

The SPRAR System

A description of the Italian system for the accommodation of asylum seekers and refugees (SPRAR – Sistema di Protezione per Richiedenti Asilo e Rifugiati)



Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst
Ministerie van Veiligheid en Justitie



Bundesamt
für Migration
und Flüchtlinge



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
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Federal Department of Justice and Police FDJP

State Secretariat for Migration SEM
Division for Asylum

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Introduction

In July 2015 we were requested by our respective ministries to visit two of the SPRAR projects included in the list of 29 SPRAR projects where the Italian Ministry of the Interior has reserved a total of 161 places for families with minor children that are transferred to Italy in the context of the Dublin Regulation. With the help of the coordinative body of the SPRAR system (*il Servizio Centrale*) we were able to visit two centres on the 7th and the 10th of July 2015.

In this report, we first provide a short general description of the SPRAR system and list the requirements every accommodation project has to comply with in order to be part of the SPRAR system. Then we describe the two projects we visited in detail.

The SPRAR System¹

The System for Protection of Asylum Seekers and Refugees (SPRAR) consists of a network of managing entities that set up and run reception projects for people forced to migrate. At a local level the managing entity, with the valued support of the third sector (non-profit organizations, NGOs), ensures an "integrated reception" that goes well beyond the mere provision of board and lodging, but includes orientation measures, legal and social assistance as well as the development of personalized programs for the social-economic integration of the beneficiaries.

Generally, the SPRAR projects are small to medium sized projects. The coordinative body checks regularly if the projects comply with the minimum criteria as laid down in the SPRAR guidelines. A wide range of services is offered, ranging from the legal support to professional education, to help with finding independent accommodation.

SPRAR's main objective is to take responsibility for those beneficiaries accepted into the scheme and to provide them with personalized programs to help them (re)acquire self-autonomy, and to take part in and integrate effectively into Italian society, in terms of finding employment and housing, access to local services, social life and education.

Minimum services guaranteed²

Cultural-linguistic Mediation

The managing entity must:

- Provide cultural-linguistic mediation in order to build a relationship and facilitate communication (linguistic and cultural) between the beneficiaries, the project and the territorial context (institutions, services, cultural traditions, local community).

Accommodation

The managing entity must:

- provide food and satisfy special needs and requests in order to respect the religious and cultural traditions of the beneficiaries;

¹Source: <http://www.sprar.it/index.php/english>

²Translated from attachment A to the Decree of the 30th of July 2013 of the Ministry of Interior, indicating the guidelines for access to the National Fund for the Asylum Policies and Services:

http://www.sprar.it/images/ALL_A-LineeGuida2.pdf

- provide clothes, bed-linen, sanitary products in sufficient quantity respecting the beneficiaries' specific needs;
- distribute pocket money according to the modalities established in the *Manuale unico di rendicontazione del Manuale operativo SPRAR*;
- respect the specific law on foreign unaccompanied minors by using, if needed, the option of fostering.

Orientation and Access to the Services on the Territory

The managing entity must:

- facilitate the access and the use of public services on the territory according to the *Manuale operativo SPRAR*;
- ensure access to health care and protect the health of the beneficiaries;
- ensure the inclusion of the children in the local school system and access to education for adults;
- ensure access, availability and attendance to classes of Italian language, without interruption during the whole year, for a minimum of 10 hours per week. In the absence of adequate services on the territory, the managing entity must adopt other measures necessary for the beneficiaries to acquire an equivalent linguistic level;
- ensure the enrolment to education for adults and to monitor their participation;
- provide information about the territory (public transportation, post, pharmacy, associations).

Education, Professional Requalification

The managing entity must:

- valorise the beneficiaries' backgrounds, taking into account their expectations (résumé, evaluation and certification of competences);
- orientate the beneficiaries to professional training and requalification (classes, trainings, internships) in order to encourage the acquisition of new competences;
- facilitate the recognition of degrees and professional qualifications and encourage enrolment to university.

Orientation and Facilitation to Work Integration

The managing entity must:

- provide information on Italian labour legislation and employment agencies on the territory and support the integration of the beneficiary into the labour market;
- facilitate the integration of beneficiaries into protected working places, in case the specific personal situation of the beneficiary requires so.

Orientation and Integration into the Housing Market

The managing entity must:

- provide information about the Italian housing legislation;
- facilitate access to the public and private housing market by promoting, supporting and eventually mediating between beneficiaries and owners/landlords;
- facilitate access to protected housing, in case the specific personal situation of the beneficiary requires so.

Facilitation of Social Integration

The managing entity must:

- promote the dialogue between beneficiaries and the local community;
- promote and support the realisation of social and cultural activities the active participation of the beneficiaries (cultural and social activities, sports);
- build and consolidate a territorial support network to the project by involving local actors;
- promote the participation of the beneficiaries to the associative and public life on the territory, also through the autonomous organization of events.

Legal Support

The managing entity must:

- provide orientation and support to the beneficiaries in their contacts with the institutional actors in charge of the different steps of the asylum procedure;
- provide orientation and information on Italian and European asylum laws;
- provide orientation and support during the bureaucratic and administrative procedures;
- provide information on the Italian legislation regarding family reunification and provide support and assistance if beneficiaries chose to follow this procedure;
- provide information on rights and obligations laid down by Italian legislation;
- provide information on programs of assisted and voluntary return.

Social and Health Services

The managing entity must:

- ensure the availability of primary and secondary healthcare;
- provide psychological and social assistance depending on the specific needs of the beneficiaries;
- provide orientation, information and help on social security related matters;
- ensure the availability of specific psychological, social and health assistance in case of special needs;
- establish and consolidate cooperation with actors who may participate in the support, rehabilitation and care of beneficiaries with specific needs;
- establish and consolidate cooperation with private and public actors who can participate in managing emergency situations.

Project 1 – 7th of July 2015

On the 7th of July 2015, we visited a project in which four places are reserved for transferred families with minor children. We were accompanied on our visit by a representative of the coordinative body of SPRAR, the director of the local entity that manages the project and a social worker employed by the project.

Accommodation

The four places are reserved in an independent apartment that forms part of an apartment building located in the center of a small town. The apartment consists of three bedrooms with two beds each, a big living room, a kitchen diner and two bathrooms. At the time of our visit, a single mother and her teenage son were living in the apartment, leaving room for four more persons.

We were told that the compatibility of the families living in the apartment will be considered before their arrival. In case of problems in the cohabitation between the families, another accommodation can be found.

The apartment looked clean and tidy. We were told that upon arrival, every beneficiary gets a short briefing on how to use the apartment and its appliances. Furthermore, the managing entity sends a professional cleaner to the apartment once every two weeks to clean the apartment thoroughly together with the inhabitants of the apartment. The inhabitants are responsible for keeping the apartment clean and tidy.

We were informed that all inhabitants of the apartment and the managing entity have a key to the apartment.

Services available to the beneficiaries

It was brought to our attention that, upon arrival, an employee of the managing entity accompanies new beneficiaries to the local medical centre and explains how access to medical services is organized in Italy. Asylum seekers and recognized refugees have the same rights and access to medical services as every Italian citizen.

We were told that the managing entity has an office in the nearby bigger town where the beneficiaries of the project can go if they need any help or advice from professionals such as lawyers, psychologists and social workers. It was stated that every beneficiary can use regional public transportation free of charge.

As explained above, adult beneficiaries have the right to at least ten hours of Italian classes per week. As for the visited project, beneficiaries have to travel to the nearby bigger town, where the classes are taught.

We were told that the town offers some job opportunities, especially in the agricultural-sector.

In the centre of the town there is a children's playground. The playground is reachable on foot from the apartment.

Project 1 – Pictures



Front view and entrance
Living room and bathroom
One of the two free bedrooms

Project 2 – 10th of July 2015

On the 10th of July 2015 we visited a centre in which three places are reserved for transferred families with minor children. We were accompanied on our visit by a representative of the coordinative body of SPRAR, the coordinator of the managing entity of the project and two representatives of the provincial authorities.

Accommodation

The three places are reserved in an independent apartment located in one of four buildings that together form a centre that accommodates different kinds of people in need. The SPRAR project occupies roughly 1.5 buildings of the whole complex and can in total accommodate 60 single persons and five families. The complex is located in a small town on the outskirts of a major city.

The apartment consists of a living room with kitchenette, one bedroom with three beds, one bathroom and two balconies. At the time of our visit, the apartment was empty. The apartment can be locked with a key.

The whole building looked clean and tidy. The inhabitants are responsible for the cleanliness of their own living area and an employee of the managing entity checks upon this regularly. The common areas are cleaned by two professional cleaners hired by the project.

Services available to the beneficiaries

We were informed that during the first days upon arrival, an employee of the managing entity talks to the new beneficiaries exhaustively, if necessary with the help of a cultural mediator/interpreter. These conversations have the purpose of providing the immigrants with a first orientation on the Italian medical, administrative and educational system as well as gathering all important information on the legal, health-related and professional/educational/linguistical situation of the family or individual. Based on this information, an individualized plan containing concrete monthly goals is designed together with the beneficiary.

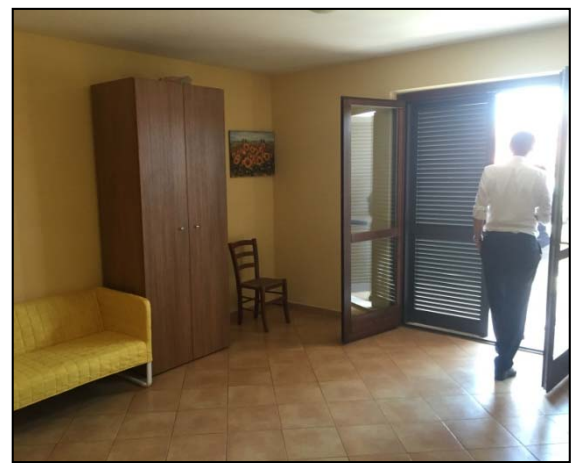
On the terrain of the complex, the managing entity has various offices where interviews are held, classes are taught, etc. The staff of the managing entity consists of five social workers, three professional educators, one teacher, one psychologist, one social assistant, two cultural mediators and two cleaners.

It was brought to our attention that in the nearby city the managing entity has a multifunctional centre where beneficiaries can go if they need legal, social, psychological, employment or education services. It was stated that every beneficiary can use regional public transportation free of charge. Finally, in the town itself there's a medical centre with general practitioners and paediatrics. Once a week, a doctor visits the centre.

Within 300 metres of the centre there is a game library (*Iudoteca*) and a kindergarten. It was stated that for the children of beneficiaries a certain number of places are reserved at the kindergarten and at the nearby school (600m) so that they can be enrolled immediately.

We were told that every family receives their daily food vouchers once a week on Saturday morning. For a family of four the weekly value of the vouchers amounts to €140. This project has chosen to hand over the food vouchers once a week in order to stimulate the families to make a budget and plan ahead. The supermarket is reachable on foot from the centre.

Project 2 – Pictures



Complex and view from the balcony
Bedroom
Living room with kitchenette
Bathroom