



Assemblea regionale siciliana

Working Group on Immigration

Programme 2014

Introduction

The Legislative Assemblies of the Regions have the task of contributing to the Europeanization process of peoples through the recognition of fundamental human rights to all human beings in compliance with the legal systems and with the different legal traditions of Member States.

Under Art. 79 (*ex art 63 (3) (4) of the TCE*) Treaty on the functioning of the European Union, the Union develops a common immigration policy aimed at ensuring, in all stages, an effective management of migration flows, fair treatment of citizens from Third Countries regularly living in Member States and the prevention and contrast of illegal immigration and human trafficking. The goal is to ensure that there be no controls on individuals at the borders and develop a common policy on asylum, immigration and control of external borders, founded on solidarity between Member States and for citizens of third countries.

The European Pact on Immigration and Asylum adopted in 2008 by the Council of the European Union is the document that contains immigration policies that all Member States should adjust to and that constitute the starting point from which to begin to start a reform process. This regulates the organization of immigration in such a way as to take into account Europe's acceptance capacity in the labour market, housing, health, school and

social services with a view to protecting migrants from the risk of being exploited by criminal networks.

It is imperative for each Member State to define and implement the immigration, integration and asylum policies and each Region must intervene in the sectors over which they have competence.

As far back as twenty years ago the Member States of the Union shared policies in these sectors. Mention can be made of the removal of controls at the internal borders in most of the European territory, the adoption of a common policy on visas, harmonization of controls on external borders and of regulations on asylum, cooperation in the fight against illegal immigration creation of the FRONTEX agency.

Even though the European Council has appreciated, under mentioned pact, the important steps forward made within the framework of the Tampere Programme (1999/2004) and the Hague Programme (2004-2009), the Council deems it necessary to seek to achieve new goals. In the light of the communication of the Commission of 17 June 2008, the European Council adopted the immigration pact taking on five fundamental engagements:

- organize legal immigration taking into account the priorities, needs and reception capacities established by each Member State in favour of integration;
- fight against illegal immigration, in particular ensuring that foreigners without papers be returned to their Countries of origin or to a transit country;
- strengthen the efficacy of checks at the borders;
- build up a Europe of reception;
- Create a global partnership with the Countries of origin and of transit conducive to the synergies between migrations and development.

Therefore the European Council has invited Member States to implement a concerted immigration policy taking into account the impact that it may have on the other Member States, and to tighten up controls at the borders by endowing the FRONTEX agency with the means for exercising its mission of coordinating the EU border controls and hence cope with the crisis and carry out all the necessary temporary or permanent operations.

In spite of the considerable progress made thus far further, efforts are required to create a truly common immigration and asylum policy that takes into account the collective interest

of the European Union and the specific needs of each EU Country, as emerged recently in the Stockholm programme that sets out the priorities of the European Union (EU) for the **common space on freedom, security and justice** for the 2010-2014 period.

The Stockholm program aims at achieving, amongst others, the following priorities: **a global and flexible migration policy**. This policy should be focused on solidarity and responsibility and deal with both the needs of Member States and of migrants. It should be **in line with the needs of the labour market of the Member States, reducing to a minimum the brain drain from third countries**. A more effective integration policy should aim at **ensuring the rights of migrants**. Moreover a common policy on migration issues should entail an **effective and sustainable repatriation policy**, while it is of the utmost importance to **prevent, check and fight against illegal immigration**.

We therefore need to **build a political perspective for the European Regions**: strengthen the dialogue and partnerships with third countries (of origin and of transit) in particular through the further development of the global approach to migration in order to prevent events like the Lampedusa tragedy.

The CALRE Working Group on Immigration

The CALRE working group on immigration was set up in October 2013 with the aim of examining the prerogatives of Regional Parliaments in participating in the formation of the regulations governing the policies of the European Union and lay down proposals for examination by the institutional bodies.

The 2014 Work Plan

A first goal of the Coordination of the Regional Assembly of Sicily is to renew the **commitment for a truly common immigration and asylum policy**. In this sense we should operate to promote political dialogue and the control of compliance with the principle of cooperating with the European Parliament, enhancing listening by the European Commission and collaboration with the Committee of Regions, **strengthening the role of CALRE as crossroads and multicentric observatory capable of clearly seeing the different positions**: the position of the Union, of National Parliaments, of the regions and of Regional Assemblies.

A privileged vantage point from which to contribute to delineating an overall governance perspective in immigration matters with special emphasis on the Mediterranean area.

Appointments 2014:

7th March: Deadline for receiving requests to take part in the immigration working group.

3th April: Conference on ‘A Common Immigration Policy for Europe’, Palermo.

4th April: First meeting of the working group, Palermo