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Migration ImpAct assessment To Enhance
Integration and Local Development in
European rural and mountain regions

Migration and territorial impacts in mountain areas to the test of the Covid-19 health emergency

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WHO WE ARE

MATILDE develops a case studies approach which is built on a multi-stakeholder perspective. The two-level consortium brings together **research partners** and **local partners** acting in the field of migrants' integration:



MATILDE regions	Local partners
1. A. P. of Bolzano-Bozen	CARITASBZ
2. Bavaria	TAT
3. Carinthia	VILLACH
4. Dalarnas län	DALARNA
5. Province of Turin	CM TORINO
6. North Karelia	JOMONI
7. North Ayrshire	COSLA
8. Bursa	STL
9. Vorarlberg	OKAY
10. Ostrobothnia	MIF
11. Haskovo	KARITASBG
12. Gudbrandsdalen	OPP
13. Aragón	ARAGON

QUESTIONS

1. What **effects** is Covid-19 having on rural and mountain areas compared to what is happening in urban and metropolitan areas? Is there a **specificity** in the territory of your MATILDE region in terms of adaptation to the crisis?
2. How is Covid-19 **impacting on the condition of foreign migrants** in rural and mountain areas of your country?
3. Looking to the future, what **long-term and structural impact** do you think the situation triggered by Covid-19 will have on the rural and mountain areas of your country? And what **socio-economic and political impact** will it have on foreign migrants living in the MATILDE regions?



EFFECTS AND SPECIFICITIES

Rural and mountain areas were generally **less affected** by Covid-19 than the urban ones. **The contagious situation is lower and the spread of the virus is limited.** This advantage could be an opportunity to increase the attractiveness of peripheral areas.

COVID-19 and its related government policies have created both social and economic effects:

- **The limitation of mobility had negative impacts on some economic sectors.** As countries of emigration, BG and TK experienced **significant unemployment rate**, whilst others (like DE, ES and AT) faced **labor shortages** in agriculture due to the lack of seasonal workers.
- Challenges in delivering **public services** (healthcare) were visible in the hardest-hit areas (e.g. Italy and Bavaria);
- Socially excluded persons, **like migrants**, have suffered even more when access to work, education, culture and social encounters had been suspended;

IMPACT ON FOREIGN IMMIGRANTS

- Stable and temporary migrants faced significant unemployment rates and risk of poverty as they often work in sectors that are **heavily affected by the lockdown** (agriculture, construction, tourism and gastronomy).
 - Despite all relevant information were normally translated in different languages, migrants showed **substantial difficulties** in accessing:
 - 1) public help programmes;
 - 2) suitable accommodation;
 - 3) education;
- Nevertheless, immigrants experienced **more follow-up** and **better adaptation** in Ostrobothnia (Finland), Guddbrandsdalen (Norway), CMTurin (Italy), Dalarna (Sweden) than in metropolitan areas.
- Bureaucratic procedures regarding **asylum requests** slowed down and the **resettlements** of refugees have been put to a hold.

LONG-TERM AND STRUCTURAL IMPACTS

Future impacts of Covid-19 are difficult to foresee. Certainly, internal areas and international migrations will be strictly connected:

RURAL AND MOUNTAIN AREAS ARE SAFER AND MORE ATTRACTIVE, BUT ECONOMIC SITUATION IS CHALLENGING

Possible future impacts:

- Tough economic downturn and job-cuts;
- If the borders remain closed, touristic destinations will face big challenges;

OPPORTUNITIES :

- Growing importance of agricultural production and a general return to regionally produced goods;
- Growing importance of empowering local governance in managing the negative effects of upcoming crises;
- Fostering digitalization and strengthening their local networks and cooperative structures.

INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS MAY FACE INCREASING DIFFICULTIES

Possible future impacts:

- Extremely higher unemployment rates;
- Slow integration processes and difficult access to public services;
- More mobility limitations and raising of scapegoat mechanism;

OPPORTUNITIES :

- Changing the negative attitude towards migrants recognizing their importance in agriculture, building, domestic and personal care employment.
Especially in the case of seasonal workers;

MAIN OUTCOMES

Rural and mountain areas are particularly appreciated in times of Covid-19 because they can guarantee «physical distancing» and strong local networks.

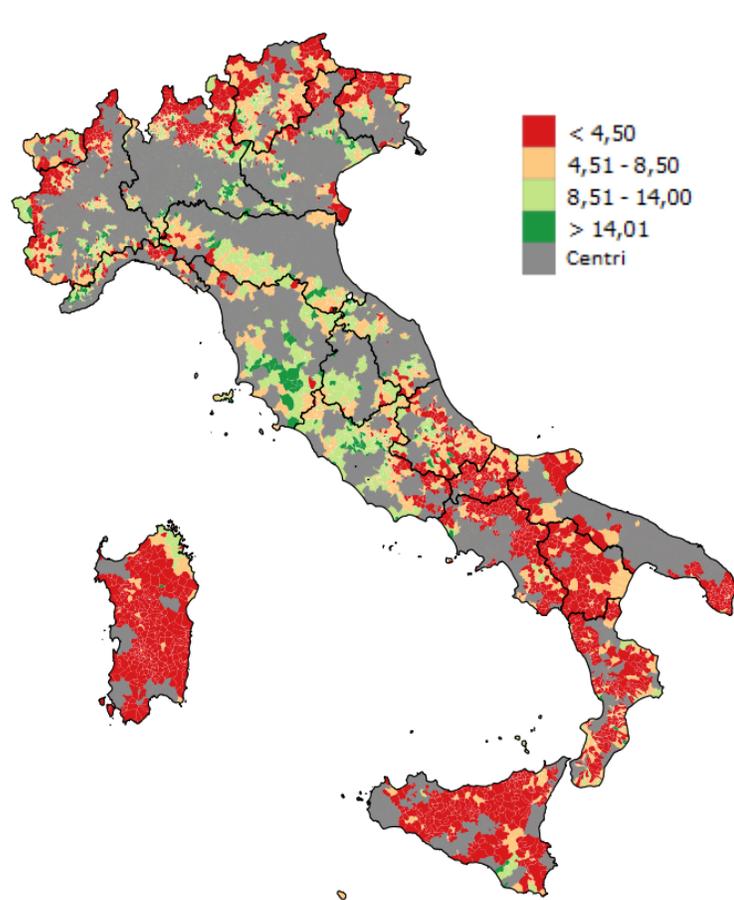


This growing attention can be an opportunity to bring economic development and investments, while increasing political awareness on economic relevance of certain migrant groups.

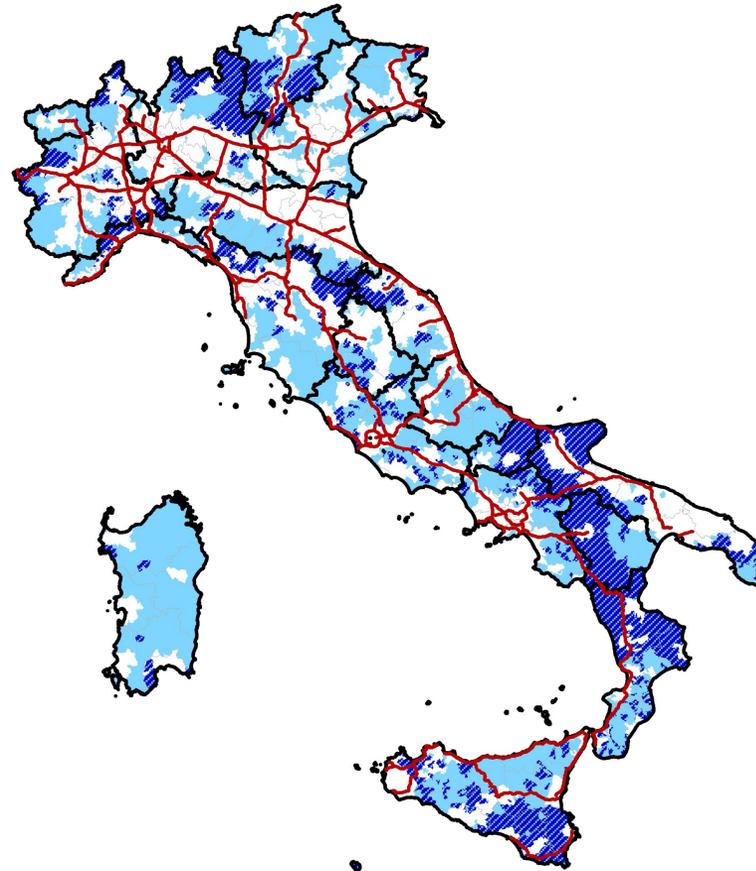
COVID19 may reduce territorial disparities, but can exacerbate **internal inequalities. Migrants faced:**

- Higher unemployment rates than the rest of population.
- Limited access to public services and integration programmes.
- Scapegoat mechanisms and challenging bureaucratic processes.

Migrants and foreign people in Italian inner and mountain areas

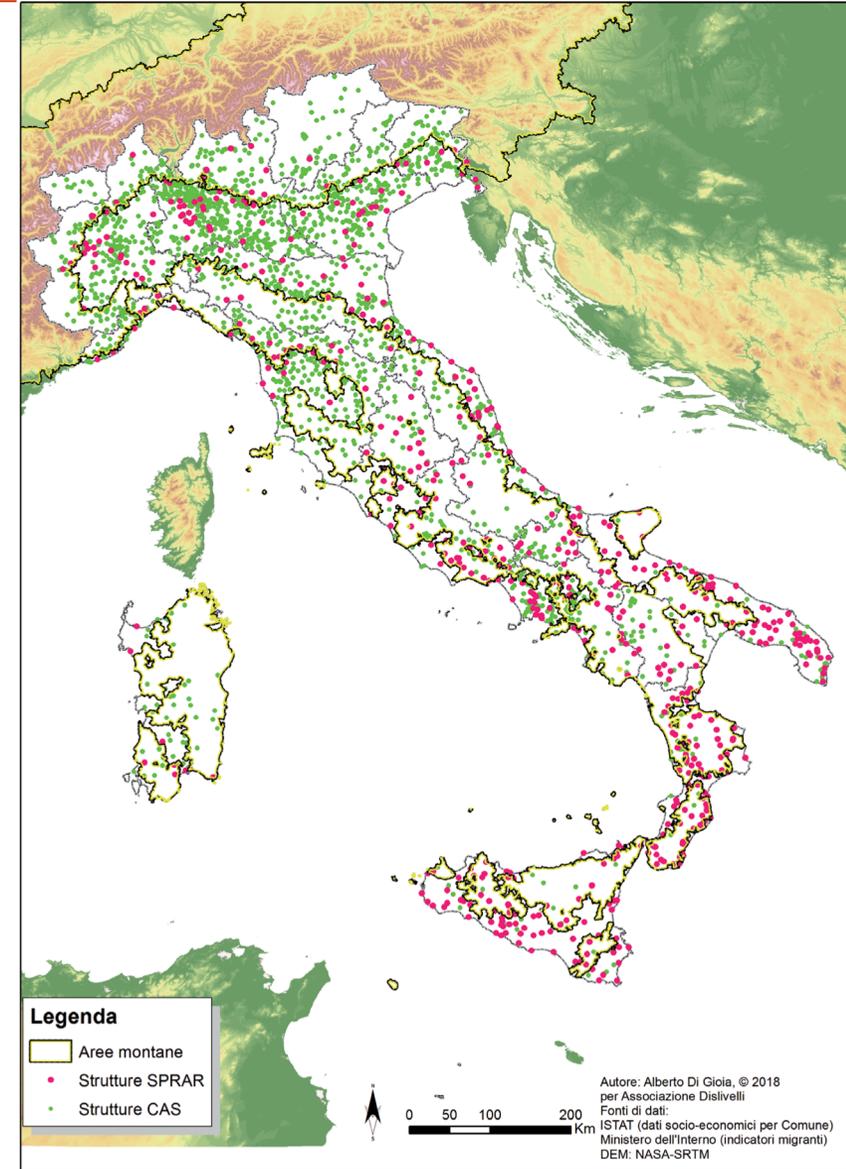


Source: Comitato Tecnico Aree Interne on Istat data (2016)



■ Aree interne (anno 2014)
■ Progetti SPRAR insistenti in Aree interne (anno 2017)
— Autostrade

Source: ANCI on SPRAR data (2017) and Agency for Territorial Cohesion data (2015)



Legenda
 Aree montane
● Strutture SPRAR
● Strutture CAS

Autore: Alberto Di Gioia, © 2018
 per Associazione Distivelli
 Fonti di dati:
 ISTAT (dati socio-economici per Comune)
 Ministero dell'Interno (indicatori migranti)
 DEM: NASA-SRTM

Source: A. Di Gioia on Istat-Ministry of Interior data (2017)

Impacts generated, **changes** and risks

The relationships of trust strengthen territorial ties, make projects sustainable, innovate the local economy

1. Territorial linkages, between areas
2. Building a community process
3. Place-based projects with residents
4. Public utility work, training and job experience in specific economic fields
5. New residents
6. Social inclusion



Fish centre in Inner area of Liguria Region - August 2020

Impacts generated, changes and risks

The pandemic has partly undermined local micro relationships, balances between needs and opportunities

1. Isolation without community
2. Weakening of relationships of trust, connections between areas and people
3. Interruption of work grants and job opportunities
4. Perspectives change: risk to return to urban centres in the absence of work
5. Difficult management in the provision of health services
6. Weakening of the path of inclusion and autonomy (time is precious in integration processes)



Training course in Inner area of Liguria Region – December 2019

Narrative and policy discourse

1. Relations of production
2. Right-wing authoritarian narrative
3. Rising inequalities and rising migrants
4. Inability to turn positive experiences into an alternative narrative



New inequalities

VS

Challenge proposed by incoming migrants



Need of new narratives for responsible policies