



STATEMENT

*Statement by Professor
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for the General Debate on National Experience

at the 41th Session of the

UN Commission on Population and Development

New York, April 8, 2008

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Mister Chairman,

My delegation wishes to express its appreciation for the introductions of the Secretary-General's reports, which highlight important trends in population in relation to urbanization and internal migration. Italy endorses the statement made by Slovenia on behalf of the European Union.

Mister Chairman,

Population growth in central cities and large conglomerations throughout the developed world tends to *zero*, and often towards decline. More recently, another perspective is taking on greater and greater importance in the developed regions: cities can be also identified as cores of renewed economic dynamism and social vitality. Today we are witnessing an accentuated urban concentration of social infrastructures and concrete job and career opportunities for particularly qualified and/or creative persons, who are absolutely necessary to generating and exploiting knowledge, know-how and an assured competitive advantage. This way of looking at the city has been embraced particularly by national and international politics, but less so by researchers, who are more cautious about the idea of a "new era" for the central city.

A recent analysis of population dynamics in 310 European cities during the 1960-2005 period found that of the eleven largest Italian cities, five were undergoing a recent process of revival while six were experiencing continuous growth. But these analysis need to be correlated with trends mainly in domestic and international migrations, which provoke tangible modifications in urban populations, especially concerning age structure and ethnic composition. There has been a decrease in the differences of economic and employment structures, and of the quality and quantity of available services (and thus in life quality) between, on the one hand, big cities, and on the other, small cities and rural areas. At the same time, there seem to be more accentuated differences in particular and fundamental demographic characteristics, i.e., the elderly and foreigners.

Urban and metropolitan transformation analyses are necessarily approximate in Italy – but not only in Italy - because of shortcomings in the fullness and timeliness of basic statistics, which are insufficient also because of the surprising population mobility -- familiar, social, occupational, and spatial -- whose growing "informality" does not produce statistical traces or data. Fresh aggregated data from the Italian national statistics institute survey on "daily life aspects" and data from the 2001 Census both confirm tangible differences in population demographic structures at the same time as much reduced differences in life style and in services availability. The capitals of the 14 Italian metropolitan areas have a total resident population, as of 1.1.2007, of 9.4 million inhabitants: 15.9% of the Italian population (table 1). But, the 60+ subpopulation represents 17.3% of the total and the foreigner subpopulation a massive 21.7%. Moreover, those two variables are strongly correlated in the precise direction of change: since the foreign population is much younger than the Italian one, a tangible increase in it would, in the mid term, contribute to lowering the share of 60 and over.

The UN's recent projections set the current proportion of the Italian urban population to the total population at 68%, which could reach 81% by 2050, above all because of population increases in urban conglomerations with less than 500 thousand inhabitants, and not for the stationary population of bigger conglomerations (i.e., Rome, Milan, Naples, Turin, Palermo). But in addition to the resident population in urban areas, it is a question of assessing the population of "informal urban regions," which are even hundreds of kilometres long, such as the one along the Via Emilia the one along the Adriatic coast, or the one constituted by the south-east Veneto region.

Moreover, one should consider the additional and often very significant population that makes frequent *use* of the city without having a specific residence in it.

There is no doubt that today we are facing a new and different phase characterised by a huge "urban sprawl" in vast areas, including interregional and trans-border areas, for which we are unprepared in terms of knowledge and governance of this evolution.

Table 1 – Municipalities Capital of the province in metropolitan areas

- Population at 1.1.2007 -

Municipality Capital of the Province	Population	% out of the total metropolitan population	% 60+	% foreigner
Torino*	900.569	40,0	0,0	9,3
Milano*	1.303.437	33,6	29,9	13,1
Venezia**	268.934	76,1	32,9	6,3
Trieste*	205.363	86,8	34,8	6,2
Genova**	615.686	82,9	33,2	5,7
Bologna**	373.026	39,1	33,3	8,1
Firenze**	365.966	24,4	32,3	9,5
Roma*	2.705.603	67,4	26,8	7,4
Napoli*	975.139	31,6	22,4	2,0
Bari*	325.052	20,4	24,9	1,7
Palermo**	666.552	64,5	21,7	2,2
Messina**	245.159	52,0	24,6	2,7
Catania**	301.564	40,2	24,1	2,0
Cagliari*	159.312	28,7	28,4	1,9
Total	9.411.362	43,9	27,8	6,8
Italy	59.131.287	15,9^(a)	25,5	5,0

* metropolitan province

** metropolitan area

(a) % municipalities capital of the province and metropolitan areas' total population/Italian population