

Arrival

If you arrive - autonomously or rescued - with a boat from Tunisia or Libya in Lampedusa or Sicily, the Italian authorities will send you first to a so-called hotspot facility. These are the first reception centres – sometimes closed camps in often bad and overcrowded conditions - in Lampedusa, Porto Empedocle, Pozzallo, Augusta, Messina, Isola di Capo Rizzuto, Roccella Jonica, Vibo Valentia and Taranto. Sometimes this kind of structures are opened in new cities in southern Italy. You should receive food and health care and you have the right to receive medical and psychological assistance.

The hotspots of Pozzallo and Porto Empedocle can be used to process asylum requests for a period of maximum 4 weeks, in all the rest of the facilities you should stay for a maximum of 2-3 days for the registration of your arrival and connected procedures.

Identification

Generally, identification procedures take place in the hotspots. They consist of photos and fingerprint collection, and you will be asked to provide personal data - name, surname, date of birth, nationality - as well as to specify the reasons for travelling - in order to seek asylum or for economic reasons. Authorities will fill a form with these information (called “foglio-notizie”), it is very important, in case you want to ask for protection, to check if your will to apply for asylum is registered already at this stage.

Authorities have the possibility to ask for your telephone to verify your identity and your nationality. In this case they can only have access to pictures, documents and videos but not to your private conversations (ie whatsapp or email). They have to store your phone in a safe place and a judge has to verify if they acted correctly, within a 48 hours period.

Families/Relatives

If you are travelling with a family member and you want to stay in reception centres with them, you should explain your family relationship to the authorities. If possible for you, you can show your identity documents to prove the relationship. Wives, husbands, mothers, fathers, daughters, sons, brothers, and sisters have the right not to be separated. If you are travelling with uncles, aunts, nephews, cousins or other family members, the authorities decide, if you go to the same or to a different reception centre and it is not guaranteed, that you can stay together.

Minors

If you are a minor (less than 18 years old) you have specific rights. You have the right to not be expelled from Italy. After a few weeks in hotspots and camps, you will be moved to a reception centre for people under 18 years old, and you will have a legal permit to stay, access to food and bed, medical care and education until you are 18 or 21 years old. When you turn 18, you can ask to go to a reception centre for adults. If the authorities do not believe that you are under 18 years old and you do not have a copy of ID documents, they will assess your age by asking many questions and you may be sent to take medical exams (age assessment). During this procedure, you must be treated as a minor.

Asylum

Everyone has the right to ask for protection in Italy (asylum, in Italian “asilo”). If you ask for asylum, you will have to do an interview with a series of hard questions, in which you will have to explain in detail the reasons for which you left your country, and why a possible return there would put your life at risk.

The procedures for the examination of the asylum application may change if you come from some countries which are considered “safe”. In this moment, Italy considers “safe” the following countries: Albania, Algeria, Bangladesh, Bosnia-Erzegovina, Capo Verde, Costa d'Avorio, Egitto, Gambia, Georgia, Ghana, Kosovo, Macedonia del Nord, Marocco, Montenegro, Perù, Senegal, Serbia, Sri

Lanka and Tunisia.

In case you come from one of these countries it is very important that, when you register your asylum request, you clarify immediately why your country of origin is dangerous for you (ie if you are at risk for political, religious, gender/sexual orientation, social, climatical reasons etc).

If you come from a "safe" country, it's possible that you will have to stay in the hotspots of Pozzallo or Porto Empedocle, in a state of detention, for maximum 4 weeks and you will have to do the asylum procedure during this time. In this case, you have the right to have a lawyer and you will see a judge, probably remotely, who will decide if you have proceed with the asylum request in an open reception centre or in the hotspot. You have the right to communicate with your lawyer before the hearing with the judge.

You can't be detained in a hotspot during your asylum process if:

- you have a passport;
- you or a close relative of yours, legally staying in the EU, can provide for a bank deposit to guarantee that you won't escape;
- you have serious physical or mental illnesses which can't be treated in detention;
- you are less than 18, you are a woman, you have been subject to violence. In this last case you have to tell it to the doctor you will meet or at the moment of the registration.

If the decision on your asylum request is negative, you have the right to go to court for a second decision. In any case, it would be important to find a lawyer or a counselling office to support you in your asylum procedure, which can last several months or years. Deadlines are very strict so it's important to ask for the support of a lawyer very quickly.

Work/Economic Migration

If you do not express a willingness to seek asylum and if you answer in the info sheet, that you came for work to Italy, you will be treated as an "economic migrant", so a person who is not entitled to remain in Italy.

Therefore a certain risk is given to receive a removal order from the territory or being transferred to a detention center, in order to be repatriated. You can appeal against the removal order, detention, and deportation through a lawyer. In any case, we recommend trying to find support with good lawyers or counselling offices and to understand better the legal procedures and your options.

Reasons why expulsion is not permitted:

- If you have an Italian wife/husband, son/daughter, mother/father, sister/brother;
- If you are pregnant - this is also valid for the father of your child;
- If you have serious health conditions that can't be cured in your home country;
- If you are less than 18 years old;
- If you are victim of human trafficking.

Other European countries/fingerprints/Dublin

As you have given the fingerprints in Italy - making it become the "responsible country" for the definition of your juridical status - once reaching another country there is the risk of being deported back to Italy, according to the so-called Dublin regulation. This doesn't happen all the times as Italy is refusing to take people back but this is not a stable situation. Anyway, if you travel to a different country, it is always good to get into contact with local solidarity groups or lawyers to find legal and social support.