

## **ABSTRACT**

In 2015 and 2016, Italy received an unprecedented number of unaccompanied minors at its shores. After years of migrant crisis, Italian municipalities continue to struggle to cope with the large influx of boat refugees and to provide them with adequate reception. This qualitative case-study aims to give an overview of the European and Italian migration policies with regard to unaccompanied minors, and examines the challenges that unaccompanied minors encounter more generally in European countries and more specifically at arrival in Eastern-Sicily. Protection measures are insufficiently enforced and UAMs often lack access to information, a guardian and adequate reception. Insufficient care and protection puts UAMs at risk to arbitrary age-assessment, expulsion, traumatizing, trafficking and exploitation.