



National Summary Report

Case study: Italy



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Exploration and analysis of further public and civic alternatives to RR: case studies at multiple levels

Case study: **Italy**

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Disclaimer

This document provides a concise summary of the key findings of the WP7 national report in Italy. For detailed analysis, evidence, and comprehensive insights, please refer to the full report. The information in this summary should not be considered complete or fully representative of the entire study



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1. Overview of public and civil alternatives to return and readmission in Italy

In recent years, the Italian context has been characterised by increasingly restrictive approaches to migration, centred on deterrence, administrative detention, and limited and conditional regularisation pathways. Within this environment, alternatives to return and readmission policies have remained marginal, often emerging at the local level and lacking institutional support.

The mapping of existing alternatives highlights a fragmented landscape composed of both legal mechanisms and project-based initiatives. Legal instruments, such as Special Protection (a residence permit based on social and work integration) and periodic regularisation measures, have provided some opportunities for undocumented migrants to obtain a residence permit. However, these measures are typically characterised by restrictive eligibility criteria, high levels of administrative discretion, and significant instability due to frequent legislative reforms. As a result, they rarely offer secure and long-term pathways to regularisation and social inclusion.

At the same time, project-based initiatives developed by civil society organisations play an important role in addressing immediate needs. These initiatives often facilitate access to healthcare, housing, education, and social support. Nevertheless, their impact remains limited, as they do not generally provide access to stable legal status or long-term residence. Overall, the Italian system reveals a structural gap between the limited scope of existing alternatives and the broader needs of undocumented migrants.

1.1 The project “Alternative measures to administrative detention: toward a migration management both more human and more efficient”

Against this background, an alternative based on the case management approach implemented in Rome by the Italian Coalition for Freedom and Civil Rights (CILD) and Associazione Progetto Diritti stands out. This initiative, called “Alternative measures to administrative detention: toward a migration management both more human and more efficient” have been running since 2021 and is particularly relevant because it provides undocumented migrants a comprehensive and individualised pathway towards regularisation



and social inclusion.

The case management approach is grounded in the principle of non-detention and is designed as a holistic and systematic model to support individuals. Rather than prioritising removal, the approach places the individual within the community as the default option, with detention considered only as a measure of last resort. Central to this model is the role of the case manager, who establishes a relationship of trust with the migrant and accompanies them throughout their administrative and legal pathway.

The intervention is structured through a series of interconnected phases, including the initial assessment of the case, the identification of vulnerabilities and needs, the co-design of an individualised action plan, its implementation through continuous support, and the resolution of the case. This process enables migrants to make informed decisions regarding their legal options, while also facilitating access to services and rights through coordination with local actors, including legal advisors, healthcare providers, and social services.

An important component of the project is its role in addressing the lack of reliable information available to undocumented migrants. By establishing local helpdesks and providing accurate legal guidance, the initiative responds to widespread issues of misinformation, scams, and inadequate counselling, which often exacerbate migrants' vulnerability and hinder their access to regularisation pathways.

The case management approach has demonstrated tangible results. Between 2021 and 2023, the project assisted more than sixty undocumented migrants, with diverse backgrounds and migration trajectories. More than half of the beneficiaries regularised their legal status. Beyond formal regularisation, the approach contributed to improving overall living conditions, enhancing access to rights, and fostering processes of social inclusion.

However, despite its effectiveness, the initiative remains limited in scope and sustainability. One of the main challenges identified is the lack of institutional support. The project was developed and implemented entirely by civil society organisations and relied on private funding, without being integrated into public policies at either the local or national level. This has significantly constrained its capacity for expansion and long-term continuity.

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