

COVID19 - Update Italy

borderline-europe, Sicily - PART 15



Latest Update: 13.11.2020

Politically/Socially

- The new corona measures throughout the country have been in force since November 3. Italy is divided into yellow, orange and red zones. It is no longer allowed to leave one's own city (unless there are valid reasons). This is likely to become a major problem, especially for migrant field workers. Health care is no longer guaranteed: in the medically far less equipped south, ambulances queue up in front of the emergency rooms, and many patients are being rejected. The red zones, the ones most affected by restrictions, will be expanded on November 12. There is no guarantee of security, especially for those with low incomes. At the same time the local population continues to violate the measures, and the city centers are heavily crowded until the official closing time at 10 p.m., when no one is allowed to be outside anymore. Palermo will introduce a "standing" ban from 12th of November on, which will effectuate daily from 4 p.m. and on the weekends, no one will then be allowed to stand or sit on benches in public places in order to avoid crowds.
- Although the Covid 19 pandemic is spreading more and more and hospitals are complaining about the lack of professional staff members, medical professionals who don't possess Italian or EU citizenship are still [prevented from working in hospitals](#). According to AMSI (Associazione dei Medici Stranieri in Italia) - an association of foreign doctors in Italy- about 75,000 people, including doctors, nurses and psychologists, are affected by this discrimination.
- The right-wing polemics rose, when the fact came out that the assassin of Nice had entered European territory via Lampedusa, and had then spend his quarantine on one of the Italian quarantine ships. As a result, Italian Interior Minister Lamorgese and the French Interior Minister met to set up a plan, in order to ensure the prevention of departures. [Aircrafts and ships should indicate departures](#) early on.
- The non-profit organizations Openpolis & ActionAid denounce the [policy of the reception centers on land](#). The virus can spread easily and riots and protest are constantly taking place, but above all they are ['machines to milk state funds'](#) without any humanitarian or social purpose. The tender conditions would favor large reception centers, which often provide huge dormitories, but work for profit reasons only and lack expertise in the social work. Smaller centers cannot compete in these tenders. This report also includes an interview with Alberto Biondo from our 'sister organization' Borderline Sicilia.
- One of the largest of these centers, the hotspot in the former barracks ["Gasparro" di Bisconte near Messina](#), which were closed only a few weeks ago due to riots and protests, is now to be reopened after all. It is to become a reception/quarantine center for young people and minors.
- Despite the pandemic, [30,780 migrants have arrived in Italy so far this year](#) (latest update 11.11.2020). 12,360 of these are Tunisians, while Bangladesh is the second largest group with 3,710, followed by Pakistan, Algeria, the Ivory Coast, Egypt and Sudan. In the same period of the previous year, 11,471 refugees had arrived on Italian territory. It is striking that the majority of the arrivals are no longer from sub-Saharan states, as has been the case in recent years.

Situation in the Central Mediterranean

- Still, almost all NGO ships are seized. Only the [Spanish NGO vessel Open-Arms](#) is back in the Central Med since November 9th. In addition, the proceedings against mission leaders Ana Isabel Montes Mier and Captain Marc Reig Creus at the court in Ragusa (Sicily) were closed. In operations on March 15th of 2018, the Open Arms had brought 218 rescued persons to Pozzallo in Sicily, the ship was subsequently detained for one month and the two were charged for ‘aiding and abetting illegal entry’.
- The protest actions on the quarantine ships continue. Tunisian citizens in particular, who are threatened with deportation after the quarantine period, are taking radical actions. From hunger strikes to self-inflicted injuries to suicide attempts, the acts bear witness to sheer desperation. In Palermo, nine young men were recently taken from a quarantine ship to hospital with serious injuries because they had swallowed broken glass and razor blades. A similar case occurred in Trapani, where the young men tried to flee as soon as they arrived at the hospital. An article in [The New Humanitarian](#), published on November 9th, reports in detail the situation on the quarantine ships and highlights the illegitimate practice, in which people were brought from centers on land to the ships without any legal base.
- However, despite the anti-covid measures, arrivals have not stopped. In the last few days over [2500 people have reached Lampedusa](#). The hotspot, which had become very crowded in the meantime, was relieved by the quarantine ships.
- After the public outcry last month, caused by the death of 15-year old Abou, the 'Rete Antirazzista Catanese' reports about a similar case that happened in early October. Another minor, 17-year-old Abdallah Said, had died in a hospital near Catania after his stay on a quarantine ship (GNV Azzurra). The young Somali was subsequently buried near Messina. Unlike Abou, however, his case remains largely unknown and so he had to die under 'total indifference'. (Source: Rete Antirazzista Catania)

Situation of Migrants

- In Sardinia, a bus that was supposed to transfer migrants to a new reception center had an accident. Seven people were seriously injured. Those affected are part of the 125 people who were rescued last month by the [Alan Kurdi](#).
- As every year in autumn, in line with the period of the olive harvest many migrants move to [Campobello di Mazzara](#). They had already suffered the last years and before the Covid-19 pandemic, from unworthy conditions. Accusations were repeatedly forwarded that no measures were taken at a political level to prevent these conditions. Every year, it seems that local politics is being surprised by the situation. Yet, the industry is dependent on the workers who do the heavy physical work for lowest wages. Last week the first Covid-19 infections were found among the workers. Accommodation has now been provided for quarantine. Various organizations are demanding, among other things, that the housing, which is provided during the pandemic should be preserved beyond the crisis and that hygienic sanitary facilities should be created and maintained. A detailed description of the situation [can be found here](#).

Further information on the situation in Italy can be found under ‘Streiflicht Italien’ and previous Corona Updates on our homepage <https://www.borderline-europe.de/projekte/newsletter-italien>