

UNDERSTANDING THE WORDS: TRIBUNALE, RICORSO, AVVOCATO, QUESTURA E PREFETTURA

#1

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND WORDS LIKE QUESTURA, PREFETTURA E TRIBUNALE?

These words are connected to important decisions that can affect your life if you are a foreigner in Italy. They are about documents, asylum, work, and your rights. If you understand what these offices do, you'll know where to go for help and what you can ask for. Knowing these words helps you protect your rights.



#2

WHAT IS THE QUESTURA?

The Questura is the provincial office of the Italian State Police (for example, the Police Headquarters of Milan or Rome). Every province has one. Among other things, the Questura is responsible for:

- *receiving applications for international protection (the first step of the asylum process);*
- *taking your fingerprints;*
- *issuing and renewing residence permits (or giving you your electronic residence permit);*
- *handling official communications and matters related to public safety.*



#3

WHAT IS THE PREFETTURA?

The Prefettura represents the Italian Government in each province (for example, the Prefecture of Padua or Naples). It deals with administrative decisions related to immigration. It does not issue residence permits, but it manages many other important immigration procedures. The Prefettura is different from the Questura and has different responsibilities.





#4

WHAT IS THE SPORTELLLO UNICO PER L'IMMIGRAZIONE?

The Sportello Unico per l'Immigrazione is located inside the Prefecture (Prefettura). Its main services include:

- work authorization for hiring foreign workers;
- family reunification;
- information about entry quotas, visas, regularization procedures, and permits for work, family, or study;
- instructions, receipts, and support for administrative procedures. It can also direct you to translation and document legalization services.

#5

WHAT IS THE TERRITORIAL COMMISSION FOR INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION?

The Territorial Commission is the office that listens to your asylum application and decides whether you qualify for protection. During your interview, you tell your story and provide your documents. The Commission decides whether to grant you: refugee status; subsidiary protection; or special protection.



The Commission is not a court. It is an administrative office.

This means its decision is not final. If the Commission says no, you have the right to appeal to the Civil Court – Immigration Section (Tribunale civile – Sezione Immigrazione)



#6

WHAT IS THE TRIBUNALE CIVILE AND THE IMMIGRATION SECTION?

The Tribunale civile (Civil Court) is where an independent judge checks that decisions made by the government respect people's rights.

For asylum and immigration cases, the Civil Court has a special department called the Immigration and International Protection Section.

 *This section reviews appeals against decisions made by the Territorial Commission. In other words, if your asylum application is rejected, you can ask a judge to review your case.*



#7.1

DO YOU ALWAYS NEED A LAWYER TO GO TO COURT?

Yes. A lawyer is the person who represents you before the judge. They are a legal expert who understands how the legal system works.

Your lawyer's job is to: protect your rights; explain your story to the judge; prepare the necessary documents; and make sure everything follows the law. If you file an appeal, your lawyer writes it and submits it on your behalf.

#7.2

In Italy, there is a system called legal aid, which allows people with a low income to have a lawyer paid for by the State. This means that if your income is below the legal limit, you do not have to pay your legal costs.

The important thing is to contact a lawyer who can help you apply for legal aid. This **allows you to be represented in court even if you cannot afford a lawyer.**



#8

WHAT DOES "FILING AN APPEAL" (FARE UN RICORSO) MEAN?

An appeal is a request asking a judge to review a decision that you believe is unfair. An appeal gives you the chance to correct mistakes and protect your rights. It is prepared and submitted with the help of a lawyer. While the judge is deciding your case, you can stay in Italy legally.

For example, if the Territorial Commission refuses your application for international protection, your lawyer can file an appeal with the Civil Court – Immigration Section (Tribunale civile – Sezione Immigrazione).



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