IDOS publishes annual report on migration 2025

The *Dossier Statistico Immigrazione 2025*, published by the *Centro Studi e Ricerche (IDOS)*, provides a data-driven analysis of migration trends and policies in Italy. Among its key themes is the evolving landscape of international protection, where the report identifies a growing gap between humanitarian needs and increasingly restrictive policies. The report contains three interconnected chapters: access to asylum, administrative detention and the reception system.

Limited access to asylum

The report argues that Italy's asylum framework is undergoing a steady tightening, even as forced displacement rises globally. In 2024, irregular sea arrivals dropped sharply, largely due to deterrence policies and cooperation agreements with countries such as Libya and Tunisia that intercept migrants before they reach Italian territory. While these measures have reduced visible arrivals, they have not lowered mortality: the Central Mediterranean remains one of the world's deadliest migration routes.

Humanitarian rescue operations face administrative and logistical obstacles that limit their capacity to save lives, reinforcing a broader climate of criminalisation around sea rescue. Along land routes, especially the Balkans, official statistics show fewer crossings, but field monitoring suggests journeys have instead become more hidden, dangerous, and expensive.

Legal and safe entry pathways remain limited in scale. Programs such as humanitarian corridors and resettlement benefit relatively small numbers, and there has been no systemic expansion comparable to the temporary protection granted to Ukrainians.

Despite fewer arrivals by sea, asylum applications rose in 2024, reflecting delayed effects of earlier flows and alternative entry routes. Italy's recognition rate remains well below the EU average, partly due to expanded fast-track procedures that compress review times and safeguards. A growing backlog of pending cases highlights administrative inefficiencies that delay access to protection. Legislatively, the year marked further reforms accelerating procedures and externalising elements of asylum management, signaling a system increasingly oriented toward restriction and deterrence.

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Administrative detention and externalisation

The report examines Italy's attempt to externalise migration control through the Italy–Albania protocol, which created centers on Albanian territory designated as Italian border zones for accelerated asylum processing and detention. This model was curtailed by the Court of Justice of the EU, which reaffirmed judicial oversight and clarified that labeling a country as "safe" requires comprehensive, up-to-date guarantees for all individuals across its territory.

To keep the facilities operational, authorities shifted their function toward return detention (CPR), including for migrants already detained in Italy pending expulsion. This development brings renewed scrutiny to Italy's longstanding system of administrative detention, which the report describes as legally fragile, operationally inefficient, and problematic in terms of transparency and respect for detainees' rights.

In 2024, only about 43% of detained migrants were ultimately repatriated, reinforcing concerns about the limited effectiveness of detention relative to its human cost. A Constitutional Court ruling emphasized that restrictions on personal liberty require strong legal justification and effective safeguards, opening discussion about comprehensive legislation to regulate detention. However, the report suggests that chronic structural problems, particularly when detention occurs outside national borders, are unlikely to be solved by legal reform alone.

A reception system under strain

According to the report, Italy's reception system has increasingly shifted from structured planning to emergency management, contributing to deteriorating living conditions for asylum seekers. Migrants and protection holders account for a very small share of Italy's total population, yet policy discourse continues to frame reception as a persistent crisis.

This framing has weakened the decentralised SAI reception model, considered more effective and integration-oriented, while expanding extraordinary CAS facilities. These larger centers operate with reduced services and are permitted to exceed normal capacity limits, resulting in overcrowding. By the end of 2024, only a minority of hosted migrants were accommodated within the SAI network.

Particular concern surrounds unaccompanied foreign minors, many of whom are placed in emergency or unsuitable facilities, including structures intended for adults. Such arrangements increase risks of overcrowding and mixed living

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conditions, issues that have already led to condemnation by the European Court of Human Rights. Even second-stage reception is under pressure due to insufficient SAI capacity and significant funding gaps for municipalities, undermining the system’s ability to provide stable and rights-based support.

Source(s)

- IDOS Study and Research Centre | IDOS Centro Studi e Ricerche (3 November, 2025), Dossier 2025: Sei cose civili da fare subito contro il sadismo delle politiche sui migranti [Dossier 2025: Six Civil Actions to Take Immediately Against the Cruelty of Migration Policies], https://www.dossierimmigrazione.it/dossier-2025-sei-cose-civili-da-fare/

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