



**European Observatory on Homelessness:
Statistics Update 2005**

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Introduction

In order to identify the variety of accommodation and support for the homeless and the national nomenclature for each category, two factors that have determined the construction of the problem of homelessness in Italy must be considered:

- the focus of the construction on the ‘no abode’: a ‘social’ and extreme definition, which also involves the (relative) separation of the problem of homelessness as defined by the housing (policy) problem (Tosi, 2003). This trait manifests particularly in the representation and conceptualisation of categories 1 and 2 (the roofless), which broadly coincide with the figure of the no abode and tend to exhaust the notion of homelessness. It also means that the more properly housing problems, like those stated as Insecure housing and Inadequate housing are discussed, not so much in terms of homelessness, but rather within the (broad) category of ‘housing hardship’
- the overlap of traditional approaches and the outcomes of the rapid modernisation of the culture of social service/intervention practices that occurred in the 1970s and the large geographical differences in policies and practices. One of the consequences is the considerable uncertainty over the terminology, which often indicates a conceptual uncertainty especially evident in the classification of the Homeless.

It goes without saying that the definitions and redefinitions proposed are not dictated solely by the specificity of the Italian situation: they also reflect a point of view and interpretation of the nature of the homelessness. In fact these observations could also be applied to other countries and concern the development of a generic classification of homeless accommodation.

The report follows the ‘template for collation of information on statistics’ proposed in the Guidelines. To simplify the presentation the following scheme has been adopted:

- an introduction which presents the main problems for each conceptual category
- definitions of the specific operational categories, with changes to the sub-categories in some cases
- the data available, grouped to deal with the entire conceptual category or group of definitions.

ROOFLESS

The category Roofless taken as a whole (*Living in a public space* and *Stay in a night shelter*) more or less identifies those people who are commonly identified with the homeless in Italy: the *senza dimora* (literally the 'no abode'). According to many of the associations and services who deal with them, the term 'no abode' translates the term 'homeless'. According to the prevailing construction homelessness is reduced to this figure. More rarely the traditional/bureaucratic term 'of no fixed abode' and that of *senza casa* (without accommodation) are used to indicate the same figure.

No distinction is usually made between *Living in a public space* and *Staying in a night shelter*.

Most often the term *senza dimora* denotes the homeless characterised by multiple deprivation and by traits of desocialisation or social disinsertion. The strictly housing component - not having housing - is not central. It is implied in the definition, but is only considered important as part of the multiple dimensions of the problems of the no abode.

The term no abode is also used in official documents: the general law on welfare of 2000 (Law No. 328), the NAPs, etc. Use of the term in these documents highlights two problems typical of the construction and the debate in Italy which affects definitions and identifications:

- the identification of homelessness as no abode with extreme poverty, but without making the overlap between the two clear.

"To remain on the lexical plane, a basic uncertainty has been observed over how to term the problem: at times one talks of 'persons of no abode', elsewhere of 'persons of no fixed abode' or again of 'extreme poverty'. Furthermore it cannot be deduced from a reading of [NAP 2003], whether the categories termed 'persons of no (fixed) abode' and those termed 'extreme poverty' are the same or whether the latter contain the former" (Bergamaschi, 2004, 47).

- the uncertainty over the definition/identification of the Roofless, given the tendency to exclude people who have no traits of the extreme marginalisation attributed to the no abode from the field and the count of the no abode.

Even when the definition of homeless is narrow, the types of figure and the cases that are included can vary. For example, foreigners living in shacks, abandoned buildings and ruins may be left out of account as most do not fit the typical, conventional description of the no abode. In the same way gypsies are generally not considered as being of no abode, even when they are living in shacks or tents.

Even if the no abode are cited in official documents, there are no official definitions of them.

Definitions are contained in documents with a degree of official importance such as the research report prepared by the Zancan Foundation for the *Commissione d'indagine sull'esclusione sociale* (Fondazione, 2002).

This survey was based on a 'strict definition' of the phenomenon. "Only those who at the time did not have a permanent roof over their heads, even in the form of a hostel or protected accommodation were included among the no abode. Consequently the only persons included are those who spent the night of the survey (14 March 2000) on the streets or in parks or in the so-called low threshold accommodation, which is to say in dormitories that offer a bed to sleep in and a shower for short periods of time but which do not require and do not allow any participation in daily routine".

In addition to this operational definition, the report also provides a more 'theoretical' definition which corresponds to the prevailing concept of the person of no abode cited above: "persons with no fixed dwelling (*dimora*), in precarious material conditions, with no formal/informal network of support".

A more blurred definition is provided in the summary of the results that was published (Commissione, 2002), above all with regard to interpersonal relationship problems: "marginalised persons without the financial resources needed to provide themselves with housing in the present and in the near future. At times the inadequacy of the financial resources is accompanied by (or is the cause of) the lack or loss of the ability to form the minimum personal relations and routine patterns required to maintain housing".

The national census distinguishes between "persons of no fixed abode", that is "those who have no habitual abode in any municipality which is a necessary element for ascertaining residence (wanderers, artists in itinerant companies/shows, travelling salespersons and tradespersons)" (this is the traditional bureaucratic definition) and "persons without a roof" that is "persons who do not dwell in housing or in another type of accommodation (persons who live on the streets, under bridges, etc.)" (Istat, 2001b).

1. Living in a public space

1.1 Sleeping Rough

1.2 Contacted by outreach services

There is no means of distinguishing between *Sleeping rough* (1.1) and *Contacted by outreach services* (1.2). Different types of outreach services ('mobile units', 'street units') obviously exist, but they do not result in a type which can be usefully distinguished from the category of *Sleeping rough*.

The functions attributed to outreach services are: to make contact with people living on the street, to reduce damage, to help make contact with services, etc. The current definitions of these services suggest a sort of hierarchy (at times explicit) between them and the night shelter level (Comune di Roma, 2000).

2. Stay in a night shelter

2.1. Low-threshold / direct access shelter

2.2. Arranged (e.g. low budget hotel)

2.3. Short-stay hostel

There is a vast range of terms for the accommodation facilities that correspond to the criteria indicated in the Guidelines for night shelters (emergency, short, direct, night) are termed in various ways: ‘dormitories’ (‘night shelters even on a rotating basis’: FIOpsd 2000), ‘first level (night) shelter’ (designed to provide an immediate answer to primary needs) etc. Some of these terms are traditional (*asilo notturno*: night asylum, *albergo popolare*: people’s hotel, dormitory...), and more often they still indicate *Low threshold/direct access shelters*. There are however some more recently introduced terms such as ‘first reception centre’, ‘reception centre’ and ‘reception structure’ with a general meaning (they are often used indiscriminately to indicate different types of hostels) and they are also used to refer to night shelters of both the *Low threshold* and the *Short stay hostel type*.

On the other hand it is not easy to distinguish between the different types in this area of provision. All the observations made in this regard in the previous statistical report (Edgar et al, 2004) and in the Guidelines apply here.

In general the range of services provided in this conceptual category and the relative distinctions are all substantially present, given partly by the current distinction between ‘first reception’ and ‘second reception’ (with at times even a ‘third reception’), and they are also contained in the legislation (Law No. 328) and in official documents.

It is, however, difficult to make a concrete distinction between *Low threshold/direct access shelters* (2.1) and *Short-stay hostels* (2.3) (*Arranged hotels* do not apply). However it is also difficult to distinguish between these types of provision and many types of the hostels stated for the *Houseless*. There are many forms of night shelters and many facilities allow stays of differing lengths. Different functions and types of hospitality with differing lengths of stay, etc. may co-exist in the same facility.

This is partly a consequence of how this type of provision has developed over the years (Tosi, Ranci, Kazepov, 1998) (see *infra* in *Houseless*).

Data on roofless

The information on the data presented here relates to the whole of the *Roofless*. For the reasons given, the data available normally relates to the sub-categories in 1 and 2 taken together.

Local data nevertheless exists on night shelter guests only (usually on service users). Some local research is available on persons found in a public space only. It is also possible to obtain separate information on persons living in a public space and for users of night shelters from the research on the roofless as a whole. However, as these research studies as well as others show, most of the homeless shift between these (and other) different solutions (Fondazione Zancan, 2002).

Two national scale studies are available on the roofless, conducted in 1992 and in 2000: Commissione 1993 and Fondazione Zancan 2002. Both were organised and funded by commissions set up by government, but the results cannot be considered official figures. The last national count was that produced by the Zancan Foundation for the *Commissione di indagine sull'esclusione sociale* in 2000 (Commissione 2002).

Fondazione Zancan, *Indagine sulle persone senza dimora* [Survey of the persons of no abode], Commissione di indagine sull'esclusione sociale, Roma, 2002.

SOURCE : Private research institute: Fondazione Zancan, for Official Department: Commissione di indagine sull'esclusione sociale.

ACCESS: Direct from agency. Published data for a summary (Commissione, 2002).

AREA COVERED: The whole country.

MEASURE: Stock.

The survey employed an s-night approach (a count of persons on the street on a particular night and who sleep in a first level dormitory on the same night).

DATA (LATEST): 17,000 no abode.

DATE: 2000.

Comments

Previous estimates based on research studies and the opinions of social workers gave a higher figure (50-60,000 according to the 1992 survey). Afterwards, higher estimates, of between 50,000 and 80,000 have continued to be reported by field workers and the press.

Istat, 14° Censimento della popolazione e delle abitazioni (2001 Census)

The census included a simultaneous count of 'persons without a roof' throughout the country on 20th October 2001 (see Istat, 2001b).

SOURCE: Stats Office: ISTAT (Istituto Centrale di Statistica)

ACCESS: Direct from agency, Published, Web site: see Appendix

AREA COVERED: The whole country.

MEASURE: Stock

DATA (LATEST): 8.867 households 'without a roof' or 'without accommodation',
13.038 persons 'without a roof' or 'without accommodation'.

DATE: 2001

Comments

13,038 persons without a roof or without accommodation is a decidedly low number especially considering that it includes persons 'without accommodation', who are foreign ambassadorial and consular staff.

Sources

Commissione d'indagine sull'esclusione sociale 2002. Commissione d'indagine sulla povertà e l'immigrazione 1993. Fondazione Zancan 2002. Istat 2001a and 2001b.

www.istat.it/dati/db_siti
<http://dawinci.istat.it>
www.fondazionezancan.it

HOUSELESS

The division into operational categories and sub-categories requires some modifications to take proper account of the classification criteria and nomenclature used by the system of provision in Italy.

As has been mentioned (Edgar et al, 2004), there is a general difficulty in distinguishing between the types included under *Houseless* and more specifically between *Short stay homeless hostels* and *Temporary accommodation* and between these forms and those of *Supported accommodation* in the strict sense. There may, however, also be some difficulty, as we have seen, in distinguishing between houseless forms of accommodation and night shelters.

These difficulties are considerable in Italy and the language employed by workers and the legislation does not help. The terms and definitions do not discriminate between forms. If we consider the criteria for identifying the condition of Houselessness - temporary in nature, institutional in nature, occupied on condition that they receive appropriate support (Edgar et al, 2004) - both the temporary nature and the support that constitutes the condition create problems.

The duration of stays generally helps to distinguish *Short stay homeless hostels* from both *Night shelters* and from *Supported accommodation*: but progress in the development of services has blurred the dividing lines considerably in both directions (Tosi et al, 1998).

Some type of support is almost always offered in this type of accommodation. It is best to consider support in the broader sense of that designed for the reintegration or rehabilitation of persons in the accommodation and also to include lighter forms and support designed for prevention in it (according to the Guidelines: 'people who may never have been homeless but whose needs make them vulnerable or at risk of homelessness'). On the other hand even emergency facilities (including night shelters) are not without some forms of support which may even start reintegration paths.

Generally speaking, one important distinction made in Italy, which should help to distinguish, is that of 'first' and 'second' (and at times also 'third') reception: which correspond to emergency, easy access, facilities on the one hand and to facilities in which social support is provided on the other hand. Nevertheless the difference between first and second reception and between night shelters and hostels is not clear-cut. What is more is that there are different viewpoints in the definition of second reception, which can comprise various functions (ibidem, 26).

On the other hand, the notion of emergency does not at all coincide with those relating to rooflessness: emergency intervention (or that termed emergency) may give rise, and in many cases it does give rise, to solutions classified under houselessness dealt with in this part.

On the basis of these considerations it would therefore seem best to simplify and partly redefine the contents and terms of some sub-categories.

3. Homeless hostel/temporary accommodation

3.1 Short-stay homeless hostel

3.2 Temporary housing

4. Women's shelter/refuge

4.1 Shelter accommodation

4.2 Supported accommodation

5. Accommodation for asylum seekers and immigrants

5.1 Reception centres (asylum)

5.3 Migrant workers hostels

6. Institutional release

6.1 Penal institutions

6.2 Institutions (care and hospital)

7. Supported accommodation

7.1 Supported accommodation: general

7.2 Supported accommodation: special groups/special needs

This redefinition resorts to two main criteria: the type of functions/objectives (emergency, support, treatment of risk/prevention; reintegration, etc.); and the type of target: general (homeless) population, women, immigrants, young people, etc. The type of accommodation is less important.

Data on houseless

With the exception of immigrants and asylum seekers (see *infra*), the data available on houseless categories is of a local character.

The national census records *Convivenze* ('persons living together': "a set of people who, without any ties of marriage, family, kinship and similar, live together for reasons of religion, health care, welfare assistance, armed forces, detention and similar") giving the number of persons for each group of persons living together on the date of the census. No possibility of estimating the proportion at risk of homelessness.

Hospices, homes for disabled adults and the elderly: 393,891 permanent, 71,942 non permanent.

Reception centres for immigrants: 8,785 permanent, 4,139 non permanent.

Health care institutes: 253,429 permanent, 242,910 non permanent.

Penal institutions: 73,985 permanent, 40,037 non permanent.

Like all national census data they are provided or can be processed by gender, area, age, etc. and for purposes of assistance. There are no indications, however, to allow situations of release or in any case of housing risk to be identified. The only type for which the statistic can be matched with one of the houseless categories is that of reception centres for immigrants.

Ministry of the Interior registers drug addicts in social rehabilitation facilities (residential or semi-residential). There are no indications however to allow situations of release or in any case of housing risk to be identified.

Sources

Un tetto per tutti 2005. Caritas Italiana 2004. Comune di Roma 2000. FIO.psd 2000. Fondazione Bignaschi 2002. Istat 2001a and 2001b. Tosi 1997. Tosi 2000. Tosi, Ranci 1999. Tosi, Ranci, Kazepov 1998. Ministero del Lavoro, *Norme regionali* www.welfare.gov.it

www.istat.it/dati/db_siti
<http://dawinci.istat.it>

3. Homeless hostel/temporary accommodation

3.1 Short-stay homeless hostel

Although it is difficult to distinguish between *Short-stay homeless hostels* and *Temporary housing*, the distinction is applicable, with the contents specified below.

As has been said the type may overlap with Night shelters (Short stay hostel: 2.3), but the distinction is conceptually clear, corresponds to that proposed in the Guidelines and has been made operative in Italy in different ways. Generally the function and the support provided seems to count more than the period of time, e.g. the Italian Caritas (2004) uses the following definition:

“First level night reception: designed to give an immediate response to primary needs. Second level night reception: provides accommodation in a community context, characterised by some factors: the unitary nature, relationships, discussion, organised personal and learning spaces in which a dimension of normality is provided. Access is after two or three interviews designed to assess the real possibilities of success, but above all the willingness of the person to follow the agreed plan. The period of stay is limited and varies from person to person in relation to the plan and its actual implementation”.

This type of accommodation is provided for by various regional laws which classify the intervention as of the emergency type.

This type of intervention is usually termed ‘emergency welfare’ services; ‘emergency intervention/services and rapid welfare intervention’; ‘rapid intervention centres/services’; ‘rapid reception centre/intervention, etc. It is targeted at people who ‘because of sudden and unforeseeable contingent, personal or family situations are without the necessary means to satisfy their primary living needs or they are incapable or in any case unable to find an

appropriate place autonomously', or at 'people without family support or whose existence in the family creates tensions and hardship such as to require them to leave immediately'. They provide 'temporary satisfaction of accommodation and nutrition needs and other primary needs for the time strictly necessary to find an appropriate solution' (regional laws of Piemonte 2004, Lazio 1996, Marche 1998, Molise 2000, Puglia 2003).

3.2 Temporary housing

The reason for grouping 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 into one single category is because of the difficulty and little usefulness of distinguishing between different lengths of stay. It would seem better to include in this category temporary arrangements provided in non welfare housing: ordinary housing or hotels, etc. (which makes it possible to set them apart from Hostels).

This corresponds to two main forms in Italy:

1. Transitional housing with support or in which the accommodation is based on an individual reintegration plan often as a further phase after that of the 'second reception'. This is the Caritas classification cited:

Third level reception in a social protection apartment: is defined "as the possibility to offer a place where further autonomy can be developed through placement for a determined period in an apartment with non continuous social work support".

It corresponds to *Supported accommodation* under 7 from the viewpoint of the objectives and the functions: the difference consists in it being accommodated here under ordinary housing.

2. Temporary placements in housing or hotels. In addition to mainstream public housing, a number of social measures are aimed at situations of serious hardship or at emergency situations (variously defined: 'serious housing hardship', 'particular housing emergency', 'welfare cases', 'persons at risk', 'situations of particular social importance' etc.). Among the measures employed by local authorities there is temporary placement in more or less precarious emergency accommodation (hotels, boarding houses, etc.).

4. Women's shelter/refuge

4.1 Shelter accommodation

4.2 Supported accommodation

The reason for treating arrangements for women separately is well justified because this separation is culturally and institutionally consolidated and it corresponds to specific forms of accommodation.

Here too the distinction between Shelter and Supported accommodation is not clear-cut, but can be maintained on the basis of the distinction between

accommodation in emergency situations and facilities with support over a longer period. In the latter case, the threshold for access is higher than for night/emergency shelters and an individual plan may be required for access.

(One, small, part of the arrangements, as for all the special categories, corresponds to Night shelters/short stay hostels under 2.3).

Accommodation services for women include the provision of lodging, help and protection, and the forms include: refuges, community accommodation, a group apartment and reception centres.

In addition to the distinction based on functions and objectives, accommodation provided for women also differs according to the type of situation and the figures dealt with. The classification from this viewpoint is very detailed: single women, single women with children, (single) women at risk (exposed to the threat of physical or psychological violence, etc.), battered women/victims of violence and sexual abuse or maltreatment, immigrant women; ex- prostitutes, etc. (see regional laws: Basilicata 1997, Umbria 1997, Sicilia 2003, Puglia 2003, Friuli-V.G. 2000, Piemonte 2004).

Provision may be referred to three types of target groups (Tosi, 2000): *women of no abode*: persons suffering from the most explicit form of homelessness, among which there are many cases of figures that have reached advanced stages on the path to marginalisation; *risk situations* connected with family crises, violence, single parenthood, etc.: situations that can be defined as virtually or at risk of homelessness; *women immigrants at risk*: where immigration constitutes an additional risk factor, adding to the previous.

As regards the service supply system targeted at persons of no abode the basic distinction is between dormitories or places that offer emergency (short stay) accommodation on one side and transitional accommodation or supported accommodation on the other. It must nevertheless be remembered that it is not possible from a practical viewpoint to identify a clear dividing line between the two types of shelter. Very frequently even low threshold services like dormitories also provide some elements of social support. This is a consequence of the evolution of the provision. Faced with the clear inadequacy of dormitories for women, attempts were made to invent appropriate formulas and to develop a culture of provision suitable for women no abode. The traditional forms of the emergency services have evolved, with the result that they have become more complex. Today objectives include - alongside that of providing emergency accommodation, which remains the primary function - 'reduction of damage', improvement of the quality of life for occupants, and at times social reintegration, or in any case the introduction of some elements of social support.

Accommodation services for women in difficulty/at risk (small hostels or ordinary housing/apartments, the length of stay varies from a few days to a few months, in this case as part of reintegration projects) is the most diffuse form of provision for women, usually classified in terms of emergency, transitional and protected accommodation. In this case too the distinction, though it exists, is very flexible, since even emergency centres provide casework plans (help with work, housing and interpersonal relations). Hostels for single mothers and for 'mothers in difficulty' are the most common provision in this area.

There are services specifically targeted at women immigrants. The distinction between emergency and transition accommodation seen for the other target groups is reproduced with the same blurred borderline. The services are almost never limited to only shelter for the night.

5. Accommodation for asylum seekers and immigrants

Immigrants are considered and counted separately from other homeless and from occupants of facilities for the homeless and there is specific provision for them (this does not mean that immigrants are not to be found even in large numbers, in other facilities also: dormitories, etc.).

Repatriate accommodation (5.2): does not apply.

The other two categories (*Reception centres* and *Migrant workers hostels*) are found in Italy too. There is different provision in the legislation for the two types of service: asylum seekers must be provided for once the recognition process has started. (It must, however, be considered that access to recognition is very restricted and most of those who apply to be admitted are rejected, expelled or placed in detention centres until their position is clarified). Reception facilities for migrant workers has been provided since the very first legislation on immigration. Provision of the facilities is delegated to regions and municipalities (this accommodation, however, covers a very modest percentage of the immigrant demand: see Tosi 2002).

5.1 Reception centres (asylum)

National projects have been started up for refugees and asylum seekers such as the *Piano nazionale asilo* (National asylum programme). PNA started in 2001 on the basis of an agreement between Ministry of the Interior, High Commissioner for the Refugees (Ahcnur), and Anci (association of municipalities). Municipalities play a central role in the implementation of the programme and activities are performed with the involvement of local voluntary associations in the majority of local projects. The National asylum programme network consists of a series of reception centres that operate throughout most of the country, similar to first reception centres (Cologna and Zanuso, 2001). These centres provide accommodation and protection to asylum seekers waiting for their refugee status recognition applications to be decided. They also provide information on work and housing opportunities, etc.

1500-2000 beds have been provided, as against a demand of about 15,000 persons each year.

5.3 Migrant workers hostels

'Reception facilities' or 'reception centres' are provided for foreign immigrants, usually with a distinction between 'first reception' and 'second reception' provision. The former (generally speaking) are of an emergency type, while the latter are more of a transitional housing type.

'First reception centres' (*Centri di prima accoglienza*) were first established by Law 39 of 1990. The law defined *Centri di prima accoglienza* as facilities that meet immediate accommodation needs, strictly for the time required to find other autonomous accommodation, facilities therefore which - in principle - were to be accompanied by social support measures (orientation, advice, etc.) (Tosi, 2002, Tosi, Ranci and Kazepov, 1998).

Law No. 40 of 1998 provided for 'reception centres', intended as: 'accommodation facilities which, even free of charge, provide for the immediate nutritional and accommodation needs as well as, where possible, the provision of the opportunities for learning the Italian language, for receiving occupational training and for cultural exchange with the Italian population and health and welfare assistance for foreigners unable to provide it autonomously strictly for the time required to achieve personal autonomy'.

The distinction between first and second reception is relatively simple as far as the reception facilities and functions to which it should correspond (Cologna and Zanuso, 2001).

First reception: accommodation facilities, both public and private sector designed for temporary accommodation (short to medium term) of immigrants. The definition includes both refuges/night shelters for the more serious housing emergencies and also temporary first reception centres as defined in the two laws on immigration.

Second reception: accommodation facilities, both public and private sector, designed for continuous accommodation with medium to long term stays for persons in difficulty or waiting for permanent placement in normal housing.

The main functions that second reception facilities should perform are: (a) treatment of social exclusion or at-risk situations - in this case the facilities perform the functions typical of reintegration facilities, places where individual plan tools for reintegration or the achievement of autonomy are employed; (b) a response to specific types of demand: temporary accommodation (of the boarding house type or accompanied with welfare support) for mobile populations.

Responsibility for setting up these facilities was delegated to the Regional Authorities, Municipalities, voluntary associations and NGOs. As far as types of accommodation are concerned, public sector provision consists mainly of special purpose facilities (of differing housing quality and type: caravan, hostels, etc.); private sector welfare provision consists more often of apartments (sometimes group apartments).

There are in reality a large variety of reception (first reception) facilities that have been implemented and there is great variety with regard to: the presence and the type support; the type of accommodation (special facilities, including

caravans and similar, to apartments); the rents charged, the length of stay; the function attributed to the centres.

The reception centres were based on the idea that the difficulties of immigrants - including finding accommodation - were temporary and that in time immigrants would be able to find normal solutions to their problems. This idea was to turn out unrealistic. In any case, in a context of scarce social/cheap housing supply, the emergency shelters were destined to attract a variety of types of demand for accommodation and to take on a plurality of functions in addition to that envisaged. Even the second reception centres are far from being facilities for persons at the second stage in an integration path. In many cases they simply represent a response to social housing demand.

The notion fluctuates between and at times confuses different types of need and supply: 'first reception' (housing needs for new arrivals); genuine emergency accommodation (for urgent and unforeseeable need of accommodation); temporary accommodation for persons who suddenly find themselves in particular situations of housing difficulty; 'insertion accommodation' (for marginalised or at risk persons for whom the provision of accommodation forms the basis for a social re-integration plan); temporary accommodation for persons present in the community for only a short period (Tosi, Ranci and Kazepov, 1998, 50).

The result is that today the nature of both the first reception centres (some definitely correspond to Night shelters as defined in 2, while in other cases the actual length of stay is indeterminate, which is to say they are permanent arrangements), and that of the second reception centres is uncertain, just as the distinction between the two is uncertain.

Data on immigrants and asylum seekers

Ministero dell'Interno, *Profughi stranieri. Dati complessivi relativi ai richiedenti asilo* [Refugees. Data on asylum seekers], Direzione Centrale per la Documentazione e la Statistica, <http://pers.mininterno.it/dcds>.

The statistics office of the Ministry of the Interior has set up a 'register of foreign asylum seekers in Italy'. The statistics are for asylum applications presented to the police authorities. Collection of the statistics is not on a regular basis. The source of the data is state police headquarters.

SOURCE : Official department: Ministero dell'Interno, Direzione Centrale per la Documentazione e la Statistica

ACCESS: Published data. Web site <http://pers.mininterno.it/dcds>. The statistics are provided on request to internal and external bodies and offices.

AREA COVERED: The whole country.

The smallest geographical unit for which published data is available is the province. Data may be disaggregated by locality/province, age, gender, profession, educational qualification, languages spoken, state of progress of the application, etc.

MEASURE: Stock

DATA (LATEST): 11.160 asylum seekers (recognized).

DATE: 31st December 2003.

Comments:

Only a minority of asylum seekers are in hostels provided by the public sector. The beds available under PNA programme have been 1,500-2,000.

Sources

Ministero dell'Interno, *Profughi stranieri*, <http://pers.mininterno.it/dcds/>

Ministero dell'Interno, *Censimento delle strutture di accoglienza per extracomunitari* [Census of reception facilities for non EU citizens], Direzione Centrale per la Documentazione e la Statistica, <http://pers.mininterno.it/dcds/>.

The statistics office of the Ministry of the Interior acquires data on the entity and location of public and private sector facilities for non EU citizens. The number, name, legal status, number of beds available is recorded. The Census is annual (since 1992). The source of the data is municipalities which transmit it to polices stations.

SOURCE: Official department: Ministero dell'Interno.

ACCESS: Published data. Web site: <http://pers.mininterno.it/dcds/>

The statistics are published in specific publications: 'Census of facilities for non EU citizens'.

AREA COVERED: The whole country.

The smallest geographical unit for which published data is available is the municipality.

MEASURE: Stock

DATA (LATEST):

Residential facilities: 1,325

Beds: 26,269. In public sector facilities: 9,213; in private sector facilities: 15,173; in mixed facilities: 1,883.

DATE: 31st December 2003.

Istat, 14° Censimento della popolazione e delle abitazioni (2001 Census)

SOURCE: Stats Office: ISTAT (Istituto Centrale di Statistica)

ACCESS: Direct from agency, Published, Web site: see Appendix

AREA COVERED: The whole country.

MEASURE: Stock

DATA (LATEST): Centri di accoglienza per immigrati: 12,925 persons (2,630 resident, 6,156 present, 4,139 non permanent).

DATE: 2001.

Full and constantly updated information exists in some regions on reception centres: number of beds, maximum stay period, etc.: which may make it possible to distinguish night shelter type centres from houseless type centres.

Sources

Cnel 2000. Bologna, Zanuso 2001. Tosi 2002. Istat 2001a and 2001b. Ministero dell'Interno, *Censimento delle strutture di accoglienza*, <http://pers.mininterno.it/dcads/>

www.istat.it/dati/db_siti.
<http://dawinci.istat.it>

6. Institutional release

6.1 Penal institutions (period defined nationally)

Prison convicts are structurally exposed to housing risk on leaving prison either because their network of support has been broken or because they have never had a network of support - immigrants constitute a large component of the prison population. Many initiatives have been organised to manage this risk both by the public and the voluntary sector or jointly between the two (see regional laws of Puglia 2003, Toscana 1997, Piemonte 2004). Provision consists of housing (usually small apartments: small communities, or reception centres, or more individually customised solutions) and of support to facilitate integration into work and society (Un tetto per tutti, 2005).

The stays may be short or longer, even medium to long term, in apartments or collective facilities. The Region of Tuscany provides stays of 3-4 months in apartments. A joint project between the Municipality of Milan and voluntary associations provides stays (in apartments) both short and occasional and also up to 6 months.

6.2 Institutions (care and hospital)

The most well defined provision, subject also to legislative measures, concerns patients released from psychiatric hospitals and more generally the creation of residential and semi-residential facilities subsequent to the process of deinstitutionalisation of the mentally ill (closure of psychiatric hospitals) that started in the '70s.

7. Supported accommodation (for homeless people)

7.1 Supported accommodation: general

This category covers the homeless (single people and families) whose need for support is met from the general supply, i.e. not divided into categories such as provision for women, young people, immigrants, etc. These facilities are designed to respond to two main objectives in Italy: protection and prevention for 'persons in difficulty' or 'at (high) risk of marginalisation'; and reintegration of the no abode. Both types are covered by various regional legislation.

All regions provide 'services of a residential character'. The objectives and circumstances are defined in different ways: to meet needs that are not adequately met by other types of intervention; to meet the need for the removal of a person from her/his social environment due to exceptional circumstances, to prevent avoid exposure to particular risk factors; to care for persons either temporarily or permanently unable to look after themselves; to care for persons suffering from marginalisation who need long term intervention that substitutes the family, etc. In all cases services not only ensure adequate conditions to meet the needs of the persons in question, but must also provide forms of treatment which assist the recovery and reintegration into society of the service users. The forms of accommodation vary according to the type of housing (apartments, group apartments, hostels etc.) and the intensity of the support provided (see for instance the regional laws of Piemonte 2004, Lazio 1996, Molise 2000, Puglia 2003).

The main distinction in the Italian situation - which is a consequence of the overall supply system - is between intervention aimed at 'serious marginalisation', an area which includes the no abode, and intervention aimed at persons and families in difficulty or at risk of marginalisation. The function assigned to social support are different, and the notion of (re)insertion assumes different meanings in the two cases (see Tosi, Ranci and Kazepov, 1998, Tosi and Ranci, 1999).

As with women accommodation, this is a questionable distinction but useful because it considers two different degrees of the problem or stages in the process of social exclusion. In this sense the distinction relates to two different functions of support, repair versus prevention, and to different supplies of supported accommodation.

The main type of supported accommodation for persons in difficulty/at risk consists of special services provided by voluntary associations or local authority offices. The intervention combine in different ways the objectives of prevention, protection, cushioning of crisis situations, housing and/or social reinsertion.

As regards the area of 'serious marginalisation', the most common objective of intervention is social reintegration of the persons involved or the achievement of an independent life for them. Along with transitional accommodation for reintegration, action aimed at improving the quality of life or at damage reduction has been developed for persons unsuitable for or unwilling to follow reintegration plans, by means of low level social work tied to shelter type accommodation.

The main tendency followed by services for the no abode in recent years has been to differentiate between emergency and transitional accommodation/services. While this distinction is quite clear at a theoretical level, in practice the borderline between the two dimensions is much more blurred. Even dormitories may constitute the first form of relatively

stable accommodation for the no abode. In fact dormitories have equipped themselves in recent years to meet a range of needs by adding social support services to the supply of accommodation.

7.2 Supported accommodation: special groups/special needs

Different types of supported accommodation are also provided for special groups or special needs. The (supported accommodation) services mentioned above designed for women, immigrants and situations of institutional release can be considered specific cases of this category.

A variety of intervention has been instituted with more or less the same logic for specific categories of person or need which could be added to the types 4, 5 and 6: more specifically cases in which discharge from an institution is imminent and no dwelling is available. This may occur for drug addicts and ex drug addicts in social rehabilitation facilities; minors who must leave institutions at 18 years of age, etc. (FIOpsd, 2004).

One important case is given by the young no abode and young at risk, for whom specific services are provided in many cities (Tosi, 1996). Young people constitute one of the categories at which the projects/the shelter system provided for marginalised/homeless people and people at risk (emergency and 'non-emergency' shelter) is aimed/addressed. Non-emergency projects aimed at young people are currently underway in various cities.

INSECURE HOUSING

8. No tenancy

8.1 Living temporarily with family or friends (not through choice)

The current definition is that of ‘co-habitation’ (*coabitazione*), i.e. two or more nuclear family units living in the same accommodation.

The difficulty of distinguishing between forced co-habitation and co-habitation through choice is an issue currently debated in attempts to define this component of housing exclusion on the basis of the available data. The point is, however, also difficult from an interpretational viewpoint, because choice and constraints are often inextricably combined. The question has been debated for young people in particular: the prolonged period for which children live with parents (longer in Italy than in most European countries) certainly reflect cultural models, but it is nevertheless commonly recognised that difficulties in finding affordable housing constitute an important factor in the delay (Tosi, 1997).

The same applies to immigrants: particularly for certain national groups such as the Senegalese, where although the high frequency of situations of co-habitation is an indicator of the difficulty in finding affordable housing it also responds to the principles of hospitality which members of these groups are required to apply.

8.2 Living in a dwelling without a standard legal (sub)tenancy

This category applies principally to situations where a rented relationship exists in practice but a certain number of the official requirements for a rent contract are fully or partially not met. This failure to meet requirements may take different forms and degrees of gravity ranging from arrangements completely ‘under the counter’ (where there is no contract at all) to contracts where some elements are missing or fraudulent, with regard above all to the amounts (which are recorded as lower than in actual fact for tax reasons). Attenuated forms of irregularity may not involve serious situations of insecurity.

These situations are very widespread in Italy and the subject of constant complaints (and research) by tenants unions. Groups of the Italian population are affected as much as those in immigrant populations. The problem is particularly serious for the latter, above all in the case, as is obvious, of undocumented immigrants.

Data on tenancy

There are some local surveys which at times throw light on the motives of co-habitation and the degree of satisfaction and therefore indirectly provide an approximate estimate of how many are living temporarily with family or friends not through choice.

The national census gives the number of families and persons co-habiting without giving elements to distinguish between forced co-habitation and co-habitation through choice.

According to the 2001 census: 236,446 families, 199,392 persons co-habiting.

An approximate estimate of how many are living temporarily with family or friends not through choice could be obtained by applying the percentage of forced co-habitation (on the basis of the reasons adopted for co-habitation or of the level of satisfaction) resulting from local or national surveys to these figures.

On 'irregular' tenancy there are some local surveys, either on the whole population or on immigrant populations and a few rare national surveys.

At national scale, 'irregular' or 'illegal' tenancy is subject to periodical estimates by tenants unions. It is difficult however to adapt these estimates to the category *Living in dwellings without a standard legal (sub)tenancy*.

Sunia, *L'offerta delle abitazioni in affitto* [The supply of rented accommodation], Indagine Ufficio Studi, Roma, 2003.

SOURCE: NGO.

ACCESS: Published data. Web site.

AREA COVERED: The whole country.

MEASURE: Stock.

DATA (LATEST): Illegal contracts amounting to 37% of the total: equivalent to 1,600,000 households.

DATE: 2001.

Sources

Sunia 2003.

9. Eviction orders

9.1 Legal orders enforced (rented housing)

The legal procedure starts with an application by the owner for the vacation of the property and ends with the execution of the eviction. Three distinct types of situation can be identified: orders declaring evictions, requests for execution, evictions executed. The risk of homelessness is different at the different stages and the degree of insecurity is likewise different.

Data on eviction orders

Ministero dell'Interno, *Andamento delle procedure di rilascio di immobili ad uso abitativo* [Figures on procedures for the vacation of residential properties], 1° Semestre 2004, Aprile 2005, Direzione Centrale per la Documentazione e la Statistica, <http://pers.mininterno.it/dcads/>

Data on evictions has been systematically collected since 1983 by the Ministry of Interior for administrative purposes. The data is intended to provide a 'picture of the entity of the procedures to vacate residential properties'. The data acquired concerns: executive eviction orders issued by the courts; requests for eviction presented to the courts, evictions executed through the courts.

The figures are furnished monthly by police headquarters to the Central Department for Documentation and Statistics of the Ministry, which enters the data into computers and processes it.

Data is updated six monthly.

SOURCE: Official department: Ministero dell'Interno.

ACCESS: Published data. Web site: <http://pers.mininterno.it/dcads/>

Statistics are published annually in the publication, *Andamento delle procedure di rilascio di immobili ad uso abitativo* (figures on procedures for the vacation of residential properties)

AREA COVERED: The whole country.

MEASURE: Stock and flow.

DATA (LATEST): In 2003 (January-December) 38,543 eviction orders were issued, with 81,404 requests for eviction and 21,714 evictions executed. January-December 2004 (some provinces missing): eviction orders issued: 24,082; requests for eviction 42,656, evictions executed 11,331.

DATE

January-December 2003. January-December 2004: incomplete data.

Comments

The connection between eviction procedures and homelessness in Italy is uncertain. Legal enforceable notice to quit as such may mean some sort of homelessness (or risk of it) only if associated with other elements of risk. In many cases eviction has been a condition for obtaining public housing for many years.

Sources

Ministero dell'Interno, Andamento delle procedure di rilascio, <http://pers.mininterno.it/dcads>.

9.2 Re-possession orders (owned housing)

Not applicable

10. Violence

10.1 Living under threat of violence from partner or family

Even if the lack of housing alternatives may imply housing insecurity for persons living under threat of violence from partner or family, in Italy violence within the family is seldom discussed as a question related to homelessness. The relatively wide availability of reception structures and shelters for women “in difficulty” implies most often that the problem becomes one of houseless as defined in categories 4.1 and 4.2. In any case, there are no data available for estimating the problem at national scale.

INADEQUATE HOUSING

11. Temporary structure

11.1 Mobile home/caravan (which is not holiday accommodation)

11.2 Illegal occupation of a site (e.g. Roma / Traveller / Gypsy)

11.3 Illegal occupation of a building (squatting)

As currently defined, these three operational categories present some difficulties:

- they present (as remarked in Edgar, Meert, Doherty 2004, 31) a certain number of overlaps which make classification uncertain: most of them are at the same time both inadequate and insecure (similar in some respects to 8.2); in a certain number of cases, mobile homes and caravans should be classified as both unfit dwellings and as temporary structures;
- in the more difficult situations (which are frequent) some of these arrangements (11.2 in particular) constitute true and genuine rooflessness;
- the three operational categories, 11.1 and 11.2 in particular, overlap with each other: many illegal occupants of a site live in mobile homes/caravans; many who live in mobile homes/caravans occupy sites illegally;
- as opposed to the other sub-categories, caravans/mobile homes identify a type of housing: not only does this involve the overlap already mentioned, it is also an improper reference to identifying situations of homelessness and housing exclusion: resort to this type of housing may be due to a lack of adequate or affordable housing, but it may also (for some members of the gypsy population) be a type of accommodation consistent with a cultural tradition which does not constitute hardship (nor is it 'temporary'). The problems arise from the fact that the site is often illegal.

Perhaps it is more appropriate, in the Italian case, to use the criterion of illegal occupancy for this category (which, however, relates to problems of insecurity over and above that of inadequate housing), together with that of the quality of the accommodation. A distinction of the type between 11.2 and 11.3 could be maintained by seeing it as a distinction between:

- illegal settlements: mostly inhabited by immigrants (undocumented) and gypsies. They are both inadequate and (extremely) insecure at the same time. According to national perceptions there is no doubt that the inhabitants of these settlements are homeless and in many cases they are situations of obvious rooflessness.
- squatting in buildings that are normal dwelling places (even if they are more or less in a state of disrepair): the reasons for squatting and the type of population (often young people) are various and at times an arrangement is reached after a while with administrators and owners.

Specific forms of housing such as caravans and mobile homes, while not in illegal settlements, could be classified, where the conditions of inadequacy subsist, as unfit dwellings, etc.

Data on temporary structures

There are local surveys and censuses performed by local administrations on illegal settlements. In addition to continuous monitoring by municipal police, two local surveys were performed in Milan in 2003 and in 2004 by Naga (an association of 'street doctors'): 6-8,000 persons in illegal settlement according to the last survey) (Naga, 2005).

A survey performed for the first report on extreme poverty (Commissione, 1993) estimated the housing arrangements of gypsies: caravan: 51.5%, tent: 8.2, improper housing: 23.9, cars etc.: 4.8. (Gypsies living in Italy are estimated at around 120,000).

12. Unfit Housing

12.1 Dwellings unfit for habitation under national legislation (occupied)

Official/legal definitions or those with administrative validity are found in national and regional legislation, in municipal regulations and in census regulations.

National legislation (Ministerial Decree of 5th July 1975) defines a series of requirements (termed 'hygienic-health'): these include: the minimum height of rooms set at 2.70 m. (2.55 m. for mountain municipalities, with further exceptions if the building is restored), there must be a surface living area of not less than 14 sq. m. for each inhabitant for the first 4 inhabitants and 10 sq. m. for each subsequent inhabitant. Minimum requirements are also laid down for heating, sanitary facilities, etc.

Minimum standards and parameters have been defined at regional level for public sector housing. The minimum requirements can also be obtained from the criteria (points) employed to select applicants for public sector housing. In Lombardy points are given for:

- improper housing conditions: premises not originally destined for residential housing, or in premises that are uninhabitable according to municipal hygiene regulations;
- co-habitation, overcrowding;
- housing conditions: accommodation without indoor sanitary amenities or with internal sanitary amenities not up to standard, or accommodation for which it is considered that unhygienic conditions cannot be eliminated with normal maintenance work; accommodation with no heating or for which the unhygienic condition has been ascertained.

The census defines as ‘other type of accommodation’ conditions which are close to ‘dwelling unfit for habitation’ with reference to the type of dwelling

The reference is to a conception of a dwelling, according to which a dwelling (flat, lodging) is a group of spaces or even a single useful space, intended to be lived in permanently by one or more persons, which has an independent entrance onto the street or onto a landing, yard, terrace etc., and is separated from other housing units by walls.

Housing units without these characteristics and which at the time of the census were occupied as permanent or temporary dwellings are classified as ‘other types of accommodation’. Examples include: caravans, campers, containers, shacks, sheds, cabins, caves; depots, garages, lofts, basements; accommodation contained in constructions that are not buildings’ (Istat, 2001b).

Similar notions are used in some national surveys. The *Survey of Household Consumption* (Istat, 2001c) include in ‘improper accommodation’: shacks, caves, containers and other precarious accommodation.

Some indications arise from these definitions:

- The inadequacy is defined in relation to a variety of dimensions:
 - on the basis of the family/accommodation relationship: co-habitation, overcrowding
 - on the basis of the quality of the accommodation: lack of minimum facilities, rundown/state of disrepair, of a type that make it unsuitable for habitation (‘improper housing’, ‘other types of housing’)
- The idea of ‘unfit’ involves some of these dimensions but relates above all to the type. It is limiting in this sense with respect to the more general problem of inadequate housing.
- The reference to legal/official definitions gives a good idea of the sense of a category intended to ‘measure cultural norms according to national standards/legislation’, but leaves out conditions of inadequacy/unfitness not contemplated by the law (or which can be defined differently).

Considering the variety of the elements of inadequacy, which are included neither in the subcategories of *Temporary structures* (11) nor in those related to *Overcrowding* (13), inadequate conditions could be better addressed by explicitly stipulating, without necessarily referring to official definitions, for various situations:

- unfit dwellings (non-standard)
- dwellings lacking basic amenities (toilets etc.,)
- dwellings in serious disrepair
- overcrowding.

As concerns the importance of these categories for defining and estimating homelessness and housing exclusion:

- categories such as ‘improper housing’ or ‘other type’ as defined above identify situations of homelessness and housing exclusion (the definitions make this category tend towards a dichotomy) with greater probability. In various cases they are situations of rooflessness, and the question arises of the relationship/overlapping between the category 12.1 and situations which are provided in the category 1;
- the other dimensions (lack of services and state of disrepair) may constitute differing degrees of gravity: while the most serious situations identify homelessness or housing exclusion, the others (just like situations of overcrowding: see infra) form part of the broader phenomenon which in Italy goes under the name of ‘housing hardship’.

Data on unfit housing

National data can be obtained, either directly or by reprocessing, from the national census and from some national surveys: Istat 2003 and 2001c etc.).

Unfit dwellings

Istat, 14° Censimento della popolazione e delle abitazioni (2001 Census)

SOURCE: Stats Office: ISTAT (Istituto Centrale di Statistica)

ACCESS: Direct from agency, Published, Web site: see Appendix

AREA COVERED: The whole country.

MEASURE: Stock

DATA (LATEST):

Number of accommodation units classified as other types of accommodation: 28,029.

Other types of accommodation occupied by residents: 23,336.

Households in other types of accommodation: 23,581.

Resident population in households living in other types of accommodation: 58,138.

One person households (not co-habiting) in other types of accommodation: 10,760.

DATE: 2001

Comment

The definition to which this data refer may be considered an 'official' or 'administrative' definition, but it is not provided in the legislation on housing.

The data obtained in this way probably underestimates the reality of 'unfit' accommodation, because the data is affected by the accuracy of the survey, difficult for these types of situation.

Without minimum facilities

National data can be obtained, either directly or by reprocessing, from the national census and from some national surveys: Istat 2003 and 2001c etc.

The *Survey of Household Consumption* (Istat, 2001c) and the *Multipurpose Survey of Households: Aspects of Everyday Life* (Istat, 2003) provide data on the following conditions:

- (a) No toilet inside home (2001): 0.8%, equivalent to approximately 17,000 households
- (b) No drinking water (2001): 1.1%, equivalent to approximately 23,500 households
- (c) No hot water (2001): 0.5%

The Census makes it possible to quantify the number of families and persons who are living in dwellings without essential facilities, defined in various ways. For example:

Dwellings occupied by resident persons without drinking water	211,815
Dwellings occupied by resident persons without hot water	371,148
Dwellings occupied by resident persons without heating	1,211,500
Families in dwellings without a shower or bath tub	93,568
Families in dwellings without drinking water and without a toilet	49,021
Families in dwellings with a toilet and without drinking water	204,535
Families in dwellings without a toilet and without drinking water	1,359

Resident persons living in family in dwellings without a shower or bath tub 137,404

Resident persons living in family in dwellings without drinking water and without a toilet 85,124

Resident persons living in family in dwellings with a toilet and without drinking water 572,564

Resident persons living in family in dwellings without a toilet and without drinking water 2,289

Sources

Istat 1996. Istat 1998. Istat 2001a and b. Istat 2001c. Istat 2003.

www.istat.it/dati/db_siti.

<http://dawinci.istat.it>

13. Extreme overcrowding

13.1 Highest national norm of overcrowding

There is no single official definition to refer to.

As already mentioned the Ministerial Decree of 5th July 1975, states that each inhabitant must have a living surface area of not less than 14 sq. m. for the first 4 inhabitants and 10 sq. m. for each subsequent inhabitant.

Other criteria are provided by Regions for access to public sector housing. The Region of Lombardy for example defines the following thresholds for 'severe overcrowding' (Regione Lombardia, 2004):

3 or more persons in one inhabitable room = 14 sq. m. + 20%
4 or 5 persons in 2 inhabitable rooms = 28 sq. m. + 20%
6 persons in 3 or less inhabitable rooms = 42 sq. m. + 20%
7 or more persons in 4 or less inhabitable rooms = 56 sq. m. + 20%
4 or 5 persons in 2 inhabitable rooms = 14 sq. m. + 20%
4 or 5 persons in 2 inhabitable rooms = 14 sq. m. + 20%

Istat standard measure of overcrowding used in surveys on consumers are: over 1.2 persons per room for overcrowding, over 1,6 persons per room for serious overcrowding (Istat, 1996).

It should, however, be kept in mind that overcrowding is not usually considered (in itself) as homelessness or housing exclusion. Neither are the serious forms of overcrowding necessarily considered as homelessness, not even potential.

Data on overcrowding

Figures for overcrowding can be obtained from special surveys (Istat, 2003 and 2001c etc.), and by processing Census data. However they would not refer to any 'highest national norm'.

Annex: Census Data

Censuses are conducted at ten-year intervals. The data reported refer to the 2001 Census (14° Censimento della popolazione e delle abitazioni).

Access to data can be agreed with Istat.

Basic data is published by Istat.

A data warehouse is accessible on the website of Istat: [//dawinci.istat.it](http://dawinci.istat.it)

DaWinci is a 'Data Warehouse' and is accessible through many 'dimensions'. Data can be browsed according to their *territorial level* and to the *type of table*. It is possible to increase or decrease the territorial level (from *geographical areas* to *municipalities* and viceversa), while it is always possible to shift from one type of table to another by clicking on a table number. The two options, *territory* and *type of table* are correlated: for example, by choosing a province, it is possible to visualise all tables available at the provincial level of detail while by choosing a type of table all the levels of territorial detail for which the table is available can be chosen.

An interactive cartography system has also been developed, which allows to visualise thematic maps of some tables.

A user guide which explains the browsing mechanism is available. A glossary of the most important statistical terms used in the tables is also on line. Users can download data tables and there is a users' comments form.

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