

Click Day in Italy: The Immigration Lottery

Maria Rita Latta (February 08, 2011)



On Monday, January 31, at 8am, Italy launched Click Day, the digital presentation of immigrant employment according to the planned quotas. The first applications to reach the Ministry of Internal Affairs will be accepted

The first day, January 31, was dedicated to 52,080 workers of “privileged” citizenship, meaning those countries that subscribed to special cooperation migratory agreements with Italy: Albania, Algeria, Bangladesh, Egypt, the Philippines, Ghana, Morocco, Moldavia, Nigeria , Pakistan, Senegal, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, India, Peru', Ukraine, Niger, and Gambia, just to name a few.

The second appointment, on Wednesday, February 2, again at 8am, was the turn of the applications for cleaning ladies and carers of other nationalities, with 30,000 positions available. Finally, the last date was Thursday, February 3, for the conversion into residence permits from 11,000 permits for students, interns, occasional workers and other categories, as well as the admission of 4,000 non-Europeans that have finished their studies in their home country.

Everything happened via computer: by logging into www.interno.it [2] the employer found a page reporting the phases of the procedure, to be followed entirely online. The digital system, as



explained at the Ministry, "has been tested and there should be no glitches. To guarantee the functioning of the service, from 7 to 9 am of every Click Day, the apparatus will be available only for receiving the questions and not for the other operations (registration, request, compilation and preparation for sending, etc.)". However, the suggestion was quite clear: don't waste time and send out the applications at exactly 8:00. To be certain about the time there was the possibility of setting the correct time in one's computer by logging on to www.inrim.it [2].

The lists will follow in chronological order from the time applications were received, as managed by the system. It will be the [Mister of Labor](#) [3] who distributes the quotas province by province. The applications will be assessed by the Provincial Direction of Labor and by police headquarters. Based on these evaluations the employer will be free to hire. The foreign worker will have to go to the diplomatic representation of his country and receive a visa for entering Italy and receiving a residence permit. The Ministry of Internal Affairs made it known that it will take time to examine all the applications and divide the quotas. The last act of indemnity towards domestic helpers and caretakers of 2009 still hasn't been completed: of the 295,000 applications, only 250,000 have been defined up to today. In any case, beginning January 31, a crazy race for an early click began, since the quotas will be distributed in chronological order. In 2007 the quotas were reached after 15 minutes.

This means that a job opportunity relies only on a click, a lottery that risks penalizing many people: this is how many foreign workers (and other people) regard this method. For many this Click Day was just another act of indemnity disguised as a flow decree. Italy is officially opening its doors to over 50,000 workers who it is believed will come from at least 20 extra-European countries. Actually this number of workers is only a small part of the multitude that have been present in our country for many years, awaiting to become legit. And the irregularity frequently becomes fruitful to many, such as the exploiters of paperless immigrants. In agriculture, construction, industry and most sectors of our economy, the workers without rights are squeezed like lemons. Not to mention the social aspect: the State gives no assistance to the elderly, certain disease patients, young couples with children, and this makes Italian families turn to cheap domestic helpers and caretakers. Click Day becomes a battle, an unmissable opportunity. It's enough to look around and ask those that work next door what this moment permeated with hope and trepidation means.

Amina, a thirty-year-old Senegalese, frequently encountered on the elevator, has been working as a domestic helper for a number of years and, with her usual smile, told us that all her hopes are set on her employer following the Ministry's instructions correctly, seeing her future crystallized in a number of seconds, although, she added, "who knows when we will know if everything went well". Luca, the adolescent nephew of an 86-year-old woman who can't use a computer, "clicked" instead of his great aunt, to try to legitimize her 40-year-old Moldavian caretaker, seen as "the only hope for my aunt, without whom we wouldn't know how to look after her". An opportunity for many, including the usual smart ones that are profiting from it, offering fake employers, intermediaries, or recommending questionable agencies that guarantee the application's result, making money off of those who want to become legit and project themselves towards a different, less unbearable, life.

Carmen, a 44-year-old from Romania, thought of entrusting her life to a convincing intermediate from an agency that promised to resolve all her problems in exchange of 1,000 Euros. "Luckily I asked my Romanian friends who told me to not trust him and I left it alone. I gave up because I still haven't found an employer. Maybe next time...".

Meanwhile, summing up the three Click Days it was made clear that the offer wasn't able to satisfy the needs of the foreign workers among families and companies, according to what was stated, among others, by the [CIA](#) [4] (Italian Agricultural Confederation), basically that more efficient instruments are needed, and especially new policies in the field of immigration.

It is in the agricultural sector that the need to regulate more foreign workers is felt in respect to the numbers suggested by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The presence of immigrants working in the fields has risen by over 2%, according to Coldiretti, meaning that one out of ten workers is a foreigner: "from the strawberry pickers outside Verona, to the apple pickers in Trentino, to the fruit pickers in Emilia-Romagna, to the grape pickers in Piedmont, and to the breeders in Lombardy." According to [Coldiretti](#) [5] this isn't merely unskilled labor: the presence of immigrant workers has become indispensable for quality production. Only time will tell if this Click Day went well. For now



there is only the sense that these policies need to be reviewed in the future, since the past has shown the absurdity of these kinds of lotteries and obstacle courses that risk leaving out many workers who deserve legality.

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Links

[1] <http://ftp.iitaly.org/files/immigrazione1297190801jpg>

[2] <http://www.interno.it>

[3] <http://www.lavoro.gov.it/>

[4] <http://www.cia.it/>

[5] <http://www.coldiretti.it/>