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WEBINAR

Reception, Integration and Asylum policies and strategies in the Comunidad Autónoma Andaluza

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Why Spain

"COM.&IN. – Competenze per l'Integrazione in Europa", was conceived as a complement to the "COM.IN – Competenze per l'Integrazione" projects which, initiated in 2014 by the Apulia Region and financed by the Ministry of the Interior through the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), aim to strengthen the Italian Southern Regions' immigration policies while guaranteeing adequate social and health assistance to foreigners residing, even temporarily, on the Italian territory. The COM.IN. projects are also conceived as a tool for enhancing the interregional collaboration between the 5 Partner Regions (Apulia, Calabria, Campania, Basilicata, and Sicily) to respond in a coordinated way to the challenges that the growing migratory pressure poses to the governance of the inclusion processes.

Much work has been done to improve the multi-level governance, create an institutional network that favours a horizontal approach to immigration, and enhance the skills of public and private operators. Work has been done and is still underway to learn more about the migration phenomenon and, finally, work has been done and is still being done to raise the standards of the governance of the migration phenomenon.

Within this framework, the project "COM.&IN. – Competenze per l'Integrazione in Europa" responds to the need of the regions to compare their working methods with other European models and experiences to better integrate those services that support the social and economic inclusion of Third-country nationals: meetings and exchanges of good practices at European level that are essential to analyse and evaluate different but functioning intervention models which can be of inspiration to the Italian partners.

The choice of exploring the possibilities offered by Spain may be explained by the many points in common that it has with the Partner Regions. Moreover, with its history of reception and management of migration, very similar to the situation in Southern Italy, the experience of Spain could be a starting point from which to learn, especially in light of the recent increase in migratory flows.

Statistics tell us that, in 2019, Spain was rated the third European country in the number of migrants' new arrivals after Italy and Greece, reaching the second place in July of that same year when 14,667 people arrived to the Spanish territory: 11,703 by sea and 2,964 by land. At the same time, Spain underwent a remarkably similar phenomenon as Italy in just a few years, shifting from a sending to a receiving country.

The Spanish Government does not address the migratory issue as an emergency or accidental phenomenon but copes with it in a systemic way being aware that it is not a temporary condition, but a real issue closely linked to the future of the country and to which Spain is committed in giving an adequate and lasting response.

SYNTHESIS OF THE INTERVENTIONS

What follows is a synthesis of the speakers' main points.

Welcoming Remarks

The Webinar was opened with the greetings and good wishes of Prefect Dr. Mara Di Lullo, Director for Immigration and Asylum Policies; Responsible Authority for the AMIF Programme 2014-2020, Ministry of the Interior. Dr. Di Lullo stressed the importance of both the work carried out by the five Southern Regions on migration and of the exchange of practices at the European level, which can become a powerful drive for improving national policies and actions.

The Migratory Phenomenon in the Italian Southern Regions and the Commitment of the Apulia Region

Roberto Venneri, Secretary General, Presidency of the Apulia Region

In Italy, the 5 Regions implementing the project have always played a key role in the migratory flows in the country. Over the course of time, due to their double-dimension borders – national and European – these regions have witnessed the arrival of several groups of foreign citizens: the Tunisians, whose presence in Sicily dates since the late 1960s; the "great exodus" of the Albanians to Puglia in the 1990s and the arrival of citizens of Kurdish origin on the Ionian coast of Calabria. Throughout the first decade of this century, Sicily witnessed the arrivals from the African continent, and Apulia from the Middle Asian and Middle Eastern regions. Finally, since 2011, most arrivals were a consequence of the "Arab springs" and the civil wars in Syria and Libya. As a result, the foreign population in the five Southern Regions as of January 1, 2018, totalled 684,455 with a registered growth in the last five years of almost 460,000.

In this context, strongly influenced by factors such as climate change and political turbulence, the five Regions have underwritten an institutional partnership that, with the aim of overcoming the emergency approach to migration, can improve the management of a deep demographic change that must be integrated into all phases of the economic and social planning of any Public Administration.

Being fully aware that the exploitation by organized crime easily spreads into the most vulnerable sections of the migrant population, the institutional partnership of the five Regions committed to combating the exploitation of migrant labour, with specific reference to agricultural workers, through a series of actions with a view to ensure a dignified reception of migrants, their integration, and the rule of law.

According to the findings of the Placido Rizzotto/FLAI CGIL Observatory¹, around 450,000 agricultural workers are victims of various forms of labour exploitation and live in inadequate lodgings; of these, about 150,000 live under near-slavery conditions, forms of exploitation that have worsened during the Covid-19 pandemic, causing an increase of

¹ Research Centre of the Trade Union CGIL, the Observatory investigates the intertwining of the food-supply chain and organized crime (www.flai.it)

about 40-55 thousand exploited people. For 2018-2019, the Centro Studi Tempi Moderni² estimated that 39% of agricultural jobs were not following the rule of law and that the Covid-19 period saw the rate of these irregularities rise to 48%, meaning that almost one in two immigrant labourers was employed irregularly during the pandemic.

Reception, Integration, and Asylum Policies and Strategies in the Comunidad Autónoma Andaluza: an overview

Maria del Mar Ahumada, General Director for Migratory Policies, Comunidad Autónoma Andaluza

Ms Ahumada opened her intervention giving an overview of migration in the Autonomous Community of Andalusia and then focused on the different tasks of the various levels of the public administration and of the organized civil society in the reception, integration, and asylum services.

As reported by Ms Ahumada, the foreign population in Andalusia corresponds to 8% of the total Andalusian population, i.e., about 625,000 foreign people, figure that excludes a significant number of third-country nationals residing irregularly. Andalusia and Spain – continued Ms Ahumada - are not the destination of most of these people since many of them, from Morocco or sub-Saharan Africa, are French speakers, and thus plan on continuing their journey towards those countries where their mother tongue is in use and where they can count on social or family networks.

In Spain, the management of migration is shared by several levels of the public administration: the national level is in charge of border control and coordinates asylum application procedures; the Autonomous Communities coordinate and develop integration policies and strategies, whose implementation is delegated to the municipalities while the regional government acts as the link between the offices that define the reception, integration and asylum policies and the actual needs of the foreign population whose main concerns that need to be addressed are: obtaining a residence permit, finding a house and a job.

The Department in charge of coordinating integration activities on a regional scale is the Dirección General de Coordinación de Políticas Migratorias de Andalucía but, as Ms Ahumada points out, *"The issue of immigration is transversal to the educational, health, work, or housing services. What we do is coordinating, evaluating and planning integration strategies and policies within all these services."*

To carry out its functions, the Directorate-General is preparing a **Plan Estratégico de la Inmigración 2021-2025**, a document giving the guidelines and summarizing the activities on behalf of the migrant population that are supported by the Regional Government.

As for funding, the Directorate-General manages three different lines offering support to projects promoting the integration of the foreign population in Andalusia that are carried out by non-profit organisations, NGOs, and municipalities:

² Independent Research Centre (www.tempi-moderni.net)

- Projects carried out by organised civil society addressing issues such as the fight against trafficking in human beings, awareness raising among the local and foreign population, social and work inclusion, etc. The regional government recognises these social actors as fundamental, especially in view of their direct link with the foreign population.
- Municipality can draw from two lines of subsidy:
 - (a) Endowment of houses to accommodate the foreign population, a solution that has proved effective in Jaén, for example, which from November and for about 2-3 months undergoes an exceptional migratory pressure linked to the harvesting of olives.
 - (b) The other subsidy covers the costs of the intercultural mediators during the harvesting of agri-food products. This service is particularly active in Huelva, where the harvesting of red fruits needs a large workforce not covered by the national demand. Huelva's farmers use labourers available thanks to the controlled "circular migration system" between Spain and Morocco, which sees approximately 16,000 Moroccan women employed each year in the collection of red fruits. In the words of the Directora General, *"We make sure that these women do not feel alone, that their health is taken care of, that they have a place to live and are supported until they return to their country."*

Ms Ahumada concluded her intervention mentioning the prize of € 3,000.00 awarded by the Regional Government for the best practices promoting the reception and integration of the foreign population in Andalusia. A prize that can be awarded for all kinds of distinguished practices, from work inclusion to education, from communication and the use of non-violent language to fighting stereotypes and racism.

Fundación CEPAIM - “Senderos” and “Nuevos Senderos”

Javier Pérez Cepero, Coordinator for Andalusia, and Ceuta



Source: Fundación CEPAIM. *New Paths* - Lazarus.

<https://vimeo.com/user105299985/review/392655075/342daaeb82>

The CEPAIM Foundation is active in 9 Autonomous Communities, in the cities of Ceuta and Dakar, Senegal, managing 38 centres. Its mission is "*The promotion of an inclusive and intercultural society that fosters full access to citizenship rights of the most vulnerable people in our society, in particular migrants, and to work for the development of local territories and the countries of origin of migrants*". To achieve this, the Foundation is engaged in 8 thematic areas: reception and international protection, housing rights and the fight against social exclusion, interventions with young people and families, equality and discrimination, rural development, interculturality and Community development, work and training, development cooperation and co-development (with reference to projects in Senegal).

The project "Senderos" dates to 2002, when CEPAIM started receiving the requests of many users of its employment centres to move to rural areas. A win-win strategy since, as Mr. Pérez noted, "*Integrating the foreign population into rural areas can help build that multicultural society that is part of CEPAIM's mission and at the same time change the negative stereotype that some individuals have about the phenomenon of immigration and the apparent damage that is believed to cause to the country.*" As many other European countries, Spain is undergoing a progressive depopulation of many rural areas which, added to the ageing of the local population, is rapidly leading to a reduction in essential services, given the lack of resources and investment in local public infrastructures and structures. Mr. Pérez stated that depopulation represents "*A dangerous loss, not only in terms of services. It is the loss of a natural, landscaped and cultural heritage that instead can be an opportunity for social inclusion, at the core of the revitalization and socio-economic development of rural communities.*"

Inspired by these considerations, the CEPAIM Foundation has developed the "Senderos" Project which, since 2014, has become "Nuevos Senderos". The latter is being implemented in 8 Autonomous Communities: Andalusia, Valencian Community, Madrid,

Murcia, Extremadura, Castile-La Mancia, Castile and León, and Aragon. The resettlement in rural areas of those individuals and families involved in the project follows 4 phases, which together constitute the **social and occupational/professional Integration Process under geographical mobility** (urban-rural, intra-rural):



Presentation of the project in rural areas, with the involvement of local actors. Phase 1 promotes the active participation of local communities and ends with the signing of collaboration agreements between the actors involved (municipalities and local authorities)

Phase 2 begins with the search and selection of people and/or families interested in joining the Program. They receive information about the place of destination and follow a training course that responds to the local job offer, increasing their employability.

With Phase 3, the selection of beneficiaries ends. After preliminary visits to the new residency, the transfer of the selected foreign persons and/or families to the place of destination is organized.

In this last phase, the term "Accompaniment" is to be understood as a constant support service. The interventions are divided into: promotion of spaces for coexistence, awareness-raising activities, personalized accompaniment during the integration period.

Fundación SEVILLA ACOGE – Programmes and activities

Manuel Vicente Sánchez, Coordinator for Training and Intercultural Mediation

Rosana Speciale Gasko, Coordinator of the Reception Programme

Rosalina Uribe Moreno, Responsible of the Microcredit Programme and the Employment Service

The SEVILLA ACOGE Foundation was founded in 1991 to provide a more effective and integrated response to the then incipient phenomenon of immigration, with the main objective of building a plural and inclusive society that guarantees equal rights and opportunities for all those residing in Spain.

All the mediators of the Foundation come from a migratory background, a feature that makes the implementation of the intercultural approach at the core of every intervention carried out by Sevilla Acoge effective and which allows the mediator to be both a professional who understands the problem and an individual who shares and knows first-hand what to migrate means. Sevilla Acoge also counts on about 100 active volunteers.

The services offered by the Foundation are distributed within nine operational programs:

- (1) **Reception:** A programme designed to promote and encourage the social and working inclusion of the most vulnerable migrants and refugees, making them feel part of a welcoming community.
- (2) **Employment Support Service:** A programme to promote and foster the integration into the labour market of migrants and refugees at risk of social exclusion. The programme offers mentoring and information on the rules, resources and requirements needed to enter the labour market.
- (3) **Legal service:** Aware that bureaucracy is one of the main obstacles that migrants face, the programme offers legal advice on immigration, family issues, and work.
- (4) **Children and young people:** A programme promoting the education of children and young people striving for equal opportunities, the responsible use of free time and intercultural coexistence. The interventions are always carried out in coordination with the institutions, in particular schools. Once a group of young people is identified, work is addressed toward identity building, a very sensitive issue for young adolescents due to the tension between the identity of the family of origin and the one that the young person must deal with in school or other spaces of socialization.
- (5) **Intercultural mediation:** A programme to improve the communication and the integration among different cultures. The programme sees the mediator at the centre of the interactions between the local communities and the migrants, allowing the new members to take advantage of all available services: health, school, and social and work guidance.
- (6) **Women's rights and gender equality:** Encouraging the empowerment of migrant women by combating racial and gender stereotypes.
- (7) **Training and Research:** A programme with two objectives: training of professionals within and without the organization and research activities.
 The issues addressed by the training are:
 - administration
 - education
 - immigrants' health
 - Spanish language (B2)
 The Spanish classes are free and, by using the Spanish language and culture, create a link between the beneficiaries and the professionals. The study of the social dynamics generated by immigration in our societies are also studied, in collaboration with some local universities.
 The research activities focus on the following topics: routes of the African women with dependent minors; transit from northern Morocco to Spain; routes of unaccompanied minors; housing.
- (8) **International cooperation and co-development:** A programme with the purpose of improving the quality of life in developing countries by emphasizing the primary role of the indigenous population. The programme provides for projects aimed at building infrastructures in rural areas and training disadvantaged groups.
- (9) **Microcredit program:** This program fosters the entrepreneurial activity of migrant women, giving a chance to self-employment for women who already had an entrepreneurial activity in their country. The programme tutors the women exploiting a three-phase group methodology: training classes focused on how to become an

entrepreneur in Spain; the design of a business plan and its assessment and, in the last stage, the search and request for funding.

Sevilla Acoge operates from two different locations: in the centre of Seville, where its headquarter is located and in the Macarena Neighbourhood, where the highest concentration of foreign population resides.

Fundación Universidad Pablo de Olavide – “UPO Acoge” and Research Activity

Francisco Javier Ramos, *Coordinator for Promotion of Employment and Entrepreneurship*
Fabiola Ortega de Mora, *Universidad Pablo de Olavide*

Born in 2001, the Foundation supports the Pablo de Olavide University in ensuring the best education, training, and integral development of its students, encouraging dialogue and collaboration between the University and the Andalusian businesses and institutions.

Carried out in partnership with Sevilla Acoge, The **UPO Acoge programme**, addresses migrant women with a good knowledge of the Spanish language who have attended previous trainings. Classes are organized in small groups of 12-14 people, encompassing women with different employment and social backgrounds.

The programme enhances women’s employability and learning ability, by reinforcing their professional and non-professional skills.

Since 2012, the Foundation has been conducting research on international migration, with a focus on gender. Among the many investigations, the speakers mention *“Mujeres migrantes indocumentadas. Frontera Norte de México-EU. A perspectiva socio-educational”* that analyses the migration of Mexican women to the United States and the role they play as actors of the migration.

Another research project currently underway is *“Gender and Citizenship”*, promoting interdisciplinary research and training network between Europe and Latin America, once again with migrant women at its heart.

Ms Fabiola Ortega de Mora ends her intervention presenting *“Voices of Immigrant”*, a new project for building *“an inclusive system of higher education”* able to respond positively to the challenge of migration, especially targeting women.

INCOMA – “REC”, “VAMOS”, “DISC” and “RAINBOW”

Juan Guerrero, *Director INCOMA*

INCOMA is a Sevilla based research and training agency with a long experience in the development and coordination of European projects on education, training, and research targeting vulnerable groups.

INCOMA works in different sectors, such as:

- Internationalization in the field of training
- international mobility promoting further education

- social inclusion
- inclusion in the labour market and entrepreneurship
- language skills and intercultural communication
- new technologies for education and training

The projects currently underway and relating to different areas are:

REC: an Erasmus+ KA2 Strategic Partnerships approved in 2018. The project intends to foster the exchange of good practices and the development of a EU professional specialization training for practitioners working with migrants and refugees. The main goal is to provide a set of competences for VET operators in the recognition and validation of informal and non-formal competences and learning.

VAMOS: an Erasmus + KA2 Strategic Partnerships approved in 2019. The project aims at supporting the efforts of EU member states to help integrate migrants and refugees in the European countries' education systems and ensure their skills development. An urgent and demanding task (<http://projectvamos.eu/>).

DISC – Digital Skills for Integration and Active Citizenship: an EU Erasmus+ programme aiming at enhancing digital skills of people with a migratory background and thus supporting their integration and promoting active citizenship. The rationale behind the project consists of upscaling two best practices – the LAUREA's Multisensory Space and the SMART PLUS self-assessment tool designed by INCOMA. These best practices have been recently adapted to the COVID-19 situation, with the development of an online approach to the Multisensory space, facilitating multicultural international cooperation, further developing the digital skills of migrants while removing the challenges and barriers of a physical space in times of social distancing (<https://discproject.eu/>).

RAINBOW: an Erasmus + Capacity Building in Higher Education project approved in 2018 focusing on the accessibility of higher education for women in India. The core objectives of the project are to examine the influence of perceived career barriers and support young women's career planning in the Indian university system and outside; to design and implement applicable framework(s) that intervenes and accompany young women inside and outside university; to establish the capacities (RAINBOW Centre) to counsel young women in Indian universities. These RAINBOW Centres will be managed by personnel that has received a specific training on the the project's framework (<http://projectrainbow.in/>).

Càmara de Comercio de Sevilla - “Andalucía Integra”, “SMART Volunteering for Female Migrants” and “ATHENA”

Pablo Morales, Coordinator of International projects

Mr. Morales presented the Seville Chamber of Commerce, describing its commitment to promoting those corporate social and cultural values that prompt the Chamber to fund social projects on immigration. As he pointed out, to achieve effective results, the active participation of all the actors involved is required: businesses, public administrations, academy, and the third sector that interfaces directly with the final beneficiaries. Mr.

Morales then continued his presentation by briefly introducing three projects of integration of third-country nationals carried out by the Seville Chamber of Commerce. The main points of these projects are summarised below:

- **Andalucía Integra** (Cámara de Comercio, in cooperation with DG Coordination of Migration Policies, Comunidad Autónoma Andaluza). AIMS: Identify and eradicate barriers to integration; analyse successful actions for migrants' integration; put two cultures in contact; foster women's inclusion and migrants' integration in the Andalusian enterprises.
- **SMART Volunteering for Female Migrants** (Cámara de Comercio, in cooperation with INCOMA). This project involves civil society, enterprises, and migrant women in five EU countries and aims at promoting better inclusion and participation of women from non-EU countries in the economic and social life of European societies.
- **ATHENA** (Cámara de Comercio, in cooperation with NOVA and INCOMA). Within the framework of the AMIF Programme and coherent with the EU Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan, the project Athena, starting soon, will improve services, policies, and the support for migrant women's entrepreneurship by sharing common knowledge, capacity building, exchange of experiences, and economic activities in which migrant women are directly involved and can interact, exchange, and increase relations and contacts in the host country.

Concluding remarks– “Vamos a poner nuevas piedras sobre para continuar a trabajar!”

Carmela Cotrone, Referent of the Campania Region

Ms Cotrone, on behalf of the partnership of the Southern Regions, thanked the Spanish participants for the opportunity to learn about the many good practices carried out in Andalucía. *"The important thing – underlined Ms Cotrone – is to be aware that migrants are a precious resource for the development of our territories. As a matter of fact, in the projects presented today it was highlighted those foreigners are always placed at the centre of the activities, as key players for our local development."* Ms Cotrone continued her speech by expressing the need to get to the bottom of the projects/programmes for the integration of the foreign population promoted by other European countries, reflecting jointly on their strengths and weaknesses. According to Ms Cotrone, such an analysis would be a useful tool for enhancing the work carried out by the regions since: *"The regional administration plans the measures to integrate the foreign population into a broad territorial context with the task of strengthening the multiplying function and positive effects of these projects. Indeed, the latter may support the strengthening of an effective common strategy. We will therefore continue the cooperation at European level so that the foundations laid today become the starting point for the development of a transnational network for the exchange of knowledge and good practices. Quoting my Spanish colleagues, Vamos a poner nuevas piedras sobre para continuar a trabajar!"*

First inputs of the Italian Regional Representatives

The main dissimilarity in the governance of the migratory flows between the Italian Regions and the Spanish Autonomous Communities is to be found in the different division of powers among the various levels of the public administration. The management of border control and asylum procedures are centralized in both countries but the coordination of the reception systems is structured at the national level in Italy whereas in Spain, the governance of services to migrants and refugees is a prerogative of the Autonomous Communities. What certainly unites Spain and Italy are the short funding periods, which risk undermining the regularity and continuity of the local provision of services to the foreign population.

The management of the second level reception provides us with a concrete example of the different role played by the Italian Regions with respect to the Spanish Autonomous Communities. In Italy, the activities implemented for the integration of third-country nationals in its territory are activated by local authorities that voluntarily choose to join the “Protection System for holders of international protection and unaccompanied foreign minors (SIPROIMI)”, drawing on the funding made available by the Ministry of the Interior through the National Fund for Asylum Policies and Services (FNPSA). The management of the SIPROIMI projects is then entrusted to non-profit organizations. In Spain, on the other hand, within the second level reception system, asylum seekers attend training and guidance programs run by non-profit organizations, but live independently, even if with rent and subsistence support. Although the implementation of actions promoting the integration of the foreign population is still entrusted to local authorities and the third sector, the Autonomous Communities step in by managing various lines of funding for the development and implementation of projects at the regional level. Following the discussion, the representatives of the 5 Southern Regions showed particular interest for the Plan de la Inmigración 2021-2025, a document containing the key lines of implementation of integration policies at regional level that the Italian partners are keen to read.

The transnational exchange between Spain and Italy has led to the identification of two significant experiences, two promising practices for which the COM.&IN. technical partner, Consorzio Nova, will carry out a preliminary study and in-depth work with a view to a possible transferability in Italy. The first practice analysed is the project "Nuevos Senderos" coordinated by the Fundación CEPAIM and funded by the Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund 2014-2020 (AMIF) and other public and private entities. The project offers immigrant people the opportunity to live with dignity and work in municipalities with a low population density in rural Spain, fostering a multicultural society that unites long-term residents and foreign newcomers in a regenerative process of semi-abandoned rural areas.

The second practice to be further explored is the agri-food Organization INTERFRESA, established in 2006 and comprising 54 agri-food companies active in Huelva. Since 2018, INTERFRESA has adopted an Ethical, Work and Social Responsibility Plan (PRELSI) that ensures that the working and living conditions of foreign seasonal workers in the

Andalusian countryside are fully respected. This is a concrete example of collaboration between the public and private sectors, considering that INTERFRESA's contribution to the fight against the labour exploitation of migrants in Andalusia is of fundamental importance for the Andalusian Junta.

The moment of exchange ends with the awareness of the many aspects that unite Andalusia with the 5 Regions of Southern Italy, considered border territories where the pressure of migration has been, and still is, particularly significant. These similarities are stronger within the agricultural sector, central for the economy of Andalusia as well as of the COM.&IN. partners and are deeply linked to the governance of the migration phenomenon, especially in terms of combating the labour exploitation of the foreign population.

PARTICIPANTS

AMIF – RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY

Prefect Mara DI LULLO

COM&IN PARTNERS

Carmela COTRONE, Campania
Catello FORMISANO, Campania
Edith MACRÌ, Calabria
Giovanna SODANO, Campania
Roberto VENNERI, Apulia
Rosa ALBIS, Basilicata
Saverino RICHIUSA, Sicily
Vito SAMÀ, Calabria

SPAIN

Camara de Sevilla: Pablo MORALES,
Maria CARRILLO

Comunità Autònoma dell'Andalusia: Maria DEL
MAR AHUMADA

Fondazione Cepaim: Javier PÉREZ, Sali
GUNTIN, Adolfo PATON

Fatima SOHORA, Luis TOLEDO, Carmona
ROCIO, Susana EA

INCOMA: Juan GUERRERO, Beatriz
GONZALEZ

Sevilla Acoge: Manuel V. SANCHEZ, Rosana S.
GASKO, Rosalina U. MORENO

UPO: Francisco Javier RAMOS,
Fabiola ORTEGA

GERMANY

Birte STELLER (WIR)
Ferdinand KRINGS (Goethe Institute)
Merrit KATHAGE

GREECE

Giorgios SAMPROVALAKIS (PLOIGOS)

NOVA, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Gianpietro LOSAPIO
Letizia CESARINI SFORZA
Emiliana BALDONI
Angela VENTURA
Luigi VANGI
Andrea V. CIAVATTA
Antonio CINIERO
Giovanni CASALETTO
Laura COSTANTINO