



Transnational Conference Report
25-28th October 2005
Turin, Italy



The MEET transnational partnership

The EQUAL MEET (Migrants-Employment-Empowerment-Training) transnational partnership is a partnership of five EQUAL Development Partnerships from the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, Austria and the UK. The aim of the partnership is to improve labour market access for migrants and refugees. The main objectives are as follows:

1. To develop and pilot new approaches to the accreditation of prior learning (APL) and gaining recognition for the qualifications of migrants and refugees.
2. To develop new vocational courses, orientation and advice services and inclusive e-learning tools, to facilitate access to the labour market; social inclusion and lifelong learning opportunities.
3. To work with stakeholders to develop appropriate awareness raising media materials which present positive images of migrants and refugees in the labour market; and share good practice experiences of intercultural training and diversity management.

In order to meet these objectives, conferences will be held to share information and disseminate the work. In addition, partners will take part in three working groups concentrating on the following:

Working Group 1 – Recognising migrants qualifications. This group will focus on the development of mainstreaming strategies for accreditation.

Working Group 2 – Skills development for migrants and refugees. This group will focus on the development, exchange and assessment of new measures.

Working Group 3 – Awareness raising among stakeholders. This group will focus on developing strategies for a change in public opinion regarding migrants.

Transnational meeting (25-28th October 2005)

A transnational meeting took place on 25-28th October 2005 in Turin hosted by the Italian partners. The aim of the meeting was to officially launch the MEET transnational partnership and provide an opportunity for the transnational partners to exchange experiences, information and ideas concerning labour market situations in the five countries. The three working groups were set up at this meeting and initial work plans were established. Further transnational meetings are planned for March 2006, October 2006, January 2007 and April 2007.

The transnational meeting took on the following format:

25th October 2005

Steering group meeting
Visit to Consorzio EuroQualita

26th October 2005

Visit to the Province of Biella
Meeting with representatives from the Province
Visit to the Employment Centre
Working group sessions

27th October 2005
Asti

Visit to the Province of

Meeting with representatives from the Province
Visit to the Employment Centre
Working group sessions

28th October 2005

Launch Conference
Final discussion on the results of the working
groups

Visit to the Province of Biella

26th October 2005

1. Meeting with the Province of Biella representatives

Marisa Lucano *Councillor of the Province of Biella*
Rossana Santarelli *Employment Centre Manager*

The delegates were welcomed to Biella. This session began with a brief overview of the history of immigration in Biella including the history of migrant workers employed within the textile industry and the recent decline of this industry within the region.

The aims of Visibilinvisibili were also discussed as follows:

- To cater for the needs of migrants, particularly focusing on the needs of women migrants in the labour market.
- To create a map of services/institutions and agencies working with migrants and enterprises providing job opportunities.

The transnational partners were welcomed and the partnership working activities that would take place during the course of Equal Round 2 were described including the development of a number of forums through which products and information could be disseminated including a website and through media awareness raising materials.

2. Visit to the Employment Centre



The Employment Centre operates in three main areas: unemployment, training and enterprises. The Employment Centre employs 40 operators.

The process involves counselling, providing information, tutoring regarding job opportunities available in enterprises and organisations, and the reorientation of migrants and unemployed individuals.

The Europass facility is available for individuals to discover the skills and qualifications that are needed for particular jobs.



Job opportunities are also advertised on the internet for individuals to browse. The Employment Centre also provides services for young people and disabled individuals to help them obtain training and job opportunities.

The Employment Centre provided materials regarding the service provision – all documentation is in Italian.

Visit to the Province of Asti

27th October 2005

1. Visit to the Employment Centre

<i>Angelo Amerio</i>	<i>Asti Employment Centre</i>
<i>Claudio Musso</i>	<i>Councillor of the Province of Asti</i>
<i>Marina Porta</i>	<i>Asti Employment Centre</i>
<i>Mr Canito</i>	<i>Asti Employment Centre</i>

Mr Canito and Marina Porta welcomed the group and introduced other colleagues working directly with migrants within the Employment Centre. They highlighted the importance of Visibilinvisibili and the aim to create links with social actors within the region including employers organisations, trade unions and provinces.

▪ History of Immigration

Italy firstly experienced immigration during the 1990's. Conflict became evident between resident communities and migrants, but in reality migrants can bring a wealth of skills and knowledge to the community and benefit the economy as a whole.

▪ Province of Asti Employment Centre Report 2003 & 2004

The Employment Centre is funded by the European Union, the Republic of Italy and the Piedmont region. The law states that one employment centre should exist for every 100,000 people. The Employment Centre does not provide benefits to the unemployed as this service is provided by a separate organisation.

Two reports from 2003 and 2004 were circulated to the visitors. Both reports document the activities of the employment centre and illustrate the use of public funds (please refer to the reports). The following sections were highlighted by the employment centre representatives:

2004 Report Chart (Page 6) – The Province of Asti has three separate projects: green represents guidance; purple represents the company service unit and yellow represents admin procedures. The chart illustrates the services available in Asti and illustrates the location of information points in the areas.

2004 Report Table (Page 7) – The table illustrates the level of usage of the various activities undertaken at the Employment Centre.

2003 Report Chart (Page 16) – The chart illustrates the process flow within the employment centre. The key below describes the sections:



- BLUE - companies and enterprises (SME's and larger organisations). Marina Porto is responsible for this section. This process involves matching the needs for employment from enterprises with users.
- YELLOW - admin services
- GREEN - clients including job seekers and companies. Different layers of consultancy are involved within this section including training. A 3-6 month unpaid training period in companies and enterprises is provided to clients.
- PINK - disadvantaged people services (this does not refer to immigrants).

2004 Report Table (Page 23) – This table illustrates the total number of immigrants who gained employment in 2004. This has risen by almost 40% since 2003. Asti has emerged as the 6th highest out of 100 regions in Italy where improvements have been made regarding the employment of migrants. This supports a survey by the Chamber of Commerce which claimed that a significant proportion of employers provided employment to migrants. Furthermore the same survey illustrated an increase in the self-employment of migrants.

2004 Report Graph (Page 23) – This chart illustrates the number of individuals who gained employment in 2004 through the employment centre by nationality.

2004 Report Chart (Page 24) – This chart illustrates the type of employment obtained by migrants as follows: 70% - regular employment, 13% - temporary employment, 10% enterprise associate, 7% - training contract.

2004 Report Chart (Page 24) – This chart illustrates the sectors of the economy that migrants have entered into. The highest sector is the Building sector.

2004 Report Graph (Page 28) – This chart illustrates the qualifications of migrants. The highest is identified as Machine Operators. This is a particularly difficult sector to find suitably qualified individuals.

2004 Report Graph (Page 29) – This chart illustrates the length of employment contracts. This chart particularly illustrates the short-term nature of employment contracts. This will be an area which Visibili-Invisibili will explore in more depth.

Visibili-Invisibili hope to work closely with the Employment Centre and aim to obtain employment for 40% of their beneficiaries within the 2 year period.

It is not clear how many migrants are unemployed as the report does not only cover migrants but instead all the service users of the employment centre. Furthermore only migrants with permits can access the Employment Centre and therefore many unemployed migrants will be unidentified.



**Transnational Launch Conference
28th October 2005**



Introduction / Performance

Angelo Scarafiotti

The subject of migration was introduced through an arts-based presentation. The speaker highlighted the common theme of migration and the movements of people. People travel for many different reasons; through choice, employment opportunities; necessity or enjoyment. Some people may take with them an abundance of material possessions, others only a bag of a few items. Nevertheless, everybody takes something with them; a small treasure that reminds them of home, even if this is only their thoughts and memories.

Movement around the world is more frequent in this day and age. This is particularly true within Europe. For some populations within the rest of the world, however, this is seen as a goal.

Movements and migration within Italy was discussed. Italy can be seen as a bridge between the 'Old Europe' and the South continent and a natural path of movement within the Mediterranean area. At present, Europe is facing demands, needs and problems to solve, but also incredible possibilities exist for opportunities and meetings within Europe between people from different countries and regions who bring with them different identities and experiences.

The history of migration in Italy was presented. There have been two very different experiences of migration in Italy: Italian migration; between 1876 and 1976, approximately 27 million Italians left Italy, and migrants from other countries entering Italy in pursuit of opportunity. Italians left Italy from all regions: from the south, central and north including the region of Piedmont. The destinations of Italian migrants were wide and varied including South America, Belgium, France and Germany and especially the USA. Internal migration also took place from the South to the large industrial cities.

Given the Italians' own experiences, we can try to understand the feelings that migrants are likely to experience when coming to Italy from other countries, such as home-sickness, unfamiliarity and language. It is important for us to reflect on the things that help us feel at home when we are travelling and the things we feel when we are far away, such as differing practices, languages and tastes. Language can be seen as an important factor that makes us feel at home. The speaker told the audience of a tale about a Chilean refugee who travelled to Spain. Upon arriving he was overwhelmed but pointed out that 'Our language is our country'.



The speaker stressed the importance of food and tastes to allow people to feel welcome and at home. As is universally known, the Italians are particularly well renowned for their cuisine. The pizza is particularly well known across the world and is a stereotype often referred to when we think of Italy. This food has been taken to other parts of the country and to other countries through the movement of people and migration. In Turin, the pizza is particularly relevant to migration. The first pizza 'al mattone' arrived in Turin in the 1960's. Many other types of flavoured pizza have subsequently been introduced through the further movements of Italians from the South. Porta Palazzo is not only a historical and popular place in Turin, but it also represents the constantly changing migration patterns. During the economic expansion many Italians, both men and women, arrived from the southern regions of Italy to settle in this area and today is inhabited mostly by migrants from North Africa.

The links between immigration and food was explored including the importing of different types of foods from other countries. Food is viewed as an opportunity that can be used for migrants to integrate into the communities and provide employment through the establishment of restaurants, and food shops. Food can also help to create an understanding of other cultures. The pizza, mussels, and the kebab were all used as examples. In particular, the kebab is of Turkish origin but now is evident across the world, made possible through migration.

People migrate often to improve the quality of their life and it is an ongoing phenomenon. Food can help us feel welcome and at home, reducing the distance that exists between ourselves and our country of origin.

Some people view that migration will result in cultural identities being lost through the mixing of different cultures. Others would argue that migration is an opportunity that can benefit us all. We can learn about new tastes and differences that can ultimately aid social and cultural integration. We must not be fearful of differences. By trying new foods, we experience new cultures and this can help us understand other people and their differences.

Opening Session

Gianni Desana
Confindustria Piemonte
Regional Industrial Association

The delegates were welcomed to the conference including a special welcome to the MEET transnational partners, representatives from the Province of Asti and Biella, the confederation of Craftsmanship, Entrepreneurs and the Trade Union.

The speaker talked about the previous work that had been undertaken in this area prior to Visibilinvisibili including 'Horizon' and 'Safe Integration'. With support from Employers Associations, the 'Horizon' programme was developed in 1996 to enhance the competencies of migrants from EU countries and aid the integration process. The aim was to increase commercial relations within the Piedmont region's economy. The 'Safe Integration' programme followed on from 'Horizon' and now Visibilinvisibili replaces this project.



Migrants must fundamentally be seen as resources to the economy. The work place is an important area to consider in the integration process. Visibilinvisibili aim to help migrants integrate into the workplace through working closely with employers and focusing on vocational guidance. Visibilinvisibili aim to work with higher numbers of migrants and in many different support areas compared to previous projects working with migrants in the area.

Institutional Greetings

Angela Migliasso

Regional Councillor for Welfare, Labour policies and Migration

The speaker gave greetings from Mercedes Bresso, the president of the Piedmont region who was unable to attend this conference. The speaker thanked the transnational partners for attending the conference and hoped that they had enjoyed their visit around the Piedmont region, particularly the provinces of Biella and Asti. The speaker stated that the aims, objectives and methodology of the Visibilinvisibili project were particularly innovative. This project joined a number of other innovative projects in the region that worked in the area of Equal Opportunities. The CARITAS Association recently published the 15th Review of Immigration in Italy. This review illustrates how immigration has developed and changed over the years. Migrants are of all ages and gender, both young and old, men and women showing the importance of developing integration policies that cater for all different groups of individuals. We have been led to expect that migrants are poorer and have attained lower education levels. In reality their educational attainment is much higher than we have been led to believe. They are in fact a resource to both society and the economy and therefore it is extremely important for employers to get involved in the project.

It is also important for us to describe the situation that migrants find themselves in so that we can identify the problems, set targets and decide measures to implement in order to create solutions. A thorough analysis of the problem with involvement of beneficiaries is important.

The Integration Policy in Asti

Claudio Musso

Councillor for the Province of Asti for Education, Professional training and Labour policies

The speaker welcomed the participants and passed on good wishes from Mr Marmo, president of the province of Biella. He explained that the MEET transnational partners had visited Asti the day before. Asti is a little province in the heart of the Piedmont region and has 200,000 inhabitants. The Economy has mainly been focused around the motor industry, machinery and agriculture. When migrants first arrived in the area, inhabitants were worried that they would take their employment opportunities from them, as many migrants began working within these areas. Initially prejudice was experienced from resident communities, however this has changed significantly.

The data in 2004 illustrated that the number of unemployed people has increased by 30%. At the same time, 24% of employment opportunities have been filled by

migrants in the province of Asti
force had become more relevant’.



and overall the ‘migration work

In 1921, Thomas wrote about migration in America and rejected the philosophy in Chicago at the time. Instead he suggested the following:

- You should not destroy the past experiences of immigrants. The main risk of this is demoralisation. It is therefore important to remind them of their origins.
- Different generations of migration results in a more competitive population.
- It is important to study different case studies in order to preserve migrants identity and help create new ones.

The Integration Policy in Biella

Rossana Santarelli

Responsible for Employment Centres (Province of Biella)

The speaker welcomed the participants and gave Marisa Lucano’s welcome, the Councillor for the Province of Biella for training, labour and equal rights. The Province of Biella supports Visibilinvisibili and encourages integration and work opportunities for migrants. A recent survey in 2002 showed that 5,000 migrants have been employed by enterprises in the region. However, Biella has recently experienced high unemployment rates, and 800 migrants have experienced unemployment in the area. The situation is therefore rapidly changing with the crisis in the textile industry. Migrants will face more difficulties in comparison with individuals from the host community in terms of gaining employment. Four years ago, the Province of Biella undertook a survey regarding the training of foreign workers but found that other social aspects were the main problem area. Therefore it is important that support is given to this group of individuals.

Integration course for a European Policy of Labour Market Access

Sue Waddington

The Transnational Cooperation Agreement

(refer to presentation handout)

Jane Watts

Progress GB – DP Overview (UK)

(refer to presentation handout)

Sonja Sari

ICE – InterCulturExpress (Austria)

(refer to presentation handout)


- More than ¼ of Vienna’s population have some kind of migration background, however it must be recognised that only those with citizenship were involved in the labour market study (slide 3).

- The part projects include Lighthouse, Antenna, BIMM, Traffic Lights, Gender Mainstreaming and Ponte.

Stephan Schiele

Migranet (Germany)

(refer to presentation handout)

-  Slide 3 – Unemployment Quota of migrants
 Erwebspersonen – General Population
 Auslander/innen – non citizenship individuals
- The number of migrants is likely to be more than the figures suggest.

Wian Stienstra
Paul Spoelstra

Laat Zien Wat Je Kunt (The Netherlands)
 (refer to presentation handout)

Davide Ricca

Visibilinvisibili (Italy)
 (refer to presentation handout)

Immigration as a resource: a working process

The labour market and migrants in Piedmont

Enrico Allasino

Regional Observatory on Immigration

(refer to presentation handout)

Human rights are important. If society helps migrants develop their skills they can become a resource to the country.

- Demography Data from Italy

Demographic statistics in relation to Italy, the Piedmont region and Turin were shown. The speaker pointed out the ageing Italian population and suggested that migration can help maintain the ratio of people of working age within Italy and the region. The speaker pointed out the high number of migrant children currently in Turin and the need to value these individuals, in particularly focusing on the school system to avoid social exclusion. Similarly there are an increasing number of older migrants that must not be forgotten. It is particularly important that they do not lose the valuable knowledge and skills they have brought to Italy. The speaker maintained that we should value our existing resources but at the same time make preparations for the future.

- The Contribution of migrants to the labour market

Statistics regarding the number of migrant employees in Piedmont and other regions in Italy were shown, as well as the age range of migrants, illustrating the high number of migrants between the ages of 20 and 40 years currently in employment.

It is difficult to count the number of foreign nationals employed in the labour market in the Piedmont region, however it is estimated that this figure was 3.5% in 1999. It is now estimated as 24%, but this is only a guessed figure and could be higher.

Migrants can make a positive contribution to the economy but must be supported, guided and have access to the necessary resources to enter into the labour market. Migration is a constant issue and therefore it is essential that these resources are not put to waste. Highly skilled and qualified individuals will be attracted to countries that can offer them jobs therefore we need to encourage migrants to come to Italy.

ANOLF C.I.S.L. Asti

Migrants come to Italy for a variety of reasons, but often they are escaping terrible situations. Many of them may die in the sea in an effort to escape. Ms Figueroa spoke about her own experiences of migration, having arrived in Italy in 1993. The speaker explained that she had been particularly lucky as she had employment experience and the necessary permit documents. Migrants bring with them rich experiences and the labour market can benefit greatly from the resources they bring with them to create a competitive economy. There are a large number of migrants in Italy, and therefore we must realise the benefits they can bring to our country. Many are prepared for employment and are willing. A particularly innovative project exists in Asti to help migrants renew their permits thus reducing the queues. Visibilinvisibili is also an equally valued project which can help migrants integrate successfully in the labour market.

Fatima Azaoui

Office of Foreign Immigrants, Biella
ANOLF C.I.S.L. Biella

Fatima spoke about her own experiences of migration, having arrived in Italy six years ago. The first migrants in Biella were men who worked for short periods during the Summer periods. Legislation changed in 1985 making it difficult to obtain permits for temporary workers. Many migrants have come to the country with their families and children, however the law has made it difficult for migrants to take part in vocational training because without stable employment permits will not be renewed.

The arrival of women migrants in Italy is a relatively recent phenomenon. Women face particular difficulties so integration policies must cater for this group of individuals.

With the establishment of families, the children of migrant parents are attending schools. It is essential that we work in this area as well as working directly with parents.

Conclusion

Domenico Rossetto

Chairman of Consorzio EuroQualità

The Chairman concluded the conference by thanking all the speakers and cited a latin playwright (Cecilio Stazio, 200 a.c) who wrote a verse: 'homo homini deus, si suum officium sciat'. This translates as 'A man is a man of God if he knows his work well'. This does not necessary have to relate to employment, but instead can mean his purpose and creative capacity.

The Chairman thanked the participants and encouraged all involved in the Transnational MEET partnership to work together within this area to help manage the complex issues involved in the integration of migrants.