

***Extract of the
Italian Shadow Report on the
Implementation of the Beijing Platform
2009-2014***

Introduction

In the last five years, international organizations and the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women have repeatedly drawn attention to, and criticized, Italy's implementation of its commitments regarding gender equality.

In the course of its six-month presidency of the European Union and beyond, the Italian government should undertake a thorough re-assessment of what the country needs to do in order to fulfil its international obligations and the obligations of the State towards women who live in Italy, to promote and achieve gender equality.

The affirmation of women's human rights is not a foregone conclusion. The implementation of these rights continues to be challenged and is exemplified in the 2012 final document of the UN Conference "Rio+20." Regarding sexual and reproductive rights, this document reflects the conservative views of many countries whose restrictive interpretations of universal human rights leave room both to gender stereotyping as well as violations of women's fundamental human rights.

Italy should clarify its position concerning the protection and promotion of women's health as well as their sexual and reproductive rights, particularly, but not exclusively, during its EU presidency and in the context of the process for sustainable development. It should do so with concrete actions to ensure that Italian VIP law 194/78 be fully applied; the legislation reform regarding assisted procreation be carried out; finally laws and provisions promoting and protecting the respect of different sexual identities be put in place.

It is imperative that gender equality is fully pursued to foster women's empowerment and the recognition of women's "agency". To achieve this goal, the government must adopt an approach that includes the definition of measurable objectives in the main interest areas for the Post-2015 Agenda, namely inequalities, poverty and work, education, health, social security, and the environment. This undertaking requires a major effort particularly at the national level to give impetus to those reforms that can improve the current system of gender-based policies, including those regarding unemployment and job insecurity that disproportionately affect women and the young.

Lately, change has partly been achieved in spite of the political credibility crisis. In an attempt to counterbalance this lack of credibility, the political system and establishment have appointed women in parliament and in key government positions. Similarly, thanks to law 120/2011 that mandates women's representation on the boards of companies listed on the stock exchange and publicly owned companies, a number of women have been appointed on company boards and to lead State-owned enterprises.

However, it is important to note that these changes in the elite's composition have not improved the living standards of women in Italy. Indeed, there is a serious risk of a profound disparity between

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the conditions of women in the top echelons of state institutions and industry and those of the vast majority of the female population whose status and living conditions are worsening. This situation is clearly demonstrated by the low employment rate (the lowest in Europe except for Greece and Malta¹), the high level of poverty and the erosion of the already fragile welfare system that affects women more than men. Thus, there are many areas that need urgent attention, and the road ahead is arduous and complex.

Furthermore Italy, despite its ratification of the Istanbul Convention on domestic violence, still has to prove that it is willing and able to fulfil its obligations to counter gender violence. In this regard, Italy must collect statistical data and apply indicators that will allow monitoring the application of international standards and laws, including CEDAW, as well as UN resolutions on women and peace. These latter instruments have direct implications for Italy, which is involved in numerous peacekeeping missions and is facing a constant inflow of migrants and refugees fleeing areas of war and conflict.

If Italy wants to play a significant role on the international scene and regain credibility with women, it needs to make an effective commitment on the above-mentioned issues.

In this difficult context, women's movements represent a positive aspect as they scrutinize public acts and are proactive. They are composed of many diverse individuals, feminist groups, nongovernmental organizations, trade unions, human rights organizations, and other people active in the social, economic, political and rights spheres.

These groups exemplify and bear witness to the strength of women that face a difficult and rapidly transforming reality on a daily basis. These committed women embody and are conduits of women's empowerment as envisaged in international standards. They can mobilize citizens and undertake actions for the promotion, protection and fulfilment of women's rights, as well as for the preservation of democratic space in Italy.

Main Critical Issues

- Lack of a reliable system for the collection, analysis and dissemination of gender-focused statistical data which are indispensable for monitoring and evaluating appropriate policies
- The high level of female poverty, especially in single-parent families, jointly with the progressive erosion of an already fragile welfare system.
- The inadequate promotion and protection of women's right to health and of their sexual and reproductive rights.
- The low employment rate of women and general job insecurity both among the young and those aged 40 and over.
- Male violence against women in the absence of an effective system to prevent and counter such violence in accordance with the Istanbul Convention.
- The lack of monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of CEDAW and subsequent relevant international human rights standards, as well as UN resolutions on women and peace.
- Women's representation in the media.
- The recognition of environmental issues related to women, their knowledge and know-how, their security and need to have access to clean and renewable resources.

¹ Eurostat, Employment rates by sex Age Group 15-64, http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/File:Employment_rates_by_sex,_age_group_15%E2%80%9364,_2013_%28%29_%28%25%29_YB15.png#filelinks

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An extra chapter:

The new Italians: Migrant women and new generations

Women and Poverty

In 2013, 12.6% of families live in relative poverty and 7.9% are in absolute poverty. The people living in relative poverty are 16.6% of the population (10 million 48 thousand people), those living in absolute poverty are 9.9% (6 million 20 thousand). Women situation in relation to the processes of impoverishment and poverty is closely linked to gender discrimination and high inequality in access to employment, retirement, credit among men and women, made even more complex in a context of economic crisis and fast transformations of social and family structures.

A1 Revising, implementing and maintaining macroeconomic policies and development strategies targeted specifically to the needs and efforts of women in poverty

The "social card" in its various and intermittent versions, for elders and children, has failed to deal with poverty and much less the female one.

According to the latest Istat report on Fair and sustainable Wellness in Italy (2014), in February 46.6% of women and 64% of men were working.

All women, working or not, Italian and foreign, of all ages, despite their commitment and daily effort, they have to face the insecurity and lack of work and welfare and a cultural heritage considering them "in charge of" the care of children, elderly and family as a whole. As underlined by Istat, "the intensity and persistence of the economic crisis, together with the gradual weakening of the effectiveness of social protection systems, have widened the area of poverty and material deprivation, extending even to population groups previously less affected by conditions of economic hardship. The difficulties of families emerge in a clear manner: the decrease in available income and wealth is accompanied by a significant loss of purchasing power and a significant decline in consumer spending. "The data of the Bank of Italy of 2012 on the Financial Statements of the families reveal the difficulty of the householder to have access to credit and show a disparity between the sexes in the perception of the crisis. Single-parent families concerning to non-widows exceed quota 1.5 million, with an increase of 47% compared to 2006-2007 and with a numerosness equal to 3.7 million people. The majority of these families consists of mother with children (83.7%). The parent families, often composed by mothers and their children, become poorer and with fewer resources even materials. The risk of impoverishment is emphasized when women have to take responsibility for the care of children and elderly in times of crisis. A RedSintesi research identifies the difference in the distribution of wealth among households headed by men and those headed by women under 65. Women heads of households earn less than men, are more educated, have no goods and seek loans more easily within the family than at the bank because they are economically weak. The nucleus with female householder can count on a definite wealth (property, real and financial assets) of € 105.000, 40.000 in less than householder with man. Comparing these numbers with the pre-crisis period, women have seen their wealth got down of the 21%, meanwhile men got down of the 8.5% only. Data. Indeed, explain why 72% of household wealth is in the men hands. The data, therefore, reveal a strong disparity in suffering the economic crisis, which also has an impact on annual income: 27. 700 euros for women and 33. 700 euros for men. As the Bank of Italy recently demonstrated, women earn less and the salary of women workers are lower than their male colleagues compare with the same job position: 1.400 against € 1,800 per month. Women borrow less for the purchase of the house. Only 60% of households headed by women own the house in which they live (compared to 65% of males) and they are less (14% versus 18 males) who go into debt to purchase.

A.2, A.3. Revising laws and administrative practices to ensure women to have equal rights in accessing to economic resources.

Opening to women the access to save and to financial mechanisms and institutions credit

Italy does not stand for equal opportunities among men and women regarding access to consumer credit and **credit to the company**. Concerning the access to consumer credit for women and men, a recent survey of the 'Observatory Supermoney, a portal which allows to compare offers from different lenders, took into consideration the loan applications received by from January to May 2014. The research shows that out of 10 Italians, who are seeking loans in the bank, only 3 are women. Women ask money less than men, but both they do it for the same purpose: having more cash for the purchase of a new car or home renovation. On average men ask a higher amounts of 11%, compared to the women: the average financing required is € 17,000 against 15,000 euros. The average age of applicants is the same: 50 years. Geographical origin does not show a big changes. The lack of "bargaining power" due to lower earnings of women compared to men (gender pay gap) certainly affects on the application process by women themselves and the granting of loans by banks that require guarantees in order to protect themselves from possible defaults **by income received**. With regard to women's entrepreneurship and access to credit, the results of several surveys of the Bank of Italy and some organizations of SMEs, emphasize the difficulties of women's businesses to be financed, while showing higher levels of reliability concern economic return comparing them of similar firms managed by men. "

Prevail a general situation of discouragement of business women. One of the main obstacles which oppose the granting of a loan to a woman it is the request by the lenders of the involvement of the spouse in the endorsement or in giving guarantees: in the regime of separation of property or marital separation that is in fact almost impossible, because it makes the wife businesswoman dependent her husband will.

C. Women and Health

Government policies in recent years have, in general, set in motion a strong process of dismantling the existing public services, largely provided by the NHS, in favour of private companies and often confessional bodies.

C.1. Increase women's access throughout the life cycle to appropriate, affordable and quality health care, information and related services.

Women, notwithstanding their historic advantage over men in terms of longevity (which, however, is shrinking), are the most disadvantaged in terms of quality of survival: on average, more than a third of their life is lived in terms of not good health. The South lives a double penalty: an average life shorter and a smaller number of years lived without limitations. Women who reside in this area and are 65 years old may still have to live on average 7.3 years without any restriction in daily activities, while their peers of the North have 10.4 years to live in this condition.

The LEA (Essential Levels of Care), introduced in 2001 and revised over time, are not actually guaranteed throughout the national territory. This leads to sectorial imbalances, long waiting lists, a different enjoyment of the right to health among Italians and residents in different regions characterized by a few situations of excellence and many of demerit. A weight has also scientific research that takes account of the various diseases and the differences between men and women in different age groups.

In the field of medical and pharmacological research there has been an increase in the awareness of the need to apply a gender medicine, thanks to the work done by professionals in the industry and by the Association of female doctors.

Family Clinics

Were established in 1975 in the wake of the pressure of the women's movement, which anticipated their institutional existence with the creation of self-managed services. These clinics are integrated basic health services with professional teams that should implement a highly innovative holistic and multidisciplinary approach, crucial for the promotion and prevention of women's health and developmental age. Family clinics support a social model of health and propose a welfare based on participation and on the empowerment of individuals and communities. Over the years, these services, in addition to suffer from an inadequate distribution throughout the country, have been affected by the spending review that penalized them at regional and national levels, and has mortified the potential relative to the original objectives.

C.2 Strengthen preventive programmes that promote women's health.

In Italy for years, the attention to women's health has been limited to the "bikini effect", that is on the prevention of female cancers.

A study on the health of the Italian Istat, points out that the health of men and that of women are different: women get sick more than men and are more affected by certain diseases. It also showed something that contradicts many clichés, or the fact that cardiovascular disease affects more women than men.

Breast cancer annually affects approximately 37,000 women in Italy; early diagnosis allows for greater survival for women (one of two). Women's associations, oncologists, health authorities worldwide recommend prevention, given the good results that have been measured at the international level, especially through mammography performed every two years. In Italy remain strong inequalities of treatment between those who live in the North and the Centre, where almost 90% of women receive a written invitation from the SSN to submit to the free check up; and those who live instead in the South, where you do not even reach 40% of diagnostic coverage. Diagnostic instrumentation for prevention also is obsolete and numerically insufficient.

C3. Undertake initiatives sensitive to gender specificity that address the issue of sexually transmitted diseases, from HIV/AIDS, and the issues related to sexual and reproductive health.

Reproductive health-Non-application of the law 194/78

In 2014, the rate of de-birth in Italy has reached a record high. The decision to procreate is determined by several socio-economic and socio-environmental factors that interfere with the life of the individual woman or of her family, and employment policies related to social welfare schemes. The fact that birth rates in our country have been for decades (and still are) among the lowest in the world, shows that women have a clear awareness of the dramatic situation and lack of choice that they have to confront: discrimination, insecurity and lack of jobs, high housing costs, the progressive dismantling of the welfare system, as well as the absence of effective and efficient policies to support parents, in addition to a general social malaise. Obviously, this situation has been exacerbated by the economic crisis of the past 6 years and the cuts of the spending review. In the present conjuncture the choice of maternity/paternity may result in a risk of massive impoverishment of future parents and children, as well as representing a huge responsibility on the part of those who procreate vis-a-vis those who are born.

Compromising the ability of self-determination of women in this context is added the poor implementation of the right to choose to terminate unwanted pregnancy, due, in most cases, to the exercise of conscientious objection by staff physicians, not only for ethical- religious reasons, but especially in order to not to obstruct their personal career aspirations in hospitals.

In some Italian regions the objection of gynaecologists is around 93% and 60% for anaesthesiologists. There are marked variations between regions mainly in the South.

This practice makes it possible for the right of doctors to overlap and be superior in daily practice to the right enacted by the Act 194 of 1978 which foresees that each hospital must ensure the right to voluntary termination of pregnancy (IGV) to all women who request it, regardless of the declaration of conscientious objection of medical staff. In this regard, the "European Committee of Social Rights of the Council of Europe" has officially recognized the lack of enforcement of the law 194/1978, in violation of the rights recognized by the law to women who want to terminate the pregnancy, due to the high and growing number of physicians that are conscientious objectors. The European Committee welcomed all the violation profiles presented in the complaint against Italy by LAIGA.

The gradual depletion of the law 194/78 forces women of all ages and origins to wander from one city to another or from one region to another of the country to enforce the right to reproductive health, or to carry out the IVG clandestinely with obvious risks to their health, denying them the freedom of choice and self-determination. Some data of the latest report of the Ministry of Health on the implementation of the law on social protection of motherhood and the Law 194/78 of September 1978, reveal that Italy can boast an abortion rate among the lowest among industrialized countries. In 2012, the voluntary interruptions of pregnancy were 105,968, decreased by 4.9% compared to 2011. Among the minors, in 2011, the abortion rate was equal to 4.5 per 1000, with higher levels in northern and central Italy. The analysis of the characteristics of women who have an IVG, referring to the final data for 2011, shows that one third of the phenomenon are women with foreign citizenship. Foreign nationals, as well as presenting an abortion rate, however different according to the nationalities, estimated 3-4 times higher than that currently running among the Italians, have a different socio-demographic composition, which changes over time depending on the weight of the different nationalities, the different reproductive behaviours and the different utilization of services.

The pill RU-486

In some regions, after bitter fighting, medical abortion is practiced by administering the pill RU-486 on an outpatient basis, while in others it required a compulsory hospitalization of 3 days. The hospital stay, as well as interfering with the provision that ensures anonymity, penalizes the working poor, minors and those foreign women who cannot afford to be absent from work during the days of hospitalization. In addition, the hospitalization required in almost all the regions has a much greater impact on public health expenditure than a day hospital.

The "Morning-after pill"

The prescription by physicians and pharmacists for the sale of the "morning-after pill" (levonorgestrel, marketed under the name of NorLevo) has so far been made almost impossible by the conscientious objectors, although it is an emergency contraceptive drug and not an abortion drug as clearly established AIFA (Italian Drug Agency) in 2014. AIFA has deemed it necessary to reiterate at the national level that the morning-after pill is a contraceptive method that cannot be refused to women who request it, otherwise there is an omission of assistance that can be legally prosecuted.

Birth path

The POMI - Maternal-Infantile Objective Program - foresees among its spheres of action the "birth path" with initial access at the territorial Family Clinic and the taking charge of the woman/couple. Despite the significant improvements achieved since 2000, there are still important problematic issues in our country. The over-medicalization of birth and the excessive recourse to caesarean section in Italy have attracted the attention of the WHO in recent years: in many Italian regions the

practice of caesarean section reaches 40%; with difficult access to VABAC i.e., vaginal birth after caesarean delivery. It is found in general that the excessive recourse to private, over-utilization of diagnostic performance without substantial differences between normal pregnancies and those complicated by pathology, and finally the lack of information and knowledge among women. These problems do not correspond to specific commitments by the Government and the Regions. Only 3 regions provide for the reimbursement of home birth.

IVF

A recent ruling of the Constitutional Court declared unconstitutional the law 40/2004 on medically assisted procreation in so far as it prohibits heterologous fertilization. The ruling therefore has effectively eliminated the prohibition of heterologous fertilization, completing the process of dismantling the Law 40/2004, which has been going on for years in the courts. The law, in its original form, only allows couples and not singles to resort to assisted reproduction and requires the simultaneous implantation of three embryos, explicitly banning pre-implantation diagnosis and freezing. Previously, the Constitutional Court declared unconstitutional even this part of the law, arguing that it leads to excessive protection for the embryo at the expense of the right to health of the woman. Despite the limitation still working towards single people, in Italy for couples it will be possible to resort to egg and sperm donation, in authorized public and private service centres, without the need to cross national borders, as couples were forced to do because their right to parenthood was denied due to the impossibility to make recourse to heterologous in the whole Italian territory.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)

The spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) including HIV, Chlamydia, herpes genitalia, genital warts, syphilis is still growing. One of the major causes is detected in the habit of men to resort to unprotected sex with prostitutes and even teenagers are increasingly interested in this.

Over the years, there are fewer funds dedicated to the prevention of AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases. The statistics shows that Italy remains one of the few European countries where the heterosexual transmission of the infection remains one of the most prevalent forms and there was an increase in HIV cases in the age groups between 16 and 25 years old.

Chlamydia is the most common sexually transmitted bacterial infection in Italy, with an annual trend that continues to increase (data ISS).

Every year there are 250 thousand cases of genital warts, with a risk that is almost double among young women aged 15 to 24 years compared to over 25.

Data from a research on "Sexuality and adolescents" have shown that only 18% of the boys say that they studied sex education in school and the information which they have about contraception and protection is very vague or anyhow the gap between information and the habit of protection is still too wide. Italy is one of the countries in which contraception is less used. The female condom is not sold, except in Umbria where, however, it is difficult to find. Only 39% of young people usually use a condom. More than the numbers are striking the reasons with which young people justify the lack of protection: for 19% of them it is a clear choice (they do not like contraceptives), 49% do not have them available at the right time, 23% forget them and 7% correspond to the needs of a partner who is against the use of contraceptive methods. Young people come to think of wanting to protect themselves against unwanted pregnancies, but they only hardly think of the MST, of which the only known or at least the dreaded is AIDS, even if the spread of the virus should be feared more than the disease.

The information about the HPV is inadequate and insufficient for the prevention of human papilloma virus. There are many, especially female teenagers at their first experiences taking the contraceptive pill, who feel protected because they trust the partner and it is very difficult to explain to them that the use of condoms is not a sign of mistrust, but rather an act of care and self respect and respect for the partner.

Difficulties of access to reproductive and generic sexual health rights for regular and irregular women migrants, Roma and Sinti, women in prison.

All these problems are worse for regular and undocumented women migrants, the Roma and Sinti, women in prison, since besides the persistence of gender discrimination, they live a climate of strong prejudice and hostility, have severe shortages of information and knowledge about the sexual and reproductive health, have serious difficulties in accessing services and the culture of prevention, are often found in poor living and sanitary conditions.

For women migrants requesting an asylum residence permit, there is a lack on the part of prefectures in the provision of information of their rights in relation to access to services offered by the NHS, leading to an improper use of health services by migrants, generating circuits of clandestine care, with adverse effects on public health, starting with paediatric assistance, deliveries and illegal abortions. Motherhood gives the right to a residence permit which, however, is of limited duration (up to six months after birth). Foreign women are the most affected by postpartum depression, but there are no ad hoc support services. Some regions of Italy have not acceded to the State/Regions agreement concerning the right to the paediatrician for children of undocumented people, a circumstance strongly violating the right to health enshrined in our Constitution.

From research carried out among the staff of the managing bodies of the reception centres in Italy, it is clear that socio-sanitary personnel does not ensure an accurate collection of data on gender-based violence suffered by migrants during the journey from the country of origin to the Italian coast, and has no knowledge of FGM, of the medical, cultural and legal aspects associated with this condition.

Migrant women from conflict zones, as bearers of FGM are facilitated to receive asylum in accordance with the European legislation. To date, only in seven Regions and in the Autonomous Province of Bolzano there are structures capable of receiving and assisting women with FGM.

Undocumented migrants who are in the Identification and Expulsion Centres (CIE) cannot take advantage of adequate health care, ignoring the specialized care that often instead would be required (even for mental health problems and violence); in addition, the staff of local health services are precluded access to these Centres.

Compared to the situation of women prisoners in jail, the transition from the medical assistance provide in prison to that of the ASL (NHS) has led to a lack of synergy that causes a disconnection in the taking charge of acute and chronic diseases, with an increase in waiting lists and a worsening of the levels of care for women prisoners.

Health and male violence against women

Male violence against women involves traumatic effects on women who are the victims, according to the type of violence and the continuation of the same. This results in physical, sexual and psychological injuries and often in a serious impairment in mental and physical health with high social and economic costs that affect not only women, but the whole community. Operators of public health services are (or should be) the primary professional resource in welcoming women victims of violence and suffering from illness, consequently have a significant responsibility to recognize and bring out the phenomenon of violence, to enable appropriate responses in a timely

manner. However, it is frequently noted an inadequate and uneven training of medical and paramedical personnel present in the DEAs of health facilities throughout the country, so the quality of an emergency professional service is often dependent on the individual sensitivity of the individual operator. The failure to recognize the violence, in the absence of an express statement of the woman who logs on to the DEA, resulting in reports that do not adequately document physical injuries and the psycho-emotional state of the victim or the presence of minor children, directly or indirectly exposed to intra-family violence. Cultural stereotypes, still widespread, and the underestimation of violence produce delays or omissions in diagnosis and appropriate treatment, in contraceptive prophylaxis, in the collection of evidence for legal purposes; the delay in the activation of anti-violence centres and services, social services and law enforcement activities. Since 2011, with respect to the psychological and sanitary services, no national policy and no action in terms of the harmonization of regional policies was adopted to combat gender-based violence, not even through: the collaboration between public and private social services; the creation of preferential and specialized access paths in First Aid Services and specific care protocols for reporting and taking charge of women victims of sexual violence and abuse; the technical equipment necessary to ensure the collection and preservation of organic samples useful for evidentiary purposes in court. Psychological services offered by the health service are not homogeneous at the territorial level, insufficient to meet the need, poorly integrated between the public service (family clinics, PS, etc.) and the no-profit sector (anti-violence centres), as well as not ensuring timely and continuous psychological assistance, nor specific training of professionals in the field of gender violence.

D. Violence against women

Male violence is one of the main problems identified by the Beijing Plan of Action of 1995, which indicated precise strategic objectives to be achieved, as reaffirmed by the Prodi-Finocchiaro Directive² and it is one of the main obstacles to the full enjoyment of fundamental rights by women in Italy.

In the following years the Council of Europe, the CEDAW Committee, the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, the European Court of Human Rights confirmed the same objectives. In particular, thanks to the intensive advocacy and reporting activity of civil society organizations³, Italy was repeatedly reproached for non-compliance with the obligations undertaken at international level in the field of male violence against women.

The government-level commitment and the coordination between the ministries responsible for preventing and combating VAW is merely formal and an institutional person dealing specifically with gender policies and women's rights has not yet been appointed since the adoption of the Beijing Plan of Action⁴.

In Italy, there is still no comprehensive national law for preventing and combating VAW which would adopt a shared analysis of the phenomenon based on a common awareness of the necessary policies, promote a precise definition of anti-violence shelters and minimum standards for victims' support services.

The ministries task force work and CSOs against VAW initiated during Letta's government has not been pursued by Renzi's government.

² D.P.C.M. March 27, 1997 "Actions to promote the allocation of powers and responsibilities to women, to recognize and ensure freedom of choice and social quality in women and men."

³ In 2011 the CEDAW platform, bringing together CSOs, reported to the CEDAW Committee the incompliances of Italy in theme of VAW and multiple discriminations against women. On the base of the shadow reported the CEDAW Committee issued specific recommendations to the Italian government, reaffirmed by the UN Special Rapporteur on VAW in 2012.

⁴ See UN Special Rapporteur on VAW, calling for putting in place a single dedicated governmental structure to deal exclusively with the issue of substantive gender equality broadly and violence against women in particular, to overcome duplication and lack of coordination (§94, a).

Italy lacks coordinated policies and the territory is not homogeneous neither at legal nor at implementation levels. 20 out of 21 regions have passed laws on violence against women; some of the regional laws promoted the establishment of anti-violence shelters, others extended the possibility of intervention to entities which lack gender based perspective and methodology.

Almost all regional laws establish the provision of funds, but not sufficiently and there is as at the national level, lack of clarity and consistency on the definition of anti-violence shelters and on the criteria to define the characteristics of services and facilities designed to accommodate women and their children, as well as on the definition of the operator of women's shelters⁵.

The system lacks integrated policies and networking capacities even at a local level among all the operators involved, it underestimates that an effective strategy for preventing and combating VAW requires constant sharing of information and communication among crucial areas which are health care systems, security, welfare, education and cultural centres, as required a national level.

D.1. Take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women. Actions to be taken.

In Italy in recent years, civil law⁶ and criminal law⁷ were amended. The Istanbul Convention was ratified in June 2013 and entered into force on 1st August 2014⁸.

Thanks to the last reforms, the legal system is currently equipped with many useful tools to ensure access to justice for women survivors of male violence, but it still lacks a comprehensive legal strategy and organic, articulated and consistent social policies ensuring the effectiveness of existing legal instruments. The continued application of practices influenced by discriminatory biases against women is jeopardising the enforcement of legal provisions.

Most of the legal reforms were included in so-called security packages containing various measures, which were generally inspired by security and public order principles⁹.

Law No.119/13 deals with VAW in a fragmentary way, giving precedence to criminal law and neglecting prevention through training and awareness-raising actions.

CSOs, who requested a different approach and intervention, were caught by surprise and involved in tardy consultation just at the time of transformation of the decree into law.

To date, no official monitoring activity has been conducted, but women's organizations reported that arrests in case of domestic violence and stalking are very rare, and so are the protection orders and the warnings against stalkers and domestic violence perpetrators¹⁰, contrary to what the Ministry of Interior reported.

The immediate protection of women surviving violence is not granted on a continuous basis and uniformly on the Italian territory, due to an underestimation of men's dangerousness when perpetrating VAW, as it continues to be confused with intra-family conflict¹¹.

International and European law implementation measures.

In June 2013, Italy ratified the Istanbul Convention, without providing a comprehensive framework of measures to implement its commitments. European Directives on the rights of victim of crime and on the European protection order¹² have not yet been implemented.

⁵ Shelters, refugees and assistance houses.

⁶ Law No.154/2001; Law No. 54/2006; Law No.219/12; Legislative decree No. 154/2013.

⁷ Law No.38/2009; Law No.119/2013.

⁸ Law No. 77/2013.

⁹ See Law No.38/2009 and Law No.119/2013.

¹⁰ Associazione Differenza Donna, *Report sull'attuazione della legge n. 119/2013 recante disposizioni contro la violenza di genere*, 12/6/2014.

¹¹ See the national network of lawyers of women's shelters who asked a monitoring process of the last reforms.

¹² Directive 2012/29/EU.

Access to justice

The organization of the courts and prosecutors' offices prevent fast and effective access of women to justice: despite the protocols of the Supreme Council of the judiciary recommending training and specialization, the last monitoring process revealed disparities in practices.

The mandatory priority of handling pending criminal proceedings for domestic violence, sexual violence and stalking is not respected¹³.

As to the audition of victim of crime in a situation of particular vulnerability, it must be stressed that the courts lack even structural requirements such as dedicated entrances and rooms.

Minorities and vulnerable groups

The adoption of measures aiming at protection of women and minority groups, which are most vulnerable to violence, such as migrant women, Roma and Sinti, did not materialize¹⁴.

It should be noted in particular that the specific residency permit for victims of domestic violence introduced by law No. 119/2013 is difficult to obtain¹⁵.

In addition, procedures for acquiring citizenship or obtaining a permanent residence permit independently from that of the partner or for business reasons, are still long and complex¹⁶.

Forced marriages

This phenomenon continues to be suppressed and despite the first research published in May 2014 by the Department for Equal Opportunities, the requests for help of young women who are forced into marriage generally remain ignored due to a lack of policies from local and national institutions¹⁷.

Child witnesses and victims of domestic violence

Despite Council of Europe recommendations¹⁸ the Istanbul and Lanzarote Convention¹⁹ commitments, the issue of witnessing violence continue to be underestimated. There is no data on minors who are victims of domestic violence. Moreover, civil law does not expressly recognize nor does it regulate witnessed and direct violence suffered by minors.

Criminal law punishes more severely domestic violence committed in front of children but does not punish the exposure of children to violence²⁰.

In violation of the Istanbul Convention, family mediation is mandatory and shared custody prevails even in the face of domestic violence.

The refusal of children to meet their father is often interpreted as proof of the so-called syndrome of parental alienation, despite the groundlessness of this theory²¹.

¹³ See article 132 bis disp. att. c.p.p. Law No.119 del 2013.

¹⁴ The European Roma Rights Center (ERRC) reported the low scholarization of Roma and Sinti girls and their massive exposition to early marriages and vaw. See the report at <http://www.errc.org/cms/upload/file/italy-red-written-comments-5-april-2013.pdf>.

¹⁵ Since the enactment of the provision, only 4 authorizations for domestic violence residency permit were issued.

¹⁶ See the review "M@gm@" vol.12 n.1 Gennaio-Aprile 2014, Elisabetta Rosi, Milli Virgilio, Delia La Rocca.

¹⁷ ActionAid e Trama di Terre, Project "Contrasto ai matrimoni forzati: agire sul locale con una prospettiva internazionale".

¹⁸ Recommendations No. 1714/2010; 1905/2010.

¹⁹ See article 31 Istanbul Convention.

2. Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that the exercise of any visitation or custody rights does not jeopardise the rights and safety of the victim or children.

²⁰ Article 572 penal code.

²¹ The Committee noted that Act No. 54/2006 introduced shared (physical) custody of children as the preferred default in cases of separation or divorce. However, the Committee is concerned at the lack of studies of the effect of this legal change, especially in the light of comparative research that points to negative effects on children (especially small children) of forced shared custody. It is further concerned at reports of suspicion towards claims of child abuse in custody cases, based on the dubious theory of "parental alienation syndrome". The Committee calls upon the State party to evaluate the legal change in the area of child custody through scientific studies, in order to assess its long-term effects on women and children, bearing in mind the experience accumulated in other countries on this matter.

National Plan against violence

The first National Plan against violence and stalking was adopted in 2010 and expired in November 2013. The plan lacked structural actions and was not implemented²². It did not establish the direct involvement of VAW expert CSOs.

Law No.119/13 mandated the implementation of a national extraordinary plan against gender and sexual violence: the extraordinary nature of the plan is inconsistent with the structural nature of male violence²³. Furthermore, the distinction between sexual violence and gender-based violence is disturbing and is a testimony to the absence of awareness on VAW.

Financing (financial resources)

Funds allocated for 2008 (20 million Euros to establish a comprehensive anti-violence plan and a National Observatory on Violence) have been only partially spent²⁴. In 2012 the management of the anti-violence toll free helpline 1522 changed, budgets and services were cut²⁵, the mapping of local anti-violence services stopped, as well as the implementation of the “Arianna” website, a key information reference on national and international levels²⁶. The allocation of funds earmarked by the law²⁷ neither brought changes to the management of services nor to the social culture, thus increasing women’s risk of not being adequately protected.

Given the lack of definition of minimum standards and requirements for managing women’s shelters and anti-violence services, in compliance with the recommendations of international bodies, it frequently happens that entities with no track record or expertise in the field are allowed to access funding opportunities to manage such services. Various entities are incorporated with the sole purpose of participating to public calls for tenders. In addition due to the lack of women’s shelters, local bodies refer women victims of violence and in life-threatening conditions to non specialized shelters that host people with different problems. This poses a serious risk of further victimization for women²⁸.

Free legal advice and representation

Women who have experienced sexual violence, domestic violence and stalking are entitled to access legal aid, regardless of their income, but adequate funds to entirely cover the services

²² The steering committee was convened once after two years in November, 27 2012.

²³ Recognising the structural nature of violence against women as gender-based violence, and that violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men (Istanbul Convention, preamble).

²⁴ On 3 August 2011 the Department for Equal Opportunities launched a call for tenders: of 146 proposals only 24 were granted funds in 2012, with a reduction of € 500,000 compared to 2008. Another call launched in November 2011 granted funds to 46 projects of 115 proposals, including also specific projects addressing first aids, thus expending a total amount of € 20 million of € 23 million allocated. Financial resources earmarked by law 119/2013 amount to € 17 million for the period 2013-2014.

In 2010 on the occasion of the G8 meeting in L’Aquila, Prime Minister Berlusconi ensured the Government would allocate 3 million euros for supporting the women’s shelters that have been ruined by the recent earthquake. This commitment has been reiterated by Ms Mara Carfagna, Minister for Equal Opportunities during the international Conference on violence and reaffirmed within the first National Anti-violence Plan. Paragraph 2F of the Plan in the section related to actions to be undertaken by the state, envisages, in line with Legislative Decree 39/2009 “interventions in support of municipalities affected by earthquakes, for resuming activities, reconstructing and restoring facilities destined to provide support to the women of Abruzzo region”. Paragraph 2F is comprised in the activities pertaining to the intervention area named “Anti-violence centres and services of assistance, support, protection and reintegration of victims”. In reality the anti-violence centres of L’Aquila received no money at all by the state until June 2014. (see Dossier “Dove sono finiti i soldi per le donne de L’Aquila?”feb.2013 http://www.actionaid.it/sites/files/actionaid/un_euro_per_i_tuoi_pensieri.pdf.)

²⁵ In 2012 the state call for tenders for managing women’s shelters and anti-violence services entailed a budget cut from € 1 million to € 600,000.

²⁶ From 2006 to 2012 the toll free emergency helpline 1522, managed jointly by Le Onde anti-violence centre of Palermo, Le Nove association and Almaviva Ltd. addressed over 100,000 requests for advice and support. 84% of the requests were referred to women’s shelters, which are not adequately financially supported by local governments. Data collected by the 1522 helpline were not disclosed regularly until 2012.

²⁷ Law n. 119/13

²⁸ On 23 June 2014 the Council of Ministers issued a decree for the distribution of funds to cover state actions relating to rights and equal opportunities over the years 2013-2014, namely programmes to prevent and tackle violence.

provided by professionals have not been allocated²⁹. Moreover the so-called Stability Law 2014 has cut the fees of law professionals at the expense of the state by one third.

Training of actors/professionals involved

We assist to a persisting lack of specialized education and training for actors of various fields³⁰ on the subject of violence against women. This hinders a cultural change towards gender stereotypes and biases justifying and minimizing violence and the spread of good practices aiming at preventing violence episodes and protecting women who have already experienced violence.

Prevention and awareness raising actions.

The awareness raising campaigns carried out by the Italian government through the media and public education programmes are not sufficient, neither are they systematic and continuous enough so as to impact public opinion and foster cultural changes, key to preventing violence. In the meanwhile these anti-violence campaigns are still conveying obsolete stereotypes.

D2. Exploring causes and consequences of violence against women and the effectiveness of the adopted measures to counter it.

Studies on male violence against women are mainly conducted by nongovernmental organizations on a voluntary basis or within the framework of projects funded by international and European institutions. Moreover there are no provisions regarding specific grants of public funding directed to research on that topic, which is also covers various areas of concerns.

In 2012 the constant advocacy with institutions carried out by civil society organizations has prompted the Department of Equal Opportunities to commission a second survey on male violence against women to the National Statistics Institute. The budget allocated for this survey - still ongoing – was cut by a third compared to that of 2006. According to D.i.Re. (Donne in Rete contro la violenza)³¹, the Italian network of anti-violence centres, women's shelters and on the basis of the data collected over the period 2008 - 2012, the number of women who have addressed anti-violence centres has increased considerably. There was a 20% increase in the last two years. In 2012, 15.201 cases were registered and 16.517 in 2013. The data collected by D.i.Re. network show that 70% of the women supported by the anti-violence centres have children³².

According to data provided by the Italian Ministry of Interior, 177 women were killed by men in 2013. Nevertheless this figure does not include women victims of trafficking in human beings and secondary victims of violence, such as children, sisters, women who committed suicide after having experienced violence etc...³³ Surveys are being carried out in parallel by women's organizations on a yearly basis³⁴.

Data collected by the lawyers of the Italian network of women's shelters and other civil society organizations, show that the majority of cases of femicides have been preceded by reports to law

²⁹ Access to free legal aid is granted only to women whose yearly income is no higher than € 10.763,00; the same provision applies to people (women and men) who are the subject or the perpetrators of all kinds of crimes.

³⁰ Law enforcement actors (Police, Carabinieri Corps etc.) army members, first aid professionals, socio-health services professionals, including general practitioners, local services professionals, and those who address migrants, law professionals, including judges, prosecutors, staff of criminal, civil, juvenile law courts, journalists and media professionals.

³¹ D.i.Re. encompasses 67 women's shelters and anti-violence centers

³² ref. www.direcontrolaviolenza.it

³³ Linda Laura Sabbadini, "Gender Violence, discrimination and economic statistics: new challenges in measures based on a gender approach" - ISTAT, 2007, page. 5

³⁴ Data available at <http://www.stopfemminicidio.it/> According to data collected by "Casa delle donne, Bologna" drawing on national and local media, over the period 2005-2013, 1036 women were victims of femicide, with an average of 116 women per year. In 2013 134 women were victims of femicide – the highest incidence occurred in the reference period - and 83 women were the subject of an attempted murder. 1 woman was killed every two/three days. Data were also collected by the organizations: Telefono Rosa and UDI - Unione Donne Italiane.

enforcement authorities by women who had experienced violence. Their need for protection by public authorities was not met.

With respect to comprehensive data collection, so far no disaggregated data for sex and age have been recorded with reference to particularly disadvantaged groups, such as Roma and Sinti women, older or detained women or women with disabilities.

D3. To eliminate trafficking and to support victims of trafficking and/or prostitution related crimes.

Over the last five years, trafficked female foreign nationals have faced increasing difficulties in obtaining access to social protection measures envisaged by the Unified Text on Migration³⁵.

More restrictive migration policies and budgetary cuts - especially in the social field - are the main causes of those difficulties, and have affected the most vulnerable subjects, including trafficked women. Compounding social expenditure restraints, there are other omissions that have become a feature of the Government's (and other Institutions) approach to the problem. Such approach is characterized for example by: - political priority given to the contrast of irregular migration, which makes trafficked women more vulnerable and potentially exposed to blackmail; - absence of an adequate system of personal identification; - lack of harmonization between the systems of defence for trafficked victims and for asylum applicants; - absence of intra-governmental and multi-agencies synergies, which would be extremely useful in order to properly target this phenomenon, where sexual and labour exploitation are very often interconnected; - insufficient amount of funds allocated to compensation for trafficked victims.

These lamentable approaches are at the root of the delay in the adoption and then only partial implementation of EU Directive 2011/36³⁶. A national anti-trafficking Plan that should fully implement the principles and measures of the EU Directive 2011/36 is still missing. This delay hampers the adoption of an approach duly respectful of human rights and of a gender perspective. It should also be underlined that many women who are victims of violence, trafficking and exploitation are often taken at the CIEs - Centers for Identification and Expulsion of irregular migrants (where persons not in compliance with current immigration laws are detained). Those women are often repatriated, despite having filed a complaint and even if they are assisted by qualified NGOs.

In this particular regard, it should be noted that:

- Police personnel and CIEs' operators lack the necessary skills to detect victims of trafficking amongst the hosts of the Centers and to enforce their rights;
- Quenching crimes of illegal entry/illegal stay prevails over adopting protection measures prescribed by law;
- No alternative measures to detention are applied.³⁷ The obligation to inform victims about the possibility to access the Voluntary Assisted Return³⁸ and Reintegration programs and to provide specific protection programs are not fulfilled. Such practices violate the general obligation of the State to ensure adequate protection of the victim's personal status³⁹.

³⁵ the d.lgs.24 / 2014, Articles 6-10 show critical deficiencies concerning the right of compensation: the prescribed lump sum is outrageous and technically difficult to apply; the central and unique role of the DEO; the changes to Article 18 of Legislative Decree 25 July 1998, n. 286 and deferment provisions.

³⁶ Art. 14 par. 1bis D.Lgs. 286/1998.

³⁷ Art.13, par. 5, D.Lgs. 286/1998.

³⁸ Art. 17, 18, 19, D.Lgs. 286/1998.

³⁹ Police tend to prioritize and consider the condition of irregularity more relevant than that of victims of violent crimes (trafficking, violence, etc.)

Over the past five years the powers of city mayors were considerably expanded to execute security and urban quality orders⁴⁰. While such orders have been ineffective in curbing street prostitution, they have pushed prostitutes off urban centers to peripheries, less accessible to NGOs, social services and police that fight against trafficking and assist victims.

Budgetary cuts have also resulted in a dramatic drop in the number of contact units and personnel, thus reducing their ability to patrol and monitor the contexts of exploitation. Such units should instead take again their role within the network of services aimed at reducing and containing the damages of trafficking-related violence, particularly in the face of cases of trafficked women with serious diseases⁴¹. In addition to containing and reducing harm, the contact units can play a fundamental role as a tool to support the processes of integration and citizenship for women who are often vulnerable, alone and lacking support networks. A new model, which is increasingly gaining ground, tends to prioritize the implementation of rules to regulate the modalities of the exercise of prostitution, according to security and public decorum patterns. However, this model disregards the complexity and –in cases of trafficking– illegality of the phenomenon. It exemplifies a lack of understanding of vulnerabilities of prostitutes—who are often minors and migrants - and risks to further isolate victims of trafficking, making them less visible and unreachable.

A further worrisome step in that direction was taken by Regione Lombardia (the most populated of Italy). In April 2014, the Region's Authorities have partially abrogated the 1958 Merlin Law, that abolished brothels⁴².

This decision was taken with no regard to debates and proposals on regulations on this matter that are taking place elsewhere in Europe and that, indeed, seem to indicate an opposite course of action.⁴³

According to a recent Eurostat survey⁴⁴, the competent authorities (Department of Equal Opportunities, Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Justice) did not set up a data sharing system to obtain more complete information on the phenomenon.

Available official data refer only to persons that have entered into projects of social protection and to those who have been granted a staying permit for humanitarian reasons. Furthermore, the complexity of the phenomenon, intertwined with criminality, marginalization and isolation of victims, makes it even more difficult to establish, with good approximation, how many women are involved.

⁴⁰ Law 125 of 24 July 2008 and subsequent Maroni decree of August 5, 2008, "Beyond the ordinances. The mayors and urban security "Cittalia, March 2009 It should be noted that the Constitutional Court has declared both the acts unconstitutional.

⁴¹ The issue of health prevention of women engaged in prostitution (in a voluntary or involuntary way), has been recently taken over by the UNDP Global Commission on HIV and the Law. In its report of July 2012 it stated that "although the number of new HIV infections is decreased by 20% from 2000 to 2011, we estimate 20 million people are infected [...] so nowadays the answer to the outgrowth of HIV dimensions and to the related health problems acknowledges that action outside the health sector can significantly contribute to improve the health situation." As for the policy recommendations on HIV prevention for voluntary and involuntary sex workers the document maintains that "... countries need to review their approach to sex work. Rather than punishing consentient adults involved in sex work, countries need to ensure safe working conditions to "sex workers" and their clients and full access to health services and commodities for HIV prevention [...] and empowerment services ». July 2012, p.36

⁴² L. 75 of 20 February 1958, known as "Merlin Law." A popular referendum at the national level could be summoned if other four Regional Councils would join the region Lombardy proposal.

⁴³ It should be recalled that on February 27, 2014 the European Parliament voted a Motion for the resolution "Sexual exploitation and prostitution, and their consequences for gender equality", presented by Rapporteur Honeyball. The resolution, while proposing a general approach, urges Member States to repeal laws that criminalize prostituted people. It stresses also data confirming the effect of the Nordic model, which penalizes the purchase of sexual services, on trafficking in human beings. International Committee for the rights of sex workers in Europe (ICRSWE), healthcare organizations and civil society have harshly condemned the resolution, claiming that this kind of "neo-prohibitionist" attitudes are detrimental for women in prostitution, increasing their vulnerabilities, exposing them to further violence and abuses, giving ground to the expansion of forced prostitution even indoor.

<http://www.sexworkeurope.org/campaigns/tell-european-parliament-vote-against-criminalisation-clients>.

⁴⁴ "Trafficking in human beings". Eurostat, European Commission. 2013 Edition (http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-is-new/news/news/2013/docs/20130415_thb_stats_report_en.pdf)

Experienced observers and operators report that, every year they have been in touch with 24.000 persons on the streets⁴⁵. The Department for Equal Opportunities issued data according to which they have contacted 1650 persons, and 1198 have entered protection programs. This large disparity of data indicates that forced prostitution on the streets is likely to be much higher than that estimated by the government. Such divergence also indicates that it is much more difficult to obtain reliable data concerning women forced to prostitution off the streets and out of sight. Collection of data and projection of assessments concerning sexual and labour exploitation still remain limited and unreliable.

F. Women and the Economy

F.1. Promote women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources.

The recognition of full equality between men and women is laid in Articles 3, 4, and 37 of the Constitution of the Italian Republic.

However, women earn less than men⁴⁶, and as of now, the government has not enacted any measure to try to overcome the pay gap between women and men.

These wage differences also have a major impact on women's choices forcing them to choose between family and their professional sphere. If men earn more, it is easier for the persons who earn less—usually women—to stay home. They would take care of the house and children, not only due to traditional gender roles and gender stereotypes rooted in culture, but also because of discrimination and barriers to their careers that they experience in their working environment.

F.2. Facilitate women's equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade

Women's harsh conditions in the labour market.

Since 2009, the burden of the economic and social crises has affected disproportionately women's lives in different age groups. In addition to unemployment that reached a record level of 13.8%, two points more than men⁴⁷, many young women, even when highly educated, are confined to low-quality and precarious jobs which foster insecurity and hamper long-term life strategies and choices, including motherhood.

Such marginal and temporary jobs also affect older women in their 40s and 50s who are unable to satisfactorily reposition themselves in the labour market. Today, the employment rate of women in our country, standing at 46.5%, is well below the EU estimates⁴⁸ and other EU countries rates. Even the employment rate of foreign nationals is falling due to the crises, cultural factors and a lack of family and friendship networks. Such absence of support-systems particularly affect migrant women⁴⁹.

Difficulties for women to enter the labour market are related to structural weaknesses that, in turn, are also the result of traditional welfare policies and the organization of services. These weaknesses are expected to be counterbalanced by family-related support systems. However, families are left to

⁴⁵ According to the Parsec Association surveys, in 2005 there were 22,700 foreign women engaged in street prostitution, while in 2009 figures have increased up to 24,700. The most recent survey, conducted by CNCA and Caritas, shows that in 2012 the presence of women in prostitution in the street and indoors amounted to approximately 24,000.

⁴⁶ Less than 23,3% average annual income (net wage) . Source: ISFOL "Is there a gender pay gap in Italy?" Paper presented at the conference "Gender Pay Gap" – CNEL July 15, 2008; LeNove Gender pay gap and work organization. A qualitative survey, ISFOL, 2008. Data confirmed from ISFOL with some slight improvement, in occasion of Equal Pay Day: "Differences persist between men and women in terms of pay. On average a woman earns less than the man at a rate of 15% at constant other characteristics. This value in the case of women graduates reaches the level of 21% compared to men with the same qualifications".

⁴⁷ 1.247.000 jobless, while men are 1.375.000, ISTAT, May 2014;

⁴⁸ 60% for women according to Treaty of Lisbon ; 75% at 2020 for women and men;

⁴⁹ ISTAT, Annual Report 2014, Conditions of the country

fend off for themselves in the absence of adequate and effective welfare policies. Single-parent and “rainbow” families fare even worse.⁵⁰

According to the EU Commission's Annual Report on Equal Opportunities, published in April 2014, should this situation continue, it would take about 30 years for Italy to reach the EU target of 75% employment rate for women, 70 years for equal pay to become a reality and 20 years to achieve equal representation in national parliaments⁵¹.

The employment gap between the sexes is more marked in Italy than in almost all other European countries⁵². Male employment rate in Italy is almost 22 percentage points higher than female, while in EU-27 the disparity is of twelve points.

F.3. –F.4.- F.5. Provide business services, training and access to markets, information and technology, particularly to low - income women. Strengthen women's economic capacity and commercial networks. Eliminate occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination.

The difficulties that women face in obtaining and maintaining their jobs depend on a variety of factors. The probability for women to get temporary jobs with atypical contracts is much higher than for men if we consider gender differences in age, education level and family situations⁵³.

The "bottlenecks" that all too often cause exit from the labour market are burdens related to motherhood and care-giving for family members, including disabled, sick and elderly parents and relatives. In particular, motherhood is not protected uniformly in all employment contracts, especially those contracts that involve uncharacteristic jobs. Self-employed female workers face additional difficulties.

A particularly significant example of this situation is the practice of demanding "blank resignations" from employees, a practice used to "dismiss" staff at will without having to pay any compensation, which is often used when women are pregnant or ask for maternity leave.

The practice was enhanced by the repeal of the 2008 Law that countered “blank resignations”. This had particularly severe effects on the ability of young people to plan their families. No other law was introduced to correct the illegal practice of “blank resignation” which amounts to blackmailing employees into foregoing parenthood in order to keep their jobs.

In addition to women who are subjected to this practice, other weak sectors of the labour market are affected, particularly the young and migrants workers. Temporary and autonomous workers (VAT-paying workers) in Italy are not afforded effective welfare support provisions. Moreover, they often have low levels of income and no permanent work opportunities.

It is clear that a lack of opportunities for women in the labour market affect even more those who live a further condition of marginality, such as migrant women in general, Roma women, Stinti, and women with disabilities.

In the last decade, the number of caregivers, housekeepers, baby sitters, and those who provide family care, went from 1 million in 2001 to the current 1.655 million (+ 53%). These workers represent a large proportion of female employment (both regular and irregular) and constitute 77.3% of employed foreign nationals.

⁵⁰ Italy is one of the European countries with lower spending on family services, about 1,58% of GNP;

⁵¹ At least 40% for every gender;

⁵² Except Malta and Greece;

⁵³ Reyneri E., (edited by), Women's work, 2008, Rome. For a general sociological and economic survey about women' work, look at website www.ingenere.it.

However, according to research CENSIS / Ismu commissioned by the Ministry of Labour, due to the crisis, over 56% of households claim being unable to spend on average 29% of household income on care services. So 15% of households, which in the North rise up to 20%, are considering that one of their members- usually a woman- give up her work to provide the services of a housekeeper. The same research estimates that in 25% of households in which there is a person that needs care and that cannot use a housekeeper, there is a woman -in 90.4% of cases young - 66% had less than 44 years-who has given up her work.

F.6 Work and welfare. The issue about the “conciliation” between public and private sphere: the lack/shortage of “sharing” between women and men.

Work – life balance well expresses the changing/uncertain balance to be constantly looked for between private and public life, which depends on the respective period of life regarding the private and public sphere. The word “conciliation” – imposed by the EU among the framework of women job policy – has an ambivalent meaning, as often underlined by women movements, which intend to deny the conflict between opposite interests of women and men, of productive organizations and of women’s needs/wishes.

This political matter has involved important parts of the women movement. The law “Instructions for sustaining motherhood and fatherhood, for the right to care and education, for the management of city schedule” offers a prescriptive rule for matters that link work and private life: maternity or training leave, “friendly” flexibility of working hours in enterprises (sect. 9), time and schedule of city services. This makes clear the need, or challenge, for a possible conciliation between the work sphere and the personal/family one, in order to significantly increase female employment. However, the results are disappointing because this policy has been kept marginal in our country since it has been considered “unproductive”, almost a “luxury” for (only) women’s needs.

It is clear that a new perspective has to be found on the welfare-conciliation matter, because the current one is based on the idea that only women’s time must be divided between work outside and inside the house, while one should talk about SHARING between men and women.

The economic crisis caused cuts in the social expenditure, which have had severe consequences on the resources of local government hampering their ability to meet local areas’ needs of care with new investments for the service sector, sometimes even reducing the existing ones. The most delicate situation concerns children aged 0-2: only 11,8% children aged 0-2 are able to enroll in the public nursery schools, 18,7% if including supplementary schooling, far below the 33% index in 2010 predicted by the EU, with huge differences among the Italian regions; 48,1% of the Italian Comuni (n.d.t municipality) offers public nursery schools and supplementary schooling, full time and supplementary services for early schooling age, full time classes are less than 50% in every region with strong differences between the North and the South; assistance to all kinds of disability and to elderly people needs.

This represents a burden for families and their amount of work devoted to care, which are even more weakened by the postponement of grandparents’ age of retirement who have carried out essential tasks compensating for the lack or absence of services for early childhood. In 2012 as a result of the Law n. 92 of the “Reform Fornero” about the “Instructions for the reform of labour market in a development perspective” women retirement age has been postponed : more than 148.000 women could not retire and so became less capable of offering assistance useful for a conciliation. Even though analysis data about family time show that some young men are involved in housework and in parenting in a different way, nevertheless the above mentioned data represent a burden for women, particularly for the middle aged ones, the so called “sandwich women” stuck between responsibilities towards elderly people and children and who can cope only by reducing housework, so that in fact the imbalance in household activities between men and women seems to be slowly reduced, starting from strongly uneven data.

The Institute for the Development of Vocational Training for Workers (ISFOL) calculated that Italian women's workday is on average 45 minutes longer than men's and, above all, is differently divided. If the workday of an employed man or woman with at least one child lasts on average 15 hours, between paid work, transfer and other tasks, fathers devote 10 hours to paid work and 5 to the rest while mothers 7 hours and 9 minutes to paid work and 8 hours and 35 minutes to family work. One should instead aim to sharing work and family time between men and women.

The outcome of such situation is that women become mothers less and less – 1.42 is the average number of children per women, and women become mothers later in their lives: at an average age of 32,1 years: a decreasing number kept up until 2013 by migrant women. Research shows that not only the gap between the wish to become mother and the effective chance to become one is wider and wider but also that those who accept this “risk” often have to face the choices between motherhood and work: one out of four mothers leaves work within the first two years of life of their child because they cannot find any effective solution that allows to handle work and private life at the same time.

A (non) choice to which many factors concur: the lack of services, especially nursery schools, with their often unsustainable costs for economically fragile families; the inflexibility of work organizations to allow friendly hours, and also the dissatisfaction for a low quality job with low salaries as data about the gender pay gap show. The latest report by the Istat in 2014 comes to similar conclusions and states that : “the number of employed pregnant women who will not work within two years from the childbirth is growing. There is also an increase in the number of women with small children who keep their jobs but lamented the lack of conciliation; More than one third of the employed women surveyed concluded that the main obstacles they face are to be found in the number of working hours, inconvenient shifts and schedules (in the afternoon or at night or at the weekend) and inflexibility of work hours.

Facts and circumstances due to the economic and social crises occur against a cultural background that reflects a (post) patriarchal organization of male and female roles, perhaps concealed or modernized, and where women professional work is regarded as less important or at least accessory, while non paid house work remains unrecognized. Women labour market fits perfectly in the development of a country and it would make Italy grow: a higher involvement of women in work would make Italian GDP grow 1 percentage point a year, as many economists, such as Cristine Lagarde, Managing Director of the IMF, have predicted..

G. Women in positions of power and decision-making processes

G1. Take measures to ensure that women have full and equal access to and participation in power structures and decision-making

The Italian civil society is composed equally of men and women and democratic institutions should be a mirror of this composition. However, the transition from the formal recognition of the right to substantive equality is not reflected in reality.

In the last three governments from 2012 till now the number of women at the top of the key ministries has increased; the number of the last parliamentary term has risen to 31%. However the current Government of Renzi has proposed an electoral law that does not respect the principle of gender equality.

G2. To strengthen the capacity of women to participate in decision-making and to assume leadership roles

We report the introduction in 2011 of the Law (Golfo -Mosca) on the obligation to balance gender representation in governing bodies and control - boards of directors and board of auditors - of listed companies (about 300).

A big step forward, even if Italy's economy is based on a system of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and third sector organizations, where women hold positions of responsibility, but not senior positions.

H. Institutional mechanism for the advancement of women

H.1. Create or strengthen national machineries and other governmental bodies.

Among the government bodies in charge of building and strengthening policies and national mechanisms for the advancement of women there is the Department of Equal Opportunity (DEO), created in 1996, thanks to the Beijing Conference. The Department acts under delegation of the President of the Council of Ministers. It is required to promote and develop policies for gender mainstreaming and women empowerment in coordination with all the other ministries. The results of the work, however, have fallen short of expectations. The governments that have taken place from 2011 to 2014 have progressively weakened the political role of the DEO at the expense of the original mandate of mainstreaming.

The current government in charge since February 22, 2014 has not appointed a Minister for Equal Opportunities and the powers remained in the hands of the Prime Minister. Because of that, all the political activities were slowed down or interrupted and CSOs were left without a referring institutional representative. In October, the Prime Minister appointed an adviser under his power decision.

The CEDAW Committee in 2011 recommended the Italian State to establish a constructive, transparent and regular dialogue with civil society, in particular with the women organizations. This dialogue, however, has remained sporadic. In The political agenda of the Prime Minister, even if there are some relevant topics such as schools and (weak) protection of motherhood, instances of women are not a top priority to be taken into account in the design and planning of measures in all sectors .

The regions have different legislative and operational responsibilities in the field of equal opportunities. Although there is a Ministry of Regional and State-Regions Conference, there is no coordination on gender issues, to set minimum targets for promoting the protection and rights of women.

The Councilors for Equality, whose task is to promote and monitor the implementation of the principles of equal opportunity and non-discrimination for women and men at work, have limited powers and insufficient financial resources. The Counsellor does not have decision-making autonomy compared to Government, despite the European Directive provides that the Councillor and the other equality bodies are independent. The Councilors ability to effectively and impartially carry out their tasks is related to the choice of the National Council of equality, selected by the government, which does not guarantee the autonomy.

Independent national institution for human rights.

Italy unlike many countries in the world, has not created yet an independent national institution for human rights, including the rights of women, to supervise and promote the actions of the institutions for the promotion and protection of these rights.

H.2. Integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programmes and projects.

The Italian national and regional institutions dealing with gender equality and protection of women's rights have not promoted and strengthened coordinated ongoing mechanisms between

national and local institutions for the progress of women and find it difficult to integrate a gender perspective in legislation, public policies. The trend in recent years has been to make "neutral" gender perspective, or not to recognize the specificity and diversity of women needs to address policies, programs and projects. Women are too often regarded as one of the many disadvantaged groups and not as half of the population, with its own ideas and proposals.

H3. Generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning purposes and evaluation

Despite the important work done by the National Institute of Statistics on the collection of data disaggregated by sex, the institutions responsible for planning and implementing gender policies and evaluating the projects results are not yet using gender indicators and data in a systematic way .

Several draft laws on statistical data disaggregated by sex have stalled in parliament. Gender statistics should be regulated by law as economic statistics are, recognizing the equal dignity. This may be the way to ensure that all relevant information about gender policies are recorded continuously, not just when you have found the one-time funds.

I. Women Human Rights

I.1. To promote and protect the human rights of women, through the full implementation of all human rights instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

In Italy, the concept of "gender discrimination" is more limited than the provisions of art. 1 of CEDAW, making impossible to the equal legal protection in civil and criminal law from all forms of gender discrimination.

The CEDAW Committee in 2005 expressed concern about the absence in Italy of a law that defined the "gender discrimination" in line with article 1 of the Convention. The CEDAW is poorly understood and the laws for the protection from gender discrimination are rarely used by lawyers, judges and CSOs. In addition, the recommendations of the CEDAW Committee at the last two evaluations Italy (2005 and 2011) were not sufficiently taken into account by institutions.

I.2. Ensure equality and non-discrimination in law and in practice

The CEDAW Committee in 2005 expressed concern about the absence in Italy of a mechanism to ensure that all institutions have a duty to promote the rights of women to act in accordance with the Convention to allow the advancement of women.

The Italian national and regional institutions dealing with gender equality and protection of women's rights are fragmented, poorly coordinated with each other, without a clear division of responsibilities and decision-making, as well as lacking adequate funding to combat and eliminate discrimination gender. Contrary to what 'happened in other countries of the world and disregard the demands of international bodies such as the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and CSOs' , Italy has failed to create a independent national institution to deal exclusively with the protection of human rights, including those of women and encouraging and monitor the actions of the institutions towards individuals, citizens or not, who live on the Italian territory.

J. Women and Media

The Italian Government's report on CEDAW's application considers the communications sector as one of the major transmission vectors of gender stereotypes. However, no long-term complete and coordinated policy addressed to all women and men has been defined to overcome a stereotyped gender representation.

J.1. Increase women's participation and access to decision-making process in media representation and new media communications technologies.

Digital technology, now mature, has profoundly transformed media and some media professions in addition it created two markets. The first market is composed of recognized people guaranteed by collectively negotiated contracts and professional orders. The second is represented by new media people and pioneers that are not recognized institutionally.

Journalism is a depreciated profession not always appreciated by audiences. Many young journalists are eager to start but never make it they are poorly paid based on the articles they write. Professional and personal prestige has gone down.

Professional women journalists represent 40% of the total number of journalists but are in the lower payment range. Only 14% of women journalists make it to the top compared with 27% of men journalists.

Professional women are extensively used to star in show programmes, but not to manage them. 54% of women handle Italian TV news. There is a major difference between appearing on TV and managing a network, a programme or a set of contents.

J.2. Promote a balanced and non-stereotyped image of women in the media

Despite women's mass entry in the media structure and their professional progress, little has changed in terms of contents. Women directors and presidents have had so far slight influence on the language used in media. Indeed, media continues to avoid representing women's competences and rather focuses on women-related criminal issues.

The 2012 CENSIS findings on its inquiry on women and media do not substantially differ from its 2006 findings. Women remain mainly associated with the following subjects: sexuality, domestic issues, light entertainment, security, violence and unconventionality. Women are either portrayed as sexually appealing and complementary to men or as victims.

Women's professionalism is not portrayed, when they are filmed 37.4% of images focus on their cleavage or legs and 62.4% of images do not cover women's entire persona.

According to the "Who makes news in Europe" research published in May 2014 and the European Observatory on Representation (OERG) in 2013, women represent 25% of the people that make news or are interviewed in the major Italian news program with a 1% increase from 2012.

Women's visibility remains low in the so-called hard news i.e. political and economic news (20%) and rare in the sports news (13%). Women's visibility is higher in the soft news such as culture and performing arts (39%) and in the bad news i.e. criminality and violence (34%). Likewise women are rarely called to speak as experts (16%) compared to men.

In any event, only young women make it to the news. 52% are teenager girls, 43% are 19 to 34 years old women and only 25% are women over 50.

The law on equal access to communication during electoral campaigns mandates media to promote equal opportunity between women and men in political communications programs. Further to the request from fifty women's associations and networks represented in the *Accordo di azione comune per la democrazia paritaria*, (Common action agreement on democratic parity) the Parliamentary Commission in charge of controlling RAI implemented the Law's requirements in RAI's public service contract.

However, women candidates' participation in television programs continues to remain low compared to men candidates but data is not available, as the Authority in charge of Communications (AGCOM) does not provide gender-disaggregated data.

Notwithstanding the 13 clauses relating to women's representation in RAI's Public 2010-2012 Service Contract, almost none was respected. The draft 2013-2015 Service Contract contains major improvements towards a better representation of women on public TV, its signature is however long overdue.

Conversely, private TV has done nothing to revise women's image on TV.

AGCOM's absence of commitment on this subject should be noted. AGCOM, who controls the entire telecommunications and communication sectors, should have a pro-active role by promoting research, monitoring and debates on contents presented on TV channels.

Women's representation in advertising

The advertisement sector is crucial as women are mainly represented as sexual objects or as good mothers. Women's naked or half-naked bodies are used to sell any type of product with images that damage women's dignity. In Italy no law regulates or sanctions sexist adverts. A self-disciplinary body, *l'Istituto di Autodisciplina Pubblicitaria (IAP)*, can only recommend companies to cease and desist from sexually offensive advertisement campaigns.

In 2011 the Department for Equal Opportunity signed an Intent Protocol with IAP to avoid advertisements that offend women's dignity. The Committee that is due to define the applicable rules has not been created.

Media childhood representation

Media childhood representation is part of the collective imagery that secludes women to childbearing duties and satisfying adults' beauty criteria. Little girls are presented with the same stereotyped roles interpreted by adult women. They must be sexy, appealing and play wives' and mothers' roles, whereas men must be strong, courageous, pro-active and non-emotional. The development of children's individuality is consequently more difficult.

Moreover, it is almost impossible to avoid that children are constantly exposed to ubiquitous advertisements that portray women in a subordinate sexually oriented role in respect of men. Additionally, symbolic violence is interiorized at a very young age. Lastly, a false idea of women's body and its beauty requisites is continuously portrayed.

Gender training for all the professions that operate in media

The Ministry of Economic Development launched a number of initiatives on gender training, which were not mandatory and gathered a restricted number of participants.

K. Women and the environment

K.1. Actively involving women in decision-making processes concerning the environment, at all levels.

Despite the fact that in Italy women-inclusive policies, equal opportunities and the recognition of essential rights – such as those related to health and instruction – are more advanced compared to many realities of the South of the World, there are still many gaps to fill. Among them, it is particularly important to create specific gender-related benchmarks aimed at elaborating and implementing territorial management policies.

In the debate in central and local institutions in Italy there is no existing, or are about to be implemented, political mechanisms able to guarantee the inclusion and the participation of women to environmental decision-making processes – not even from a merely advisory viewpoint. To realise such objective, deliberative and inclusive based participative institutions should be created in promoted.

There are few public funds aimed at raising the awareness of the public opinion over themes such as the environment and the management of natural resources, or at educating on ecology and gender issues. This because of the lack of an organic reference framework that would individuate in formal

and informal education and in informative activities a strategic asset to bring a change that has to be cultural in the first place.

K. 2. Integrating gender-related issues and perspectives in policies and programs for sustainable development.

There is a need to a concrete involvement of women in decision-making processes on environmental and development policies. Such an involvement would correspond to the necessity of considering specific impacts and themes (such as reproductive and neonatal health) that transcend a purely feminine dimension, appealing to the general interest.

On the other hand, despite declarations, road maps and working groups, the female component has not found any inclusion yet, especially in elaborating contents, defining policies, deciding resource attribution standards and managing public economic resources.

Indeed, despite women represent a very strong component in social mobilization, especially in regard to environmental conflicts and the defence of the connected right to health, they are not involved in the elaboration of policies that could rather benefit of their contribution, thus gaining a clear gender vision.

It would be essential to adopt a gender perspective in evaluating specific impacts – in social, sanitary and economic terms – concerning environmental risks and damages. Therefore, the involvement of women and their associative organisations represents an urgent measure in Italy, especially in programs of primary prevention and monitoring of the social consequences originating from the environmental contamination. This urgency is also proven by the proliferation of women and mothers committees that fight through active citizenship, social action and sometimes through institutions, in order to defend health, life and the environment. Women are at the forefront in the struggle against health consequences of industrial areas, carbon coal-burning power plants, atmospheric contamination and they favour a transparent information and the respect of precautionary principles.

There are by now many cases of social mobilization against pollution and environmental degradation where women constitute a main social component. Over the Italian territory examples of environmental problems with important repercussions on the health of the population can be ascertained starting from the 57 contaminated areas (later reduced to 39) which have received the denomination of SIN⁵⁴ and over which epidemiological studies, such as the S.E.N.T.I.E.R.I.⁵⁵ report, realized by the Istituto Superiore di Sanità (National Health Institute), have shown worrying results for the incidence of environmental pollution-related tumours.

Environment and maternity

An important example about the correlation between the environmental contamination and women and children's health has been observed in the city of Taranto, where the presence of the iron and still industry is a source of the major incidence of illnesses such as the endometriosis and other chronic pathologies that cause infertility. Several scientific studies have investigated the potential connection between the exposition to dioxin-like composites and the growing incidence of endometriosis. Exactly last January the *Taranto Leader* committee, largely composed by women, presented an official request to the Regional authorities for the establishment of a regional register

⁵⁴ National Site of Interest (Siti di Interesse Nazionale)

⁵⁵ National Epidemiological Study of Lands and Settlements Exposed to Pollution Risks (Studio Epidemiologico Nazionale dei Territori e degli Insediamenti Esposti a Rischio da Inquinamento).

of endometriosis in order to better characterize this illness, that beside being progressively disabling, often produces irreparable effects over the reproductive health of women of childbearing age.

Another emerging theme of great relevance concerns breastfeeding and neonatal health. Over the years, several studies that have shown the presence of dioxins, PCB and other chemical substances in breast milk, in a harmful concentration for newborns, beside noticing a strongly compromised state of health among mothers.

President of ISDE (Doctors for the Environment) in Forlì, spokesperson of the National Campaign for the defence of breast milk from environmental pollution, has been denouncing for years, together with many other associations, how the information over environment and health is still extremely scarce. Not only in Taranto, Gela or Brescia, emblematic cases of the Italian “Biocide” map⁵⁶, but also Macerata, Ravenna and many other “minor” towns have gained headlines for their far from reassuring analysis over breast milk.

In Campania, a painful case is represented by the experience of the “Mothers of the Warrior Angels of the Triangle of Death”⁵⁷ that gathers all the mothers that have lost their sons or daughters due to environmental pollution-related tumours. They come from the towns of Acerra, Afragola, Caivano, Giugliano, Marcianise, Succivo, San Cipriano d’Aversa, Casal di Principe, Casalnuovo, where criminal waste disposal has created the conditions for a dramatic sanitary emergency. They are mothers that, having to live with the most painful grief, defend their land and life.

K.3. Reinforcing or creating mechanisms at a regional, national and international level in order to evaluate the impact of development and environmental policies on women

In this sense, acknowledging, systematizing and/or institutionalizing collected data and documentation systems related to environmental conflicts and to environmental and sanitary analysis – often elaborated by independent organizations – could help public institutions and monitoring bodies in the work of mapping, monitoring and intervening in high-risk areas.

At the same time, adopting and promoting participatory tools for mapping environmental issues and emerging risk factors would provide the public institutions with a concrete instrument in order to carry out a capillary territorial control through citizenship involvement.

It is necessary to reaffirm the previously mentioned necessity of realizing gender-differentiated environmental and economic analyses. A further and last specific point concerning the goals so far described has to deal with the actual and urgent issue over land restoration in Italy. Nine-thousand km of Italian land inhabited by about 10 million people (the already mentioned SIN), present a contamination element that is produce sanitary risks for residents. That is to say that about a sixth of the Italian people are exposed to daily health-damaging environmental factors. Among them, the impacts on women and children are noteworthy and widely accepted.

Launching social controlled land restoration processes and adapting them as the main priority and strategy of the government agenda, beginning with the involvement of the population and of the most affected target groups (including women) in order to achieve land restoration, redevelopment and environmental reparation and ecological reconversion policies, is a decision that can no longer be put off.

⁵⁶An emerging category that citizens of the sadly renown “Terra dei Fuochi” (alias the Triangle of death), have adopted in order to refer to the people’s systematic exposition to polluting factors with health-related issues.

⁵⁷ Italian name, Mamme degli Angeli Guerrieri della Terra dei Fuochi e dei Veleni.

An extra Chapter

The new Italians: Migrant women and new generations

Immigrant and second generation women of foreign origin judge the action of the various governments over the years and also of some of the antiracist associations in these words: ‘we express profound disappointment in relation to the real intention of changing security laws and policies, which are discriminatory and repressive, as well as in relation to the building of a common project’”

In 2013, the presence of migrants in Italy is on the rise- due to family reunifications and new births- but this growth is practically annulled by repatriations, departures to other European and global destinations by many migrants and their families. There are about 5 million people (EU and non-EU), of which over 50% are women. The only sector that keeps growing among foreigners is the provision of services and assistance to families, that ‘army of domestic workers and caregivers’ that amounts to around 1- 1.5 million people, 70% of which is made up of foreign women; also, families exclusively supported by women’s salaries are increasing. However, the employment rate of foreign mothers with children is going down, due to increasing difficulties in combining work and family duties, and due to a lack of a family or solidarity network.

Starting in the last decades of the last century, we have witnessed a ‘feminization of migration’⁵⁸, according to which women’s migration is not due to family reunifications anymore, but to autonomous choices to look for work and support to the families they have left behind. All of this produces a care drain, with serious consequences especially on their children left behind in their countries of origin. Migrant women therefore, although representing the strong link in the migration chain- as they maintain contact with their countries of origin, manage the impact of a different culture in their children’s development, claim citizenship rights for themselves and their families- are also a weak link- as they are exposed to different forms of violence during the journey and in their work environments; are often alone and feel like misfits both in Italy and their own country (the so-called Italian syndrome); suffer the decrease in services even more than Italian families, although they contribute to the Italian welfare system; are almost exclusively employed in the care sector, even though they have other skills and aspirations⁵⁹; they cannot climb the social ladder, still representing a marginal part, although a growing one, in relation to the total of foreign businesses in Italy.

Research from the Filipino Women’s Council (FWC)⁶⁰ shows how women are more and more trapped in the global chain of care, and they are pressured to support their families through remittances. Associations of Latin-American women complain of difficulties in their associational life created by institutions and other organizations.

Figures, laws and policies

During the time Berlusconi was in power and Maroni was Minister of the Interior (2008-2011) the link between immigration and security was strengthened; rejections at sea caused hundreds of victims; restrictive measures were sharpened (detention in Cie, where the law is suspended for 18

⁵⁸ Migrant women in Italy were 361,137 in 1991; after 20 years, in 2011, female presence among foreign residents is 2,369,106, equivalent to 51.8% (research carried out by the Nilde Iotti Foundation)

⁵⁹ In other countries, such as the UK, they are mainly employed in services, but with more formalized modalities, in hotels and hospitals.

⁶⁰ Charito Basa, Wendy Harcourt and Angela Zarro, “Famiglie transnazionali e famiglie che vivono di rimesse in Italia e nelle Filippine: Rompere la catena globale della cura”, 2011

months! Where harassment and abuses are common practice). Repressive and racist orders from various mayors, (the so-called federal racism) added to this.

Racism and sexism intermingled giving rise to false ideologies- like ‘the monster is outside us’, the male who rapes and kills belongs to other cultures-, to violent actions and norms, ‘in defense of one’s own women’ against immigrants.

Despite the commitments undertaken after the 2013 elections, according to which Parliament would have finally started discussions on the reform of the citizenship law, a year has passed and the examination of the many law proposals has not started yet. Second generation children of foreign parents, despite being born in Italy, have to wait 18 long years to request Italian citizenship. This is the fault of an old law from 1992 linked to the *ius sanguinis* (you can only obtain your parents’ citizenship) and not the *ius soli* (you are a citizen of the country where you were born or you have grown up). Such is the discrimination suffered by second generation girls and boys (over a million): from being forbidden to go on a school trip abroad, to not being able to practice sport at a competitive level; they are excluded from public exams, they can’t register in some of the professional registers, they can’t access many study and training opportunities, due to their ‘immigrant’ status, even though they are not immigrant.

There are many immigrant women’s associations that are on the front line in the fight for immigrants’ rights; there are also many antiracist associations that fight for acceptance, solidarity, cultural mediation etc. and carry out common initiatives, from the Lampedusa Charter, subscribed by tens of Italian and foreign associations, to the campaign for citizenship ‘I am Italy as well’, to the campaign that denounces the abuses in the Cie (*LasciateCIEentrare*). Not only: to protest against the most discriminatory measures implemented by successive governments, be they left or right wing, feminist groups mobilized, as well as groups such as doctors and nurses, principals and teachers, law experts, university researchers, and most of the cultural and academic world. Trade unions carried out unified mobilizations and obtained important victories in legal cases against discrimination.

However, despite some gains, current legislation has not been changed, apart from some unsustainable aspects such as the crime of illegal immigration; the repressive and discriminatory character of the laws is still present, as well as their implementation, although in the last few years the racist, xenophobic and security-related emphasis has disappeared during the Monti, Letta and Renzi governments.

In order to avoid the ‘barges of death’, guarding North African and Middle Eastern coasts through Frontex is not the right measure - in the same way as the rescue operations at sea of *Mare Nostrum* are not enough. What is needed is freedom of emigration and the application of humanitarian law. Rejections at sea should not be allowed, while the entrance of migrants should be permitted. The possibility of filing a request for asylum should be allowed in reception centres, as well as the use of short term permits to look for employment, which can then lead to regularization, all of which requires a rapid change in the Bossi-Fini law.

As far as the request for asylum, this should be allowed in the chosen European country; it is therefore necessary to review European regulation, allowing migrants to achieve their life project.

If the policies of rejection were to be changed, new resources for the welcoming and inclusion of migrants would be freed, as well as for favoring access to public social and health services, in particular for women of foreign origin. It would also free resources for recognition of school

qualifications, for entry into public education up to the highest level, with the possibility for migrants to access more qualified and professional labor opportunities. It is necessary to always bear in mind that immigration is a resource for the Italian welfare- even if only in terms of taxes and contributions, as immigrants pay much more than they receive.

What is needed is a complete change in current policies, based on a project where a multi-cultural world, with guaranteed freedom of circulation and freedom of achieving one's own life project, is certainly preferable to the closure of national boundaries.