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"Humanitarian corridors": a best practice in migrations management

Paolo Naso

> Fear asks: "Is it safe?" Opportunism asks the question: "Is it political?" Vanity asks: "Is it popular?" But conscience asks the question: "Is it right?'" And there comes a time when you have to take a stand that is neither safe, nor political, nor popular, but one must take it because your conscience tells you it is right.
>
> Martin Luther King

For over ten years, Italy has been implementing a best practice for migration management known as "humanitarian corridors"[1]. Traditionally, the term has a technical military meaning that refers to a mechanism for protecting the civilian population for whom, during a conflict, escape routes are opened that are as safe and protected from fighting as possible.

The "corridors" we write about in this essay, although characterized by the same "humanitarian" purpose, have a different dynamic: since their inception, they have been proposed as a legal and safe way to guarantee refugees in particularly vulnerable conditions access to the procedure for recognizing refugee status. The problem is that, according to the law in force in Italy and in most Schengen countries (see Moses 2013), the right to apply for recognition is reserved for individuals who have already entered the national territory. The paradox and main limitation of the current asylum rules lie in this precondition, which pushes many individuals who would potentially be entitled to refugee status to try to enter the Schengen area illegally in the hope that, once they arrive, they will be able to submit their application.

The human cost of this procedure is extremely high and morally intolerable, especially in view of the increase in migratory pressure along the central Mediterranean route, caused by the serious political instability in the countries involved in the so-called "Arab Springs" (see De Sousa 2014).

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[1] Numerous scientific essays have described specific aspects of humanitarian corridors. Among others, we would like to mention Pappalardo 2023; Garofalo 2017; Gois, Falchi 2017; Marchetti, Manocchi 2018; Marchetti 2018; Morozzo Della Rocca 2017; Palm 2018; Rolando 2018; Sangiorgi 2018; Naso 2019; Nalbone 2020; Naso 2024.

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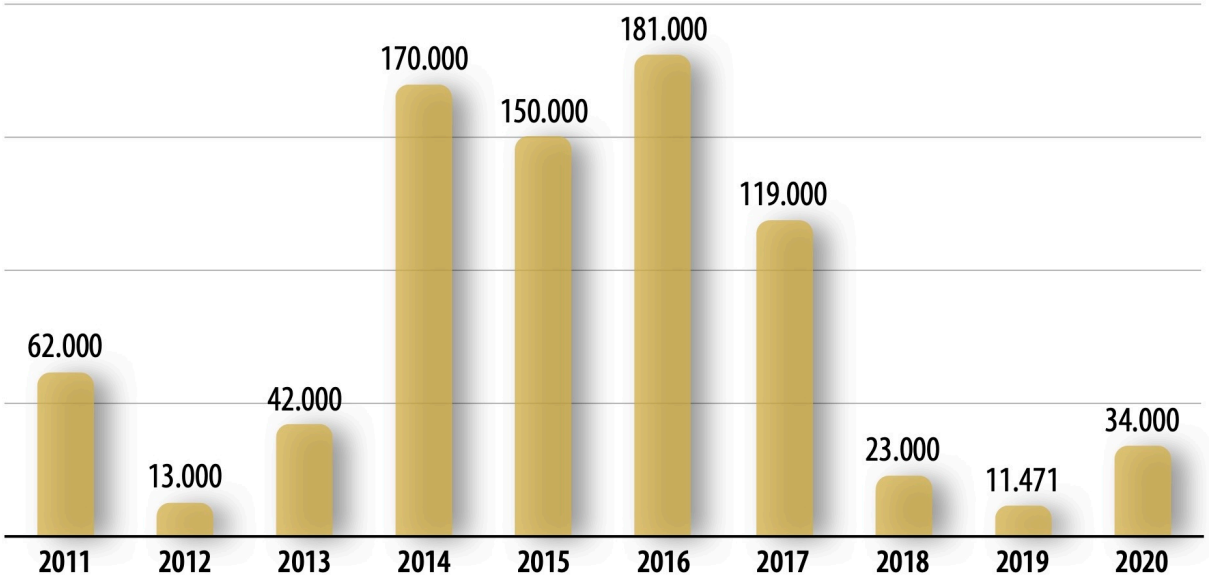
Migrant arrivals in Italy 2011-2025



Source: ISMU 2023

In the same years, according to IOM sources, there were at least 30,000 victims of Mediterranean "immigration"[2].

This is the backdrop against which a veritable massacre took place in 2013 when, on October 3, just off the small island of Lampedusa — 110 nautical miles from Sicily and 70 from Tunisia — a shipwreck occurred in which 368 refugees died. It was not the first accident of this kind, nor will it be the one with the highest number of victims in the history of recent Mediterranean migration[3]. What made the difference was the direct and anguished testimony of dozens of survivors and, above all, the accounts of some of the rescuers, which had a significant impact on Italian public opinion. The particular awareness of the October 3 tragedy is due primarily to the testimony of several volunteers, almost all islanders, who intervened to rescue the survivors. Thanks in part to their initiative and political pressure, combined with that of various NGOs engaged in search and rescue efforts, since 2016, October 3 has been designated the Day of Remembrance and Reception, pursuant to Law 45/2016, established to remember and commemorate all victims of immigration and to promote awareness-raising and solidarity initiatives. The timely construction of a collective memory of that event, involving survivors, islanders, law enforcement agencies, NGO workers, journalists, and tourists, had an important effect in terms of mobilization. The effects were significant: on October 13, 2013, the Italian government launched

[2] See https://missingmigrants.iom.int/mediterranean (accessed June 10th, 2026).

[3] According to the UNHCR, 3,231 migrants died during the Mediterranean crossing in 2021, 1,881 in 2020, 1,510 in 2019, and over 2,277 in 2018. The number could be even higher with deaths and missing persons along land routes through the Sahara Desert and remote border areas. The Mediterranean is seeing an increase in deaths and tragedies, as revealed by the graphic representation of UNHCR data (see www.unhcr.org/it, June 10th, 2022, accessed February 6th, 2024).

Operation Mare Nostrum (Tazziol 2016), which ended on October 31, 2014, and was therefore carried out under the governments headed by Enrico Letta and Matteo Renzi; and on May 18, 2015, the European Union promoted a search and rescue program officially called European Naval Force in the South-Central Mediterranean, known as Sophia, which ended in 2020. The transfer of SAR operations in the Mediterranean from Italian to European responsibility was largely due to the determination of Prime Minister Renzi, aided by Italy's six-month presidency of the EU (July-December 2014)[4].

1. The civil society

At the same time, civil society also mobilized, for whom Lampedusa had become a symbol of hospitality and solidarity (see Albera 2025; Cuttitta 2012; Bartolo 2018; Bartolo, Tillotta 2017)[5].

The experience of the "Humanitarian Corridors" (CU) matured in this context and in the consolidated ecumenical relationship between two religious entities: the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy and the Waldensian Board on the one hand, and the Community of Sant' Egidio on the other. In short, we are dealing with public actors with a specific religious and even confessional character, characterized by a recognized capacity for charitable intervention — diaconal in current Protestant parlance — and theological elaboration on current issues of public relevance.

The date, which is not only symbolic, from which the reflection that would lead to the conception and creation of the CUs actually began, is certainly October 3, 2013. A little less than a year later, from September 7 to 9, 2014, the usual meeting "Religions and Cultures in Dialogue" took place in Antwerp (Belgium), promoted by the Community of Sant'Egidio and attended, as was often the case, by the moderator of the Waldensian Table, Eugenio Bernardini. During that meeting, the founder of the Community, Andrea Riccardi, its president, Marco Impagliazzo, and Bernardini himself discussed the urgent need for a proposal and a concrete ecumenical initiative on the issue of irregular migration in the Mediterranean. It was the beginning of a dialogue that soon involved a group of Catholic and Protestant experts. The Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy (FCEI) — an inter-church body representing Protestant mainline denominations such as Waldensians (reformed), Methodists, Baptists, Lutherans the Salvation Army — promptly expressed its support for the initiative and mobilized the nascent structure of *Mediterranean Hope – Refugee and Migrant Pro-*

[4] Operation Sophia, formally European Union Naval Force Mediterranean (EU NAVFOR Med), was a military operation of the European Union that was established as a consequence of the April 2015 Libya migrant shipwrecks with the aim of neutralizing established refugee smuggling routes in the Mediterranean. The operational headquarters was located in Rome. The EU mandate for the operation ended on March 31 2020. The history of the various search and rescue missions in the central Mediterranean carried out by the EU is summarized in EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service (Orav 2024).

[5] Among other titles showing how Lampedusa became an international symbol. On the topic, we can refer to some movies or documentaries, the most known and internationally awarded, *Fuocoammare*, by Gianfranco Rosi 2017.

gram, which was then taking its first steps, surpassing and expanding the activities of the pre-existing Refugee and Migrant Service[6].

The general objective was to open up a "legal route" that would allow refugees and migrants to avoid violent and risky blackmail by traffickers by accessing legal and safe immigration routes. The more specific objective was to identify the legal basis for formulating a project to be submitted to the Italian government for approval. After a thorough study phase, the working group saw the possibility of linking up with the regulations governing visas issued by Schengen countries. In particular, Article 25 of the Treaty Regulation allows Member States to issue a visa

> with limited territorial validity […] when, for humanitarian reasons or reasons of national interest or by virtue of international obligations, the Member State considers it necessary to derogate from the principle of compliance with the conditions of entry

laid down in the Regulation. With some exceptions, such visas have "limited territorial validity" to the territory of the issuing Member State (see European Parliament, European Council 2009). On this legal basis, the ecumenical working group drew up a plan for the opening of "humanitarian corridors" for a thousand beneficiaries, which was submitted to the relevant ministries. At the time, the government was headed by Matteo Renzi and the relevant ministers were Angelino Alfano at the Ministry of Interior and Paolo Gentiloni at the Foreign Affairs, who showed interest in the proposal[7], delegating the verification of its feasibility to ministry technicians (Gentiloni 2018). Mario Giro, one of the founders of the Community of Sant' Egidio, was Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs with responsibility for international cooperation (Giro 2016). The negotiation phase focused on the procedures to be adopted which, once agreement had been reached, were specified in a protocol signed on December 15, 2015. The cornerstone of the mechanism was the issuance of a visa "for humanitarian reasons" by Italian consulates in the countries of departure — the first CU concerned Lebanon and Morocco, with Ethiopia also in the pipeline — to individuals who, due to documented vulnerabilities, could apply for refugee status as soon as they entered Italy. Based on these criteria, the cases investigated by humanitarian workers operating in the countries of departure had to meet a criterion compatible with the asylum application. Once in Italy, beneficiaries would enter an integration process that included, in addition to hospitality for an appropriate period of time — in practice between one and two years — schooling for minors, Italian language lessons, and job placement.

Some aspects of this first Protocol deserve further consideration. First, it embraced a flexible and inclusive interpretation of the right to asylum. The potential beneficiaries of the project included not only 'displaced persons in clear need of inter-

[6] In particular, the Assembly voted on the document "Welcoming those who are strangers". *Nev* December 9th, 2015 (accessed February 6th, 2024).

[7] On January 17, 2018, Minister Gentiloni wrote a letter to the presidents of the organizations promoting the Humanitarian Corridors to express his support (see also Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Ministero degli Affari Esteri 2026).

national protection' and 'persons recognized by the UNHCR, at least *prima facie*, as deserving of refugee status' under the 1951 Geneva Convention and the related 1967 Protocol, but also individuals who

> due to their vulnerability, would be easy victims of trafficking or would have no chance of reaching Europe, even though they do not fall within the categories provided for by the Geneva Convention, such as, for example, women alone with children, victims of trafficking, the elderly, people with disabilities or serious illnesses[8].

With this definition, the Protocol extended the principle of protection from essentially individual cases to groups of individuals at risk of survival; on the other hand, it also included serious illnesses, single mothers, and victims of abuse and trafficking among the risk factors. A second element to highlight is that the project was not limited to opening a safe and legal route to asylum, but also included a series of measures to integrate beneficiaries into the national social and productive fabric, such as rapid and effective literacy training in Italian, the active participation of parents in their children's schooling, attendance at vocational training courses, internships, and other forms of gradual introduction to work. These are stages in an 'integration chain' that the promoters carefully designed for two reasons: the goal of ensuring the gradual autonomy of the beneficiaries was considered essential and indispensable; it was necessary to limit the duration of assistance to the beneficiaries, the costs of which — as we will explain shortly — were borne by the promoters. This attention, suggested by the promoters' long experience in programs for the integration and social inclusion of migrants[9], played a very positive role in protecting the humanitarian corridors from smear campaigns, which have affected other reception experiences, such as the Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees (SPRAR), accused too lightly of keeping people "doing nothing"[10].

Finally, it is important to highlight the financing arrangements for the project: the costs of opening the corridors, identifying and transporting beneficiaries to Italy, and providing accommodation for a "reasonable period" were entirely covered by the Community of Sant 'Egidio, the Federation of Protestant Churches, and the Waldensian Board. With this choice, the proponents intended to make a direct contribution to the rapid launch of a "good practice", which would otherwise have been impossible if the necessary funds had been obtained through an Italian or European public tender. They also wanted to provide an ethical response to the shadow of corruption linked to the reception of immigrants, as documented by the 2013 "Mondo di

[8] Technical protocol for the implementation of the project Opening of Humanitarian Corridors between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, the Ministry of the Interior, the Community of Sant' Egidio, the Federation of Protestant Churches, and the Waldensian Board. The text of the Protocol has not been published but was obtained from the offices of the FCEI based in Rome, Via Firenze 38 (see Sant' Egidio 2025).

[9] In particular, the Federation of Evangelical Churches in Italy established the Refugee and Migrant Service as early as the 1980s (Naso 2026-forthcoming). The Community of Sant'Egidio has a long history of intervention on behalf of migrants, well documented in Marazziti 2019.

[10] Among the newspapers that stood out most in the campaign against the SPRAR network was Il Giornale, originally owned by the Berlusconi family. See eg "Rifugiati. Ecco il fallimento del nostro Sistema di accoglienza". *Il Giornale*, May 2nd, 2016.

Mezzo" investigation (see Abbate 2012)[11]. The Protocol was signed on December 15 at the Ministry of the Interior, in the presence of the new president of the FCEI, Rev. Luca M. Negro, the president of the Community of Sant' Egidio, Marco Impagliazzo, moderator Bernardini, and the directors-general of the two ministries involved.

2. From Italy to Europe

Thanks to the positive experience in Italy, the advocacy efforts of the Evangelical Churches and the Community of Sant 'Egidio to extend the humanitarian corridor model to other European countries have been relatively successful in France (500 people) (Sant'Egidio 2026) and Belgium (300) (Sulewski 2025)[12]; small-scale experiments have been carried out in San Marino[13] and Andorra[14], while in the fall of 2019, in some German Länder, led by the Evangelical Church of Westphalia, the NeST project was launched, inspired by the Italian model of humanitarian corridors, although the identification of beneficiaries is essentially delegated to the UNHCR (see Möller 2026-forthcoming)[15].

Given the peculiarity of the French secular model — based on a principle of strict separation between the powers of the state and those of religious communities — subsidiary cooperation between republican institutions and various religious associations (the French Episcopal Conference, the Protestant Federation of France, the Protestant diaconal structure FEP, the Community of Sant' Egidio, and Caritas) appears to be of particular importance, as President Hollande pointed out at the signing ceremony for the Protocol held at the Élysée Palace on March 14, 2017:

> This Protocol confirms that in a secular Republic, fruitful collaborations with the Churches are possible and indeed desirable [...] A secular Republic means working with all those who, through their convictions, want to commit themselves to the general interest[16].

Shortly thereafter, other corridors were opened in Italy on the initiative of the Italian Episcopal Conference, Caritas, the Migrantes Foundation, and the Community of Sant' Egidio. On January 12, 2017, these Catholic associations signed a protocol for 500 beneficiaries, entirely similar to the "ecumenical" one of 2015, except for the

[11] The investigation called "Mafia Capitale" began in 2012 following the reports of journalist Lirio Abbate and downloaded the existence of a criminal network that controlled the contracts for the management of funds for the reception and integration of migrants.

[12] On the topic, see also "Couloir humanitaire" vers la Belgique pour 150 réfugiés syriens, November 22nd 2017 (www.emb-net.be/fr/couloir-humanitaire-vers-la-belgique-pour-150-refugies-syriens (accessed June 9th, 2026).

[13] After the first experiment in 2017, the Republic of San Marino approved a law for the permanent establishment of humanitarian corridors, Law 30 April 2021 n. 79 (www.stillirise.org/uploads/2024/04/legge-san-marino-ita.pdf) (accessed June 9th, 2026).

[14] See "Humanitarian Corridors: Andorra opens to refugees", May 7 2018 (www.santegidio.org/pageID/30284/langID/en/itemID/25448/Humanitarian-Corridors-Andorra-opens-to-refugees.html) (accessed 6th June, 2026).

[15] See Neustart in Team (NeST) (www.infomigrants.net/en/post/16727/new-german- resettlement-program-enlists-members-of-civil-society-as-mentors-to-help-refugees-integrate-better) (accessed 6th June, 2026).

[16] "France sets up 'humanitarian corridors' to welcome vulnerable refugees" (www.santegidio.ch/2017/03/france-met-place-couloirs-humanitaires-accueillir-refugies-vulnerables); Institut Français des Relations Internationales 2024.

place of departure, which was Ethiopia, for the benefit of refugees of Somali, Sudanese, and Eritrean origin[17].

The debut of the Conte I government (June 1, 2018) with Minister Salvini at the Interior Ministry, while undermining established integration policies and limiting the criteria for admission to asylum seekers' protection, did not block the humanitarian corridors program; however, it made the prospects for integration more difficult and uncertain. In the 'war' against NGOs operating rescue missions in the Mediterranean, humanitarian corridors have in fact become the 'good tool' to be proposed against sea rescue, to the point that the government wanted to speed up some resettlement programs, improperly defining them as 'humanitarian corridors' (Carli 2019): a first contingent of 51 refugees from Libya was welcomed on November 14, 2018, by Salvini himself; two other groups arrived on December 18, 2018 (103 refugees) and April 19, 2019 (147 refugees), also from Libya.

While welcoming this additional form of humanitarian corridors, the promoters of the CUs have never spared criticismof the policy of closure towards migrants and asylum seekers, opposing the Security Decrees (see Riccardi 2019) and expressing full support for the activities of NGOs (AgenSIR 2019)[18] to the point of declaring themselves willing to take charge of the reception of 147 refugees who, in August 2019, were forced to remain on board for 19 days because the Interior Ministry refused to grant them a port of disembarkation. After a long trial, in 2025 the Court of Cassation found the minister not guilty of the crimes charged[19].

3. "European" humanitarian corridors

Bolstered by unexpected recognition, including the Nansen Refugee Award[20], the leaders of the evangelical churches in particular engaged in international ecumenical action, both to encourage other countries to adopt the CU policy or increase the number of beneficiaries, and to persuade the European institutions themselves to open a "community" corridor. At the beginning of 2016, the president of the FCEI, Luca M. Negro, pushed in this direction by sending a letter to the Minister of the Interior, Luciana Lamorgese, and the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Emanuela Del Re, in which he reiterated the need to open new "European humanitarian corridors as a strategic tool for the sustainable management of the arrival of vulnerable persons"[21].

[17] The history of the humanitarian corridors managed by Caritas and other Catholic associations is reported on the organization's official website (www.caritas.it/corridoi-umanitari-universitari-lavorativi) (accessed June 9th, 2026).

[18] The letter, addressed to Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte and Interior Minister Matteo Salvini, was signed by FCEI President Luca M. Negro and Waldensian Table Moderator Eugenio Bernardini: "This gesture", explain the two Protestant leaders, "has an eminently humanitarian significance for us and responds not only to the evangelical vocation of Christian hospitality and love, but also to the urgent need to bring to safety people who have already suffered and are guilty of nothing more than fleeing war and persecution" (Agenzia Nev 2019).

[19] See "Con la sentenza della Corte di Cassazione termina ufficialmente il lungo iter giudiziario che ha coinvolto il leader della Lega negli ultimi sei anni". *Il Giornale*, December 17th, 2025.

[20] The project's growing recognition is also attested to by the awards it has received: the Colomba d'oro per la pace (Golden Dove for Peace) from Archivio Disarmo in 2016, the Lucchetta journalism award in 2017, and the prestigious Nansen Award from the UNHCR in 2019.

[21] Migrants, European humanitarian corridors (see FCEI 2016).

In the following years, the call for the Europeanization of the CU was a constant feature of the FCEI's action, supported by the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME 2024). In 2019, during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, the FCEI, CEI, Tavola Valdese, and the Community of Sant' Egidio published a joint appeal stating: "We felt the need to join our voices," wrote Italian Protestants and Catholics, "just as we have worked together on many occasions in the field of immigration, enabling the creation of the first humanitarian corridors, initiated by the Community of Sant' Egidio, the FCEI, the Waldensian Board, the CEI, and Italian Caritas." At a time when

> we celebrate the gift of unity and fraternity among Christians, we wish to explain to everyone that for us, helping those in need is not a gesture of do-goodism, naive altruism or, worse still, convenience: it is the very essence of our faith[22].

The highlight of this European campaign was the conference organized by the FCEI, the Waldensian Board, and the Community of Sant' Egidio, in collaboration with the Church Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME), at the European Parliament on International Human Rights Day[23]. On that occasion — attended by the Vice President of the European Parliament, Massimo Cataldo, representatives of the UNHCR, and all the main political areas represented in Brussels — the promoters re-proposed the key points of the proposal: the opening of European humanitarian corridors within the framework of a pact between the institutions and civil society of the various member countries; guidance for beneficiaries before departure; the complementarity of the project with regard to the commitments already made by the States. The final outcome of that meeting, however, was essentially inconclusive because the various political parties, which had expressed interest in the Italian experiment, did not make any concrete and operational commitments. Confirming this lack of response, we can cite the fact that the European Parliament has never approved a motion supporting Humanitarian Corridors, and in the new Migration and Asylum Pact on the issue of the migratory emergency in the Mediterranean[24] and deaths at sea, there is no reference to this good practice.

4. From good practice to policy

In summary, from 2015 to the present, FCEI, the Waldensian Board, and the Community of Sant' Egidio have signed six protocols "together"[25] — three from Lebanon,

[22] See "Catholics and Evangelicals: saving migrants at sea and expanding humanitarian corridors". *Vatican News*, January 22nd, 2019.

[23] See "European humanitarian corridors, the commitment of the government and EU institutions". *Nev*, December 11th, 2019.

[24] See European Parliament, "MEPs approve the new Migration and Asylum Pact", April 10th, 2024 (www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20240408IPR20290/meps-approve-the-new-migration-and-asylum-pact) (accessed June 10th, 2026).

[25] The first protocol was signed on December 15, 2015, for 1,000 beneficiaries from Lebanon. Other protocols were signed on the following dates: November 7, 2017 (1,000 beneficiaries from Lebanon); April 20, 2021 (300 beneficiaries from Libya); July 30, 2021 (1,000 beneficiaries from Lebanon); November 4, 2021 (1,200

two from Libya, and one from Afghanistan (via Pakistan) — for a total of 6,000 beneficiaries who have been welcomed into facilities linked to the proposing entities. The beneficiaries came mainly from Syria and Afghanistan, followed by smaller numbers from Sudan, Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq, and other countries in the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa. The opening of CU from countries other than Lebanon marks a politically significant step because it broadens the perspective from the specific case of Syrian refugees to the much more controversial issue of sub-Saharan migrants in public debate.

As has often been pointed out, one of the characteristic features of CUs is that they are not only a legal and safe way to access the right to asylum by avoiding dangerous crossings, but also, from their very inception, they outline a path to integration that is achieved thanks to the contribution of various actors in civil society, starting with local and national evangelical diaconal agencies. The data collected by MH offices on a sample of approximately 1,500 beneficiaries offer useful food for thought. There are 16 regions involved in reception projects, confirming that this is a widespread and participatory initiative[26].

Conclusions

In almost ten years, the CU experience has established itself as a sustainable model for managing migration flows while respecting human rights and supporting the integration and social inclusion of beneficiaries. We are therefore facing an anniversary that suggests an assessment of this *best practice*, which, to date, is one of the rare attempts[27] to open a passage in 'Fortress Europe' (Krasna 2018)[28], providing a response to the problem of irregular migration and the tragedy of refugees who lose their lives in an attempt to reach Italy via the central Mediterranean route.

As Pope Francis also noted[29], the CU has been a high point in ecumenical practice, certainly the most visible and significant area in terms of common witness.

beneficiaries from Afghanistan); December 20, 2023 (1,500 beneficiaries from Libya). Since 2017, other corridors have been added by Caritas and the Community of Sant' Egidio. On May 3, 2019, the same entities renewed the Protocol for 600 beneficiaries, extending the departure points to Ethiopia, Niger, and Jordan. The texts of the protocols are available in the Archives of the Federation of Evangelical Churches and the Community of Sant'Egidio. The text of the first, signed in 2017, which serves as a guideline for subsequent ones (see Naso 2024: 229).

[26] The data was provided to us by the Mediterranean Hope Office – Refugee and Migrant Program of the FCEI.

[27] Other legal routes of entry into Italy were the 'resettlements' of refugees under UN protection abroad, operated by the UNHCR on the basis of quotas defined annually by the Italian government, and 'evacuations'. According to sources at the Ministry of the Interior, in the years when the CU was launched, the resettlement quotas in Italy did not exceed a few hundred beneficiaries, National Commission for the Right of Asylum, Statistical Notebook from 1990 to 2018, 2018, at www.libertaciviliimmigrazione.dlci.interno.gov.it. (accessed February 5th, 2024). Evacuations are sporadic autonomous measures taken by the Italian government, such as the one carried out by Minister Salvini in 2022 for a hundred refugees in Libya (see www.interno.gov.it/it/notizie/giunti-italia-99-rifugiati-e-richiedenti-asilo-vulnerabili-dalla-libia (accessed February 5th, 2024).

[28] The expression 'Fortress Europe' had already been adopted by the in FCEI 1989.

[29] After mentioning the joint commitment of the FCEI, the Waldensian Board, and the Community of Sant' Egidio, in a public meeting that brought together hundreds of CU beneficiaries, the Pope said: "I really like that Christians are coming together to work on this, together, as brothers and sisters that we all are, and not emphasizing our differences" (Cernuzio 2023).

This "good practice" has gone through different political phases and has made inroads into parties and sectors of public opinion that are generally opposed to measures that, in some way, favour immigration. In the case of the CU, the moral authority of the proposing bodies, their direct financial commitment to supporting the project, and the effectiveness of the integration measures adopted have opened a breach and led to a generally favourable opinion of this model of "good immigration," which is also fully functional in terms of the needs of the Italian labour market. While pointing out the criticality or failure of the 'Europeanization' of this good practice, the proposal and implementation of the CUs is the most obvious case of 'ecumenical political diaconia' that fits fully within the action of subsidiarity (see Nastasi 2016)[30] and, in particular, within the framework of Article 118 of the Constitution: the CUs, in fact, give concrete expression to the principle that "Regions, metropolitan cities, provinces, and municipalities shall promote the autonomous initiative of citizens, individually and in association, for the performance of activities of general interest, on the basis of the principle of subsidiarity". And here is the challenge facing the social action of the Third Sector and the religious actors operating within it: to promote social action which, in accordance with the ethical principles that guide their theology, is not a substitute for the action of political decision-makers but, in dialogue with them – even critical dialogue – produces good practices capable of being transformed into permanent and structured policies.

[30] The principle of subsidiarity, formally included in the Italian Constitution in 2001, postulates a synergy between anti-government and social actors at different levels who cooperate on specific social projects.

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