated or that have failed to cover the needs of the posts in the centres. Where possible, the model of large centres located in the suburbs prevails. A business that attracts managers of an industrial nature, large private entities, including foreign ones, capable of achieving economies of scale, and that keeps away small managers with a social vocation and qualified personnel.

• **La trasparenza sempre annunciata continua ad essere ostacolata.**

Last but not least, is the issue of access to information. As reported in the first edition of Centres of Italy, for an expenditure of billions of Euro per year, involving thousands of administrations and operators, and more than 100,000 foreigners, there is no reliable information and reporting system that allows us to know and monitor the situation. There is still a lack of sufficient data to observe the evolution of the phenomena in due detail. Information that for years we have been trying to obtain from the Ministry of the Interior, which rejects our requests for access to the centralized information system (Computer system for the management of reception), forcing us to collect the data we require from each individual prefecture, a laborious task. Denying everyone the right to know, to inform and to be informed.

Reception: the figures after the Security Decree

30%

the cut in funding
for smaller reception
centres.

428

invitations to
tender issued by 89
prefectures in 2019.

134

Contracts awarded in
2019 directly, without
s tender, largely
extensions.

Reception costs

2,7 BILLION

Euro for reception
expenditure in 2018.

80%

the share of the cost
of the CAS.

11,4 MILLION

the planned
expenditure for
repatriations in 2019;
it was 3.9 in 2018.

1.1 Italy the fortress: sealing the borders

The design of the migratory policy, embodied by the absolute protagonism of the former Minister of the Interior Salvini, is essentially articulated on two fronts: the internal one, with the tightening of the system of migrant reception and integration - [Security Decree](#) - and the external one, through the progressive closure of borders and the “closed ports” ([Security Decree 2](#), read the [Dossier](#) of the House and the Senate).

The intentions behind the overall programme are clear: fewer arrivals, fewer rights for those who arrive, more expulsions. The promised outcome is more security.

This design is neither new nor original. It was the Minister of the Interior Minniti who promoted, thanks to the [agreement with Libya](#) the strategy of border externalisation that makes Italy the most important country in the world [outpost of Europe's migration policies](#). Minister Minniti was also responsible for the first measures to counteract the rescue actions at sea of the NGOs ([code of conduct](#)), and for the consolidation of the so-called “hotspot approach”, i.e. the use of [arbitrary rejection practices](#) and repatriation used in border centres like the one in Lampedusa. A policy that has achieved the expected results, given the sudden drop in landings experienced since the second half of 2017.

However, the side effect of this policy, continued and reinforced by Minister Salvini, has been, and continues

to be, the detention of thousands of migrants and refugees in Libyan concentration camps. According to the [official estimates](#) of the International Organization for Migration, at least 600 thousand people are exposed to human rights violations and abuses.

«Migrants and refugees suffer unimaginable horrors during their transit and stay in Libya. From the moment they enter Libyan soil, they are subject to unlawful killings, torture and other ill-treatments, arbitrary detention and illegal deprivation of liberty, rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence, slavery and forced labour, extortion and exploitation by both the State and others.»

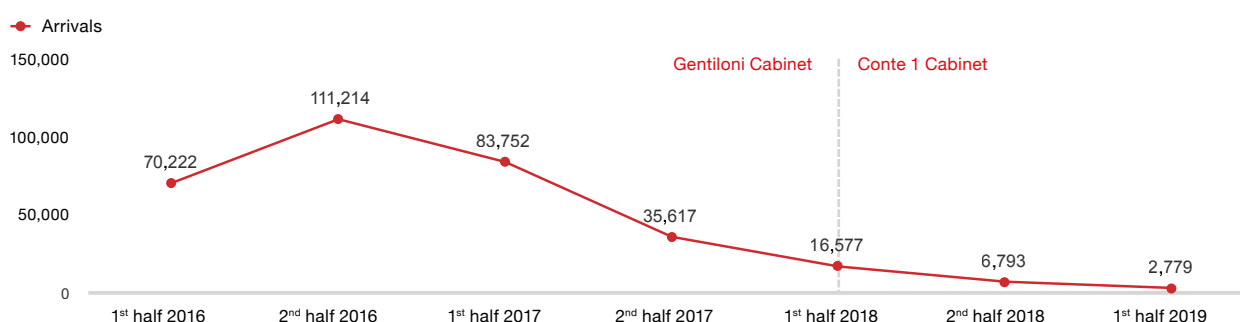
[Desperate and Dangerous: Report on the human rights situation of migrants and refugees in Libya, ONU 20 dicembre 2018.](#)

Therefore, from the point of view of defending the borders, the action of the Conte I Cabinet is part of a furrow that has already been traced and appears more to be the accentuation of measures inherited from the previous centre-left-wing government than a real turning point. It changes the degree and intensity of the measures, not the political and cultural direction, which is one of closure, containment, deterrence in the name of security. Elements that over time have become the cornerstones of the rhetoric and the [European policies](#).

GRAPHIC 1

Landings in Italy between 2016 and 2019

The six-monthly trend in flows and the decline in migrant arrivals since the second half of 2017.



N.B. In February 2017 the then Minister Minniti concluded with Libya the [memorandum of understanding](#) in terms of combating illegal immigration and shortly afterwards launched the first measures to combat NGO rescue operations at sea.

Source: [Unhcr](#)

16%

refugees received in developed countries. Lebanon is home to one million refugees out of a population of six, as is Germany, which has 80 million inhabitants. In Italy there are less than 190,000 refugees.

(Unhcr - Global trends 2018).

Beyond the political and ethical considerations that this line begs, the question is whether or not this strategy works. Whether it can produce more security and less social tension or whether it is destined to fuel these.

1.2 A decree named "Security"

Point 13 of the [Contract for the Government of Change](#) signed by Luigi di Maio and Matteo Salvini in May 2018, clarifies, in the title, the plan on which the new government intended to base its action in the field of migration: "Immigration: repatriation and halting the business."

"The current migration issue is unsustainable for Italy, given the costs to bear and the related business fed by national public funds often managed with little transparency and susceptible to the infiltration of organized crime."

[Contract for the Government of Change - Signed by MSStelle and Lega, May 2018](#)

The reforming design of the reception system is mainly based on two measures: the [Security Decree](#) and

the [new tender specifications](#). The decree, in turn, contains two measures, each of which is intended to produce significant effects: the abolition of [humanitarian protection](#) and the suppression of the SPRAR (System of Protection for Asylum Seekers and Refugees).

1.3 No more humanitarian protection

The abolition of humanitarian protection, the main channel of access by which asylum seekers can obtain a residence permit, aims at drastically reducing the number of persons entitled to be received or in any case to obtain a regular residence permit.

However, if we look at the trend of landings in relation to that of asylum applications, we can see that the drastic reduction in arrivals, which began in 2017, has also resulted in a sharp drop in the number of applications recorded during the following year, which was then accentuated in 2019.

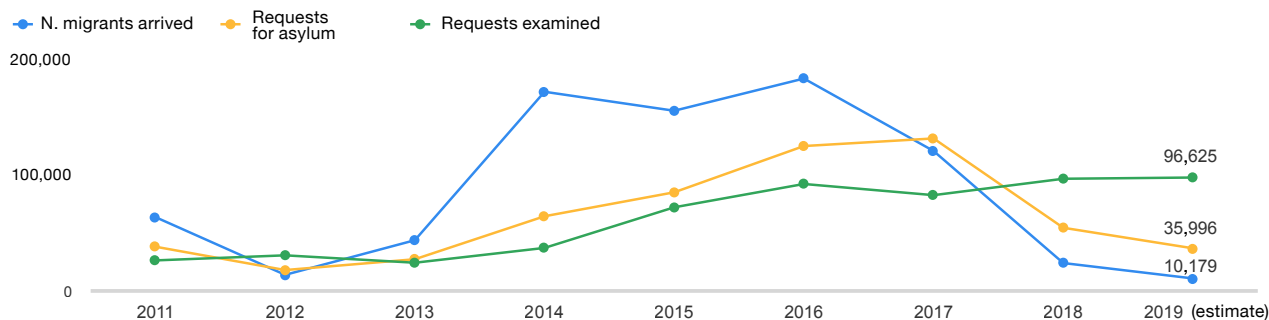
While the trend of the applications examined remains almost constant, even in 2018, due to the load accumulated in previous years. However, the [pending applications](#) halved over the last year (from 134,475 in June 2018 to 63,380 in June 2019). If the arrivals remain relatively stable, it is therefore to be expected that the problem of the pending applications will be resolved in the course of 2020.

So, the decision to abolish humanitarian protection comes at the very stage when landings are at their lowest since 2010. A measure to counteract an emergency that does not exist and that exacerbates the real emergency. That of the illegal immigrants, which the same system helps to create.

GRAPHIC 2

Landings, asylum applications and examination of the applications

The long-term trend of the landings compared with the number of asylum applications submitted and the number of applications examined.

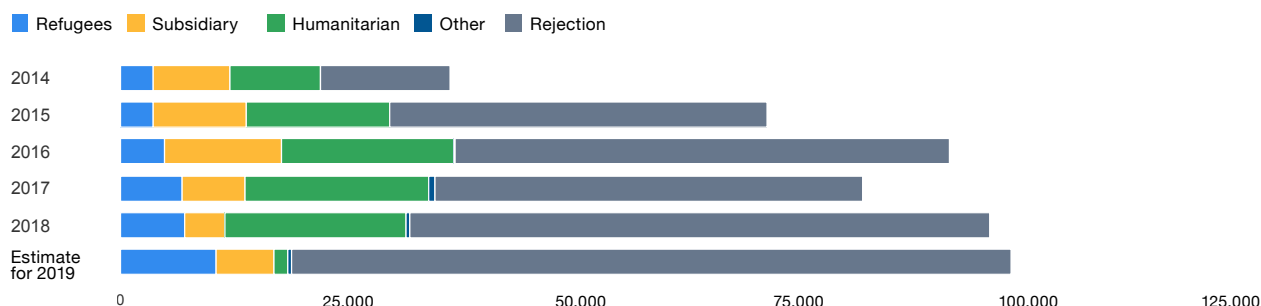


Source: [Ismu](#), [Unhcr](#), [Ministry of the Interior](#)

GRAPHIC 3

The outcomes of asylum applications between 2014 and 2019

Increase in the number of denials in 2019 following the abolition of humanitarian protection.



N.B: Despite the abolition of humanitarian protection at the end of 2018, there were still a number of outcomes of this kind in 2019, which we have estimated, based on monthly trends, could reach around 1,500 by the end of the year. The Ministry of the Interior traces this data back to the procedures decided before the abolition of humanitarian protection, but only entered into the special computer system at a later stage.

Source: [Ministry of the Interior](#)

1.4 Illegal immigrants: the real emergency

«To date, there are approximately 500,000 illegal migrants in our territory and, therefore, a serious and effective repatriation policy is unavoidable and a priority.»

Contract for the Government of Change - Signed by M5Stelle and Lega, May 2018

The impact of the abolition of humanitarian protection is, in fact, immediate. This translates into an increase in the percentage of “rejected asylum seekers” (those who are denied a form of international protection), from 67% of the applications examined in 2018 to 80% in 2019. In absolute numbers, this means that in 2019 the total number of rejections will approach the figure of 80,000 people at risk of being ousted from the system who will, for the most part, be added to the population of illegal immigrants. This has been growing steadily since 2013, mainly due to the substantial closure of legal entry channels for business reasons. In this scenario, we estimate that the number of illegal immigrants could reach about 680 thousand by 2019 and exceed 750 thousand in January 2021.

According to the new legislation, those whose application for international protection has been definitively rejected should be sent to Repatriation Centres (CPRs) and then forcibly deported to their

country of origin. Except that the [capacity of the Repatriation Centres](#) to date is 1,085 places- not to mention the conditions in which the migrants are detained, often marked by a [complete suspension of rights](#) - and the average annual number of repatriations does not exceed 5,600, in [slight decrease in 2019](#). At this rate, even in the impossible hypothesis of 0 arrivals in the coming decades, it would take more than a century and more than € 3.5 billion (€ 5,800 per repatriation according to [EU Observer](#)) to repatriate them all.

Therefore, the vast majority of this population is destined to remain in Italy without documents, without any alternative to living on the streets, with no possibility of finding a house or a job unless employed illegally or not employed at all. A population driven by the existing measures towards progressive invisibility. A real emergency, directly related to the Security Decree, removed from the political agenda and much of the media debate that even the tiniest spark ignited by racist propaganda could easily cause to explode.

1.5 The system turned upside down

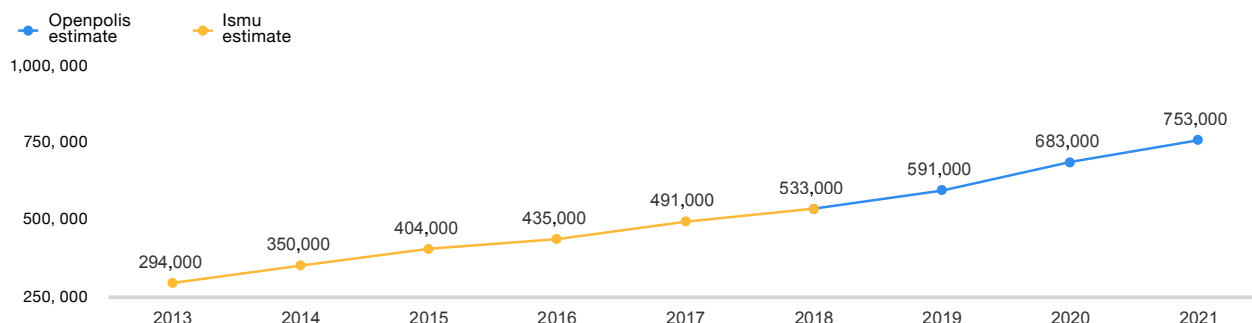
The plan to reorganise the reception system is divided between the rules laid down in the Security Decree and those of the new tender specifications.

The system in previous years had evidently grown in the wake of the emergency, with all the associated problems. The trend of the distribution of places

GRAPHIC 4

The increase in the number of illegal immigrants in Italy

The number of illegal immigrants in Italy has been growing steadily since 2013. The abolition of humanitarian protection at the end of 2018 further boosted this trend.



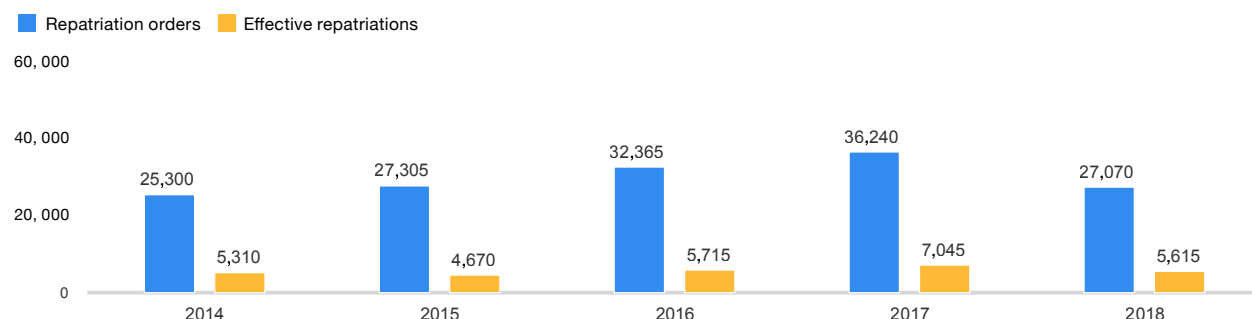
N.B: In the simulation, we start from the estimates made by ISMU (Multiethnicity Initiative and Study Foundation) of the illegal immigrants present, which reach 530,000 in January 2018. The number of landings, repatriations and the percentage of rejections are assumed to be constant (77 thousand rejections were estimated for the 96 thousand applications examined - including pending applications - in 2019 and 56 thousand out of 70 thousand in 2020). Finally, it is considered that the 40,000 humanitarian permits granted between 2017 and 2018 will expire in the following two years and it is assumed that the rejections will become definitive and turn the applicants into illegal immigrants.

Source: Openpolis processing of data from [Ismu](#) and [Ministry of the Interior](#)

GRAPHIC 5

Repatriation figures for the last five years

Repatriation orders and actual repatriations from Italy performed between 2014 and 2018.



N.B: The reason why Italy manages to carry out the repatriation of only 20% of the people ordered to leave the territory, is largely linked to the nationalities of the migrants. In countries such as Germany, which accounts for 78% of the actual repatriations, around one third of the migrants come from Balkan countries, states with which it is easier to reach return agreements than in Africa, the area where a large proportion of the asylum seekers in Italy come from.

Source: [Eurostat](#)

between the centres of the Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees (SPRARs) and the Extraordinary Reception Centres (CAS) shows that the latter have increased disproportionately. So, the CAS, which should have been an extraordinary and temporary response to the emergency of the landings, had become the definitive solution. While the SPRAR, which is the virtuous model based on small centres run by the municipalities and has been proven capable of

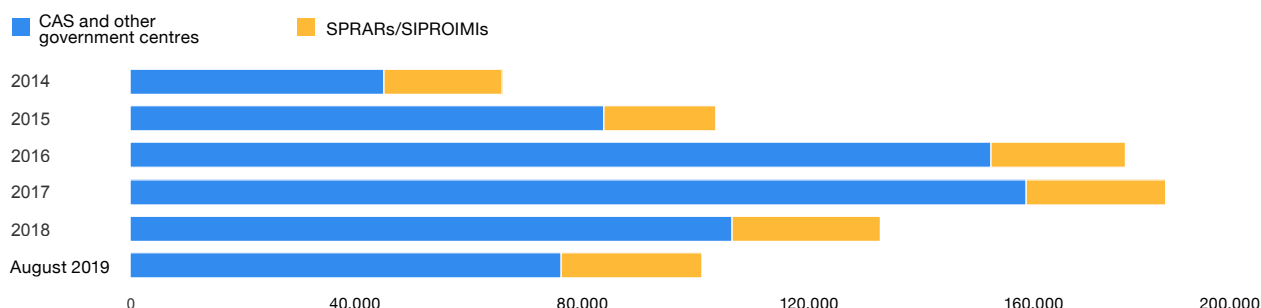
achieving the social and working inclusion of foreigners, has largely remained a minority solution. The proportion has now reached less than 20% SPRARs compared to over 80% CAS.

And the majority of the critical issues related to the lack of transparency, few controls, and contracts worth millions of Euros awarded without tenders and often extended, were concentrated in the CAS, managed by

GRAPHIC 6

Attendance in reception centres between 2014 and 2019

The distribution of the attendances in reception facilities, divided into those in the CAS and those in other governmental centres on one hand and those in SPRARs/SIPROIMI centres on the other



Source: [Def 2018](#), [Ministry of the Interior](#), [Constitutional Affairs Committee of the Chamber](#)

the prefectures reporting to the Ministry of the Interior. In this context, the market for the reception business was created and expanded to all the regions of Italy. The use of extraordinary reception has fostered the emergence of a breeding ground for profits that are sometimes illicit.

This was how a generally healthy sector, made up of the third sector players who run the centres offering quality services, was infiltrated by hoteliers, cleaning service owners, various entrepreneurs and [fake charities](#) posing as reception facilities. (Read Centres of Italy 2018: [“Reception in northern Italy, the case of Turin”](#)).

permits, in addition to unaccompanied minors) remained. Only the latter would be entitled to integration. Asylum seekers were then confined to the “new” CAS, which remained in the hands of the prefectures and were deprived of the minimum services geared at promoting their economic and social integration. Only room and board were guaranteed. And yet the [analysis of the experiences](#) shows how the possibility of learning the language, receiving psychological assistance and work orientation, in the first weeks and months after arrival, is the decisive factor in favouring the autonomy of foreigners, their integration into local communities and the reduction of social tensions.

- *The reception market was created and developed during the emergency, flourishing as a result of the persistent refusal to adapt the organizational measures to the dynamics of the migratory phenomenon.*

1.6 The dismantling of the SPRAR

Instead of acting on this unhealthy imbalance, by reducing the more problematic part (the CAS) and strengthening the more virtuous one (the SPRAR), the new legislation implemented by the Conte I Cabinet went in the exact opposite direction, contradicting the strategy that the Ministry of the Interior itself had followed in the recent past.

With the Security Decree, the [SPRAR was heavily downsized](#) and replaced by the Protection System for Beneficiaries of International Protection and for Unaccompanied Foreign Minors ([SIPROIMI](#)). As a result, the “asylum seekers” disappeared and only beneficiaries of the forms of international protection already recognised as such (or new types of residence

1.7 The new CAS: lower costs but more problems

The renewed organizational discipline of the CAS is contained in the new Specifications for the management contracts of the initial reception centres and repatriation centres. The objectives of the new specifications, issued at the end of 2018, are the rationalisation of procurement and the compression of operating costs.

As far as the CAS are concerned, there are in fact three types of [specifications](#) planned: one for centres consisting of individual housing units (€21.35 per capita), one for collective centres with up to 50 places (€26.35 per capita), and one for collective centres with between 51 and 300 places (€25.25 per capita). (Read the report by [InMigration](#))

- *The centres with the largest number of places that can implement economies of scale and medium to large operators are encouraged.*

The reduction in the figures compared to the average amount of 35 Euro per capita allocated with the previous contracts, clearly penalises the smaller centres and encourages the medium and especially the large ones, for which economies of scale are possible. However, this also means favouring the selection of medium to large managers, to the detriment of small cooperatives and associations that employ qualified personnel with costs that are not compressible.

In order to analyse the state of application of the new provisions and their consequences, we have addressed a request to the holder of the data, we applied to the data keeper, the Ministry of the Interior, for access to the computer system for the management of reception (Sga), which collects all the information transmitted by the prefectures in relation to the managed centres, attendances, payments, managers and other aspects. We were denied access on the grounds that the data would be incomplete, and that the available data are contained in the report to the Parliament submitted by the Minister of the Interior. The report which, by law ([law 146/2014](#)) must be communicated to the chambers by 30 June each year, as of the date of closure of the first part of the report, does not appear to have been sent.

We therefore had to rely on information from the public contract database managed by [Anac](#) and we collected other data directly from a number of prefectures through [requests for access to the files](#) some of which responded positively.

From 10 December 2018, the date of entry into force of the new specifications, to the beginning of August 2019 we counted 428 contracts put out to tender by 89 prefectures throughout Italy. More than half of the cases are extensions of ongoing contracts or procedures designed for specific situations, often implemented

as provisional solutions until the new system is fully operational.

- **More than half of the calls published by prefectures in 2019 are extensions of expired contracts and repetitions of unallocated tenders.**

So, there are only 208 framework agreements that followed the standards of the new specifications, including some that have been repeated. This happens when a first tender published by a prefecture is not awarded because nobody submits a bid, or when the places allocated are not sufficient to cover the requirements.

In general, it can be observed that, despite the layout of the specifications, the prefectures have definitely tried to focus on small centres (housing units). This trend is evidently more marked in the regions of northern Italy, where the model of widespread reception has traditionally been followed more, also by the prefectures. However, the calls for tenders for housing units are also the ones that seem to have encountered the greatest problems. Because they show a higher percentage of tenders that have been re-proposed.

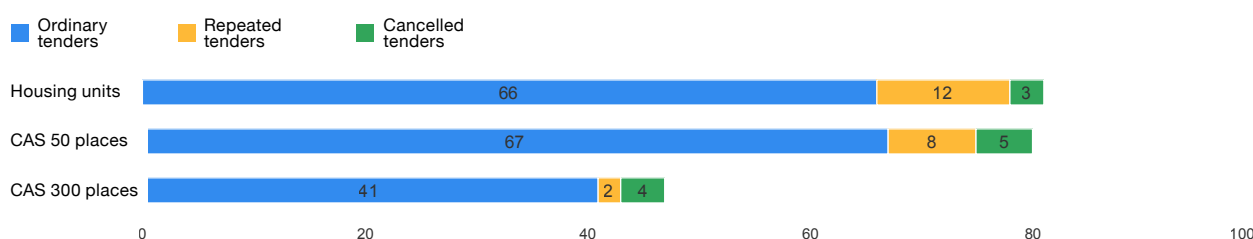
«We're not in the hotel business: that's not our job.»

[Eleonora Vanni, president of Legacoopsociali](#)

This context is to some extent confirmed by the local news, which tell of the difficulties experienced by small and medium operators in participating in the new calls for tenders due to the economic unsustainability caused

GRAPHIC 7

The prefectures' invitations to tender for the management of reception centres Problems in the allocation of tenders after the approval of the Safety Decree (December 2018 - August 2019)



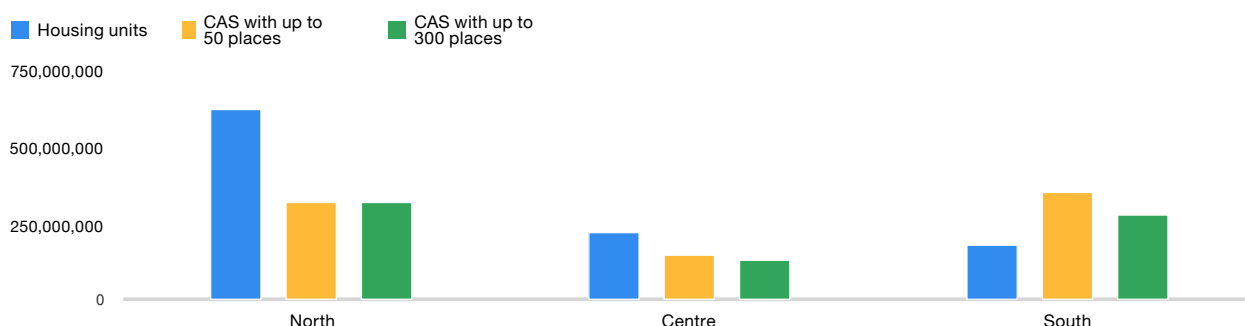
N.B: The new legislation envisages, apart from in specific cases, that each prefecture must launch, for each of the three types of centre, a framework agreement aimed at several economic operators. The objective is to sign a prior agreement with the operators covering the entire requirements of the prefecture. At a later stage, following the ranking order emerging from the framework agreement, the actual agreements between prefecture and managers will be signed, taking into account the actual number of people in need of reception.

Source: Openpolis processing of [Anac](#) data

GRAPHIC 8

Types of calls for tender issued by the prefectures by geographical area

The allocation of tenders for the management of reception centres in the intentions of the prefectures (December 2018 - August 2019).



N.B: In order to analyse the initial intentions and preferences of the prefectures among the different types of centres provided for in the specifications, we have taken into consideration only the non-repeated calls, including both calls for the allocation of reception centres with publicly owned buildings and framework agreements aimed at several economic operators (which do not provide for public buildings).

Source: Openpolis processing of [Anac](#) data

by the reduced costs. There are also a number of third sector players who have refused to transform their work from social workers oriented towards the inclusion of migrants into something more like a hotel manager - or caretaker services - in large facilities.

It is still too early to draw conclusions about the application of the new rules, which are struggling to be fully implemented. However, on the whole, there are several signs that prefectures and operators in the sector are finding it difficult to adapt to the government design that tends to favour a model - large managers for large centres - which goes in the opposite direction to the one recommended by the Ministry of the Interior in the immediate past. In the report to Parliament (August 2018), it was precisely the concentration of immigrants in large structures that had been indicated as a cause of management problems, social conflict and as at the greatest risk of criminal involvement.

«the concentrations of migrants, received in a single large structure, make the management of the centre difficult, with negative effects on both the efficiency of the services provided to the migrants, on the local communities and on the possible risk of attracting economic interests from criminal circles.»

[Report to Parliament by the Minister for the Interior Salvini on the reception system dated 14/08/2018.](#)

1.8 In the budget, less reception more repatriations

The examination of expenditure focuses mainly on the budget items of the Ministry of the Interior which covers the costs for the management of reception centres.

In this respect, expenditure increased substantially between 2016 and 2018, from € 1.6 billion to € 2.7 billion. In 2018 almost 80% of this expenditure was allocated to the CAS and other initial reception centres while about 20% was used to finance what should have been the ordinary reception system, namely the SPRARs/ SIPROIMI and the centres for unaccompanied minors (MSNAs).

As far as 2019 is concerned, since we still do not have the accounts, we can only rely on the figures budgeted for over the years in the budget law.

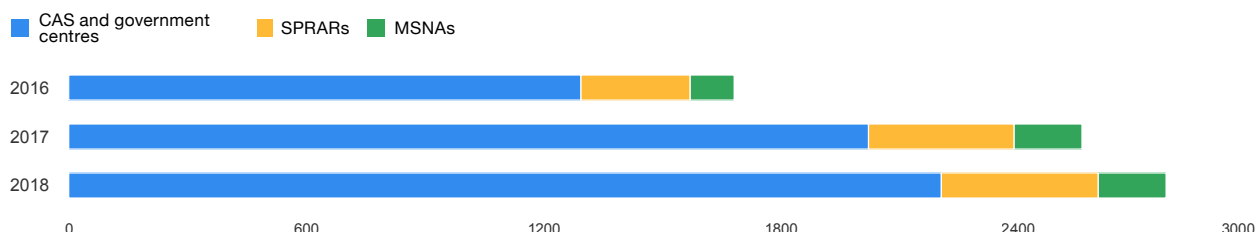
Therefore, a reduction in expenditure of around €150 million is expected for 2019 compared to 2018. This is mainly due to the decrease in the expected costs for the management of the CAS and initial reception centres (approximately 125 million less). There is also a reduction in the funds allocated to unaccompanied foreign minors (about 20 million) and a small reduction in the funds allocated to the SIPROIMI - former SPRAR centres (about 6 million).

The item relating to the Centres for Stay and Repatriation (CPR) was in contrast to the trend showing,

GRAPHIC 9

The expenditure incurred for the management of reception between 2016 and 2018

The State budget statement in the expenditure items of the Ministry of the Interior dedicated to the reception of migrants. (Millions of Euro)



N.B: In the General State Accounts for the years 2016, 2017 and 2018, the accrued amounts committed to the budget statement were taken into account. For CAS and the other governmental centres, expenditure item 2351 relating to the Ministry of the Interior was taken into account, for the SPRAR, items 2352 and 2311 were considered, and for foreign unaccompanied minors (MSNA) item 2353.

Source: [Ministry of Economy and Finance](#)

in the comparison between 2018 and 2019, an increase in expenditure of approximately 6 million Euro (+46.9%). An increase, in fact, already foreseen by the Gentiloni government.

However, the figures actually recorded at the time of reporting are usually much higher than those expected, in particular for the CAS (+187% in 2016, +53% in 2017 and +33% in 2018), so we must wait to know how things will actually go, based on the flows of people actually received.

As for the repatriation fund – “aimed at financing the costs of repatriating foreign citizens found illegally present on the national territory to their country of origin

or provenance” – a remarkable peak is registered, from 3.9 million Euro in 2018 to 11.4 million Euro in 2019, three times as much.

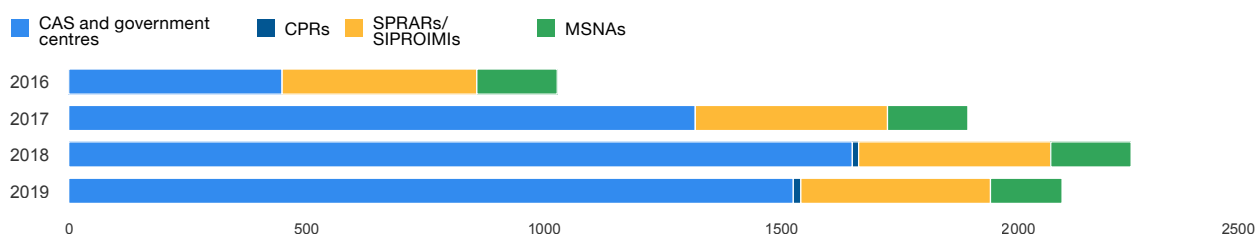
Here too, however, the substantial difference between forecasting and reporting must be taken into account. As regards repatriations, in fact, no less than 28.2 million Euro was spent in 2018, compared to an allocation of 3.8 million Euro. However, there is a clear desire to increase expenditure on repatriation.

The budget choices in terms of reception, therefore, confirm, at least in the budget phase, the general direction of the Conte I Cabinet. An approach based on the unproven and unprovable association between

GRAPHIC 10

The expenditure planned for the management of reception

The State budget for the Ministry of the Interior's expenditure items dedicated to the reception of migrants between 2016 and 2019. (Millions of Euro)



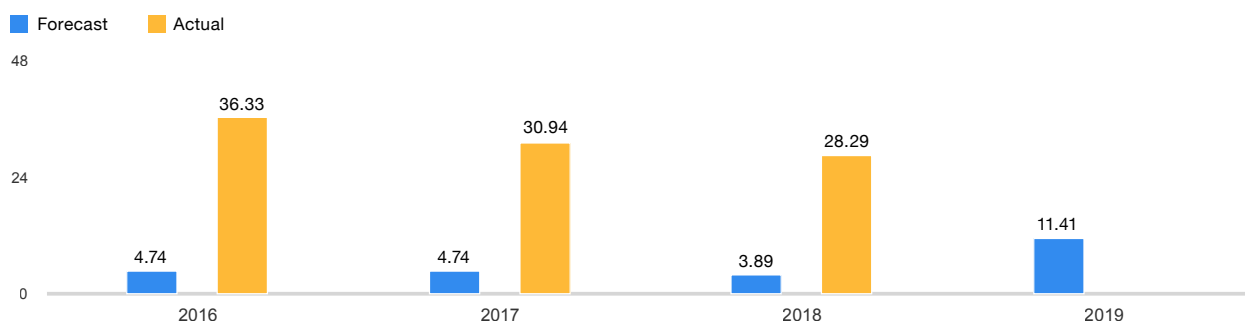
N.B: The State budget for the years 2016-2019 was considered on an accrual basis. For the CAS and the other governmental centres, expenditure item 2351 relating to the Ministry of the Interior was considered. From this item, for the years 2018 and 2019, management plan number 10, which considers in particular the funds allocated to the management of detention and repatriation centres (CPR), was extracted. For the SPRAR items 2352 and 2311 were considered, for foreign unaccompanied minors (MSNA) item 2353.

Source: [Ministry of Economy and Finance](#)

GRAPHIC 11

The expenditure allocated by our country to the Repatriation Fund 2016-2019

The Repatriation Fund in the State Budget and Statement of Accounts. (Millions of Euro)



N.B: The Repatriation Fund is an expenditure item (2817) from the budget of the Ministry of the Interior. For the years 2016-2019, the expenditure forecast for the accrual account is given. For the years 2016-2018, the accrued funds committed to the accounts are also shown..

Source: [Ministry of Economy and Finance](#)

migrants and citizens' safety, to be solved by penalizing inclusion and financing detention and expulsions. The reduction in spending on reception centres (CAS in particular, but also SIPROIMI - former SPRAR and unaccompanied minors) is therefore offset by an increase in spending on repatriation centres.

1.9 In brief

The internal front is the one on which the immigration policy of the Conte I Cabinet has left its strongest mark, with the heaviest consequences. The choices made, guided by the will to capture the general anti-immigrant consensus, condemn the country, in the coming months and years, to suffer the exasperation of the contradictions of a policy on reception that is systematically contrary to inclusion.

The design of the SIPROIMI - replacing the SPRAR - means that integration is no longer, even formally, a general objective of the reception system, but becomes a privilege for the few: only refugees and the beneficiaries of residual forms of protection.

For the large mass of asylum seekers, however, a path of exclusion has been mapped out. This is articulated by way of a first stage in the "new" CAS, where migrants wait without being able to do anything about the outcome of the asylum application which -aided by the abolition of humanitarian protection - will be negative in 80% of cases. The final stage, for the vast majority of them, will be for their status to decline into that of an illegal immigrant.

The announced outcome of the Security Decree is therefore that of an explosion in the emergency of illegal immigrants for whom there is no public policy in place,

except for repatriation which, as we have seen, is hardly ever used. As a result, there is likely to be an increase in social hardship, exploitation by undeclared work, illegality and crime. Phenomena that are preconditions for an increase in deviance, social conflict and racism.

Consistent with this approach, the expected savings - all to be confirmed - consider integration services for asylum seekers as a source of waste that must be reduced. However, it would be sufficient to consult the [national](#) and [international](#) studies on the subject, to understand how the expenditure destined to finance the inclusion and self-sufficiency of foreigners should be considered, on the contrary, an investment for a country like Italy which is depopulated and in which entire sectors of the economy have been driven for some time thanks to [migrant labour](#). An investment in the development of human and professional skills of social workers working in contact with foreigners. [A factor of local development](#) and for the repopulation of inland areas.

On the other hand, the costs resulting from the supposed savings are not calculated. Costs related to the loss of tax revenue from the many workers who work regularly, and to the [unemployment](#) in the field of reception and the administrative and social security costs, which local authorities will have to bear to deal with the consequences of non-integration.

As far as we can see, based on the first initiatives on the subject and on the silence on the need to re-establish nationwide structure into the reception process with public ownership, the Conte II Cabinet does not seem to be oriented towards establishing a policy of "discontinuity" from the previous executive, maintaining a political culture to the detriment of migrants' rights.

In conclusion, the level of transparency of the reception system guaranteed by our institutions is not progressing. Although prefectures have, on average, improved communication following the Freedom of Information Act (more consistent presentation of the data), we are in fact still faced with the inaccessibility of information and the inability to use it easily. The computer system for the management of reception (Sga) is still completely closed to civil society.

Given the outlined situation, in the next parts of this report we will examine in detail some of the effects

of the new reception structure hinted at in this first overview. The objective will be to understand the new dynamics of the allocations. The difficulties of the new tender specifications for reception centres will be highlighted, with calls for tenders unanswered and appeals submitted by some candidates. In the same way, we will analyse how the new set-up favours the creation of mega-structures and the concentration of the management of reception by only a few large players.

Part Two

SYSTEM

ERROR

In the first part of this report we analysed the internal fallout of the approval of the Security Decree. In particular, we focused on the consequences of the abolition of humanitarian protection on the increase in the number of illegal migrants and we provided elements on the effects of the new rules on the reception system as a whole.

In this second part, we go into the impact of the new tender specifications (linked to the Security Decree) on the operation of the reception machine. A measure that distorts the meaning and role of the system by transforming the extraordinary reception centres (CAS) into places of desolate waiting and existential suspension rather than a launchpad for integration. In this chapter we will document in particular some territories where the difficulties experienced by the prefectures in entrusting the management of the centres have been more clearly expressed due to the refusal of a significant part of the third sector to follow the line imposed by the Conte I Cabinet. We are approaching this analysis in the awareness of the limits of the sources we have at our disposal, but we are forced to base our findings on these because of the lack of freely accessible disaggregated official data.

It is quite clear that the availability of the information needed to monitor the reception system and its developments, particularly at a time of transition like this, is essential from the point of view of protecting people's rights and legality. For this reason, the repeated refusals of the Ministry of the Interior to meet our requests for access to the documents to obtain the data contained in the Computer system for the management of reception (Sga) are even more unjustified and unacceptable: at the moment we are awaiting the outcome of our appeal to the Tar, after an initial request sent via the Freedom of Information Act, which was followed by a request for review. On the other hand, it must be considered how these civic monitoring measures have become even more urgent given the delay in compliance with the minimum transparency instrument provided for by law in relation to the reception system: the [annual report](#). The publication, expected by June 30 of each year, was only communicated to the Presidency by the Minister of the Interior last October 29 and made public only at the end of November (a few days after the publication of the second part of this report), following repeated pressure from civil society.

In order to understand what is happening in the territories, the reactions of the managers and why some prefectures have effectively found it difficult to assign the contracts we then used the database of public contracts of Anac (Bdncp), researched and analysed the documents present on the sites of the prefectures and collected the testimonies of the third sector players to verify whether their experience was consistent with what emerged from the data, in particular with respect to regions such as Tuscany or Emilia Romagna.

2.1 The new rules of reception

In the last few years, the reception system in Italy (in spite of the identification of the SPRAR as an ordinary system) has been characterized by an emergency management that has produced very different practices and results depending on the territories. In the most recent period, at least in some areas of the country, the model had started to structure itself in a more orderly manner, following the indication that the CAS should have collected the experience of the SPRAR, generally recognized as a positive example.

BOX 01

SPRAR

The SPRAR - today SIPROIMI - was made up of a network of projects led by local authorities. An integrated and widespread reception system that did not limit itself to providing assistance but, through personalized projects, pursued the autonomy of its recipients. It will take time to verify how the SIPROIMI will be reconfigured and the standards it will manage to guarantee.

[Go to "What are CAS, SPRARs and Hotspots?"](#)

The restriction of the migrants' rights and a change of perspective on the role of the third sector, from a function of subsidiarity and support to one more merely devoted to [quest control](#) had already started in the last parliamentary term, in particular through [Minniti-Orlando decree](#). It was with the first Conte government, however, that this design began to have a notably more marked impact, through the transformation of the overall structure of the reception system. The SPRAR was transformed into the [SIPROIMI](#) excluding asylum seekers, as well as any remaining beneficiaries of humanitarian protection from the system.

- **The CAS became an obligatory, and not an**
- **"extraordinary", step in the pathway of migrants in**
- **Italy.**

Therefore, the ethos behind the existence of the CAS also changed, as they were transformed into structures where migrants have to wait for a decision to be made on their asylum applications, in the meantime receiving no support for achieving autonomy or integration. The cut in services, provided for in the new tender specifications, was accompanied by a drastic reduction in the amounts made available for the management of the centres.

Moreover, of the three types of centres now envisaged (single housing units, collective centres with up to 50

places and centres with up to 300 places), the most significant cuts involved those that offer widespread reception in small apartments, projects in which it is also more difficult to develop economies of scale, as is possible in larger centres.

2.2 The third sector response

It was precisely against this clear change of direction that the managing organisations protested from the outset, opposing the new rules both from the point of view of economic sustainability and contesting the cut in services. The initial reaction of the third sector was a series of appeals to the Tar, calling for the suspension of the calls for tenders (as, for example, occurred in [Lombardy](#), [Tuscany](#), [Campania](#) and [Friuli Venezia-Giulia](#)). In some cases, the appeals were unsuccessful, in others the court has taken more time to investigate the matter more closely and we still do not know what the courts' decisions will be.

Regardless of the appeals, the operators have often decided to withdraw from the hosting system of their own accord and, one year after the approval of the Security Decree and the new specifications, it is becoming increasingly clear that this refusal has caused many prefectures real difficulty in allocating all the posts deemed necessary. In this case, it is a difficulty dictated by structural elements. The new legislation is in fact very clear and provides very little room for manoeuvre for the territorial offices of the government, which find themselves caught between the need to guarantee a service envisaged by the law and rules that are difficult to apply.

A potentially explosive phenomenon, which for the time being remains traceable thanks to the reduced number of new arrivals in the centres, due to the drastic drop in arrivals (of flows of asylum seekers that have never - it is useful to reiterate - constituted an emergency or an invasion), but which, in any case, have destructive effects on the paths to integration of thousands of asylum seekers. But what if the numbers increase? What are the plans and options available if the active structures are no longer sufficient? Questions that need to be answered in order to finally start developing a policy of reception and integration planning rather than condemning the whole system to the extemporaneous management of the emergency, with all the relative effects in terms of violation of rights, waste of public money and widespread illegality.

Furthermore, even if the number of arrivals were to remain stable, this would still leave a number of significant problems to be solved. The fact that some territories, unable to allocate all the places in reception, host fewer migrants than expected, calls into question one of the fundamental principles of the Italian reception system, namely that of multi-level governance.

- **The day-to-day management of the reception system seems to lack strategic planning.**

The [National Plan for Reception](#) recognises, in fact, the need to plan the distribution of migrants on a regional basis. Through the National Coordination Table it should be possible to define the [distribution](#) of the places among the different local areas, following the principle of proportionality with respect to the resident population (about 2.5 places per 1,000 residents).

2.3 The repetition of the calls to tender

One of the tools we used to address the lack of official data was the Anac's public contract database (Bdnep). From this, we extracted and analysed the public contracts in the field of reception between the date of approval of the Security Decree and early August 2019.

Despite a time frame of analysis limited to the first months of application of the new rules, and some structural [limits](#) of the Bdnep, especially the fact that there are no contracts for amounts of less than 40 thousand Euro in this database, some interesting elements emerged.

First of all, it is worth pointing out the large number of contracts put out to direct assignment in the course of these few months, despite the fact that the standard procedure for assigning the management of the new CAS envisages the use of open allocation processes, which offer greater guarantees of transparency and competition. However, the use of direct assignment should be limited to cases of necessity and urgency, and to contracts of limited amounts. And yet it cannot be said that Italy is experiencing a phase of emergency" at the present time. One cannot see where this urgency arises, therefore, except from the difficulty experienced by the prefectures in allocating posts through the new rules and therefore from the need to extend the current contracts.

BOX 02

ASSIGNMENT PROCEDURES

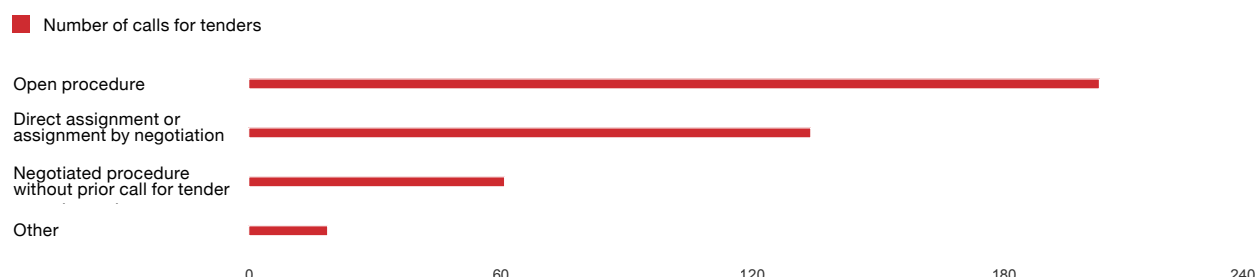
The direct assignment or assignment by negotiation procedures have often been used in recent months to extend ongoing contracts, active thanks to the old legislation.

[Go to "What are the procedures for choosing a contractor?"](#)

GRAPHIC 12

The procedures for choosing the contractor after the Security Decree

The procedures used by prefectures to assign the management of the CAS.



DESCRIPTION: The standard procedure for awarding the management of a reception centre is to issue a call for an open tender. In some cases, however, negotiated procedures were also used. Direct assignment or assignment by negotiation may be used for reasons of necessity and urgency, and for limited amounts. In many cases they are therefore used to extend ongoing contracts (as are negotiated procedures).

Source: Openpolis processing on data of [Anaco](#)

In this case it does not explain exactly what happened but indicates that the system has experienced difficulty in applying the new rules through ordinary procedures.

Another way to detect whether some prefectures have had difficulty in awarding contracts is to observe the repetitions of tenders. The fact that a prefecture proposes a framework agreement to assign the management of a certain type of centre more than once is in fact a sign that there have been problems in assigning the first tender, otherwise there would be no need for a repeat.

Of the 81 prefectures that had issued framework agreements for the management of CAS, at the beginning of August, eleven had repeated, at least once or several times, one or more invitations to tender.

This type of analysis is also limited to presenting a general overview, without providing detailed information on either why the calls for tender were repeated or on the extent of the problem encountered by the prefecture. It should be borne in mind, however, that a prefecture that has not managed to allocate all the places in reception may not necessarily decide to repeat the tender.

Although the Anac data always provide a partial view, they are still very useful for identifying some general trends that we will then verify through a more detailed analysis of some territories, and by speaking to those working in the field.

A first aspect to be highlighted is certainly the geographical one. In fact, the prefectures that have re-proposed calls for tenders are all in the centre-north. Secondly, with the exception of Pisa, they have all encountered problems in assigning tenders for the management of small centres. Conversely, it turns out that the assignment of places in large centres poses significantly fewer problems.

6

the framework agreements offered for tender by the Prefecture of Reggio Emilia in an attempt to assign the management of reception in collective centres with up to 50 places and in individual housing units.

In fact, most of these 11 prefectures did not issue calls for tenders for large centres at all, probably because they were aware that the territory was not prepared for this type of reception. Only 5 of these prefectures issued calls for tenders for CAS of up to 300 places, and 3 of these encountered problems.

The data therefore confirm that the new specifications puts widespread reception at a disadvantage. It is no coincidence that the subject of unanswered calls for tenders and repeated tenders emerges more strongly in those areas of the country where prefectures and third sector organisations had focused in recent years on small to medium sized centres, often in residential units, in an outlook that pursued the inclusion of migrants in the local social and economic fabric.

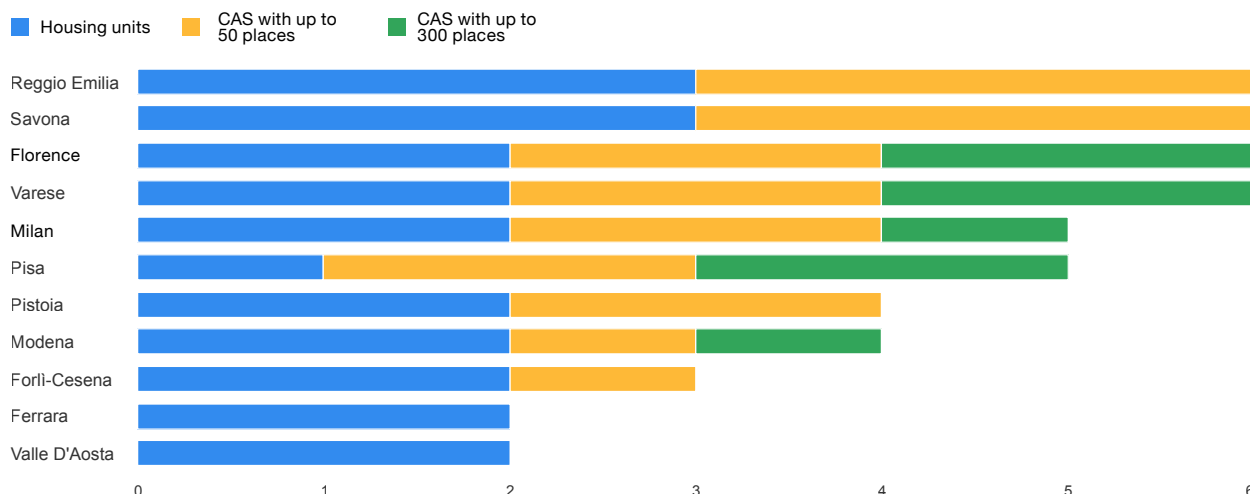
- **The territories that had structured themselves more**
- **based on models of widespread reception suffered**
- **most as a result of the new rules.**

The attempt by some prefectures to continue along this path has also revealed the critical aspects of the new model which, depending on the case, may have concerned the economic sustainability of these projects with the new specifications, or the refusal to adapt to a new approach to reception where no form of integration is envisaged.

GRAPHIC 13

The repetition of tenders for the reception of migrants

The prefectures that repeated the invitations for reception as provided for in the new specifications on at least one occasion.



N.B. When a prefecture publishes a framework agreement for one of the three types of centre provided for in the new specifications, it establishes at the outset the number of places that must be filled, by that type of centre, to meet the needs of the area. The repetition of one of these calls indicates that something went wrong with the first tender, usually because all the places initially planned were not assigned.

Source: Openpolis processing of data from [Anac](#)

2.4 Interview with Stefano Trovato



Stefano Trovato is a member of the National Executive of CNCA, the National Coordination of Care Communities.

Stefano, can you explain to us, from your point of view, for what reasons have some third sector organisations decided not to participate in the calls?

There are basically two reasons for this, which are sometimes separate and sometimes go together. There is an economic reason why the services that are requested, according to most organisations, cannot be covered by that type of rate and there are reasons based on ideology. Many of the organisations in the field of cooperation and in associations, do not consider themselves to be "hotel-owners", i.e. they have no intention of simply running hotel facilities. Instead, they consider themselves parties who play a precise role in society, which is not only of an economic nature but also subsidiary to some services that the State should offer, providing services that are part of a pathway pursuing the emancipation and integration of migrants into the social fabric.

From the data that we have analysed, it appears to us that more frequently, problems emerge in the

reception offered in small towns, can you confirm this trend?

Yes, I confirm the trend. This is because a large part of the cooperation has been structured in the form of widespread reception, a system already typical of the SPRAR reception model, an Italian model which focuses on integrating small groups of migrants into the local area. Clearly the economic rationale is that in structures characterized by widespread reception, the opportunities for economies of scale are smaller. Instead, economies of scale are more feasible in large facilities.

Although the problems have mainly occurred in relation to the small centres, we have also registered critical issues in the assignment of tenders for large facilities too. Why do you think that is?

Very often, the places where there is no response to the prefecture's request for accommodation in large centres are the same places where this type of response has never been present before. Generally, those who respond to this type of request are parties who already have facilities of this type in use. These might include transnational economic entities or, as happened especially in 2015-2016, former hoteliers who had been unsuccessful in the tourism sector and used their facilities to cater for the reception sector. Or organisations such as the Red Cross or associations related to the church, which already have

large facilities and therefore do not need to rent premises, so can take advantage of economies of scale.

By analysing the data, we see that the refusal of the third sector to participate in the new calls for tenders is expressed more strongly in the centre-north, but we know that the phenomenon is more widespread. Based on what you've seen, how widespread is this position nationwide?

As far as concerns the organisations that are part of the CNCA, this phenomenon is widespread throughout the territory and it is fairly evenly distributed, even if with different dynamics and motivations. In the south, also due to the strong lack of job opportunities there, the tendency not to participate was sometimes slightly mitigated. For this reason, even organisations that would usually have rejected this approach have participated in the calls for proposals, trying to adapt, perhaps by networking among themselves, to make up for the lack of resources. In any case, this aspect seems to me to be very limited. In fact, the number of non-participating CNCA member organisations has reached 80%, all mainly from the north and centre-north.

If, by repeating the tenders, the prefectures are not able to allocate all the places deemed necessary, what are the possible scenarios?

Since the beginning, one solution they have used is the extension of the ongoing contracts or negotiating an extension. At a certain point, however, the Ministry will have to choose whether to modify the specifications or use other ways.

Several organisations have lodged appeals against the new specifications. Do you know how they're doing?

In our country, the organisations that have chosen to appeal are a minority, 5%. The first appeals did not go well, but it is interesting to note the case of a group of Tuscan organizations. They appealed to the Tar, which reserved the right to withhold judgement until January of the next year, in order to carry out an in-depth assessment. This is important because it means there will be an answer.

[Listen to the full interview on openpolis.it](https://openpolis.it)

2.5 The situation in Tuscany

Tuscany is one of the regions where the phenomenon of unanswered calls has become more evident.

In fact, in this territory the problem has become so urgent that in June the region approved a [resolution](#) to call for EUR 4 million to be allocated as co-financing to public bodies or the third sector for projects aimed

at receiving foreigners with no access to networks to promote social inclusion.

€ 4 MILLION

the amount put out to tender by the Tuscany Region for supplementary services in the reception sector.

This effort was an attempt to provide new resources to those organisations that participated in the calls but do not have the possibility to provide the integration services, which the new specifications do not foresee and fail to finance. A road that has also been travelled by other regions, such as [Lazio](#) or [Calabria](#), albeit with more limited resources.

By analysing Tuscany more closely, we can see that problems have emerged in several provinces, not all of which are detected by the Anac data. Two of these are good examples of the problems that can occur when a large part of the third sector withdraws from the reception system: the cases of Florence and Livorno.

In Livorno, as also emerged in the [local press](#), most of the invitations to tender for reception were unanswered. In this case, after the failure of the first call for bids, the prefecture decided not to publish any new ones and instead to transfer the migrants living in the closed centres elsewhere.

As can be seen from the documents published on the website of the [Prefecture of Livorno](#) of the 1,000 posts put out to tender after the approval of the Security Decree, only 564 were actually assigned.

To learn more about this situation we requested access to the records of the Prefecture of Livorno who agreed, providing the local reception figures of for May 2018 and June 2019.

From the analysis of these data, we see that at the end of June 2019 only 6 CAS were active in the province (held by 4 managers) with a total capacity of 624 places. Only a year earlier, there had been 16 managers and 35 active centres, which could accommodate 1,262 people.

6

the number of centres that remained active in the province of Livorno in June 2019, two of which are large.

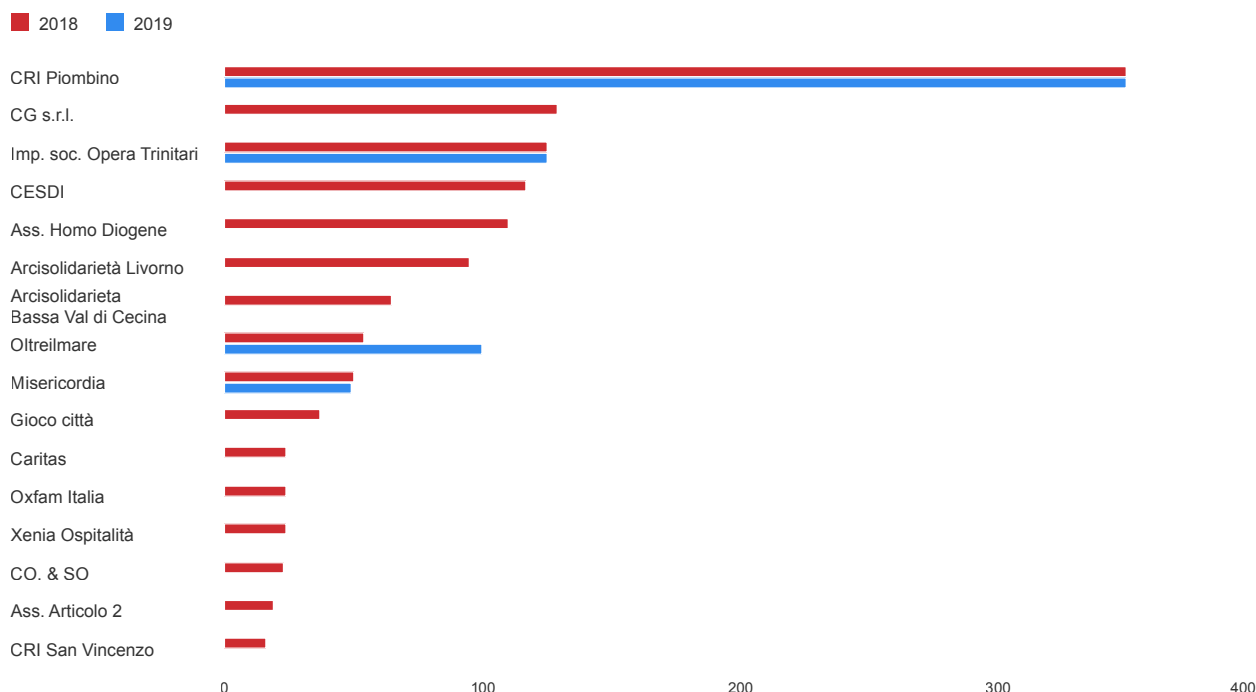
The vast majority of the managers decided not to participate in the new tender, all the small and many medium-sized centres closed and the number of places available in reception dropped dramatically.

Migrants staying at the centres that were closed were offered relocation, often to other locations. Many accepted, abandoning paths of integration developed over time locally. Others instead “[decided](#)” to stay in Livorno, risking marginality. The issue of transfers is

GRAPHIC 14

The managers of the reception in Livorno before and after the Security Decree

The extraordinary reception places managed by each manager in Livorno in 2018 and those that remained in the system in 2019.



N.B: The Prefecture of Livorno responded to our request for access to the records by providing data updated in May 2018 and June 2019 on the extraordinary reception centres active in the province of Livorno. Specifically, the data concern: the managers, the location of the centres, the number of migrants received, the capacity and the type of structure.

Source: Openpolis processing on data from the [Prefecture of Livorno](#)

an issue that not only concerns Livorno but one that is occurring throughout the country with destructive effects on the integration paths of thousands of people. This is an issue that deserves to be analysed in detail to measure its magnitude and impact but about which, again, there is no official information.

Of the various similar situations, or the situation which have involved many areas of Tuscany, that of the prefecture of Florence is a particular case in which a real wall appears to have been erected between the prefecture and the managing bodies.

- **The prefecture of Florence seems to have entered into a mechanism from which it cannot escape, and which produces the same result every time.**

At the beginning of 2019, the reception centres in the province of Florence were active thanks to agreements of 2017 which had reached their natural expiry date in December 2018. While awaiting the issuance of the

new regulations applied by the Conte I Cabinet, and in particular the new specifications, it had therefore been necessary to extend these until 30 April 2019.

At the end of March, the [prefecture](#) therefore issued calls for 3 framework agreements. The largest was one for single housing units but the number of places offered in large centres was still very significant.

The result, however, was clearly different from the expectations. There were no bids submitted for the call for tenders for large centres, while for the other two, the managing bodies submitted bids for a very limited number of places. At the end of all the operations, only 3 agreements were signed for a total of 285 places of the 1,800 initially offered.

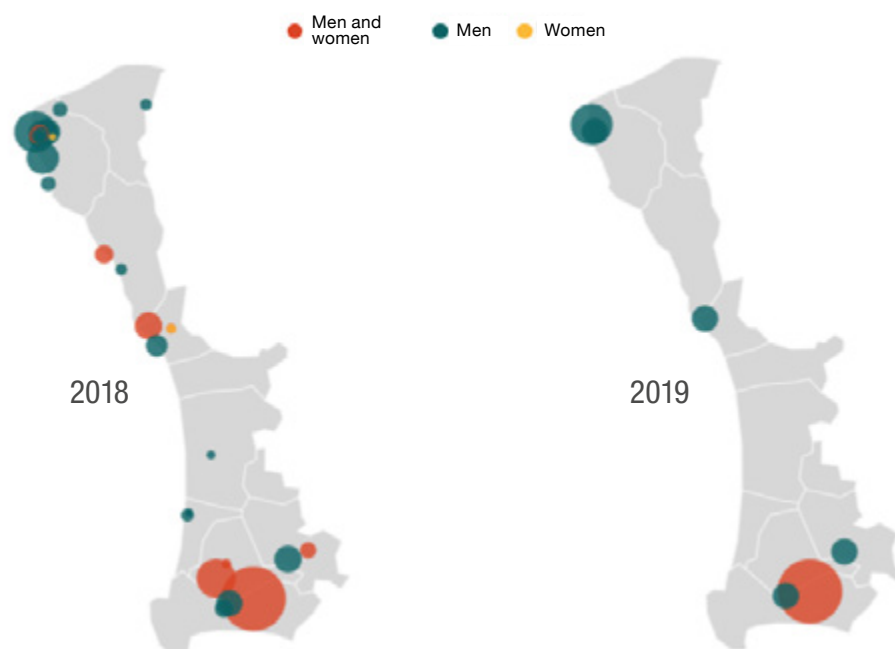
15,8%

the quota of places assigned in reception by the prefecture of Florence with the first call for applications.

GRAPHIC 15

L'accoglienza a Livorno dopo l'Approvazione del decreto sicurezza

How the geography of the reception of migrants in the province of Livorno has changed between 2018 and 2019.



Source: Openpolis processing on data from the [Prefecture of Livorno](#)

Given the failure of the first call for tenders, the prefecture was forced to extend the contracts again in order to guarantee the service until 31 October 2019. As a result, 3 new calls were published in June to fill the 1,500 remaining vacancies.

If possible, however, this procedure turned up even more unsatisfactory results. Of the 1,500 places offered, only 141 were made available by the operators in collective centres with up to 50 seats, while the other two tenders were completely unanswered. Moreover, it was by no means certain that these few places offered would be assigned. The bids were in fact submitted by two operators who had already participated in the first tender, one of which had been excluded by the prefecture.

• **How is it possible that the prefecture did not foresee this outcome and put alternative measures in place?**

One wonders, faced with the results of this new tender, how is it possible that the prefecture has let months go by, only implementing a plan that has produced another unsuccessful result.

On the other hand, observing the active reception centres, in extension, in the province of Florence in June 2019, it is immediately noticeable how in this territory a widespread reception model has developed in many small centres that mostly receive migrants in apartments. A model that is therefore very different from the one promoted by the new specifications.

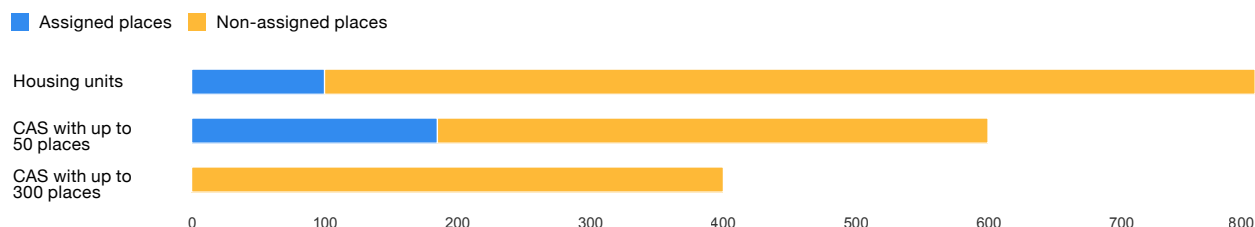
In July, in an attempt to unblock the situation, the Prefecture of Florence appeared to decide to change course. The route to take was indicated to it with a notice from the Ministry of the Interior (protocol 10813 of 18/06/2019) inviting it to proceed, no longer through an open procedure but through a [negotiated procedure](#). However, the result continued to disappoint expectations. Only one manager responded to the call, offering 68 places in medium-sized collective centres.

«Since last spring we've been launching calls for tender for reception and recently we have had new expressions of interest. The intent of the prefecture is to guarantee the continuation of reception services to all those who are entitled to them and are

GRAPHIC 16

The first call for tender for reception centres in Florence after the Security Decree

Places offered by the Prefecture of Florence and places allocated by way of agreement in the April 2019 calls for tender.



N.B: In April, the prefecture of Florence published three framework agreements with which it intended to allocate 1,800 reception places, a number deemed necessary to cover the needs of the territory. Each of the calls for tender responded to one of the three types of centre envisaged by the new tender [capitolato](#) for the management of extraordinary reception centres.

Source: Openpolis processing on data from the [Prefecture of Florence](#)

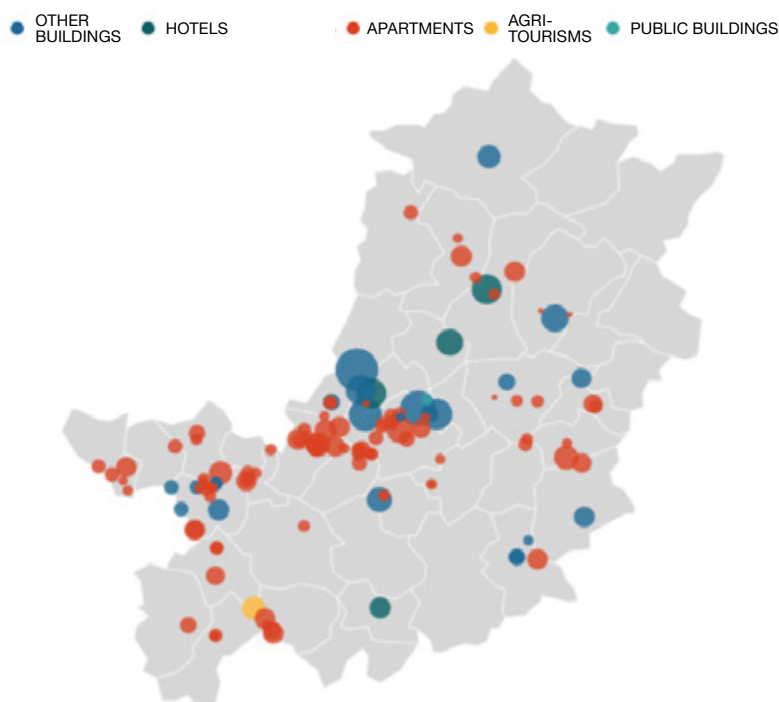
already present in our cities». This is why it is «important that all managing bodies apply to ensure the continuation” of the projects.»

[The Prefect of Florence Laura Lega - from Redattore Sociale 23/09/2019.](#)

GRAPHIC 17

Reception centres in the province of Florence

The widespread reception model active in Florence in June 2019 under contracts extended from December 2018.



Source: Openpolis processing on data from the [Prefecture of Florence](#)

Unsatisfied with the outcome, the prefecture reopened the terms of the negotiated procedure in October, apparently expecting a different outcome from previous ones. By then the last extension mentioned in the documents of the prefecture had expired and one year had passed since the entry into force of the Salvini decree and the new specifications, yet in the province of Florence most of the posts deemed necessary to guarantee the reception service was as yet unassigned.

Over the months, the prefecture lowered its estimates of the number of places to be guaranteed in the province. From 1,500 places in June, the number decreased to 1,000 in July and finally to 800 in October. A reduction that was not however enough to solve the problem.

At a time when the system witnesses a reduction in the overall number of arrivals, more emphasis could have been placed on structuring the reception more effectively and efficiently, by implementing best practices that favour the integration and insertion of the foreigner, helping him/her to become an active and productive member of the community.

On the contrary, the protraction of this situation proved the ideal context in which to return to managing the reception service in emergency terms in the event that flows were to increase again, and provides fertile ground for the creation and development of pockets of marginality and social discomfort, with consequences we are well aware of in terms of easy exploitation.

2.6 Interview with Giulia Capitani



Giulia Capitani is Migration Policy Advisor of Oxfam which, as part of its many activities, also manages several

reception centres for migrants, always in small structures based on a widespread reception model. This year, however, due to the new reception rule¹, Oxfam has also decided not to participate in the new calls for tenders for the management of the CAS.

Can you tell us what led to your making this decision?

It was a fairly lively debate in the heart of the organization. Because not participating in the calls has two important repercussions: the fact that those who have been your beneficiaries up to that moment are no longer your beneficiaries and risk being transferred to other regions; and the impact that this may have on the workers who are working with the refugees and asylum seekers. However, it was impossible for our organization, even after these considerations, to accept the reduction of rights contained in the new specifications. What drove us to say no was the absolute distortion of the function of the operator. There was no longer a demand for figures such

as educators or even figures that would help these people pursue a pathway towards autonomy. Instead, there was a huge emphasis on providing "detention" services. This distorted our role as social operators so much that it made participating in the call for tender unsustainable, not so much economically but from an ideological point of view.

Was this an individual decision or was it discussed and agreed upon with other third sector organisations?

There were moments of coordination and exchange and we also signed collective letters of request for the suspension of the tender documents. But in conclusion it was an individual choice and, as is normal, each cooperative and each association decided for itself.

From what you know, how did the managers who decided, for various reasons, to continue providing reception services, tackle the economic difficulties presented by the new specifications?

As far as I know, in Tuscany there were two kinds of responses. On one hand, some manager succeeded in using their own funds to make up for the lack of ministerial funding. On the other, the large managers that decided to participate have focused on combining these in some ways with other projects and services, such as language courses, which they manage independently from the hosting services. Yet, there are also people who participated in the competition and really complied with the specifications and so they don't provide these services.

Earlier you mentioned transfers to other regions, can you expand on that?

We have worked hard, also with the prefecture, to ensure that the transfers took place not only in the same region but in the same city, so that they were simple changes of address and not real transfers. But what happened throughout Italy, and not only in Tuscany, was that where there was no way to do this negotiating work, there were transfers to other regions too.

The phenomenon of unanswered calls for tenders has been particularly strong in Tuscany and Emilia Romagna. In your opinion, is this because these regions are unique in some way?

These are territories in which the third sector has a strong structure, a strong dynamism, a long tradition and certainly also the habit of taking sides on issues that are not strictly operational but also more political. But the reason why, at least in Tuscany, so many calls for tenders went unanswered is the fact that the so-called phenomenon of widespread reception had really taken root. Tuscany has been asserting this model since 2011. Here, in fact, the panorama of the managing organisations was extremely fragmented and apart from a few large groups, there was really a myriad of small managers with only a few places and not many staff. It is clear that in these organisations,

the conversion of their personnel was facilitated by the small numbers.

As far as we know, in Florence, despite the issuance of several calls for offers, the prefecture has only managed to allocate a small part of the places it considers necessary to meet the needs of the territory. What do you think about the attitude of the prefecture of Florence? Has there been a dialogue with the third sector organisations in recent months?

No, not really a dialogue. There was some pretty one-way communication. We, as Oxfam Italy, pulled back from the negotiations as early as in April 2019 when an extension request arrived from the prefecture, but under the new conditions. Obviously, we all refused, and we decided not to participate in the new calls for tender. What we know from the other managing bodies is that their contracts were extended until 30 June with the old rules. Then, with the subsequent extension to 31 October, the old rules were maintained, and therefore the famous 35 Euro, but with a deduction of 15%.

The Tuscany region has launched a call for offers worth €4 million to be allocated as co-financing to public or third sector organisations that pursue projects aimed at foreigners with no social integration network. What is your opinion on this measure? Do you think this might convince some managers to return to the host system?

I don't know if it would convince the managers who withdrew from the host system to return, but it was definitely an important initiative because it gave new impetus to those associations that had decided to participate in any case, but which could not have guaranteed services for promoting integration.

Since it is not possible to keep going forever with extensions, as now seems clear, if the prefectures are unable to allocate all the places in the reception area, what alternatives remain?

For me, the only possible scenario is the relocation of people who can't find a place in reception but are entitled to one. I see no other solution except the relocation of people to regions where there has been a greater response to the calls for tenders. Let's remember that the situation we are talking about occurred in a particular context, and that is when the number of landings substantially collapsed and there was therefore less pressure on the reception system, meaning that there were still many vacancies elsewhere in Italy.

[Listen to the full interview on openpolis.it](https://openpolis.it)

2.7 In brief

Despite the obvious difficulties of dealing with such a complex issue as reception with access to almost no official data, and assuming the refusal of the Ministry

of the Interior to provide the information we requested access to, it was however possible to define some fixed points.

Our detailed analysis of some areas where problems emerged in the assignment of tenders, both through the data we collected and based on the experience of those in this field, in fact, outlines a critical situation.

If it is true that up until now, the difficulties experienced in covering the needs have not turned into an emergency, this has mainly been for two reasons. Firstly, the substantial drop in arrivals; secondly, thanks to the extensions by which the prefectures allowed the reception to continue, often with the rules in force before the Security Decree.

• A total lack of planning.

The first point highlights a short-term policy that relies on the belief that the scenario will remain constant and that the number of landings will remain low, without any consideration of multi-level governance, the role of the National Coordination Table (also in the dialogue with the third sector) and the need to distribute migrants throughout the territory in a proportionate and planned manner.

• The prefectures are caught between inapplicable rules and the duty to guarantee the service.

On the second point, however, there are legal limits. It is not possible to extend a public contract indefinitely. What will the prefectures do then, in the absence of government instructions, to comply with the laws of the state when even this possibility of procrastinating contracts ceases to exist?

That's not counting the damage that's already been done. The loss of operators' jobs which, in addition to the employment problem, constitutes a dispersion of skills developed over years of work and commitment, is only one of the relevant examples. This aspect particularly affects the most fragile territories with the greatest need for employment, forcing the third sector to make painful choices. And even when these result in a continuation of the services, they usually lead to a reduction in personnel.

• Reception services are interrupted without considering the social effects for migrants and host communities.

In addition, the closure of small centres means that refugees and asylum seekers will be unable to find work and be integrated into society, perhaps being

moved to different and distant cities and towns where services promoting those kinds of inclusion are not available. This can at best mean a lengthening of integration times, culpably delaying the moment when each of these people can become an economically independent and productive entity for society. Or, in some cases, it may even mean the abandonment of any attempt at integration, and therefore the migrants being marginalised and left on the street, with all the associated social costs.

As we will see better in the third part of this study, when small centres close, large ones remain open, at least in the places where they were already present. Yet it is precisely in the large centres that the worst experiences for migrants and local communities have occurred in recent years.

Part three

LARGE CENTRES FOR LARGE MANAGERS

The application of the rules laid down in the new specifications, as we have seen, has raised many problems and, one year after their introduction, it cannot be said that the new system is fully operational. This is another reason why it is not possible to verify whether to date it has been applied uniformly throughout the country. In addition, each territory has produced different responses to the problems posed by the new rules.

In some provinces the most obvious effects have been the unanswered calls and the extensions of old contracts, while in others, the contracts were awarded. However, these assignments are drastically changing the structure of the reception system, both in terms of the distribution of migrants in the centres and in terms of the type of organisations managing them.

3.1 The concentration of the reception offered in the period prior to the Security Decree

As we reconstructed in the [first part of the report](#), our reception system, developed over the years in response to a state of emergency, has been characterized by the pathological preponderance of the part that should have been extraordinary and temporary (the CAS), to the detriment of the ordinary part under public ownership, in the hands of the municipalities (SIPROIMs/SPRARs). This overturned system has brought with it the problems that have been reported by several parties, related to the lack of transparency in the management of contracts, the scarcity of controls, the failure to provide the due services, up to the most extreme cases of some centre managers indulging in illegality and complicity with organised crime. Problems mostly connected and often amplified by the concentration of high numbers of migrants in large centres, managed by operators with a commercial vocation and zero experience in the reception sector. All critical elements highlighted by the work of the parliamentary committee of inquiry into the reception system.

«As far as the CAS are concerned, President [...] they are a thorn in the side in objective terms, because they represent the failure of that policy of territorial coordination that the Plan, on the other hand, would prefer to promote through the region.»

Domenico Manzione, at the time Under-secretary at the Ministry of the Interior, heard by the Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry into the reception system, 13/10/2015.

However, in recent years there has been a tendency to at least partially address the most serious problems, with some effort also on the part of the prefectures, particularly in the central-northern regions, to favour the widespread reception represented by the SPRARs (small centres assigned to third sector managers).

At the end of October 2019, with a delay of four months, and thanks to pressure from civil society, the [Report of the Minister of the Interior to Parliament](#) on the functioning of the reception system in 2018 was finally published. Thanks to this, it is now possible to make some evaluations on the structure of the reception system in 2017 and in 2018, i.e. the two-year period before the approval of the Security Decree and the new specifications (for more information, see also [Centres of Italy 2018](#)).

It should be noted that the reports do not provide re-usable data. Instead, we are talking about a file (in pdf image format for the 2018 report) in which aggregated data is published. A starting point that therefore poses many problems, often even in terms of simply reading the tables and graphs, due to the poor printing quality. There is therefore very little space for independent analysis. Not to mention the numerous errors in the text (particularly with regard to incorrect or missing tax identification numbers).

One of the tables in both reports concerns the overall capacity of the structures managed by the prefectures in each province during the year and the number of active centres. From this information it is possible to obtain the average capacity per centre in each province or region. Obviously, the averages give us very partial data and single cases, such as for example the Centre for Asylum Seekers in Isola di Capo Rizzuto in Calabria (with a very high capacity) can easily and significantly distort the information.

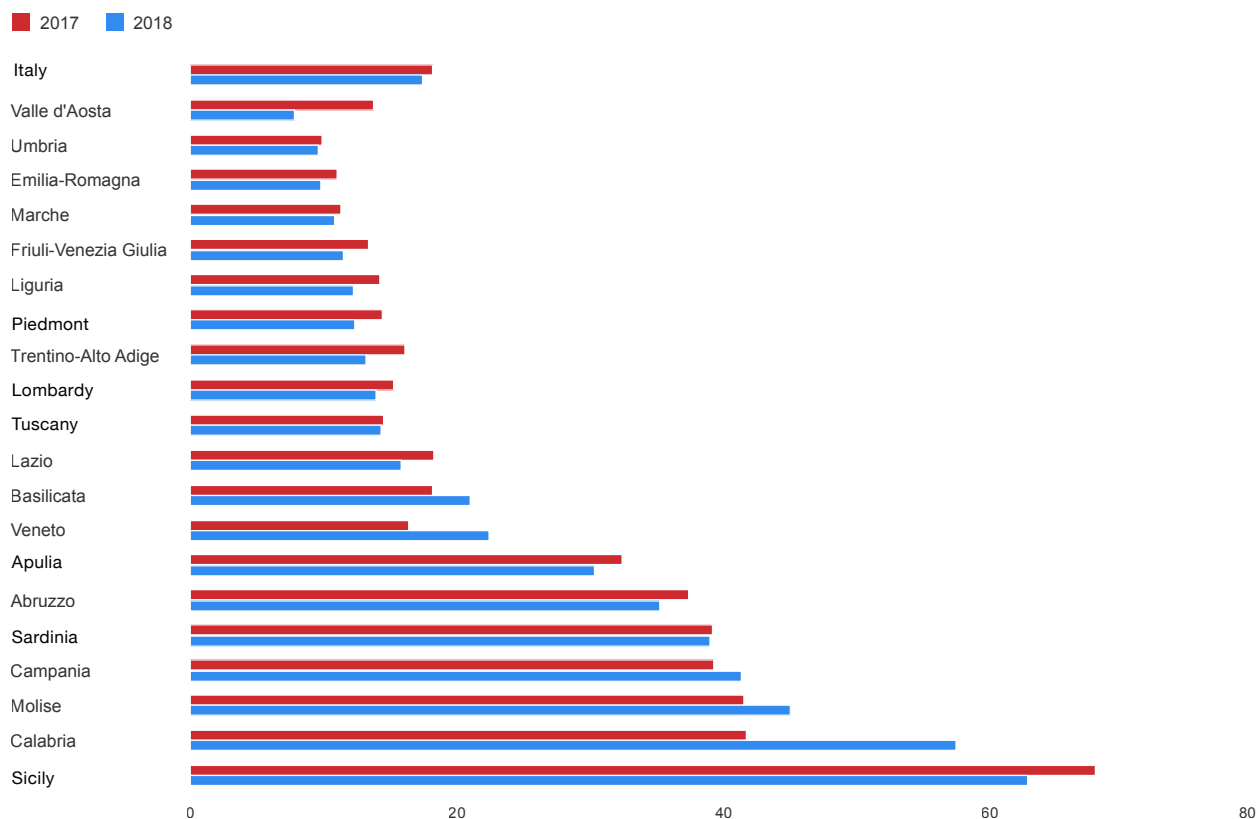
In any event, in the period under examination, most of the Italian regions witnessed a drop, albeit limited, in the capacity of the centres. This trend is more evident in the central-northern regions, while Calabria, Campania and Molise are in contrast with the trend.

The data in the two reports therefore allow us to observe that while the total number of people received, and therefore the number of places in the centres managed by the prefectures was decreasing (180,000 in 2017, 165,000 in 2018), so was the average capacity of the reception centres. A process that seems to confirm the interest in pursuing the widespread reception model (smaller centres distributed in the territories) which was meant to facilitate the integration of the migrants while reducing the negative impact that high concentrations can have on local communities and on the migrants themselves.

GRAPHIC 18

The sizes of the reception centres before the Security Decree

Between 2017 and 2018, the average capacity of the reception centres at regional level was reduced.



Source: Report by the Ministry of the Interior on the functioning of the reception system for the years [2017](#) and [2018](#).

«The strategic alliance with the territories [...] has made it possible [...] to progressively lighten the burden on large reception centres, places that are difficult to manage and live in, in the belief that large numbers have negative effects, not only in terms of the impact on local communities but also on the efficiency of the services provided to the migrants. At the same time, the related significant financial burden placed on these centres make them a source of attraction for criminal interests.»

[Ministry of the Interior. Report on the functioning of the reception system in 2017.](#)

Pushing the extraordinary reception centres towards a widespread model was also a useful step for encouraging the gradual absorption of the

CAS in new SPRAR projects ([read the circular of the Ministry of the Interior dated August 2017](#)).

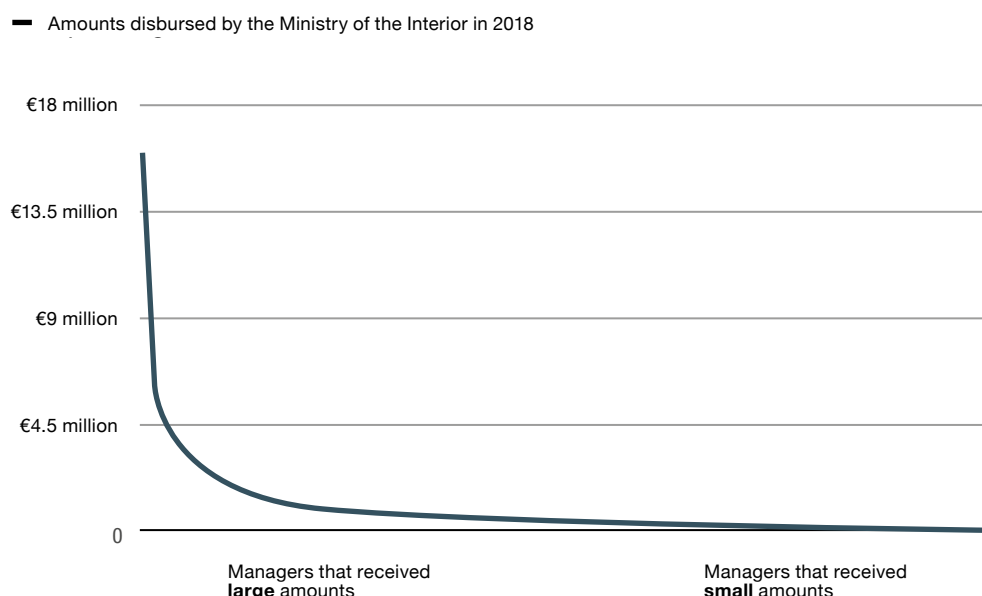
As for the disbursements, i.e. the amounts devolved by the Ministry to the managing bodies (to be kept separate from the funds of the state budget that we saw in the [first part of the report](#)), the two reports show that expenditure on the management of prefectural centres decreased from EUR 1.7 billion in 2017 to EUR 1.2 billion in 2018 (-25.9%).

The number of operators (identifiable by the tax codes indicated in the report) also decreased, but proportionally much less significantly (1553 in 2017 and 1467 in 2018, i.e. a decrease of 5.5%). As a result, the amounts awarded to each manager on average range from around €1 million in 2017 to €800 thousand in 2018.

Again, the average has a very relative value. But if you look at how the sum of the amounts awarded by individual operator in 2018 is distributed, you can immediately see that the sector is characterised by a significant concentration of operators with high amounts

GRAPHIC 19

Payments made by the Ministry of the Interior to each institution managing reception centres in 2018



N.B: On the horizontal axis all the managing organisations are indicated, or rather the individual VAT or tax codes (1467), indicated in the Report to Parliament on the functioning of the reception system in 2018. The ordinates show the overall amounts disbursed to each of these by the Ministry of the Interior in 2018.

Source: Report by the Ministry of the Interior on the functioning of the reception system for the years [2017](#) and [2018](#).

and an overwhelming majority of successful tenderers who were awarded small amounts.

It is therefore a market dynamic in which a few large managers have to counterbalance a long tail, made up of a myriad of organisations that manage small numbers. Each of these managed a few centres, with a small number of migrants, inserted in a project and in a specific local context. A dimension that is anything but ideal for those who want to make significant profits, and instead better suited to territorial organisations with a prevailing social vocation.

In any case, we tried to refine this analysis to understand how the total amounts paid by the Ministry of the Interior were distributed among various groups of managers. We then aggregated the assignees of the contracts by class of amount, indicating as “large” those managers who received more than 10 million Euro from the Ministry. Then, we find the “medium to large” managers (between EUR 5 and 10 million), those

classified as “small to medium” (between 2 and 5 million), the “small managers” (between 500 thousand Euro and 2 million) and finally those identified as “very small” (under 500 thousand Euro).

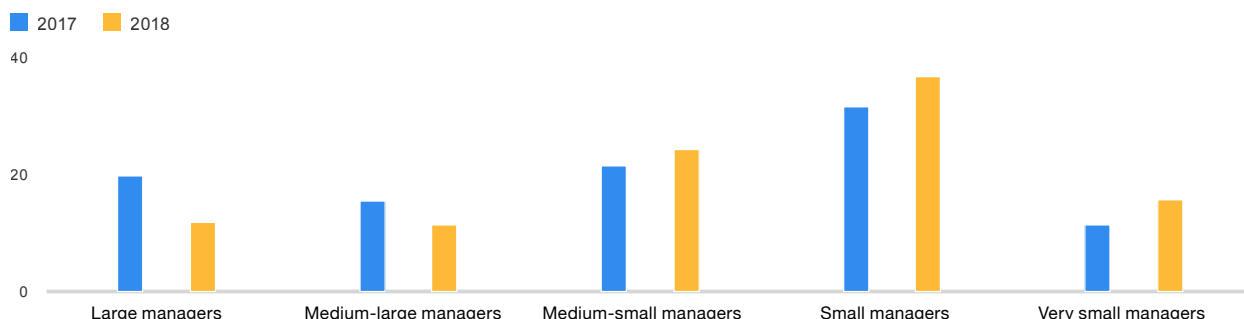
This analysis also confirms that between 2017 and 2018, the trend was to favour a reception distributed among several players, with a significant reduction in the weight of the large managers. In fact, in 2017 these accounted for almost 20% of all amounts disbursed, while in 2018 this percentage fell to 12% (-40% compared to 2017). At the same time, the share received by medium-small (+13%), small (+16%) and very small (+36%) managers increased.

Between 2017 and the following year, therefore, there would be a reduction in the degree of concentration of resources among the managing organisations, on the one hand, and on the other, a reduction in the average capacity of the reception centres.

GRAPHIC 20

Distribution of the amounts paid for reception between 2017 and 2018

The amounts disbursed by the Ministry of the Interior to the managers of the reception centres are divided by classes of amount. (Percentage values).



Source: Report by the Ministry of the Interior on the functioning of the reception system for the years [2017](#) and [2018](#).

3.2 The return to the big centres

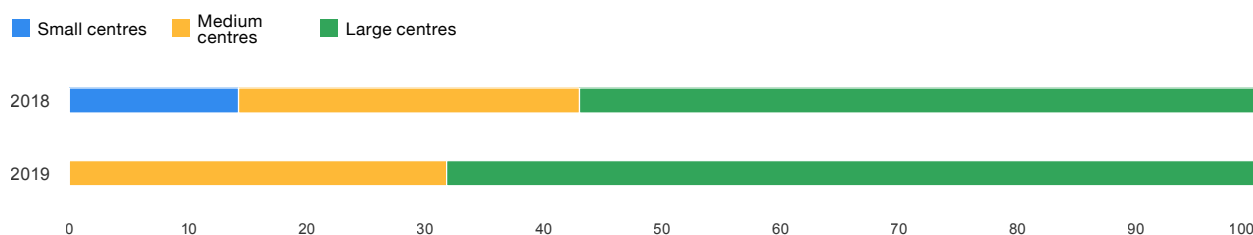
The new reception model, in the form in which it emerges from the rules and the cuts in costs imposed by the new specifications, seems instead to go in the opposite direction, i.e. against the concept of widespread reception, instead prioritising large centres and large managers. This is, in fact, the best combination if not the only one available, in order to achieve economies of scale that allow the impact of the cut in funding to be reduced.

While in some territories, the rejection of a large part of the third sector has caused serious difficulties for the prefectures in assigning the contracts, in other parts of the country things have gone differently. As we saw in the last chapter, in Livorno, several centres have been closed and the ones that have remained open are mostly large. The consequence, in addition to the overall decrease in the number of migrants received in the province, has been a significant increase in the number of asylum seekers received in large centres (to learn more, see "[System error](#)").

GRAPHIC 21

The increase of large reception centres in the province of Livorno

Distribution of reception places in the province of Livorno between centres of different sizes in 2018 and 2019. (Percentage values).



N.B: Following a request for access to the records, the Prefecture of Livorno provided us with data on the reception facilities active in the territory in June 2019. The reception facilities were classified according to how many people they can accommodate. Large centres: more than 50 places. Average centres: between 20 and 50 places. Small centres: less than 20 places.

Source: [Prefecture of Livorno](#)

3.3 Interview with Gianfranco Schiavone

[Listen to the full interview](#)



Gianfranco Schiavone is vice president of the ASGI (Association for Legal Studies on Immigration) and President of the I.C.S. (Italian Solidarity Consortium) of Trieste.

Gianfranco in this chapter we will analyse the situations in Rome and Milan, pointing out a tendency to concentrate the migrants in the big centres.

What's happening on the national level? Are there any differences between the different territories?

There are many differences between the territories because fortunately in Italy, for many years there has been a path of consolidation of the widespread reception approach integrated into the territory. In some places, this approach has become the most popular one. In these cases, the dismantling of this system has not yet taken place or is taking longer. But everywhere, the process is now heading in the opposite direction to the widespread reception' approach.

Clearly, where the system was fragile, where a majority of large centres with low standards and a minority of widespread reception programmes with high quality standards co-existed in the same territory, the latter very quickly regressed. Because they were engulfed and absorbed by the dominant model that quickly took over. Therefore, the difference between areas does not correspond to geographical characteristics but is strongly linked to the historical path of each territory.

What about the big managers?

The two things can only go hand in hand. In the meantime, it is essential to clarify why large centres can withstand the new approach or even be suitable. Only in large centres, and especially in large centres where the structure is state-owned and therefore there is no responsibility and no economic investment on the part of the managers, is it possible to participate in tenders without running huge risks. In addition, the large centre allows economies of scale that the small structure cannot permit. The new specifications envisage the widespread reception model, but this is basically a fake prediction. Because at the cost of the new specifications providing widespread reception in houses and not in varying proportions of gigantic state-owned premises is economically impossible.

The large structures, on the other hand, are assigned to managers that have a greater economic capacity, which is necessary when applying to manage a facility of perhaps 300 places. It is no coincidence, in fact, that companies, joint-stock companies, and more generally profit

organizations are those making more space for themselves in this field.

The mechanism of the large centre and that of the large organisation tend to go hand in hand, and this mechanism favours the profit-making organization. Even if the profit margins are derisory profit-making organisations, in some circumstances, may still be interested. Because by lowering their costs as much as possible and thus providing a poor service, they can calculate a profit, albeit very small, but which then becomes significant given the high number of guests. In this way they also keep a foot in the system in view of better times when profit margins may be higher.

How has the third sector reacted and behaved in response to the new rules?

Unfortunately, they have been incredibly disappointing. In the sense that there's been no common strategy, no alliance, and no standardised response, based on the rejection of this approach.

The world of associations and social cooperation has responded by basically pulverizing itself into a myriad of individual initiatives which, in the end, have essentially been characterised by two choices. One is the decision not to taking part in the tenders, an ethical, political choice. However, if it is not accompanied by a legal dispute, it essentially translates into an abandonment of the land. While the second choice is to participate, accepting the new conditions. Often with hypocritical motivations that can be synthesized in the phrase "better that we do it than someone else." These are probably larger organisations that have differentiated their interventions in the welfare field, but not only, and that have reabsorbed the manpower surplus without losing the contracts, perhaps hoping for better times. And so acting based on a very private logic. The result is that those who have rejected and simultaneously challenged the new tenders have remained completely isolated.

What about the appeals?

There were and still are only a relatively small number of appeals. They are very coordinated with each other, the issues raised are basically the same and relate to the inconsistency of the new specifications with the Procurement Code and the lack of compliance with the standards set out in European Directive 33/2013. Most of the disputes raised are pending at the moment. Some of those who have already had an outcome have had a negative one. There are not many of them and I must say that the reasons for these decisions beg very little respect. Wrong legal grounds, stereotyped and, above all, very close to political rather than legal assessments. We will see how the next decisions go, but for now this too is a rather bleak page which we hope will not continue. We hope that in the future a different direction will be taken.

[Read more about these topics in the 2019 report of the Migrants Foundation "The Right of Asylum"](#)

3.4 The large reception centres in the Milanese territory

In Milan, many large centres and large managers were already present in previous years. The new rules have contributed to creating further difficulties for the widespread reception model, by discouraging small managers and creating new incentives for others to use the model based on large centres.

With the publication of the new calls for tender, many associations and third sector organisations decided not to participate in the tenders but, compared to what happened elsewhere, it seems that other organisations filled the gap, managing to reach a number of places deemed sufficient by the government territorial office.

As a first step, in February 2019, the [prefecture](#) set up the new calls for tender by designing an offer very geared towards encouraging the concentration of migrants in large centres. If you consider both the framework agreement for the management of centres with up to 300 places, and the contracts for the Aquila CAS and for the former Mancini barracks, the number of places put out to tender for large centres by the prefecture of Milan was 2,220, or 64%.

64%

of the places offered in reception in Milan concern large centres.

In addition, not all places initially offered in widespread diffusion (750) and in the CAS with up to 50 places (500) were effectively assigned and the Prefecture was forced to issue two new calls for offers.

In Milan, therefore, the problems in the assignment of the contracts occurred exclusively for the widespread reception model and for small centres, while contracts

for large centres were assigned without any apparent complications.

This also had an important effect on the composition of the reception managers. Comparing the data on the centres active in Milan at the end of 2018 with the documents relating to the latest calls for tenders, it emerges that, of the 31 entities that managed facilities in Milan in 2018, 11 did not participate in the 2019 calls for tenders.

11

managers of the third sector in Milan have abandoned the new tenders.

In this case they are a set of parties which, despite their differences, have several elements in common. They are managers who had based most of their reception projects on the widespread model and who, according to the Annual Report for 2018, have low economic volumes, at least in the reception sector.

- **The small social organisations are pushed out of the reception system, giving way to large entities, including profit-making ones.**

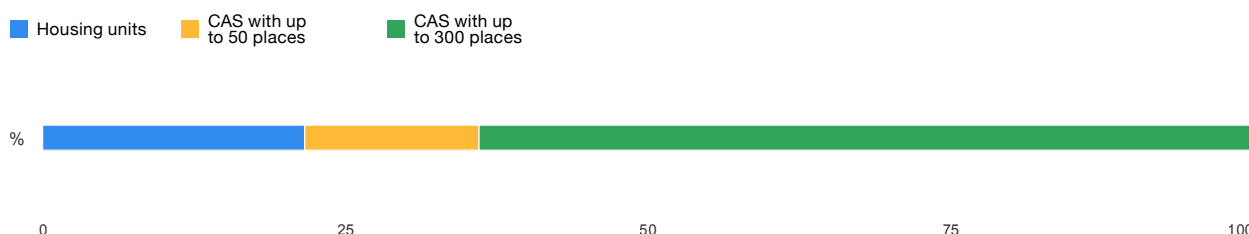
But while several small organizations decided not to participate in the new calls for tenders, 9 other organizations, which in previous years were not part of the local reception system, presented bids for two large centres: the Mancini Barracks (300 places) and the Aquila CAS (270 places).

These include 2 large managers who received more than €12 million in disbursements from the Ministry during 2018. These are Medihospes, which we will discuss in more detail in the part concerning the reception centres in Rome, and Versoprobo, which, moreover, appears to have been assigned the management of the Via Corelli facility which has recently returned, [amidst much controversy](#), to act as a Repatriation Centre (CPRs). A

GRAPHIC 22

The reception envisaged by the prefecture of Milan for 2019

Places offered by the Prefecture of Milan in the February 2019 calls.



Source: [Prefecture of Milan](#)

centre in which therefore there is no “reception”, but only administrative detention.

Another 4 participants are [limited liability company](#) (i.e. profit-making organisations without a clear social mission): Ospita Srl, Engel Italia Srl, Nova Facility and Ors Italia srl, a [Swiss company](#) that has only been operating in Italy for a few months and is owned by a British private equity fund.

It is no coincidence that these very calls for tenders have taken an interest in these very organisations. In fact, here we are dealing with individual calls for tenders to assign specific publicly owned centres, as well as large ones. In this case, those taking part in the call for tenders do not have to rent suitable structures and perhaps renovate them before taking part in the tender. The risks of such an investment are therefore zero.

By analysing the managers, who on one hand decided to leave the Milanese reception system and, on the other, have tried to enter it, the mechanism of incentives and disincentives that derives from the new specifications clearly emerges.

Small businesses with a strong social vocation are those which leave the system, while the large ones, including profit-making companies, are often those that try to enter.

3.5 Interview with Emilia Bitossi

[Listen to the full interview](#)



Emilia Bitossi is a volunteer of the Naga Association of Milan. Among the many activities they carry out, Naga volunteers provide free healthcare, legal and social assistance to foreign citizens in the Milan area.

Emilia tell us, from your point of view what has been the effect of the new specifications on the situation in Milan?

This theme was an integral part of the report that came out in December 2019 by a Naga group called Osservatorio, of which I am a member. The Osservatorio was founded in 2015 with the objective of monitoring the changes that were taking place inside the reception system.

The reality of the CAS already worsened in 2017 with the Minniti decree and this was then definitively sanctioned with the Salvini decree passed at the end of 2018. This worsening has had an effect, in particular, on the integration services that, in the most virtuous CAS, had been implemented in the previous period to promote the integration of the guests into the surrounding reality. These services were completely dismantled by the new

specifications. The figure of the psychologist disappeared altogether, the medical service has been greatly downsized, the Italian school abolished, as well as the recreational activities and the possibility of doing training courses. The CAS have become dormitories, the operators are there to exert very strict control that severely limits the ability of the guests to find a job or perform any other activity outside the centre. Delays in returning to the centre can lead to the immediate revocation of the reception. And in fact, revocations have skyrocketed.

As far as the centres and managers are concerned, what has happened?

A large number of managing bodies have pulled back since the launch of the new specifications. Claiming that this was not reception and that they could not meet the needs of the guests. Many of the more virtuous ones also legally opposed the new specifications. The only ones left are CAS with over 50 places. In the past few years widespread reception had been viewed favourably by both Minniti and Lamorgese who was also Prefect of Milan at the time. Widespread reception should be seen positively because small numbers are much better managed and the people who are received have more chance of gaining autonomy. In addition, small numbers are dispersed throughout the territory, which also means a lower impact and a greater integration capacity. This is also a positive aspect, although we must also consider the negative aspect, which is the isolation of the guest in a territory that doesn't see or hear them. In any case widespread reception disappeared due to the budget envisaged by the new specifications.

Do you notice any differences in the way the various managers operate? Are there any attempts to integrate the cut services? How and with what resources?

Some big managers in Milan are always the same even if they administer fewer centres. Then there are smaller cooperatives, in some cases new ones. They may have operated in the territory before, but not in Milan and for now I can't say anything because they only took over in January.

As for the operators who stayed on and participated in the call, many are keen to say that they will retain all the services because they can manage them with their own internal resources. But this all remains to be seen, and this also goes for what the smaller cooperatives will do.

In this period have you experienced a higher demand for assistance both from those who, despite having a place in the CAS, no longer use the integration services, and from those who instead do not have any kind of reception?

Absolutely. The influx here is very high. They come for medical issues, to receive legal support, for the Italian language school and much more. Certainly, those in the CAS receive less support than before. But it is still too

early to draw conclusions on this. Let's not forget that with the Salvini Decree many had to leave the reception system. There is an increasing number of people who have had their right to reception revoked for various reasons. Then there are those who came out of the CAS maybe even with protection, but can't get into the SPRAR, today SIPROIMI, and end up on the street. It is truly an emergency situation, a word that we would like to abolish, but in fact the situation is really serious now.

3.6 Reception in Rome and the return to the large centres

Here too, the intentions of the [prefecture](#) of Rome when distributing places among the various types of centres were geared from the outset towards creating a type of offer that is strongly favourable to large structures. In fact, in the call for tender issued after the approval of the new specifications, 2,970 places were offered for the large centres (74.8%), 800 for those with up to 50 places (20.2%) while only 200 places (5.0%) were offered for the housing units.

As in all the Italian cities, between December 2018 and July 2019 the presence of migrants in the reception centres in Rome also decreased significantly. In the capital, in the space of 7 months, these fell 18.1% (from 3,103 to 2,541 guests). This could undoubtedly have been an opportunity to restructure the system, to make it more effective in the pursuit of what should be the objective of reception: accompanying migrants on the pathway to autonomy and to a positive coexistence with the hosting communities.

We requested access to the records, something we are often forced to resort to, and the Prefecture of Rome provided us with data on the centres active in the area in December 2018 and July 2019. By analysing the documents, it is clear that, following the allocation of new calls for tenders, large centres have become even more crucial than they already were in 2018. The share of centres with a capacity of more than 100 places has in fact increased by 37% in a few months.

83,5%

of the reception places in Rome are located in large centres.

Small and medium-sized centres still account for 16.5% of the total number of places, compared to 29.4% in the previous year. The return to a model based on large centres therefore appears even more marked than the calls for tenders initially proposed by the prefectures suggested, making widespread reception projects even more residual.

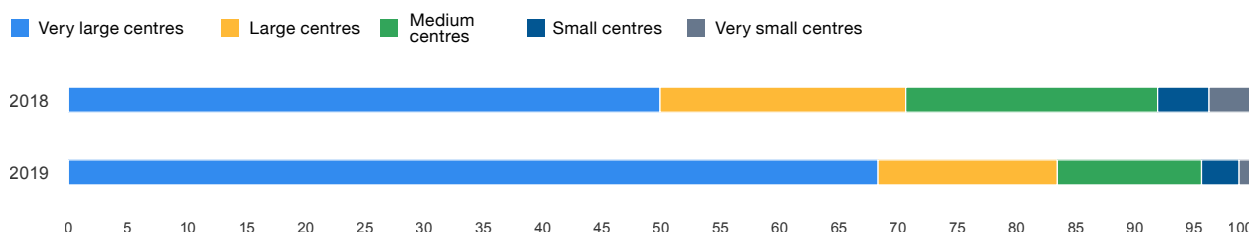
3.7 The monopolistic trend of reception in Rome

However, the effect of the new rules not only had an impact on the size of the centres, but also on third sector organisations. In December 2018, there were 17 managers of the reception offered in Rome, seven months later only 10 remained, most of which were large (in terms of turnover and presence in the reception sector in the previous years).

GRAPHIC 23

The size of the reception centres in Rome between 2018 and 2019

Distribution of reception places in the province of Rome between centres of different sizes before and after the entry into force of the new specifications. (Percentage values)



N.B: Following a request for access to its records, the Prefecture of Rome provided us with data on the reception facilities active in the territory in July 2019. The reception facilities were classified according to how many people they can accommodate. Very large centres: more than 100 places. Large centres: between 50 and 100 places. Medium centres: between 25 and 50 places. Small centres: between 10 and 25 places. Very small centres: no more than 10 places.

Source: [Prefecture of Rome](#)

The most striking case is certainly that of Medihospes (formerly known as Senis Hospes), one of the major national operators in the sector, which in 2017 had 2,067 reception places distributed in 15 Italian provinces, for which it obtained payments from prefectures for a total of over 20 million Euro. The growth of this group has been exponential in recent years and, according to data from the Chamber of Commerce, its turnover increased from 42 million in 2016 to 114 million in 2018.

In 2018, Medihospes (in collaboration with Tre Fontane, another major national operator, initially considered an auxiliary cooperative and then [incorporated](#) by Medihospes during 2018), already managed 16 centres in the metropolitan territory of Rome. These facilities had a variable capacity, of between 50 and 250 places, and altogether offered 37% of the reception places in the territory.

This already dominant position was substantially strengthened in 2019, almost bringing Medihospes to a monopoly position in the capital. In July, in fact, this

company held almost two thirds of all the reception places.

63%

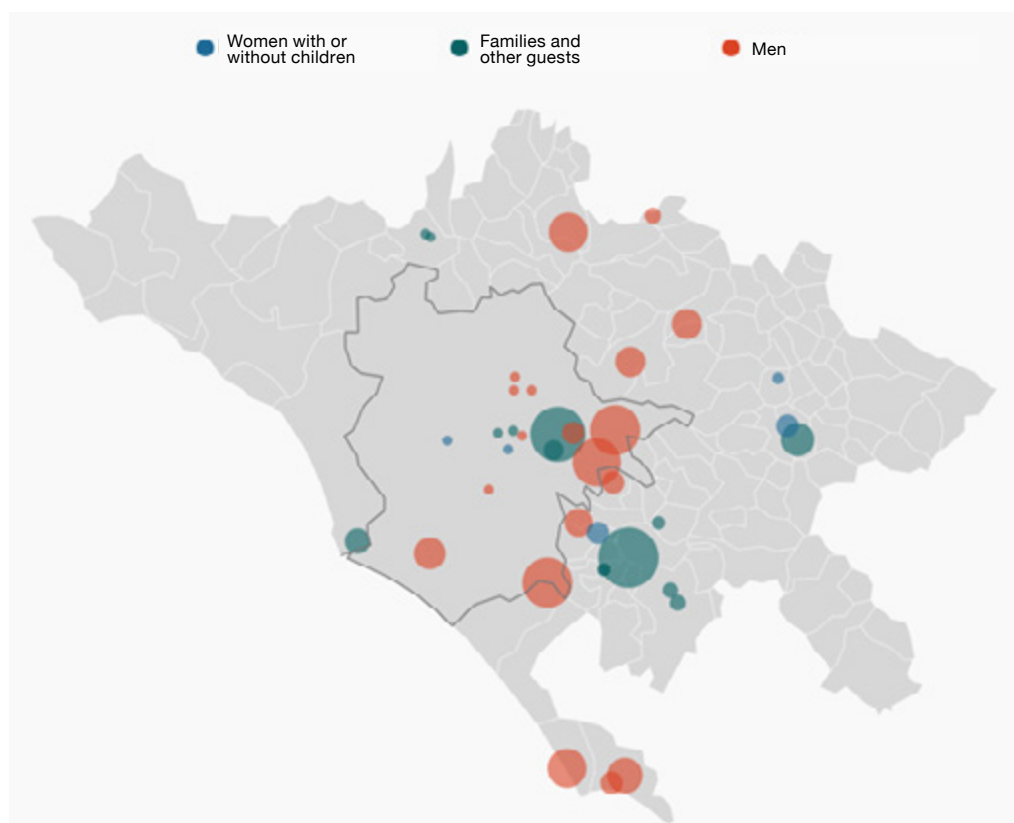
of all the reception places in Rome are managed by Medihospes.

It is also a company that has shared the same representatives as the La Cascina Group, a cooperative subjected to special administration for attempted mafia infiltration in the Mafia Capitale affair, according to that declared in an ordinance of preventive detention issued by the preliminary investigations judge of Rome, Flavia Costantini. Medihospes appears to have shared premises, promotional initiatives and political support with the cooperative in special administration and the companies of its Group (see [“The business of the Mafia Capitale coop: contracts for the migrants even after the investigation”](#) “La Repubblica 26 September 2015, Foschini and Tonacci). Medihospes was also among the managers of the Centre for Asylum Seekers of Borgo Mezzanone when [L'Espresso](#) (see the in-depth study

GRAPHIC 24

The reception of migrants in the metropolitan city of Rome in 2019

Reception centres in the metropolitan area of Rome, capacity, attendance, and managers.

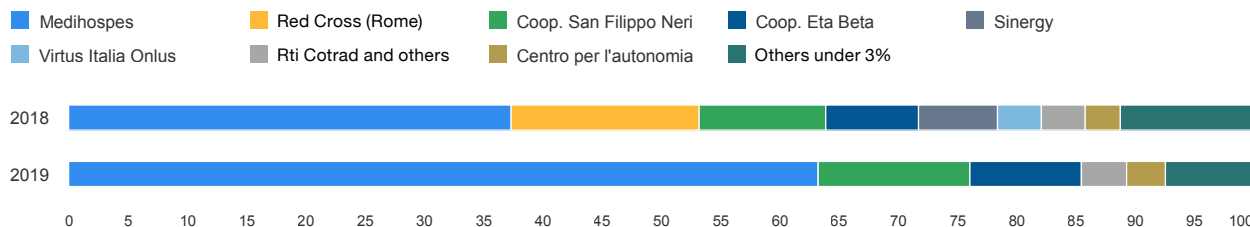


Source: [Prefecture of Rome](#)

GRAPHIC 25

The managers of reception in Rome

The composition of reception managers in the metropolitan area of Rome in 2018 and 2019. (Percentage values).



Source: [Prefecture of Rome](#)

by Fabrizio Gatti of 12 September 2016) it exposed the inhumane conditions in which the guests were being kept. But even leaving aside these past events, the fact remains that assigning 2/3 of the reception to a single manager, whoever it may be, means that the administration (the contracting entity) is in danger of being “held captive” and conditioned by its supplier.

- **In the absence of any real competition, monopolies and oligopolies in the management of reception risk weaken the administrations’ capacity to control the situation and their autonomy of choice.**

In order to better understand important organisations for the reception system such as Medi hospes, we would require more information than we have at the moment. For example, by law, each managing body of reception centres is obliged to publish a report on the management costs ([Art. 2 paragraph 2-quater of the Security Decree](#)). However, neither on the Medi hospes site nor on the sites of other major operators on which we carried out checks could this information be found. The prefectures, which are supposed to monitor compliance with these standards, also have the duty to publish these data on their website. But, with a few rare exceptions, the rule does not seem to have been applied here either.

Thus, while some operators were strengthening their dominant position, the organisations left out of the system were again those that managed small and medium-sized centres in 2018, but not only that.

Some managers of large centres also withdrew from the new system. In particular, these included the social cooperative Sinergy which ran a large centre, and above all the Red Cross of Rome which ran three centres with 360, 150 and 30 places each until 2018.

The [decision](#) of the Roman Red Cross, as stated by the director, was made due to reasons of economic sustainability but also takes “the form of a public

protest”, namely that “it is not by bringing our associations to their knees that we reform the system.”

As we have seen, however, in Rome other organisations offered to fill the gap left by the absence of organizations like the Red Cross. However, the experience of the managers of small centres was very different.

In 2018 there were 7 organisations that managed facilities with less than 25 places. To date, however, only three of these have remained, managing housing units or small structures: Cenerella, Cotrad (in association with various other third sector organizations) and the Caritas in Roma (Cooperativa Roma Solidarietà). Caritas is a very large organisation and can perhaps count on this and the availability of many [accommodation units provided by parish communities](#) to provide a service that is no longer economically viable for others. Cotrad is also a very large cooperative with a long history in the field of social assistance, albeit not in the reception of migrants.

Therefore, in order to continue running small centres, both the political decision to accept the new rules and a facility able to cope with the economic constraints through creating economies of scale or using their own resources appear essential.

A dynamic that cuts out small organisations and concentrates the management of the reception, placing it into the hands of just a few managers. With all the legal, social, and political risks that such a dynamic presents.

3.8 In brief

Between 2017 and 2018, the reception sector seemed to be oriented towards a widespread model, both in terms of the number and size of the centres and in terms of the number of managing bodies and the amounts received by each of them. Since 2019, however, with the entry into force of the Security Decree and the new tender

specifications, a diametrically opposed mechanism was triggered.

The reception system has reacted differently to the new rules depending on the territory. This also occurred due to the different models of reception that have been developed in Italy over the years. This fragmentation makes it difficult to measure the phenomenon at an overall level, but the incentives in the new specifications point in a very clear direction.

Even though they sometimes produce different results, the phenomenon of the unanswered calls for tender on the one hand and the return to the large centres on the other seem to be two sides of the same coin. Different responses to a mechanism that is clearly pushing for the demolition of the widespread reception system. If, on the other hand, the new specifications eliminate the services which aim to integrate asylum seekers, there is no reason why it should favour a system that facilitates the inclusion of migrants in the local communities. Highlighting the absolutely insufficient degree of assistance provided in the initial reception system in Italy, some [foreign courts](#) have even issued judgements where they refuse to send the so-called “Dubliners” back to our country. According to these statements, in fact, following the Security Decree, Italy would not be in a position to guarantee the necessary assistance to migrants.

Moreover, the principle that large centres have a negative impact on the territory and on their guests, as well as attracting criminal interests, no longer seems to be taken into account. Yet this was a shared and consolidated approach on the institutional level and there are many official documents and administrative records indicating widespread acceptance as the model to follow.

*«the bigger the centre,
the more problems»*

[Ministry of the Interior. Report on the functioning of the reception system in 2018.](#)

The same report on 2018 by the Ministry of the Interior indicates as a prerequisite for the definition of the new rules the need to go beyond the old specifications, which were clearly based on the model of large centres. In fact, the new specifications specifically regulate widespread reception. It is a pity that this forecast came to nothing since, as we have seen, in addition to no longer envisaging integration services, the amounts provided for in the specifications do not in practice make it possible to develop real projects of widespread and integrated micro-reception.

In addition, the economic rationale, according to which the new specifications would lead to major savings, is also unconvincing. On the contrary, some analyses show how the running costs of the centres are [bound to increase](#). Furthermore [ANCI](#) highlighted how the cut in services is resulting in an annual cost for the municipal

coffers estimated at 286 million. As we pointed out in the first chapter, each cost must be interpreted in relation to its objectives. A system that does not aim to promote the inclusion of guests as active and productive members of society, may be cheaper but it does not produce any results other than to keep people stationary in awaiting period that means nothing and has no perspective. On the contrary, by favouring integration, the costs turn into an investment in the future, favouring the integration of the asylum seekers and refugees into the labour market and communities.

In addition, a system based on small centres and modestly sized managers, still brings economic sap into the communities. On the contrary, a model that attracts large managers, including profit-making entities, distributes resources very differently.

In the coming months, however, the effect of the new rules on the reception system will become clearer. In many parts of Italy in fact we are still in a long transitional phase. A phase which, moreover, has been largely managed through the use of extensions despite all the risks associated with such instruments, that should be anything other than an ordinary practice.

*«The other mechanism that conceals
blatantly illegal situations are
extensions, which are almost
normal in these areas. Extensions,
particularly in the face of
the difficulty of tendering, are
seen as ordinary systems for
managing this mechanism.»*

[Raffaele Cantone in a hearing at the Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry into the reception system. 10/11/2015.](#)

But this aside, however, today, performing a complete analysis of this sector remains a very complex task. Although the Computer system for the management of reception is now operational, the Ministry does not release data except through the annual report. The data contained in the report, however, as already pointed out, are difficult to re-use for the purposes of performing an independent analysis.

The Ministry also continues to reject our requests for access to the records by which we are asking to be able to consult the non-aggregated data on the reception system in open format. This continues to prevent such an important sector from being fully and comprehensively analysed and discussed by players from civil society, the media and the academic world. It is almost as if performing analyses and comparisons may be a problem and not an opportunity for an open and constructive debate.

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