

ERLAI MEETING

Exchange of good practices on Integration policy and projects

The experience of Emilia-Romagna Region

Andrea Stuppini

(Head of Reception and Social Integration Policy Department
Ministry for Social Policy, Immigration Youth, International Cooperation

E-mail astuppini@regione.emilia-romagna.it)

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Background

The phenomenon of immigration in the Emilia-Romagna region is not an emergency, but a structural phenomenon: in our region, immigrants have exceeded 6% of the resident population; during 2003, newly-hired foreign workers made up 18% of the total population; immigrant children in schools have reached almost 8% of the total population.

Legal Framework

Regional law “Norms for the social integration of immigrant foreign citizens.

Objectives

1. To increase and improve knowledge about immigration issues as a whole, promoting immigrants' own culture and mutual cultural integration;
2. To provide immigrants with the same rights and duties as regional citizens, enabling them to access public services.

Recipients

- Citizens from non-EU Member States,
- Refugees,
- Regularly residing stateless individuals, in compliance with current norms in force, resident or domiciled in the territory of the Emilia-Romagna region,
- Asylum seekers, with exception to the competences of the State.

Contents concerning integration

- Design of a three year program of activity covering immigration, in order to strengthen regional integration policies;

- Promotion of social integration through participation of foreign citizens in **public life**, also through the activation of instruments of representation within the framework of local institutions;
- Design of a **regional council for immigration** that is composed of institutional groups, social sectors, private social services and representatives of foreign citizens;
- Realization of a regional plan of action against racial, ethnic, national or religious discrimination, also through the institution of a **Regional Center for discrimination**;
- Introduction of a new system of observation for the migratory phenomenon through the institution of a **Regional Observatory for the migratory phenomenon**;
- Provision of **contributions to Provinces, Municipalities, and third party sectors** for interventions of social integration (for example, information centres and offices, Italian language courses, cultural mediation activities, intercultural centres and initiatives);
- Development of interventions regarding **housing policy** (promotion of housing agencies, in order to favor supply and demand, rotation funds and securities, welfare lodgings, primary hospitality and accommodation centers, and so on);
- Promotion of experimental forms of intervention sponsored by social services (employers, local agencies, unions), in order to address jointly the issues of **job placement and housing**;
- Support of the cultural integration role taken on by **schools** through the distribution of economic resources aimed at both the specific training of teaching personnel and through the use of cultural mediators;
- Promotion of adequate **health policy**;
- Consolidation of **international cooperation activities**, particularly related to training.

Regional project for integration and intercultural communication

Objectives

- To remove prejudices and stereotypes that prevent dialogue and mutual acquaintance,
- To improve the perception of immigrant citizens, strengthening their presence on the territory,
- To experiment with new innovative tools for the dissemination of multicultural and multilanguage information, to promote the dialogue between different points of view and different cultures;
- To promote a correct awareness of the roots and the real aspects of the migratory phenomenon,
- To encourage a correct awareness of cultural, social and religious behaviour, of the various immigrants' communities,
- To grant equal opportunities for information access,
- To prevent intolerant behaviour, racial, ethnic, national and religious discrimination,
- To support and to carry out projects in favour of active participation of immigrant citizens in the realisation of communication activities.

Funding

The Government of Emilia-Romagna provides contributions, through the Provinces, for the implementation of socio-cultural activities and for welfare assistance activities aimed at immigrant foreign citizens.

Recipients:

- Single or associated Municipalities and Provinces,
- AUSL (local health units),
- Private non-profit individuals or agencies,
- Immigrant Associations.

Actions

- a) Realization and consolidation of **intercultural centres**: places of mediation and confrontation among cultures, giving the possibility for meetings and exchanges between individuals of different origin, as well as the elaboration and implementation of initiatives to promote social integration;
- b) Development of **public information initiatives** regarding topics related to immigration, which favour a correct knowledge and understanding of the causes and real aspects of the migratory phenomenon;
- c) Realisation of **artistic, cultural, and sports initiatives**, improving the appreciation of the cultures of countries of origin and promoting opportunities for socialising, also in an environment outside the workplace;
- d) Consolidation of competency regarding **socio-cultural mediation**, according to the relevant regional norm for professional training, in order to detect and reinforce specific professionalism aimed at guaranteeing both the recognition of the needs of users, as well as obtaining adequate performance from the services;
- e) **Training of operators** in charge of relations with foreign citizens, with a view to guaranteeing equal conditions when accessing services.

Outputs

- Multilingual and multicultural TV and radio programmes,
- Magazines on intercultural communication,
- Websites on immigration and legal assistance,
- Service information on newspapers.

Contact persons

Barbara Burgalassi

E-mail bburgalassi@regione.emilia-romagna.it

Andrea Facchini

E-mail afacchini@regione.emilia-romagna.it

Giorgio Palamidesi

E-mail gpalamidesi@regione.emilia-romagna.it

Reception and Integration of Asylum seekers Project

Legal Framework

An Agreement regarding asylum seekers and refugees was signed in Emilia-Romagna on June 17th, 2004, by the Institutions (Region, Provinces and Municipalities), by all social sectors (CGIL, CISL, UIL, and employees organisations), and by third party organisations.

Topics

- Reception measures,
- Social integration,
- Employment
- Professional training,
- Housing policy.

Objective

- To strengthen and to enlarge the reception and integration services of refugees, asylum seekers and beneficiaries of humanitarian aid.

Actions

- Reception of 25 immigrant citizens,
- Counselling and legal assistance,
- Guidance for health and social services,
- Vocational guidance,
- Start-up and management of a social services network for victims of torture,
- Training of public Institutions' personnel on right of asylum.

Actors

- 26 Municipalities in the Province of Parma,
- Local Public Health Service
- Province of Parma,
- Emilia-Romagna Regional Government,

- Italian Consortium of Solidarity (network of 11 national Associations + 55 local groups),
- Local Associations

Funding

Emilia-Romagna Region: Euro 111.500,00

Municipality of Fidenza: Euro 26.740,00

National Funding: Euro 164.250,00

Contact person

Giorgio Palamidesi

E-mail gpalamidesi@regione.emilia-romagna.it

Council of Immigrant Citizens

Instrument of representation within the Municipality of Ravenna.

Objective

- To promote social integration through active participation of foreign citizens in public life,
- To support active participation in administrative and socio-intercultural policy.

Actions

- Start-up of a multicultural working group,
- Recognition of the stakeholders and diffusion of a questionnaire concerning immigrant citizens' perception of public administration,
- Start-up of a leading working group, which will draft the project of the new Council of Immigrant Citizens,
- Approval of the project by the Council of the Municipality of Ravenna.

Actors

- Municipality of Ravenna,
- Social sectors,
- Representatives of foreign citizens

Contact person

Andrea Facchini

E-mail afacchini@regione.emilia-romagna.it

Regional Observatory on Immigration

Introduction

- Established in 2000.
- The Regional Observatory collaborates with local Observatories on Immigration and Emilia-Romagna publishes a publication on immigration data every year on the basis of the Regional Observatory results.

Objective

To collect, elaborate and analyse information and data on immigration waves on a yearly basis in order to improve local strategies on immigrants' integration.

Actions

- Immigration data research, collection and elaboration.
- Monitoring of regional actions towards immigrants in the fields of housing, health, vocational training, urban security, labour market, and social inclusion.
- Research and studies for the Regional Ministry for Social Affairs.

Contact person:

Daniela Salvador

E-mail dsalvador@regione.emilia-romagna.it