



CIR ANNUAL REPORT 2014

Summary

This year too we are presenting a summary of the Annual Report of CIR activities, our “calling card”, containing information relating to the key data, activities, projects and campaigns but also the challenges faced over the course of the year. The Report also highlights the chief events of 2014 not only those in which CIR has been involved but also the whole spectrum of issues concerning refugees and the right to asylum in Italy and in Europe.

“It is astounding that in 25 years of activities CIR has assisted over 120 thousand people and contributed to the rehabilitation of four thousand victims of torture, while constantly fighting for the rights of refugees and asylum seekers to be recognised”, explains **Roberto Zaccaria, President of CIR since February, in the introduction of the report.**

“We would like to underline with pride that during 2014 in the Mediterranean our country established the largest humanitarian operation in memory, involving the Italian Navy, the Coastguard, the Financial Guard and hundreds of thousands of volunteers. The name of this operation was *Mare Nostrum* and though it concluded at the end of the year, in order to hand over to Frontex’s smaller operation *Triton*, it continues to serve as a model that is, for now, unrepeatable. Thanks to that operation tens of thousands of human lives were saved and hundreds of boat captains and those involved in human trafficking were arrested. It would not be an exaggeration to consider awarding the Nobel Peace Prize to those women, men and the institutions who contributed so much to this extremely delicate mission,” states Roberto Zaccaria, President of CIR.

The **Director of CIR Christopher Hein** outlines the condition and reception of refugees and asylum seekers in 2014 and the proposals and projects promoted and developed by CIR during the year.

“2014 has seen continuous arrivals via sea of refugees and migrants on the coast of Southern Italy throughout the year. With over 170,000 people arriving the figures were unprecedentedly high. Almost half of these arrivals belonged to just two nationality groups: Syrians and Eritreans.”

- STATISTICAL OVERVIEW OF ASYLUM SEEKERS IN ITALY IN 2014

According to data from the Ministry of the Interior, in 2014 Italy received 64,886 requests for asylum, presented mainly by citizens originating from Nigeria (10,138), Mali (9971), Gambia (8556), Pakistan (7191) and Senegal (4678). Among those requesting asylum 59,870 were men, 5,016 were women, there were also 1,942 accompanied minors and 2,584 unaccompanied minors.

In Italy out of a total of 36,330 decisions (data including decisions on cases pending from the previous year), 21,861 outcomes were positive (60%). 3649 people (10%) were given refugee status, 8121 were granted subsidiary protection status (22%), 10,091 were granted humanitarian protection status (28%), 13,327 had their requests rejected (37%) and there were 1142 other outcomes (3%). The number of asylum requests in Italy in 2014 more than doubled (+144%) compared with the figures for 2013. This was the largest increase seen in all of the EU countries, where the average increase was of +44%.

-USERS ASSISTED BY CIR IN ITALY AND IN NORTH AFRICA IN 2014:

During the year CIR has had contact with, and in many cases provided orientation to (through individual or group interviews) and assisted **9,890** asylum seekers, refugees and those granted humanitarian or subsidiary protection status. Our services have been performed in nine Italian regions as well as in Libya and Algeria in order to safeguard access to protection for asylum seekers arriving in our country and to encourage the integration of refugees. CIR was also involved in Cameroon and Chad as part of clinical study into victims of torture.

-ACCESS TO PROTECTION

Advice and orientation activities in collaboration with local organizations, institutions, associations within the sphere of S.P.R.A.R. (the Protection System for Refugees and Asylum Seekers. After Lazio (over 2,744 users), a significant number of people were assisted in Campania (2,500), Puglia (579) and Sicily (566). In Libya 2,363 people were assisted.

Focus on the users in the national offices in Rome: CIR assisted 2,744 people at the national offices in Rome in 2014. Of this number, 1,120 were refugees, 969 asylum seekers, 222 with permits for humanitarian reasons and 395 with subsidiary protection. These people originated from 58 different countries. The most numerous nationalities were: Afghanistan (378), Iran (313), Democratic Republic of Congo (306), Eritrea (237) and Ivory Coast (195). 46% of users used orientation services; 31% underwent in-depth interviews with the social or legal sections (including the necessity to insert some people into the psycho-social rehabilitation pathway VI.TO: for those who have suffered extreme trauma caused by torture or violence), and 6% were provided with a financial contribution.

- INTEGRATION PROJECTS AND PROJECTS TO ASSIST THE MOST VULNERABLE CATEGORIES OF REFUGEES

CIR has continued with diverse projects in order to support the integration of refugees. These include:

- **“Ordinary Integration”**: financed by European Funds for Refugees. The project involves the creation of a pathway towards full autonomy following departure from reception centres within the Rome Municipal area for 70 people that have been granted international protection status.

- **“Rinnovare l’In.vi.to”**, financed by European Funds for Refugees. This project aims to encourage within the territory of Rome and its Province, the integration for **60 people with international protection status** and belonging to the most vulnerable categories, through a wide-ranging assistance programme including the organization of individual and personalized socio-economic, medical, psychological and rehabilitation interventions.

“Right to Rehabilitation” – supported by the European Union Pilot Project – Funding for Victims of Torture. The objective is the psychological, medical and social rehabilitation of 130 victims of torture, through the use of a multidisciplinary approach that aims to support the process of social and professional integration. The partner in these two projects is the Department for Economic

Development and Productive Activities, Training and Employment Department of the Rome City Council.

“Rosarno...and then?” : in Salerno, Caserta and Naples has provided social and legal orientation and assistance to 2,500 people, while awareness and information campaigns have reached 3 million people.

“RE-LAB: start-up your business”: the objective of this project is to support those who have been granted International Protection status (TPI) through integrated pathways towards employment autonomy. The Re-Lab project has involved 341 people with international protection status, 125 received entrepreneurial training, 98 successfully concluded the training pathway. 26 were shortlisted and a final selection was made of 14 business projects that were financed by the project and promoted by the International Training Centre of the International Training Organization (ITCILO).

“Together with VI.TO.” – financed by the European Commission (EIDHR). Over three years the project identified and managed the cases of 1084 asylum seekers and refugee survivors of torture, also establishing activities of training, awareness raising, capacity building, networking in addition to research in Cameroon and Chad, thanks to international partnerships with two important organizations (AJPV in Chad and the Trauma Centre in Cameroon)

A transversal aspect of the various activities of the project to support the victims of torture in Italy (legal, social, medical and psychological services) was the management of the psychosocial rehabilitation workshops. Some refugees have participated in the workshops, some have had central roles in the theatre show **“MARE MONSTRUM- Ovvero –L’annegato più bello del mondo”** (**“MARE MONSTRUM - or - the most beautiful drowning in the world”**) in memory of Gabriel García Márquez – at the San Sisto Orangery in Rome (Baths of Caracalla). The show was one of the events promoted by CIR on the 26th June 2014, International Day Against Torture, in addition to the international conference **“Global scenarios: the causes and dimensions of migration in the African continent”**, which included the participation of Romano Prodi, President of SIOI and former Foreign Minister, Franco Frattini. A new communication campaign **“Vere torture. Oggi è il tuo giorno”** (**“Real Torture: today is your day”**) was also created.

Other Projects: *“The Right to justice: quality of legal assistance for unaccompanied minors”*, *“Staring at the Sun”*, supported by Open Society Foundations, a project concerning people of Romani origins, who are excluded from citizenship rights in Italy.

VOLUNTARY ASSISTED RETURN – An increasing number of migrants are returning to their countries of origin voluntarily. The number of such individuals has risen from 228 people accompanied to return in 2009 to 2,000 estimated by June 2015, for a **total of 3, 219 people who over these years have utilized this measure that helps migrants to return and reintegrate into their country of origin.**

CIR is part of the RIRVA Network (the Italian Network for Voluntary Assisted Return) The network, which is in its sixth year of activities, has supported Voluntary Assisted Return since June 2009 with a national reference system for information and consultations on the measures of Voluntary Assisted Return (RVA) for migrants, operators in the sector and citizenship.

CIR is active in the project “**Return Integration 2**”, which has the aim of accompanying **80 citizens from Algeria, Ghana, Peru, Ecuador and Columbia** through the pathway of voluntary assisted return. In 2014 105 people were approached and, following an in-depth explanation of the procedure and an evaluation of suitability, **45 people including 6 family groups** confirmed their interest and were accompanied on individual pathways for the development of their own return project. **18 people have already returned to Ecuador, Columbia, Peru and Ghana and 15 reintegration plans have been developed.** The initiative builds on the experience of the project “**Return Integration**” that provided **25 families (45 people in total)** information and orientation in their pathway of voluntary return, assisting **32 people in their return and monitoring their reintegration in their country of origin.** Specifically, 27 people have returned to Ecuador, 4 to Columbia and 1 to Ghana.

JOINT INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS

CIR is a member of **ECRE, the European Council for Refugees and Exiles, the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN) - working group on Migration and Asylum of the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims –IRCT.** In February 2014 CIR, together with the Italian Society for International Organization (SIOI) and the Association for Assistance to Somali women and children, with the support of the Italo-Somali Chamber, organized an international conference in Rome “*Somalia, the current scenario and development prospects*”.

For many years CIR has pursued transnational projects and participated in European networks with the support of the European Union.

The EPIM Project “Access to Protection: a human right”, supported by EPIM, created the report “*European Borders: access to protection? Bridges not walls*” presented in Brussels at an international conference on 28 October and the document “*Maybe Tomorrow*”, which describes the Mare Nostrum Operation and the conditions of initial reception of migrants on their arrival in Italy.

The AIDA/Asylum Information Database Project supported by EPIM: on 9 September last year the 2nd Annual Report of the AIDA-Asylum Information Database was launched, titled “*Mind the Gap: an NGO’s perspective of the challenges of access to protection in the Common Asylum System*” was presented in Brussels.

With the FER Project “**Locanda Dublino**”: **132 people** were inserted into activities of identification, initial information and orientation at the Marco Polo airport in Venice. **68** were beneficiaries of reception activities.

As a member of the **European Network on Statelessness**, in Italy CIR launched the information and awareness raising campaign “*Everyone has the right to have a nationality*” that culminated in an online petition presented in **October 2014** at a public event at the European Parliament **in Brussels** urging Europe’s leaders to commit to protecting the stateless. In Italy social media activities contacted 80,000 on Facebook alone. On **10 October** CIR and UNHCR organized a public **meeting in Rome** about the issue of **statelessness**, moderated by Gad Lerner and promoted by the Human Rights Commission of the Senate.

- ACTIVITIES IN NORTH AFRICA

“Although with extremely limited means, CIR continued its activities in Algeria and in Libya, in the latter country in conditions of extreme difficulty and insecurity. CIR is convinced that efforts to improve the conditions of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, including the most vulnerable groups, in the countries of North Africa does not mean “externalising” European responsibility but, rather, it follows a logic of humanitarian intervention” explains the director of CIR.

1) **IN LIBYA:** CIR is involved as the leader of the project “**CONTRIBUTING TO THE EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF MIXED MIGRANT FLOWS IN LIBYA**”, financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the International Cooperation department of Political Affairs of the Italian Republic in collaboration with Caritas in Tripoli and OICEA - Organization for International Cooperation and Emergency Aid

In spite of the security problems and instability of the political situation in the country, activities were pursued concerning: capacity building for local institutional personnel; the provision of humanitarian assistance; the identification of vulnerable individuals; consultations and/or accompaniment and /or intermediation for residential integration and for social/health services, or in the field of education; legal consultations; research into immigration and related issues; monitoring the presence of foreign migrants detained in reception centres in the country; promotion and support to the constitution/reinforcement of associations for the safeguarding of migrants, of networks of organizations working with migrants. **Beneficiaries: 2,363 people in 8 Detention Centres managed by the Libyan Interior Ministry;** of these 227 were minors, 79 were unaccompanied minors and 872 women, originating mainly from Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia and Sudan. 976 were asylum seekers, refugees or those with humanitarian protection status; 121 were victims of human trafficking or prostitution; 35 people suffered from psychological-physical disorders.

CIR was a partner in the “**SAHARA MED** “ Project, jointly financed with the European Commission. The project was led by the Italian Interior Ministry and also involved the partnership of the Libyan Interior Ministry, the OIM and the Greek Naval Ministry through the project “**Rose in the Desert**” financed by the Italian *Tavola Valdese* and co-financed by the Dutch Embassy in Italy, the project established the liberation, care and reintegration of **17 female migrants**, victims of people trafficking.

2-In Algeria, CIR was involved, in spite of many difficulties, in the activities of the project “**Mixed Migration in Algeria – reinforcing protection and management capacities of the most vulnerable,**” in order to aid the effective management of mixed migration flows in Algeria; the project is financed by the National Commission for Human Rights in Algeria, the Dutch Government, *Otto per Mille* funds, *Tavola Valdese*.

-TRAINING AND COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITIES:

During 2014 CIR promoted diverse training activities, both independently and in collaboration with other institutions or organizations. Important joint initiatives were consolidated with with the Rome

University “*La Sapienza*” – Political Science and International Law faculties, the Jus & Nomos Association, the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literature of Salento University, the University of Bergamo.

In 2014 CIR promoted “**Fammi vedere**” (“**Show Me**”) the first edition of the short film competition for those wishing to narrate the world of asylum seekers, refugees and their viewpoints through the medium of film.

The winners of the first edition, who were awarded the prize during an evening of solidarity and entertainment at the Montecitorio Club (the Italian Parliamentary Club), were: first prize: ***La Porta*** (*The Door*) by Giancarlo Loffarelli; in second place ***Travel*** by Tomasso Papetti and in third, ***Philomene*** by Diego Monfredini. The winners appeared on television on the broadcast ***Unomattina*** and on **Rainews 24**. The competition and the short films of some of the finalists were shown in Turin at the 66th edition of the Prix Italia, the international competition organized by RAI for radio, television and the web, and also at the third edition of the **Trevignano Film Fest** and at the **MAXXI** gallery as part of the **Wired** initiative.

The initiative was supported by figures from the world of culture and show business, who judged the competition and also presented their own contributions on the theme of the right to asylum. In the first edition the jury was composed of: **Roberto Faenza, Monica Guerritore, Laura Delli Colli, Wilma Labate, Gabriele Lavia, Monica Maggioni, Pasquale Scimeca, Mimma Nocelli, Carlo Puca, Andrea Purgatori, Ivan Silvestrini, Walter Veltroni**. Also on the jury were the President and Director of CIR, in addition to representatives from the field of refugees, the media and education. Mediterranean Hope, a project of the Federation of Evangelical churches in Italy and the SAIE, supported the project for short films about the right to asylum for 2014.

MEDIA: CIR lobbying, advocacy and communications in 2014 concerned in particular the operations **Mare Nostrum and Frontex Plus**, the numerous arrivals and shipwrecks that occurred in the Mediterranean and the situation in Libya. There was a particular focus on the promotion of **protected access to the EU territory** and to international protection and also to the strengthening of the capabilities of the reception system and services for integration in Italy. Connected to these themes was the **launch of the 2nd Annual Report AIDA and “Access to Protection: Bridges not Walls”**. Numerous national and international newspapers reported on appeals, reports and declarations made by CIR on these themes during the year.

In 2014 CIR launched the **awareness and fundraising campaign “Vero Rifugio” (Real Shelter)**, connected to campaigns using solidarity SMS messages and *5 per mille*. A **television message was created and broadcast on 25 channels** (including La7, Mediaset, DeeJayTV, Discovery) with a **total of 857 free broadcasts while a radio spot was broadcast on 13 stations for a total of 271 free broadcasts**.

WEBSITE & SOCIAL NETWORK: significant development on social networks, especially **Facebook**, where there was an increase in “likes” from 3,320 to 3,900 (+17.4%), **Twitter:** an increase from 520 to 1000 followers (+92.3%) and the **CIR YouTube channel** that rose from 8,900 to **17,500** views (+96.6%).

By Luca C. Zingoni

Updated on 30/9/2015