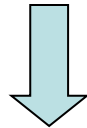


**Social Cohesion
as an *asset* for territorial
governance.**

The role of the RST in Italy.

**Globalization,
intercontinental mobility,
disruption of the value systems (Inglehart),
and the financial crisis
focus the political agenda on the
sustainability of an economic and social system
which is shifting according to rapidly changing
parameters that, in turn, are bringing our societies far from the
development criteria known so far.**

An extremely coherent social structure is necessary.



**Promotion of the welfare of all citizens,
reduction of disparities
and social weaknesses
fight against marginalization**

**The function of social cohesion in Italy is strategic
The role of the Prefect (RST) on the territory is decisive**

**In the framework of the many relevant functions assigned
to the various local government bodies – i.e. Regions, Provinces and
Municipalities-
the RST ensures institutional coordination between said bodies
as well as their coordination with the civil society and acts as
a “sensor” of local needs.**

**The “Prefect of security and guarantees”
plays a coordinating role between central and local bodies
and acts as a hub for the institutional network at provincial level.
In this way, he guarantees an extremely effective response to the
needs of the community in a time when public resources are cut,
together with all relevant safeguards.**

The Prefect's action related to social cohesion involves three fields of action:

Migrants' social integration



Mediation in the employment field

Social emergencies

Migrants' integration

As of **1st January 2011** immigrants legally residing in Italy exceeded **4.5 million (4.570.317)** i.e. **7.5 %** of the population –
It was one million more as compared to **1st January 2008** and **335,000** more as against the previous year with a **7.9 %** increase over a year.

In 2010 foreign new-born children amounted to **78,000** i.e. **13.9 %** of the total new-born children

It is necessary to integrate migrants into the social tissue in order to avoid reactions which may lead to social tensions

The policies implemented involve all local government bodies.

The Prefect is assigned a key role for the governance of the phenomenon:

Immigration Desks

first employment of foreign workers, family reunification and conversion of residence permits.

Local Immigration Boards

chaired by the Prefect

They ensure assistance to immigrants as well as to labourers' and employers' organizations.

Local Committees for the Recognition of International Protection to

Refugees.

Further initiatives to foster concretely migrants' integration into the production and social system:

- to facilitate the knowledge of the Italian language**
 - labour integration processes**
 - health assistance**

These actions are promoted in partnership with other Italian public institutions as well as external stakeholders such as the organizations of many countries of origin

Mediation in the employment field

According to Durkheim labour constitutes the basis of social cohesion

Decisive is the role played by Prefects in the employment field.

They are given specific powers to order resumption of work in cases of strikes involving the essential services

They conduct **preventive conciliation activities in the framework of union disputes**

Of significance is the mediation activity for companies in crisis which does not stem from a specific legal provision but from the recognition of the Prefect as a guarantor and mediator of the various parties by the economic/production stakeholders.

Thanks to the above, **discussion tables are set up between workers and companies with a view to settling today's increasing labour disputes**

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Social emergencies

The realization of a solid social cohesion is based on meeting a number of requirements in addition to employment, i.e. housing, income and education.

The Prefects' activities are significant in these fields, too.

They include the monitoring of housing-related emergencies, mainly in large urban areas, which gives a picture of the phenomenon thanks to regular reports in order to adopt effective policies . They also include problems related to school dropout, juvenile discomfort and the integration of particularly underprivileged subjects.

The initiatives aim at integrated prevention and rehabilitation interventions which are realized also thanks to the conclusion of memorandums of understanding with other institutional stakeholders (schools, local services, etc.).

Moreover, the Prefects have been called to register communities' needs, analyse the needs of social groups, suggest remedies, facilitate shared solutions to conflicts and organize prevention activities in sensitive situations.

As an example, as early as in 2008 the Prefects of Rome, Milan and Naples were appointed Commissioners responsible for the social emergencies related to nomadic communities.

To sum up
social integration policies are based on three requirements:

knowledge of local problems,

capacity to mediate

capacity to coordinate the stakeholders

The three characteristics can be found in the
figure of the **Prefect**.

- 1) He is a bi-directional tool who knows the territory and informs the central government of its needs;
- 2) traditionally he is a body who – by virtue of prestige and proven ability – is able to mediate and conciliate conflicting positions by setting up discussion tables in order to find a mutually satisfactory solution;
- 3) he is institutionally a central coordination body for the other state departments first, as well as for local government bodies under the horizontal/vertical subsidiarity principle

**In Italy the Prefect confirms his
role as a civil rights guarantor
and he plays it for the purpose
of implementing local
governance.**

**Prefect Laura Lega
Ministry of the Interior - Italy**