

All illegal immigrants for a day

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Like in the game of Monopoly, the danger of being sent back to the beginning is great, as is the chance of meeting hurdles along the way. In the game “Illegal Immigrant”, whose rules are based on the Italian laws concerning migrant workers, the pieces have to overcome a number of difficulties. These are the same difficulties that many foreigners actually try to overcome, but in this case, unfortunately, the situation has very little to do with playing games. In order to sensitise people about the situation that immigrants face in our country, Varese, too, is joining **Illegal Immigrant Day**, which is being promoted in another 105 Italian towns and cities by the newspaper Carta (www.cartad.org). On **Friday 24 September**, Coordinamento Migrante, a network that gathers a great number of associations in Varese Province, is organising numerous events in Piazza Podestà. “In particular, a mini-contest of the game “Illegal Immigrant” will be held, which everyone can take part in,” explained **Alessandra Pessina**, of the association UISP. “It’s an exciting way to understand how complicated it is for a migrant worker to have a fully legal position in Italy.”

Indeed, the central theme of the day is living as an illegal immigrant, which, as **Oriella Riccardi** of the Varese branch of the trade union CGIL, explained, “seems to have become a compulsory step in the life of every immigrant.”

This is because immigrants very often become illegal some time after coming into the country. “People have a distorted view,” added **Sergio Moia**, of the trade union CISL. “Illegal immigrants are not people who arrive herded in large boats, as we often think or are led to believe. They are people who come to Italy legally, on a tourist visa, who become illegal when their visa expires. This is the result, particularly, of the **Bossi-Fini law, a measure that is completely inappropriate** given the situation in our country. As a result of this law, which doesn’t work, stopgap measures have to be taken, like amnesties and quota laws. We welcome other solutions, like the recently proposed decree on “mini-quotas”, which would allow entry to five thousand foreigners so that they can get a professional qualification, and another five thousand, for training apprenticeships. This is an interesting way of establishing the foundations for legal immigration.”

According to **Giulio Rossini**, of the Varese branch of the association ARCI, “The message of integration has to be communicated in a positive way. We must always seek dialogue, even in social groups where there’s greater resistance to these topics.”

In Piazza Podestà, the movement **Ubuntu**, will also be presenting the art works of a former illegal immigrant, who is now living here legally. **Thierry Dieng** of the movement said, “It’s a way of explaining the wealth of ideas and of innovation that these people bring to our communities.”

The theme of Friday will continue into the future with a project that will also involve schools. “It’s the everyday lives of people that really enable overcoming the fear of foreigners,” said **Ruffino Selmi**, of the association ACLI. “Illegal immigration is something that is repeated over

time, it was characteristic of the Italian migrations, for example. It's a category we use that becomes worrying only when it becomes a criterion for discrimination."

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