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LAB-MIG-GOV

Labour Migration Policies in Europe

THE ITALIAN CASE

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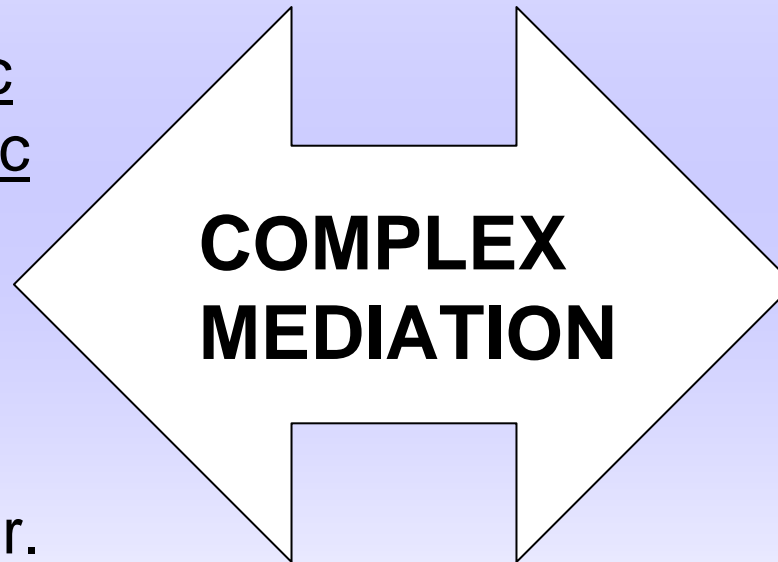
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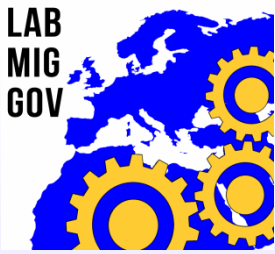


Challenges & constraints (I)

1. Demographic and economic constraints:
High and persistent demand for foreign labour.



2. Political constraints:
Negative, although contradictory, attitudes of public opinion towards immigration.

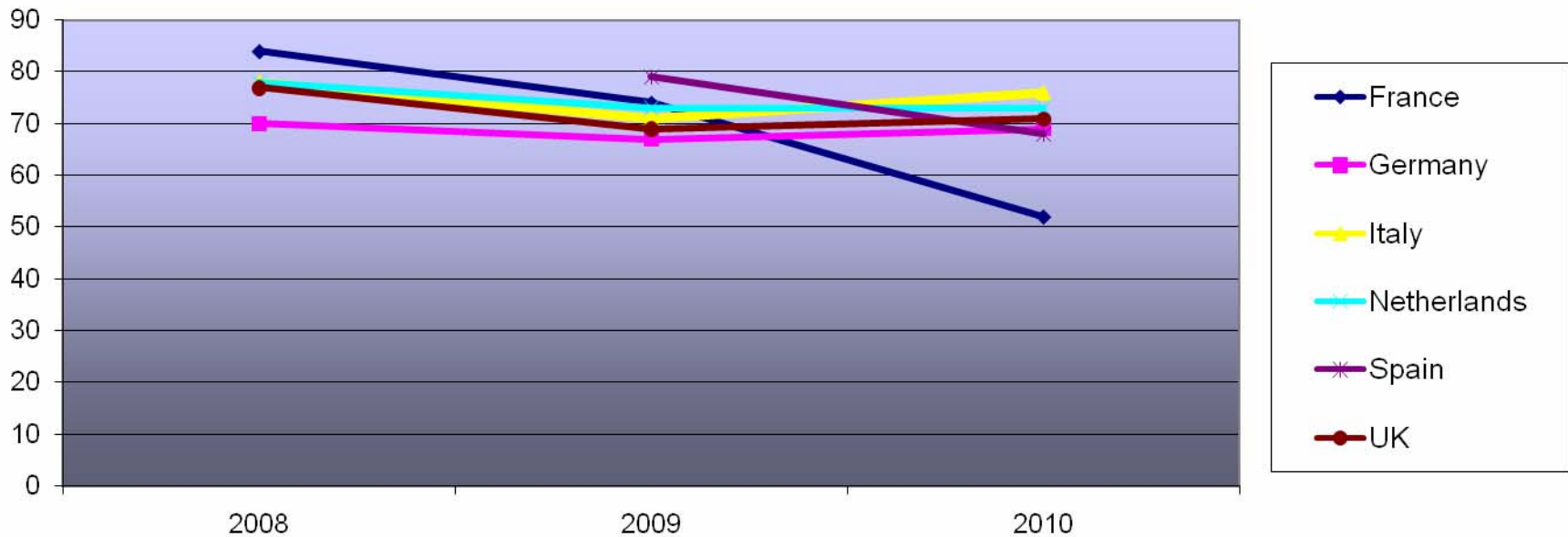


1. Demographic and economic constraint

- ❑ Negative demographic trends: combination of low fertility and population ageing results in a reduction of domestic labour force
- ❑ Socio-economic structure: demand of foreign workforce is particularly high in SMEs (especially low-medium skills) and households which results in an atomized demand and in a minor role of the main employers' organizations (e.g. Confindustria) → weak representation of interests and lobbying

2. Political constraint

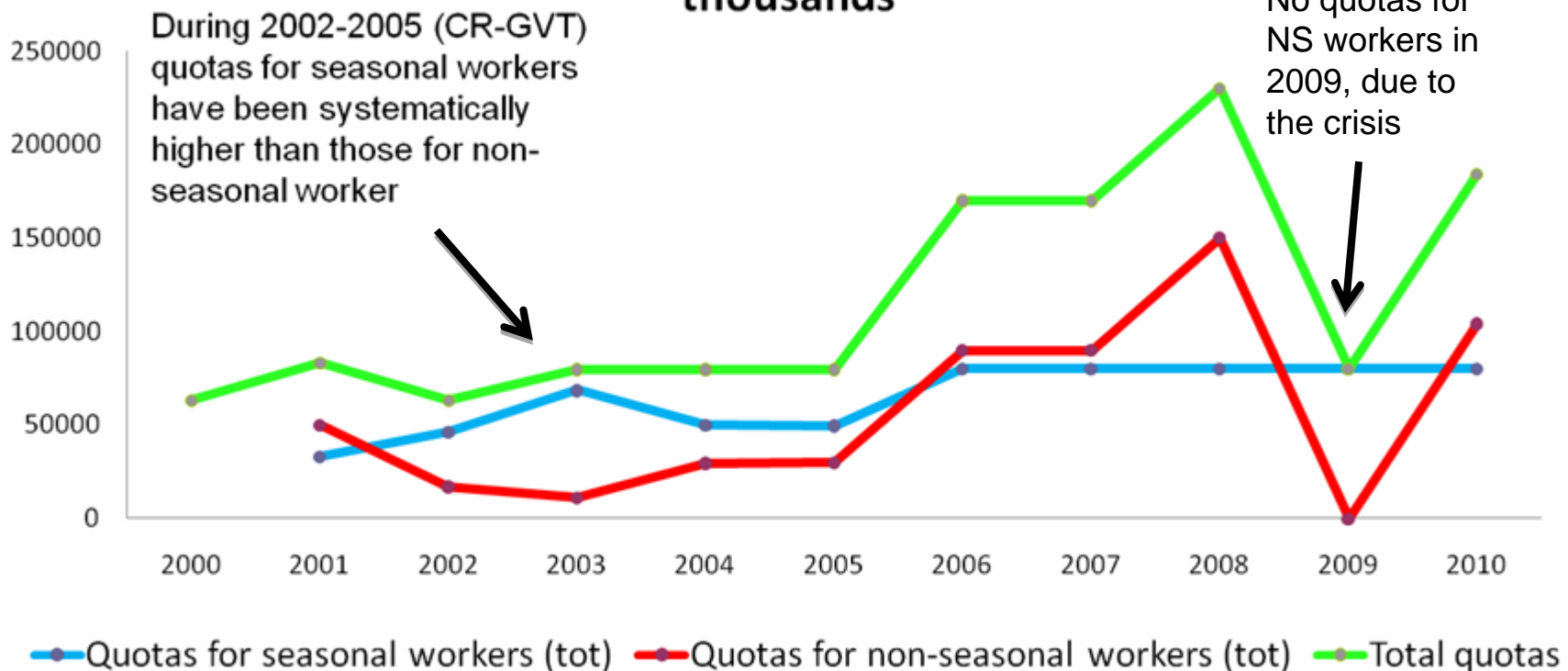
TTI - 2010 - Percentage of Europeans who agree that “immigrants generally help to fill jobs where there are shortages of workers”



Policy dilemma 1: How many immigrants? The quota planning system

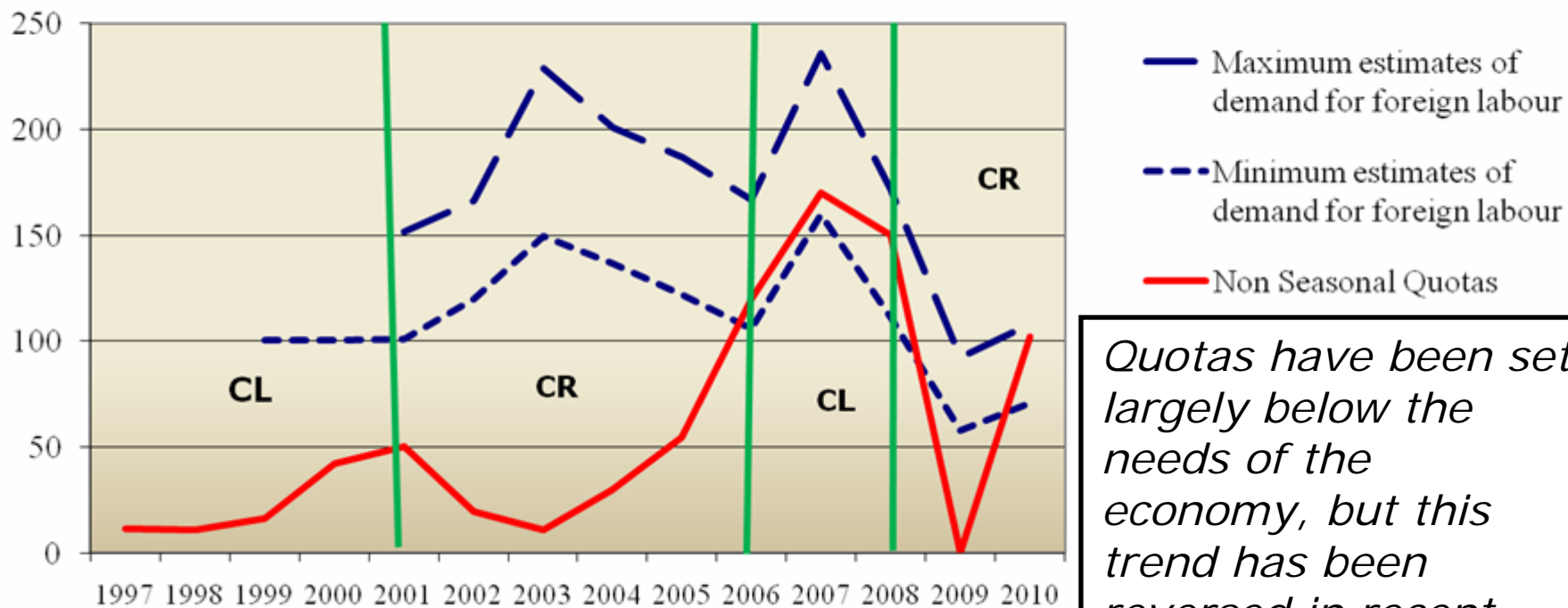
- Annual Quotas (quantitative ceilings) are established on the basis of the Document of Migration Policy Planning (adopted every 3 years): no longer produced since 2006.
- Quantitative ceilings set as a political compromise between a) labour demand expressed by Italian employers (Excelsior surveys) and b) “sustainability” concerns.
- Within general quotas, specific caps are set for different types of work (seasonal and non, dependent and self-employed) or jobs (domestic workers or others).
- Privileged quotas: special quotas are granted to nationals of countries with which Italy has concluded (or is about to) bilateral agreements on migration management (i.e. re-admission): 20 countries in 2010.

Total Quotas (seasonal and non-seasonal) - 2000-2010 – thousands



Shortcomings and dysfunctions

Political cycle and economic cycle in the definition of labour immigration quotas (L. Einaudi, 2011)



Quotas have been set largely below the needs of the economy, but this trend has been reversed in recent years

Policy dilemma 2: who and how? Selection and matching

- ❑ Employer-driven VS worker-driven mechanisms
- ❑ Admission mechanism in the Italian quota system is based on nominal hiring from abroad (both Italian and foreign employers are allowed to hire migrant workers) → mainly employer driven system.
- ❑ In general terms, there is not a particular selectivity based on qualitative criteria, i.e. individual characteristics of prospective immigrants (age, nationality, level of education or skills...): residual exceptions.

Shortcomings and dysfunctions

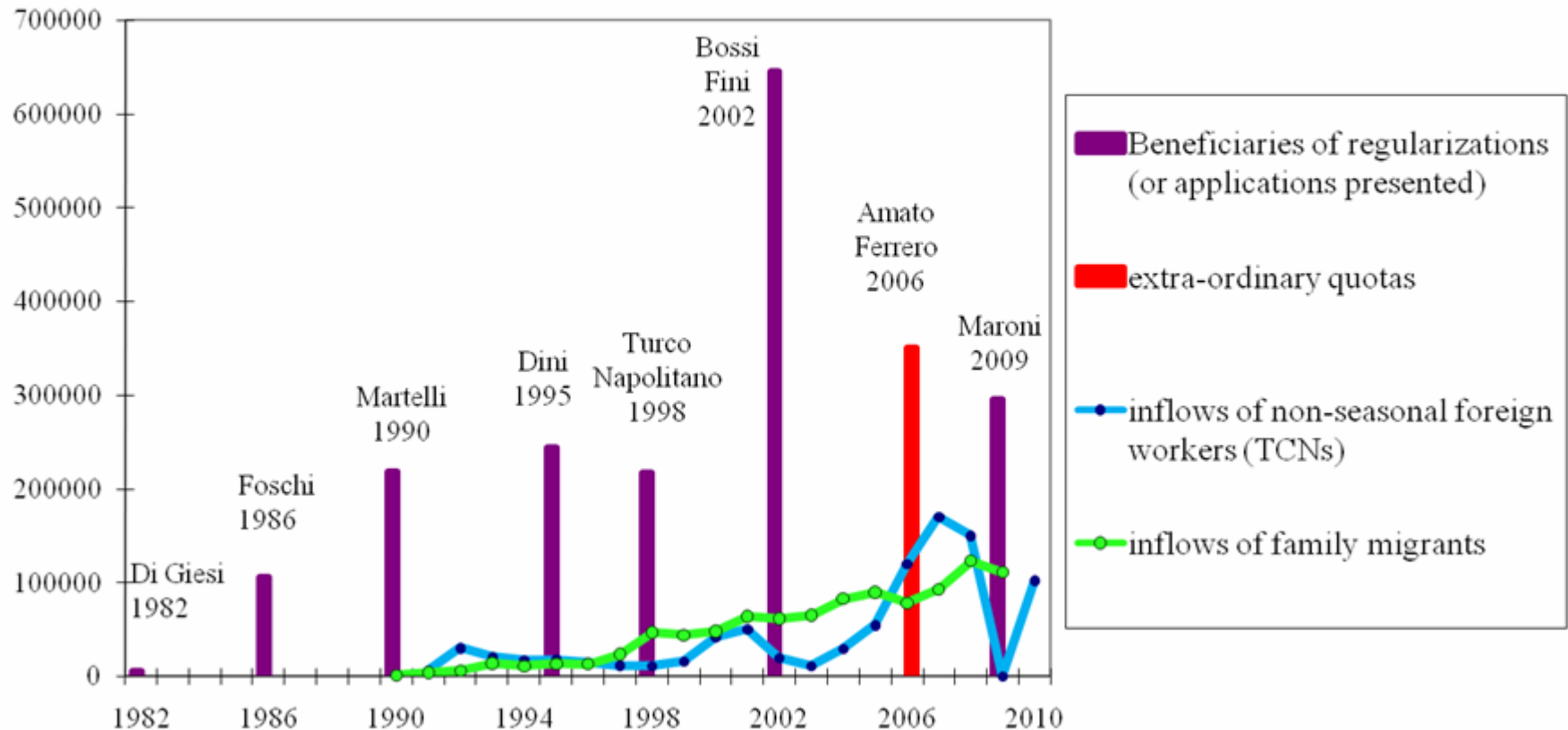
Quotas as a hidden regularization:

- Absence of formal intermediation systems de facto makes nominal hiring from abroad almost impossible (usually workers are already irregularly living in Italy)
- Informal intermediation favours extended family regroupments, migratory chains, or deceitful practices.



Dysfunctions → structural need for regularizations

Migration Laws and regularization schemes, in comparison with inflows of non seasonal regular workers (TCNs) and family regroupments (1982-2010)



Conclusions

In sheer quantitative terms, a very open system (2009: top EU immigration country)

BUT legal channels are undersized and rigid (ineffective matching mechanisms and burdensome administrative procedures)

Policy fails in creating adequate incentives to channel migratory pressure along legal channels

Reiterated use of mass regularisations → constant feeling of lack of control by public authorities → large opportunities for populist propaganda

Judgements on governments' performances on immigration management

