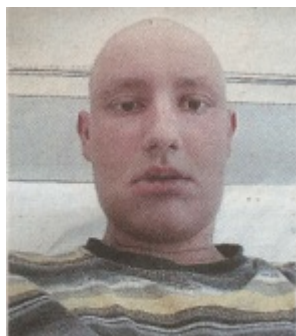


The life of Eraldo depends on a residence permit

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To get treatment for his leukaemia, he needs a residence permit, but to keep his permit, he must also have a job. **Eraldo Hazizaj**, a 19-year-old Albanian, managed to obtain the piece of paper that could save his life, thanks to **Alex De Mercato**, from Busto Arsizio, who is making every effort for his friend, who he considers a brother. But now it is his turn to ask for help. "It's difficult for us to keep Eraldo's business going," explained Alex, who opened a kebab shop to get him a residence permit, "and he's even received an eviction order." **Alex opened the shop and registered it in the name of his friend, who was supposed to manage it**, but, last February, only three days after it opened, he had a **nasty relapse and has now been admitted to the San Gerardo Hospital, in Monza**. Without a job, Eraldo is in danger of losing his residence permit, and therefore, his health card, which allows him free access to treatments that would otherwise cost something like €75,000.

Alex is appealing to anybody who can help; he wants to move the business to another place but the rents are very high and everybody is asking for Eraldo's residence permit, which exists, and is valid until 2014, but is in the hands of Milan's chief of police, waiting for Eraldo to give his fingerprints. **Bureaucracy and a lack of sympathy** might upset everything, above all, Eraldo's treatments. Alex is well aware of this, and is trying to do everything to stop the closure. **He failed to get a positive response even at Caritas**, he said, after he asked to get access to "hope loans"; the State does not even help when it promises concessionary interest rates for new entrepreneurs. "They ask you about your previous incomes," he said, "but if you're a new entrepreneur, how can you have a previous income?" In short, everything is difficult.

However, Alex is not quitting, his friendship with Eraldo and his brother (with whom it all started, *ed.*) will overcome the thousand obstacles put in their way by bureaucracy and the market. **Alex and Eraldo's brother met 7 years ago**, in the district where they live; two parallel stories, the Busto car seller and the Albanian bricklayer. Eraldo came to Italy with a 3-month permit, to visit his brother, when he was 15, then his disease changed the lives of all three. Now, the brother has also left his job, to look after Eraldo and to donate his cells, while Alex is fighting to keep the kebab shop

open. The difficulties have multiplied, and now they need some extra help.

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