



## USITF Newsletter #1, Week of January 31<sup>st</sup> – February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016

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Welcome to the first edition of the weekly USITF newsletter, “Italian Politics This Week”, which aims to briefly summarize the major events that occurred in Italy over the past week, complete with news and analyses from national and international sources.

**Giulio Regeni’s murder:** An Italian student, Giulio Regeni, was found dead in a ditch with signs of torture on the evening of February 3 in Egypt. Regeni, a PhD student at the University of Cambridge, was conducting research on labor unions at the American University in Cairo. The circumstances of his death are still unclear. On Friday, two people were apprehended in relation to his murder. Federica Mogherini, EU High Representative, sided with Italy in trying to get to the bottom of the murder. ANSA has the story [here](#).

**Rome summit against ISIS:** Representatives of the international coalition against ISIS met in Rome on February 1 to discuss previous and future efforts in the fight against the terrorist organization. US Secretary of State John Kerry and Italian Foreign Minister Paolo Gentiloni are confident that the 23 countries involved in the coalition will crush ISIS. The hypothesis to open another front in Libya was apparently also discussed. Read more [here](#). For an in-depth analysis, see the [FT](#), [CBS](#) and [NBC](#).

**But Pinotti seems skeptical about it:** Military intervention “is not imminent,” Italian Defense Minister, Roberta Pinotti, said on February 4. Pinotti argued that the international coalition has been defeating ISIS in Syria and Iraq and the terrorist group is now moving to Libya, where a civil war is raging after NATO’s intervention in 2011. Italy will keep concentrating its efforts to shore up Libya’s stability through a political process. Read the news [here](#).

**Civil union bill sparks tensions:** A bill granting rights to gay couples is generating political rifts in Italy. Angelino Alfano, Italian Interior Minister and leader of the political party NCD, which is part of the political coalition sustaining the government of Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, argued that it would be “traumatic” if Renzi’s political party (PD) would vote with the anti-establishment party, M5S, over the bill. Italy is the only Western European country without gay marriages or civil unions. On January 30, thousands flocked to the Circo Massimo in Rome to protest against the bill. Read the story from Ansa [here](#) and an analysis from Slate [here](#). For a broader perspective on the issue, see [NPR](#).

**Italy agrees on EU immigration fund to Turkey:** Italy will finally contribute to an EU fund to help Turkey cope with the impressive flow of migrants “to save human lives,” Prime Minister Matteo Renzi said during a visit to Nigeria. Rejection to the plan came following heightened discussions regarding more flexibility in Italy’s budget in relation to its migration-related spending.

Renzi has urged the commission to accept that Italy will devote an extra 3.2 billion euros on migration, increasing its deficit despite the strict rules of the so-called Stability and Growth Pact. According to Reuters, the plan for 2016 contributions is envisaged at 427.5 million euros for Germany, 327.6 million euros for Britain, 309.2 million euros for France and 224.9 million euros for Italy. See more [here](#) on the topic, and [here](#) to have a deeper understanding of Italian quarrel with the European Commission.

That's all for this week, see you next Monday!