

“A country that never wanted us”

Italy's difficult relationship with its immigrants; from the refugees to the second generation

By Henri Nanushi

On the 8th and 9th of June, Italy will be holding a referendum that will consist in five abrogative questions.

Among them, the one that has undoubtedly captured the country's attention is the reform regarding the Italian citizenship.

The question proposes the amendment of Article 9.

If passed, it will reduce from 10 to 5, the years of residence required by foreigners when applying for citizenship.

The referendum is the pinnacle of decades of activism from Italy's foreign community.

The referendum symbolises Italy's approach to a new era; a country that has always been culturally conservative and homogenous will be finally recognising its multiethnicity.

The event will take place in an historical time where immigrants and their children are as relevant as ever in Italian society.

As of 2025, foreigners in Italy constitute the 10% of the country's total population, in Milan, the economic capital of the country, they make up the 21,2% of the residents.

Foreigners and immigrants are also the main point of discussion in the parliament and media. They headline the major news stories and, regardless of the party, are crucial in every political speech and manifesto.

The referendum is not the only hot topic regarding immigrants in Italy,

The matter regarding Jus soli has also been constantly debated for more than 25 years.

Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, has also recently made the news for the controversial decision of reaching detention agreements with Albania.

These agreements expect the establishment of offshore detention centres in the Balkan State. The centres are intended to host Italy's asylum seekers, leading to the creation of what has been dubbed as the “European Guantanamo”.

The recent rise of petty crime in Italy's metropolises established a climate of modern-day witch hunt towards the second-generation youth.

This was also fuelled by the sensationalization put in action by certain journalists and media entities, openly aligned with extremist political ideas.

The climate led to the creation of “punitive patrols” by organised groups like “Articolo 52” that roam the streets at night in search of foreigners to target.

Italy is obviously going through a period of cultural transition and the road towards achieving its objectives seems to be bumpy and full of obstacles.

On one side the immigrants and the second generation feel targeted by the government and the public opinion, on the other, the country is still suspicious and sceptic towards its potential new citizens.

To understand better the relationship between Italy and its immigrant, it's crucial to look at the history of immigration in the country.

Italy's history of Immigration

The first serious immigration wave that Italy experienced in its history came from the Balkans in the early 90's.

After the fall of the Berlin wall and the collapse of Enver Hoxha's communist regime, Albania was left with a population that was amongst the poorest in the world.

The desire of freedom of a population that lived under the oppression of a totalitarian communist dictatorship for 46 years, led Albanians to embark on a desperate spree of mass expatriation.

Albania had always been isolated and secluded.

The communist dictatorship always prevented the broadcasting of foreign channels and radio programs, but despite the heavy censorship, Albanian devices were often able to catch clandestine signals from the other side of the Adriatic.

Being caught watching or listening to Italian signals by the authorities would have easily resulted in the internment and delocalisation of an individual's entire family.

Despite the risks, that watching or listening to Italian transmissions implied, a great part of the Albanian population still secretly syntonised on the Italian broadcasts daily.

Italy was Albania's only window to the western world, and because of that, Albanians had always a soft spot for their neighbour across the sea.

In 1990 the communist regime in Albania started losing power, and the first Albanian immigrants started landing on Italy's shores.

The most impactful and symbolic episode of this wave of migration happened in 1991.

In the morning of the 7th of August of 1991, the Albanian cargo ship Vlora, made its way back to its country of origin from Cuba.

The sugar ship moored in the port of Durres, a commercial port that was always guarded by the Albanian military and closed to the main public.

My father, was the general military officer in charge of patrolling the port and experienced the extraordinary event that was about to unfold first handily.

The cargo ship that was not designed to carry passengers and could realistically fit under 100 people was stormed and hijacked by a horde of almost 30.000 Albanians.

When asked about recalling the event, my father said:

"The days prior the hijacking of the Vlora were troubled, the regime fell and people were storming the borders and the embassies in search of a way out of the country.

That morning I was covering my shift at the port as usual, and since it was a very hot summer morning, the nearby public beach was jam-packed.

The voice about the cargo ship coming back from Cuba, somehow started going around, and a crowd of people stormed the port; first it was a dozen, then a 100, shortly after 200, in less than 15 minutes the whole beach emptied and reversed itself into the ship.

The beach goers were not the only people to rush the ship; the people of Durres were also calling their friends and families and convincing them about boarding the vessel. In few hours the ship was full of thousands of people.”

When asked about the army’s reaction, he said;

“When people started storming the port, all of our soldiers and even some of my officers dropped their weapons, deserted, and boarded the ship.

At the time it was understandable, there was nothing I could do to stop them and even today I still don’t blame them about their actions.

People were tired, the government was inexistent, the country was in a state of anarchy. Everyone wanted a better future outside of Albania.”

When asked about his personal thoughts on the event he said;

“They asked me to board the ship, but the scene that I had in front of my eyes was surreal. Thousands and thousands of people, Men, women, children piled up over one another.

It looked like hell and I honestly thought that they were not going to make it on the other side on those conditions.

Looking back, I am happy about my decision, I still reached Italy a year later but boarding the Vlora at that time, seemed like a suicide to me.”

After boarding almost 30.000 people, the Vlora started its journey to Italy.

The ship sailed blindly towards the Apulian coast without digital navigation and the captain was held at gunpoint.

The ship was heavily overcrowded and no food or water where available for the passengers.

The Vlora reached Italy the following day.

The Italian government that at the time did not have any official data about the incoming ship, tried to deny the docking of the cargo.

After 36 hours of negotiation, the ship was finally allowed to dock at the port of Bari.

When the ship landed nothing could have prepared the Italian authorities about the scenario that they encountered.

The small coastal city of Bari, that at the time counted 80.000 residents, had to deal with almost 30.000 refugees.



The Vlora in the port of Bari (1991)

The government and the authorities were overwhelmed, the hospitals were overloaded. because of the severe heat and the lack of food and water, most refugees happened to be in precarious conditions.

Despite the panic in which the authorities found themselves to be, the citizens of Bari responded to the emergency in a welcoming way. The citizens stormed the port and helped the refugees, offering them: food, water, clothes, medical care and accommodation.

If the public's response is still remembered because of its incredible humanity, the government response its disgracefully membered for its cruelty. After the docking, the Italian government forcibly confined 10.000 refugees in the "Della Vittoria" Stadium.

The stadium was dilapidated and lacked essential hygienic services. During those days Italy was experiencing a heat wave and the refugees were forced to stay under the excruciating sun without being provided any protection.

The food and water supplies were not properly rationed, they were instead thrown in the stadium from outside. The situation inside of the stadium was anarchic, and the lack of equal distribution of the supplies, led to the formation of armed gangs.

The confinement in the "Della Vittoria" lasted for 8 days. The international humanitarian society, ferociously condemned Italy for the forced confinement and treatment of refugees.

The brutal treatment of the refugees by the Italian authorities, led to the breaking of several international humanitarian laws.

After the confinement, several refugees managed to escape from the authorities' controls, the ones that didn't were forcibly repatriated.

During the repatriation of the refugees, humanitarian laws were once again broken.

The authorities lied to the refugees.

The refugees were told about a transfer to another Italian city, but instead got deported back to Albania.

In the years following the events of the Vlora, Albanians were often demonised and ridiculed by the media, with racist programmes like "TeleDurazzo" and "Striscia la Berisha".

The media also tended to put emphasis on the crimes committed by Albanians.

The Albanian community was notably blamed for murder cases that later proved to be completely extraneous to the group, like the massacre of Novi Ligure.

The hate campaign towards the Albanians was heavy, so much so that political groups like Lega Nord started to carry on punitive patrols and chant motto's that stated; "hang every Albanian".

In the midst of the hate campaign towards the ethnic group, the Italian government once again disgracefully tainted its history.

On the 28th of March of 1997, an Italian patrol vessel purposely sank a cargo ship containing 142 Albanian refugees fleeing from the civil war, leading to deaths of 83 people. 27 people were forever lost in the Adriatic, 52 corpses were recovered, amongst them 16 were women and 25 were children.

After the incident happened, the European court of Human Rights recognised Italy's foul play in the event.

The Italian government was heavily criticised and condemned by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

The sinking of the ship conducted purposely by the Italian patrol vessel, in order to deter the refugee ship from reaching the Italian coast was deemed illegal.

The tragedy and the condemnation from the United Nations did not deter shameful declaration towards the refugees from exponents of the Italian right wing.

Irene Pivetti, the former president of the chamber of deputies publicly stated;

"All the Immigrants should be thrown in the sea and left to drown. All their ships should be sunk by our navy"

Pivetti never retreated her statements, and when she was confronted about her words, she said; "I was not the one that brought them into the sea, they did it to themselves".

In the days following the incident, the Italian authorities, hid evidence about the sinking and publicly blamed the refugees for the happening.

In the following months the Italian right-wing media, put on a campaign of defence towards the authorities, shifting the responsibility of the incident towards the cargo ship.

On the 9th of May of 2014, the Italian authorities were finally condemned by the Italian court for the actions carried on during the tragedy of Otranto.

On the 6th of March of 1998 the Italian government implemented the Turco – Napolitano law. The law was the first one regarding immigration in Italian history, and granted immigrants basic rights, such as; Health, instruction and familiar union.

Between the end of the 90's and the start of the new millennia, new immigrants' groups, started to arrive in Italy.

The main groups that arrived, were; Romanians, North Africans and Yugoslav immigrants fleeing from the Balkan wars.

On the 30th of July of 2002, Italy implemented the Bossi-Fini law.

The law was a follow up of the Turco-Napolitano and tied the right of stay with valid work contracts.

The law was a further step into the regularization of immigrants in the country.

The Turco-Napolitano law promoted the familiar unions, and the 2000's were the decade were immigrants mainly united with their families.

The decade is also important because these families started having children, leading to the birth of Italy's second-generation community.

In the 2010's, Italy found itself to be at the centre of the humanitarian crisis regarding African Immigration towards Europe.

Over 1 million immigrants reached Italy's shores between 2010 and 2020.

The peak of the crisis happened between 2014 and 2017 with the arrival of over 624.000 people.

The 2010's humanitarian crisis was also tragic, with various incidents that lead to the deaths of over 26.000 people in the Mediterranean.

The migration crisis contributed to the rise of popularity of the Italian right wing, that often targeted and exploited immigrants for political reasons.

The right-wing propaganda has been often accused of discrimination and superficiality. Italy's extremist media often portrayed exaggerated statistics and false statements, like the one stating; "Immigrants are sleeping in 4-star hotels, while Italians sleep on the streets". The hate campaign done by the media and the political parties, led to the creation of violent neo fascist political groups of "Casa Pound" and "Forza Nuova".

The hate campaign produced various violent episodes against immigrants and almost turned tragic on the 3rd of February 2018.

Luca Traini was a 28-year-old exponent of the political party "Lega".

Traini was also a neo fascist and had close ties with both Forza Nuova and Casa Pound.

Traini was the author of a racially motivated mass shooting in the city of Macerata, where he seriously wounded 6 men of African origin with a Glock 17.

The terrorist attack led to heavy criticism of Lega's secretary and Italy's interior minister, Matteo Salvini.

Salvini was accused of fuelling the violent environment towards Immigrants in the months prior to the attack.

Salvini was also controversial for another episode.

In August 2018, the “Diciotti” ship, a cargo containing 190 African refugees, was denied docking, and held at sea for more than 10 days, by the orders of the minister.

The actions done by Salvini, were deemed illegal by the Italian court and in 2025, the government was obliged to indemnify the victims.

On the 22 of October 2022, Giorgia Meloni, the founder of the right-wing party Fratelli d'Italia, was elected as Italy's prime minister.

Meloni and her party have been often criticised for their discriminatory stances towards foreigners, and especially for the international deal that saw the implementation of offshore immigrant detention centres in Albania.

The second generation

As of today, the second-generation presence is as strong as ever in Italy.

Children born from immigrant parents, represent the 17,7% of the total births in the last 20 years.

Even if the statistics are lower compared to its neighbouring countries, in 35 years of constant immigration, Italy's population became gradually multi-ethnic.

Despite the ethnic shift, 35 years of bad publicity from the media and the influence of politics on the public opinion did not impact well on the second generation's upbringing, affecting also negatively their relationship with integration.

A survey from Openopolis.it showed that 49,5% of Italy's second-generation minors suffered episodes of bullying, a number that is higher compared to the Italian counterpart that instead was reported to be 42,4%.

Another survey from Censis, showed that 62,4% of second-generation immigrants in Italy suffered racist episodes, and that more than 40% of people born from immigrant parents, doesn't feel Italian.

The ostracization towards immigrants in Italy, also impacted their employment possibilities. A foreigner's wage in Italy is also statically 26,3% lower compared to their Italian counterparts.

For foreigners is also more difficult to land high job positions, as of today over 75% of foreign workers in Italy occupy blue collar roles.

The economic disparities led immigrant families to live in the poorest neighbourhoods of Italian cities, where criminality was already common, and possibilities were limited. Neighbourhoods like Corvetto and San Siro are amongst the most multi-ethnic in Milan, but also the ones where the crime rate is higher.

Crime in Milan has been increasing significantly from 2012 to 2020 but also notably declining in 2024 and 2025.

This did not stop certain Italian media from building up a discriminatory campaign towards the second-generation youth.

A problem regarding foreigners and criminality clearly exists; a survey conducted by the newspaper 'il Giornale' showed that 65% of the crime committed in Milan was attributed to people of foreign origin.

But despite the concerning statistic, it's also vital to consider the previous data regarding the foreigners' conditions of living.

It's also important to look at the fact that the 36,5% of second-generation immigrants, leaves their studies as early as 14 years old.

It's safe to say that most of these kid's future is everything but certain, especially if they grow up in neighbourhoods like Corvetto and San Siro.

A recent phenomenon that regards the second-generation is the use of the term "Maranza". Maranza is the term used by the Italian media to describe Italy's second-generation youth of North African descent.

Maranza's are often accused of committing petty crime and causing trouble in public places. This claim is not untrue, since a survey by "Il Secolo" showed that 95% of thefts in Milan are committed by youths of foreign origin.

But even though numbers are hardly debatable, it's important to look at the bigger problem, generalisation.

Generalisation is extremely dangerous when done by governmental entities and widespread media.

Journalists like Paolo Del Debbio, from Mediaset's Rete 4, often exploited the term Maranza to stigmatise the second-generation in order to generate audience.

Politically directed media campaigns like Del Debbio's, are often based on exaggerated statistics.

This is dangerous because it generates a climate of misinformation, discrimination, and scaremongering (especially when official stats show that crime is actually decreasing in the country).

These campaigns also contributed on the creation of violent vigilante groups like "Articolo 52", that patrol the streets at night in search of "Maranza's" to punish; It's also important to point at the fact that the people targeted by these patrols are often minors.

The coverage of the Ramy Elgaml tragedy, was also another instance in which the Italian media proved to be controversial.

On the night of the 24th of November 2024, Ramy Elgaml, a 19-year-old second generation Italian-Egyptian from Milan, lost his life in a police chase.

Ramy was the passenger of a T-Max scooter driven by his friend Fares Bouzidi, the two failed to stop at a Carabinieri's checkpoint and a pursuit started.

The chase lasted for 8 Km and ended in Corvetto, where a Carabinieri's Vehicle impacted with the scooter, killing Elgaml on the spot.

Further investigation revealed that the officers involved in the incident were under scrutiny for procedural fraud and obstruction of justice.

The investigation included allegations of deleting witnesses' videos, and omission of crucial details from official reports.

The video recordings of the Carabinieri's vehicle, also showed conversations between the officers involved where they expressed frustration for not being able to knock down the scooter earlier, and satisfaction after the impact happened.

Despite the evidence against the officers, the Italian media went on a campaign of defence towards the Carabinieri and criminalization towards the victim.

Way before the final sentence, Ramy and Fares were accused of being criminals with no evidence to back up the claim.

As of today, the accuses towards Ramy and Fares remain unfounded.

The fact that this episode happened is concerning, but what is even more concerning Is the media coverage of the tragedy itself.

The media was more focused on proving that a second-generation immigrant was a criminal and his murder was justified, than focusing on the fact that a 19-year-old died.

Programs like rete 4's "Dritto e Rovescio", went on for months with episodes where the officers were justified, and the second generation was demonised.

The bad propaganda and the authority's wrongdoing, led to major protests by the second-generation communities in the whole of Italy.

The manifestations saw clashes between the protesters and the authorities.

These instances were unfortunately another occasion that the media used to paint the second generation negatively.



Ramy Elgaml

The second generation's point of view: interview with Immigrital

Italy's divisive climate, and the sense of discrimination felt by the second generation led to the creation of activism groups.

Immigrital is a group that was founded in 2023, by second generation immigrants of proletary origin.

The group creates events and takes part in protest aimed at defending the second-generation youth in Italy.

The group operates as an independent form of media, it counts over 3,220 followers on Instagram and is always active on social themes.

I interviewed them, and we discussed various themes regarding the second generation in Italy.



Immigrital in a manifestation for Ramy Elgaml in Bologna

Who are the people behind Immigrital, and why did you decide to create the group?

“We were initially a group of friends of different second-generation origin.

After we connected with each other, we realised that we shared a numerous amount of experiences, regardless of the countries of our descent.

Between us, we finally felt fully understood.

The people that have not lived our experiences, regardless of their empathy, will never fully understand our battles and the sacrifices of our families.

In 2023 we organised a meeting in northern Italy.

We then decided to create this group after a campaign of letters towards the second-generation rapper Baby Gang, that was in jail at the time.

We founded this group because; we have been alone and invisible in political and socio-cultural environments for too long.

We really wanted to make a change.”

What do you think about the media portrayal of foreigners in Italy?

"We know well unfortunately, how much the criminalization and stigmatization impacted on our formation.

When we were just children, we frequently saw our nationalities "Albanian, Moroccan, Romanian", being constantly portrayed negatively, and even used as an insult everywhere.

Today they use different terms, like "Maranza".

We believe that the use of this term is extremely abused against the second-generation youth of migrant and proletarian origin.

Maranza is a term that labels the youth under the basis of social class and ethnicity.

When it comes to media perception through the years, we believe that the communication channels changed, and we have more ways to get together and fight the stigma."

Do you think that the actual government and especially some of his members are hostile towards the second generation?

"We think that is factual.

They themselves are the ones to admit it, especially some of them like you said.

There are some fringes that are extremely hostile towards us, but the problem is transversal to many political parties on a systemic level; lack of opportunity, representation, and inclusion.

We are not for any political party in the end, our main objective is to build a community and fight racism."

What do you think about the 8th and 9th of June referendum? What do you think about the people that are against it?

"We believe that the referendum will be a moment that will finally recognise what has been a social reality for years; Italy being a multi-ethnic country.

Italy has already been a multi-ethnic country for over 30 years,

A lot of powerful people try to hide, cancel, and marginalise the migrant communities.

They deny our existence on one side and on the other exploit us under sub-alternate conditions.

Recognising basic rights, such as citizenship constitutes a step towards progress, and we think that it will contribute positively on making people feel more included in the life of the country where they were born and grew up.

Some people are against it because of pure hate, others because of ignorance and misinformation, others again will maybe need to get in touch with our realities.

The negative propaganda is massive."

What do you think about the Ius Soli?

“In general, they talk about the second generation as a threat when our categories have worked for years with underpaid salaries.

*Phenomena like micro-criminality can be reduced by doing acts of equity such as approving the *Ius soli*.”*

What do you think about the media circus created after the tragedy of Ramy?

“The case of Ramy impacted us profoundly because a lot of us grew up and have families in Milan, Ramy was a son of immigrants just like us.

It was touching to see how his friends mobilized and asked for justice with their sole forces.

The accusations and the insinuations made by the media and some politicians about Ramy being a criminal proved to be false.

Nobody has yet apologised for the pounding campaign that contributed to the building of a climate of hatred towards the second generation during those days.

*We are disgusted about the freedom with which certain people besmirched the name of a 19-year-old victim,
In this case we are talking about a lack of values and basic respect.*

We will always try to make our narrations emerge; we quickly got in contact with the youngsters of Corvetto after the tragedy happened.

We want to bring Ramy’s name everywhere.”

What do you think about the punitive patrols that target mostly the second-generation?

“On one side, we should not deny the sense of insecurity of the people, on the other is undeniable that this perception is alimented and widespread by distorting reality.

We also believe that more welfare options exist, like cultural offers and free fields in the neighbourhoods.

The second-generation youth in Italy, is already directed towards pre-determined destinies. It’s hard to invert this tendency, who is able to go to university does it in spite of many obstacles.

The second-generation youngsters are statistically more likely to leave their studies as early as 14 or 16 years old compared to their Italian counterpart.

When they leave school, they often end up in the street or in the best-case scenario, exploited and underpaid by certain employers.

This establishes a vicious cycle and a poverty trap.

For us, these “Punitive Patrols” are vile and totally useless; they do them now against very young second-generation kids, they did them few years ago against southern Asians in central Italy, exactly like the fascist “squadristi” used to do decades ago.”

Is there still a future in Italy for the second-generation immigrants or should they migrate?

"We believe that there is a lack of equity.

Statistically the second-generation youth are more likely to migrate towards other countries compared to their "Italian" counterparts.

A lot of us now live in France and Germany, some of us are still in Italy.

But regardless of where we live, we believe that its compulsory to fight until everyone could be able to aim at either their professional or academic chosen path.

Everyone should freely decide to leave this country by choice instead of constriction."

Does this country make you feel proud of being Italian?

"We feel like a lot of fringes of this country never wanted us.

This goes even back to the very first mass migration wave that hit Italy in the 1990's, when the Albanian migrants were locked up like objects in the stadium of Bari.

As a group we have an extremely critical position on this "Italianity" that permeated this country in the last 30 years.

As singles we all define ourselves in our own way, some feel Italian, some Italian-Arabic some only by their country of origin.

At the same time, it fills us with pride when we see the second generations youth, asserting proudly the flag of their country of origin.

We are also extremely attached to our cities of origin, and we love to see the acts of resignification, destigmatization and symbolic reappropriation such as Baby Gang posing with the Italian flag in a multi-ethnic neighbourhood. "

Interview with Modou Gueye

Modou Gueye is an Italian-Senegalese cultural mediator and prominent media personality.

Modou has lived in Italy since 1990 and has often appeared in programmes of important media companies such as Radio 24, Mediaset and RAI.

Mr. Gueye is also the president of 'Sunugal' an association that favours integration relationships between Italy and Senegal, as well as the founder of 'CIQ-Centro internazionale di quartiere' a social centre aimed at the integration through activities, of immigrants and the second generation in Corvetto, Milan.

We had an interview, and he shared his views on various social themes.



Modou Gueye

Do you think that in Italy today, there is a sort of stigma towards second generation immigrants?

“If a stigma exists, it doesn’t come from the public but from certain journalists and politicians.

I’ve been living in Milan for 35 years; I’ve been frequenting various Milanese environments and I can say that I’ve never really seen this kind of attitude towards the second-generation immigrants from the public.

It’s the media and the propaganda that really stigmatises the youth.”

Why do so many second-generation immigrants leave school so early?

“Unfortunately, I must confess that most of the times, there are cultural reasons behind.

I know a young man, a friend of mine, whose name is Lamine.

(Lamine) wanted to enrol at the academy of fine arts of Brera after high school. His father was an artisan and forbid him for doing so, he told him that he had to bring money at home instead.

The family should have been more far-sighted and helped him enrol at university instead of denying him the opportunity.

It’s sad because Lamine had a real talent for drawing.

This is a recurrent problem with a lot of second-generation families.

A lot of parents struggle with rent and the cost of living, that’s why they end up forcing their children to drop out from school. Most of the time, the parents are the ones to blame.”

What impact, did the tragedy of Ramy have on the young people of Corvetto? Do they feel in some way betrayed by the government, the media and the police?

“The second generation of Corvetto felt betrayed, abandoned, and invisible to the eyes of the institutions, way before Ramy’s death.

the tragedy did not help, but the real structural problem relied in the lack of integration of these kids, due to the lack of help from the institutions.

When Letizia Moratti was the mayor of Milan, she invested a lot of funds towards integration, in order to help the immigrants and the second generation.

Since then, I sadly have to say that her successors did not invest at all towards these causes.

This is not a problem that regards only Milan but also the whole of Italy.

Politics in general, never really invested towards integration.

They sometimes give money to big associations, that often end up not delivering those funds towards the development of migrants and the second generation.

Its compulsory for us to have investment and interventions that can directly help our youth.

The media does not help either, they only look for ‘scoops’ and sensationalization. when talking about immigrants and second generations they never really highlight the positives sides, but only the negatives.

This helps the stigmatization that we discussed before.

This attitude towards foreigners only leaves the idea that these people are dangerous and destructive.”

You’ve been living in Italy since 1990, what do you think about the foreigner’s perception in the media?

“Unfortunately, Italy has a TV channel that continuously spreads negative propaganda against the foreigners.

Rete 4 is one of the most racist tv channel that exists.

It keeps only highlighting the negative sides of the immigrants and second generations, favouring on the other side the propaganda of certain right-wing politicians, that openly exploit the image of the immigrants for their purposes.

Rete 4 is extremely negative towards immigrants, but the other channels are not better.

RAI, which is a public entity owned by the government, never talks about integration, and never really had programs that treated themes like cultural interaction.

I always said it and I will always confirm it; the Italian media is the first and biggest enemy of the immigrants, the second generation and the diaspora.”

Do you think that the children of immigrants have the same opportunities as their Italian peers, or you think that they should rather migrate to other countries instead?

“Unfortunately, in Italy there’s a lot of skepticism towards diversity.

When they see that you are different, they tend to believe less in your capabilities.

I also have to say that recently a lot of companies have decided to finally value people's curriculums instead of their backgrounds

But in general, I have to say that a son of immigrants still finds it harder than an Italian."

The future

As of today, Italy is in the middle of a cultural shift.

A positive outcome on the citizenship referendum could be the first step towards a peaceful interaction between the country and its immigrants.

On the other side the distrust that the second generation has, towards the government is undeniable.

35 years of suffering cannot be brushed off easily, and a referendum cannot be the only step to take when it comes to integration.

Solutions like major investment towards cultural interaction and a less discriminatory presence in the media could be helpful for achieving the goal.

Meanwhile, it's important to note that the decision of taking these actions, could only start from the institutions.

The road is difficult.

Prejudice should be let apart from both the government and its new citizens, but with a dose of good will from both sides, these objectives could be easier to reach.