



Scirocco
borderline-europe, Sicily –
Part 08/2023
Palermo, 10.05.2023



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Scirocco [ʃiˈrɔkko-Scirocco] is a southeasterly, hot strong wind that carries dust and sand across the Mediterranean Sea to Sicily and Italy's north for often only a few hours. This newsflash has been published on an approximately bi-weekly basis since March 2021.

Political and social situation

Clear position against Lollobrigida's statement

At the federal congress of the CISAL trade union on the 18th April 2023 Minister of Agriculture [Lollobrigida](#) warned in front of the background of the low birth rate in Italy against a "population replacement" (literally: ethnic exchange) (sic!) in which Italian children are replaced by "others" (meaning migrants). Democratic Party (PD) leader [Elly Schlein](#) strongly criticized these statements and attributed the minister's language to the ideology of "white supremacy". Lollobrigida points out in his subsequent statements that he was not aware of the theory of ethnic substitution and that his choice of term was made out of ignorance and not racism. His clarification is not very convincing since the term has already been used several times by [Meloni](#) and [Salvini](#) in previous years.

Statements like this from a sitting member of the government are unacceptable and once again support the post-fascist orientation of the current government - within which, for example, statements are made that emphasise that [anti-fascism](#) is not constitutionally

anchored in Italy. Contrary to Lollobrigida's statement there are [studies](#) that show that increased immigration can indeed have positive effects on the development of economies facing a declining birth rate and ageing population.

Approval of the Cutro Decree

The so-called "[Cutro Decree](#)" was already confirmed in the Chamber of Deputies on the 3th of May (it had been scheduled for the 10th of May). The right-wing party (Fratelli d'Italia) had held a confidence vote on the 2nd May, which forwarded the decision by a week. The original draft of the decree was again strengthened by the right-wing, which also submitted it. The opposition members who wanted to make contributions in the week before 10th of May are now no longer allowed to do so. Now there is nothing in the way for the application of the decree. The so-called Commissione degli Affari Costituzionali, the committee responsible for the inclusion of the draft law, had released the original version to the Senate for modifications. Article 8 (punishment of smugglers) was approved without any changes. Opposition [amendments](#) calling for the deletion or specification of this article were rejected.



CPR, Pian del Lago

Likewise, the implementation of Article 10 (building more detention centers for repatriation (CPR)) was voted for. It was also decided that the [Red Cross](#) should be responsible for the management of the Lampedusa hotspot and that 400 migrants per day should be transferred from the Lampedusa hotspot to Sicily by private boats. Once again commercial ferries are being rented. Let's hope that after the experience with the [quarantine ships](#), this time it really is just a ferry service. Regarding the [protezione speciale](#), an amendment in the Senate at the end of April was only partially rejected. The motion, named after its first signatory Maurizio Gasparri (Fratelli d'Italia), called for the deletion of a passage in Art. 19 TU (Testo Unico, Migration Act) that referred to compliance with the Italian Constitution and international treaties when deciding whether to grant *protezione speciale*. The rejection came from its own majority because there was too much concern that the law was unconstitutional and contrary to European law.

The possibility for people who have received special protection to convert it into a residence permit in order to be able to work was removed; it also no longer applies to persons who are in Italy due to severe catastrophes and for medical treatment. In addition, a mental illness alone should not justify a ban on deportation.

The [mayors](#) of the six major cities Rome, Turin, Florence, Naples, Bologna and Milan wrote a letter to the government opposing the abolition of special protection and pointing out the extremely negative consequences for migrants (e.g. increase in undeclared work and

homelessness). This action was welcomed by the PD president Elly Schlein.



In [Rome](#), on the 28th April, a demonstration under the slogan "Not on our backs" took place with thousands of participants against the Italian migration policy. But the protest was unsuccessful: the decree with the macabre name "Cutro" became law. In the meantime, the [number of victims](#) of the Cutro shipwreck on the 26th February has risen to 94.

The State of Emergency

Within the frame of the so-called State of Emergency, Valerio [Valenti](#) was appointed as commissioner for the administration of the first and second reception system. In the future Valentini will coordinate the [expansion](#) of reception facilities in cooperation with local authorities. However, four Italian [regions](#) (Emilia Romagna, Tuscany, Campania and Puglia) oppose Valentini's executive commission, as they do not want to accept the government taking over their responsibilities.

During his first [stay](#) in the Lampedusa hotspot on April 18th, Valentini declared that from now on two ships will be provided for transfers out of the hotspot.

Among many other deputies, [Francesco Silvestri](#) of the so-called Five Star Movement criticises the declaration of a state of emergency, because according to him there is no emergency and the overburdened reception and distribution situation of migrants is above all a structural problem in Italy. In order to get the migration situation under control in the long term, structural changes in the reception system and legal entry routes are needed.



Dublin cases

On the first of April 2023, the Court of [Lecce](#) upheld the appeal of a Bengali asylum seeker. Based on the Dublin Convention, the plaintiff should have been transferred to Malta. The judge suspended the transfer based on a well-founded risk of "inhuman and degrading treatment" in Malta. In addition, in two decisions of the 28th November and 9th December, the [Dutch](#) Council of State decided that a Nigerian and an Eritrean asylum seeker could not be returned to Italy because the Italian authorities themselves had suspended readmission by transfers from other EU Member States under the Dublin procedure in a circular of the 5th December. Another reason is the lack of reception facilities. According to the Council of State's department, this does not automatically mean that the Italian authorities are indifferent to the situation of the foreigners. But there is still a real

risk that, if they are transferred to Italy without their own will and decision, they will find themselves in a situation of very extensive material deprivation and thus unable to meet the most basic needs such as shelter, food and running water.

Situation of the refugees

Psychotropic in CPR

Journalists Luca Rondi and Lorenzo Figoni, with the support of [Riccardo Magi](#) MP from the Italian party Più Europa and Ilaria Cucchi (whose brother was killed in [police custody](#)), among other MPs, have submitted a parliamentary question to the Minister of Interior and Health on the use of psychotropic in detention centres for deportees (CPR). The question follows an investigation "Locked up and numbed" by *Altræconomia* magazine. Their data shows that purchases of [psychotropic](#) (e.g. antidepressants, neuroleptics, anti-epilepsy drugs) in CPRs account for a significant proportion of health expenditure: 64% in Milan, 51% in Rome and 44% in Turin. The medications are used for various reasons: Firstly, to keep refugees and migrants calm, as they are less likely to "make demands" when asleep or anaesthetised, and secondly, to reduce their feeling of hunger. This misuse of psychotropic drugs costs lives. We already reported on the case of Wissem Ben Abdel Latif from Rome [here](#). In another case, a trial began in mid-January 2023 to resolve the death of Vakhtang Ehlukidze (a 37-year-old Georgian). The autopsy revealed that Ehlukidze died of pulmonary and cerebral oedema, which can be attributed to a "cocktail of drugs and narcotics".

Accommodation in tent camps

In the context of the declaration of the state of migration emergency, [Matteo Lepore](#), mayor of Bologna, points out that the government is abolishing the current reception system in Italy and opening the way for tent camps. Only in Bologna for example 400 refugees and migrants who are already in the system would end up on the streets. According to a report in the newspaper Der Standard a [tent camp](#) is already being set up in Catania (Sicily). Transfers to Catania often take place from the hotspot Lampedusa. Once again, a right-wing government is only creating grievances that supposedly wants to fight with its measures against it.



Demonstration in Palermo on the occasion of Liberation Day on 25 april

Find more information on the situation in Italy and previous issues of the [Scirocco](#) under "Projects" on our [homepage](#).

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