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Comenius Project
MY -> OURS – Migration and Youth.
Towards an Open-Minded, Unprejudiced and Receptive School/Society

ESSAY

Friuli Venezia Giulia has a long tradition of emigration. Nowadays, it is a land of immigration. What are the most positive and negative aspects of this new phenomenon? Write your views on the matter.

Italy, and in particular Friuli Venezia Giulia, has always been involved in migration, but especially in the second half of the 19th century this phenomenon grew significantly, mainly caused by economic reasons. The destinations were eastern and central Europe, the USA and Canada, South America (Argentina, Brazil, and Venezuela) and Australia.

The flow of emigrants has not been always constant, especially during the two World Wars and due to the political restrictions during the fascism regime. When finally the economic development took place also in Friuli, the number of those who came back home was higher than the one of those who left.

Since the late 80's of the 20th century, Friuli, and Italy in general, has become a country of immigration, in particular hosting people coming from developing countries.

The reasons why they come to Italy are bound to certain issues in the countries of origin. The most important ones are: overpopulation, wars, political persecutions, famines, and economic reasons, like unemployment and poverty, but also for studying.

As for the continent of origin of the foreigners residing legally in Italy, nationalities from European countries account for the largest group (49.6% of the foreigners holding a stay permit, from Eastern Europe), followed by Africa (22.3%, from North Africa, Eritrea and South Sahara), Asia (18%, from the Philippines, India and Sri Lanka), America (9.7%, from South America) and Oceania (0.1%). The largest foreign group is the Albanian group, followed by the Moroccan one and by the Romanian group. According to the statistics of Istat, today about 4,029,145 foreigners live in Italy.

Migration has both direct and indirect consequences, for the countries of emigration and immigration. Considering only the country of immigration, it can have both positive and negative effects, involving all aspects of the state itself like, for example, culture, economy and population.

The positive aspects regarding population are: the decrease of the average age, since the majority of immigrants are young, and the increases of the birth rate which leads in turn to the population growth.

Young people mean workforce which contributes to the country's economy. In Italy, immigrants often do jobs that Italians do not want to do and the sectors that take them on are agriculture (seasonal jobs, like harvest) and fishing, industry (most of all building and engineering industry) and the manufacturing sector, tourism and housework (housemaid, domestic service, women who look after of elderly people in need). Moreover, they pay taxes, that means income for the state, and contribute to the GDP. Sometimes, more than workforce, they bring capitals and technological innovations, because some people who come from other countries are already qualified.

Concerning the cultural aspect, people's mentality changes and the population becomes more willing to accept a mixed society. New traditions and religions are introduced and this fact leads to a more open-minded society that can consider other people from different points of view. Another concept is multiculturalism: if you live in a multicultural country, you can widen your culture and personal knowledge

of other traditions. Cultural diversity is often accompanied by new cultural manifestations, in the field of architecture, art, new technologies.
However, there are also some negative aspects.
Some immigrants are unemployed, find temporary jobs, or irregular and low-paid jobs. Some of them are exploited and work illegally, without paying taxes.
Another relevant point is that a lot of people enter the country illegally and they do not know the place and the language. For these reasons the state has to provide them supports in term of language, accommodation, education, job and health-care.
Someone claims that immigrants are related to the increase of crimes in some areas, due to poverty, ignorance and lack of family, and also that sometimes they are discriminated and bullied. A lot of local people also fear that the Italian identity may be overcome and that the introduction of other cultures might develop a major diversity between the two identities and the formation of marginal and segregated groups.
Immigration is nowadays one of the most important issues and it does not involve only our region or country, but the entire world. The better thing to do, to avoid negative effects, is, for governments, to make new legislations and laws based on support, tolerance and education, and making people respect them. Moreover, they should help both the local people and those who immigrate, to integrate in the society trying to build a more united community. We can start in our own small way, for example at school, accepting people and establishing a dialogue for learning both from other cultures and publicize the idea that foreigners are not enemies or people to joke about, but friends.
In conclusion, even if there are a lot of difficulties and obstacles, immigration is a positive thing because it is a way to teach people, and especially future generations, not to have prejudice and criticize foreigners, because we are all citizens of the world and as that, we have to respect the people and the places we visit as we respect ourselves.

WEB SITES:

- www.ammer-fvg.org
- www.emigrazione.regione.fvg.it
- www.istat.it
- http://migrationeducation.de/38.0.html

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