

VareseNews

I was Senegalese. Now I am Italian

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“It’s a big day. Today is a wonderful day.” Djibril Thiam, a Senegalese, feels reborn after 45 years. 3 March 2010 is a date he will remember forever, because this is the day when he signed the document that granted him Italian citizenship. “I’ve earned it, because I’ve lived and worked in Italy for 17 years. And I’m proud to have it” said Djibril in the heat of the moment. Besides the Coordinator for Civil Status, **Maria Pia Ini**, there was his partner, his daughter and a lot of friends in the small register office in the town hall in Varese. Djibril explained, “Thanks to this Italian citizenship, I’ll be able to avoid many heavy procedures. I’ll no longer have to queue up at the Police Headquarters to get the residence permit, wasting a lot of working hours. All this has a lot of positive aspects; now I’m on a par with my daughter. She was always repeating that I wasn’t Italian. Now she can no longer say so.”

In that countersigned and stamped document there is also a newfound sense of liberty. This is not a journalistic exaggeration, because for a lot of non-EU immigrants going away from Italy is a continuous and concrete worry, that is caused by the time of renewal of the documentation. Djibril will have to pop into the offices for the last time, in order to return the old and, by now for him, useless residence permit.

“Now I can stand up and go where I want without asking for a visa, without worry. Maybe I won’t get so many problems in the African airports anymore and as an Italian I will be more assisted.” Citizenship concession is a more frequent practice than what people think, but as Maria Pia Ini, the coordinator of the office, explains, it has not got the same meaning for every applicant. “For some of them it has got only a sense of release from the bureaucratic oppression. Personally I get angry at people who ask for the citizenship and don’t speak any word in Italian and I would like that this message could arrive to those that want to streamline the procedure, because this practice needs always a deep meaning. For Djibril there is this meaning,” explains the coordinator.

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