

COURTESY TRANSLATION

The management of migratory flows towards the European Union has entered a critical phase, in which the solidarity of Member States is put to the test on a daily basis. Despite recent initiatives by the Commission and the Council, the closure of borders by some Member States, sometimes not adequately motivated, coupled with the widespread refusal to sharing the burden of this huge challenge, threaten the foundations of the Union itself. The Commission's proposals, strongly supported by Italy, to set up a European Border and Coast Guard, together with the 'Back to Schengen' Communication and the Dublin System reform proposals can yield concrete results only if the management of migratory flows moves from an emergency stage to a more strategic and organized one. From this perspective it is clear that the external dimension of migration policies is fundamental for the survival of Schengen and the principle of free movement. The management of migratory flows is no longer sustainable without a targeted and enhanced cooperation with third countries, both of origin and transit. Much has already been done but we need to do more and to act rapidly if we want to prevent a deteriorating systemic crisis.

Italy has drafted a contribution of ideas defining a possible path to improve the effectiveness of the EU's external migration policies. I am sharing these thoughts with you so that the Commission and the EEAS can take them into consideration in their reflections on a comprehensive EU migration policy, as part of a further elaboration that could be presented to the European Council.

In writing this non-paper, we have taken into account recent experiences. In particular, the EU-Turkey agreement represents a first concrete attempt for enhanced cooperation with a third country that, albeit agreed in an emergency situation and hence perfectible, shows that it is possible to develop effective lines of action in the management of migratory flows. We believe that this agreement should not remain a one-off case. If so, we would be witnessing an imbalance in terms of resources and political capital employed in one geographical area compared to other areas that are no less important when tackling the issue of migration.

Our non-paper is centered on the idea of developing a model of offer to partner countries whereby the measures proposed by the EU (strengthened financial and operational support) need to be matched by specific commitments by third countries, such as effective border controls, reduction of migratory flows, cooperation on returns/readmissions and fight against trafficking in human beings. A lot can already be done by focusing existing resources and instruments (governance should be improved) on key partner countries. But we must go further and provide new and innovative sources of financing that, among other things, will help cover the future costs of the agreement with Turkey.

In particular, at EU level it will be essential to finance and manage: 1) an extraordinary action plan on returns; 2) legal, logistical, financial and infrastructural support to manage migratory flows in the partner countries with a careful on-site screening that distinguishes refugees from economic migrants.

The ideas that Italy provides to the Commission, to the President of the European Council and to the EEAS are motivated also by the belief that an ambitious plan on the external dimension of migration would find a broad support among Member States.

Considering the importance of the migration issue and the efforts of all the European institutions, I inform you that it is my intention to send this letter and the attached document also to President Schulz and Prime Minister Rutte, while the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Gentiloni will send the non-paper separately to HRVP Mogherini.

I take this opportunity to extend my best wishes,

Matteo Renzi