

UNIRE – Unione Nazionale Italiana per i Rifugiati ed Esuli

contribution to the Asylum Report 2026

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## General Observations

### 1. Areas where important developments took place in 2025

In 2025, UNIRE observed significant developments in **Italy and the broader EU+ context** in relation to:

- **Preparatory implementation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum**, particularly regarding screening, border procedures, and responsibility-sharing mechanisms;
- **Expansion of accelerated, border, and detention-related procedures**, including externalisation initiatives;
- **Growing strain on reception systems**, with uneven territorial coverage and reduced integration-oriented services;
- **Increased relevance of judicial oversight**, at both national and EU level, in assessing the compatibility of migration management measures with EU law and fundamental rights;
- **An essential role played by civil society organisations** in monitoring, legal assistance, reception support, and rights protection.

### 2. Areas with limited or no developments

- **Alternatives to detention** remained underdeveloped and inconsistently applied;
- **Statelessness identification and determination mechanisms** showed no substantial improvement;
- **Long-term integration policies**, especially in relation to housing and stable employment, remained fragmented and insufficiently resourced.

### 3. Observations on the implementation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum

UNIRE notes that national implementation efforts have so far focused primarily on **control and procedural efficiency**, while **reception quality, safeguards, and integration measures** have received comparatively less attention. A balanced implementation of the Pact will require sustained investment in reception systems, effective legal assistance, vulnerability assessments, and independent monitoring mechanisms.

## PART A – Contributions by topic

### 1. Access to territory and access to the asylum procedure

UNIRE highlights continued protection challenges along the **Central Mediterranean route**, which in 2025 remained one of the most dangerous migration routes globally. Refugees and migrants originating from **Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and West African countries** continued to flee conflict, persecution, and severe socio-economic hardship.

Throughout their journeys, particularly in **transit through North African countries**, many individuals experienced heightened vulnerability, including exposure to violence, exploitation, arbitrary detention, and discriminatory practices. UNIRE observes that **migration containment and externalisation measures**, when not accompanied by adequate safeguards and monitoring, may entail **unintended humanitarian consequences**, including increased risks to life and barriers to accessing asylum procedures.

Ensuring effective access to territory, timely registration, safe disembarkation, and full respect for the **principle of non-refoulement** remains essential.

## 2. Access to information and legal assistance

Access to timely, accurate, and comprehensible information remained **uneven across the territory**. Legal assistance continued to depend largely on the presence of civil society organisations, with gaps particularly evident in accelerated and border-related procedures.

## 3. Dublin procedures

Dublin procedures continued to be affected by **complexity and delays**, with transfers often challenged on grounds related to reception conditions and access to rights in destination countries.

## 4. Reception of applicants for international protection

The **Reception and Integration System (SAI)** represents Italy's main reception model for asylum seekers and beneficiaries of protection, following the replacement of the SIPROIMI system under **Legislative Decree No. 130/2020**. Managed by municipalities in cooperation with third-sector organisations, the SAI is designed to provide **integrated reception** through personalised pathways supporting autonomy and social inclusion.

In 2025, UNIRE observed a **progressive weakening of the SAI system in practice**, linked to insufficient funding, limited project renewals, uneven territorial coverage, and reductions in essential integration services. In several local contexts, Italian language courses, vocational training, and job placement support were reduced or discontinued.

These developments risk transforming integrated reception into poor **basic accommodation only**, increasing vulnerability rather than promoting independence. UNIRE notes that inadequate investment in reception and integration may contribute to poverty, labour exploitation, social exclusion, discrimination, and deterioration of physical and mental health conditions.

## 5. Detention of applicants for international protection

*(Italy–Albania protocol)*

In 2025, the **Italy–Albania protocol on migration management**, signed in 2023, faced significant legal and operational challenges. The detention centres established in **Shengjin and Gjadër (Albania)** did not become operational as envisaged.

An **August 2025 ruling by the Court of Justice of the European Union** established the incompatibility of the detention framework foreseen by the protocol and its implementing legislation with EU law, rendering transfers of asylum seekers to Albania legally impracticable.

Civil society organisations raised concerns regarding the **cost-effectiveness, legality, and safeguards** of the project. ActionAid Italia submitted reports to the **National Anti-Corruption Authority (ANAC)** and to the **Court of Auditors**, requesting an assessment of potential mismanagement of public resources and administrative accountability.

UNIRE observes that this case highlights the importance of **judicial oversight, fundamental rights compliance, and responsible public spending** in the design of externalisation and detention-related measures.

## 6. Children and applicants with special needs

Identification of vulnerabilities and access to specialised reception services remained inconsistent. Guardianship systems for unaccompanied minors continued to face capacity constraints. For that end UNIRE is implementing partnere for a project aiming to increase foster care and mentoring for unaccompanied migrant minors and young adults, leveraging the many years of experience and expertise gained in this specific field by the proponents, partners, and municipalities involved.

## 7. Content of protection

Beneficiaries of international protection continued to encounter barriers in accessing housing, social assistance, healthcare continuity, and stable employment. Integration measures remained fragmented and insufficiently resourced.

## 8. Return of former applicants

Return procedures increasingly intersected with detention practices, while independent monitoring and safeguards remained limited.

## 9. Resettlement and humanitarian admission

Resettlement and humanitarian admission programmes remained limited in scale and insufficient in relation to global protection needs.

## 10. Other important developments

UNIRE notes that civil society organisations faced **operational and funding constraints**, despite their growing role in reception, legal assistance, monitoring, and rights protection.

### Final note

UNIRE reiterates its commitment to constructive dialogue with EU institutions and national authorities and underlines the importance of a **balanced, rights-based approach** that combines effective migration management with full respect for human dignity, fundamental rights, and the right to asylum.

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