

*Report on Migrants and Refugees across Europe. How to share the challenge for a shared world of peace.*

*International Seminar. Rome 27-29 April 2016*

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*Report on Migrants and Refugees across Europe. How to share the challenge for a shared world of peace. International Seminar. Rome 27-29 April 2016*

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Migrations are by now a key issue of the public discourse: the flows of people looking for a better life – sometimes just for a life – that arrive to Europe from Africa and Middle East are alarming policy makers and citizens all over the continent. Quite often the issue is addressed in a Manichean way, in favour or against the arrivals of migrants, without a serious debate. Stereotypes and cliché are frequently at the root of the ideas of the public, while decision makers often consider the problem only as an emergency, worried to manage the arrivals of foreigners without disappointing citizens. In this context, intellectuals can play an important role, as they can debunk the common myths and offer a fairer awareness of the phenomenon. It is very difficult that their studies reach the large public but, anyway, they can help the policy makers to improve the migration policies, providing them with tools of knowledge that, in the present situation, are more and more necessary.

The International Seminar *Migrants and Refugees across Europe. How to share the challenge for a shared world of peace*, held last April in Rome, tried to analyze the issue from a scientific point of view, highlighting several aspects of migrations. The Seminar was organized by the CeAS (Centro di eccellenza Altiero Spinelli) of University of Roma Tre, Italy, and by the RCIMI (Research Centre on Identity and Migration Issues) of University of Oradea, Romania, with the patronage of UNHCR, of Institute Luigi Sturzo (Rome) and of Consiglio italiano per il movimento europeo, within the programme *European Pathways to Peace*, implemented by the CeAS. Aim of the Seminar was «to analyze causes and types of migration flows and their socio-economic, legal and political impact, to collect study materials on the phenomenon, to advance proposals for managing it, and to contribute to

promote a greater sense of awareness and responsibility on the side of EU countries» (Migrants and refugees, 2016). Main organizers were Luigi Moccia (president of the CeAS) and Lia Pop (Director of the RCIMI).

The welcome speeches at the Italian Chamber of Deputies saw the participation of Mario Panizza (Rector of the University of Roma Tre), Joseph Mifsud (Director of the London Academy of Diplomacy), Ferruccio Pastore (Director of International and European Forum on Migration), along with Moccia and Pop.

The main day of the Seminar was 28 April, with four panels held at the University of Roma tre.

The first session, chaired by Marc Maresceau (University of Gent), was dedicated to *Experiences and views* (panellists: Janos Simon – Eötvös Loránd University; Naděžda Šišková – Palacky University of Olomouc; Jan Wendt – University of Gdansk; Esther Lopatin – Center for European Studies of Herzliya; Irina Mihaela Pop - University of Oradea; Erminio Fonzo – University of Salerno) and focused on issues related to communication and to the perception of migrants in Europe, in particular in Romania, Hungary and Poland. The panellists also presented some proposals to improve the situation and to allow the public opinion to achieve a better perception of the phenomenon, such as the exploitation of the memory of emigration.

The second panel, chaired by Fulvio Attinà (University of Catania) and titled *National policies* (panellists: Stefan Messmann – Central European University; Ioan Hosu & Mihnea Storica - Babes-Bolyai University; Solange Fatal- University of Montpellier; Andrea De Petris – University “Giustino Fortunato” – Filomena Riccardi – University Roma Tre) analyzed the conditions of migrants in some European countries: Romania, France, Germany, Italy, focusing both on legal issues and on policies for inclusion.

The third session, titled *Values and rights* and chaired by Janos Simon (panellists: Lia Pop, Marie-Laure Basilien-Gainche – University Jean Moulin Lyon 3; Marco Massó Garrote – Universidad de Castilla La Mancha; Patrizia Palermo – University of Genoa; Emanuela Parisiani & Denise Venturi – Scuola superiore Sant’Anna of Pisa; Silvia Zarrella – Ngo Asilo in Europa), dealt with issues related to inclusion and law, discussing several aspects, such as electoral participation, rights of the LGBTI migrants, laws on “High Seas” and, more in general, asylum policy in Europe.

The last panel, titled *Eu Policies*, was chaired by Ioan Hosu (panellists: Stefania Panebianco – University of Catania; Nicola De Dominicis – Uni-

versity of Roma tre; Loredana Teodorescu – University of Roma Tre; Marco Omizzolo & Pina Sodano – University of Roma Tre; Giuseppe Zarrella – Association “Eugenio Rossetto”). The panellists discussed about the role of the European Union, that today is one of the most debated issues, as most European people consider insufficient the commitment of the Union for managing of the flows. Several topics were analyzed, including the *Mare Nostrum* operation, the sharing of responsibility among Member States, the cooperation with the neighbouring countries.

The last day the congress moved to the Institute Luigi Sturzo where, after the welcome speech of the president Nicola Antonetti, the panel chairmen of the previous day gave a report of the papers presented. A round table with the participation of Filippo Bubbico, vice minister for Home Affairs; Eugenio Ambrosi, International Organization for Migration; Stéphan Jaquement, UNHCR; PierVirgilio Dastoli, Consiglio italiano per il movimento europeo, Liliana Ocmin, National coordinator of the Department of Migration Policies of Cisl and Giulio Saputo, Young European Federalists, closed the event.

It is impossible, in the short space of this report, to summarise all the reflections proposed during the Seminar. The proceedings, indeed, are in press in a volume of the European University Press (*European Studies* n. 2). What is certain is that one of the value of the congress was the multidisciplinary approach, as it involved sociologists, jurists, scholars of international relations, historians and other intellectuals. Moreover, not only academics, but also people engaged in the practical management of the flows joined the meeting.

The contribution of different disciplines and the cooperation among scholars and decision makers is more and more necessary, as migrations are a very critical and urgent issue, that risks to undermine the very foundations of the European Union. Think to the Britain leave, the so-called “Brexit”, that was provoked to a large extent by the concern for the possible arrival of migrants in the United Kingdom. Moreover, the fear of migrants is contributing to increase the weight of anti-European and populist parties, by now spread in all the countries and more and more present on the political scene. The public opinion is exposed to the alarmist messages conveyed by mass media that, generally, speak of migrants only about crime, arrivals and problems of reception, forgetting the contribution of the for-

eigners to the national economies and to the welfare states of countries whose population is more and more ageing.

Moreover, the current migratory policies are only aimed at facing the emergence of arrivals and first reception. Too often the policy makers neglect the potential role of migrations in promoting development and growth and do not consider that, if included and enabled to work and use their potentiality, migrants can help, with their work, not only the countries of destination - for which they are more and more necessary - but also those of origin, mainly through remittances. Unfortunately, migrants are often considered a burden, rather than a resource, and only short-sighted policy are implemented. In the present situation, however, effective inclusion policies, able to exploit the potentiality of migrations in the longer term (think, for example, to the second generations) cannot be further delayed.

In this sense, communication is today the most important issue, given that policy makers, in particular those who hold an elective office, are forced to take into account the opinion of the public. If citizens, following alarmist messages and stereotypes, have a negative – and often unfounded – opinion of migrants and are afraid for their arrival, unavoidably the decision makers are forced to propose and implement restrictive policies, in order not to lose support. In other words, the investments for inclusion will be difficult until many people will believe that it is inopportune to “waste” money for foreigners, without acknowledging that these investments would benefit not only they migrants, but also the hosting countries. Not surprisingly, the number of mayors, deputies and other politicians that use to make statements against the arrival of migrants, mainly at local level, is increasing. The fear of the other – a recurring feature in the history of mankind - is easy to raise in front of the arrival of large flows of migrants.

Therefore, initiatives like the International Seminar held in Rome are to be encouraged and it is to be hoped that who studies the phenomenon with a scientific approach may become an important voice within the public discourse.

## *References*

Migrants and Refugees (2016). *Migrants and refugees across Europe*. Unpublished seminar booklet.