

## KEY STATISTICS

Currently different sources deliver official statistics and overview on Homelessness in Italy.

Among these, there are:

1. National Institute of Statistic (Istat)
2. Italian Caritas
3. Fio.PSD (Italian Federation of Organizations Working with Homeless People)

The first source is the **National Institute of Statistic (Istat)** that have conducted the first national survey on Homeless People in Italy (they were 47,648 in 2011), and the follow up in 2014 showing that **50,724 homeless people** were living in cities with over 250,000 inhabitants<sup>1</sup>.

This latter survey was conducted in 158 big and medium-sized Italian cities from 21st November to 21st December 2014. According to the Ethos typology, the Italian survey identified roofless and houseless - people living rough, in emergency accommodation, in accommodation for homeless – including migrants, etc, who spent their life in one of the 768 providers working with homeless people in these cities.

**Another important source for observing homelessness** in Italy is the Italian Caritas that publishes the **Caritas Report**<sup>2</sup> every year.

Looking at the last report<sup>3</sup>, we can observe a strong increase of people and families get in touch with Caritas Counselling Services<sup>4</sup>, as a consequence of Covid-19 crisis.

In the early phase of the pandemic emergency (March-May), **445,585 people**<sup>5</sup> ask for material support, with an increase of 129% compared to 2018 (195.541 users)<sup>6</sup>

### KEY PULL-OUT STATISTICS

*Official statistics reveal that 50,724 people were homeless in Italy (Istat 2015)*

*A report by Caritas Italy showed that 445,585 people visited Caritas's services in the early phase of the Covid19 emergency*

*Fio.PSD's Observatory identifies that emergency services address new profiles*

Meanwhile, the number of Homeless people decreased during the same period, from 19% of 2019 to 14% of 2020.

<sup>1</sup> Istat, Homeless People, 2015. For details visit <https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/175984> and <https://www.fiopds.org/persona-senza-dimora/>

<sup>2</sup> By the web platform "Ospoweb", the Research Office of Italian Caritas collects data on people visiting Caritas Counselling Services around the country every year.

<sup>3</sup> Caritas Italiana, Gli anticorpi della solidarietà, 2020. For details visit [https://www.caritas.it/pls/caritasitaliana/v3\\_s2ew\\_consultazione.mostra\\_pagina?id\\_pagina=9114&rifi=guest&rifp=guest](https://www.caritas.it/pls/caritasitaliana/v3_s2ew_consultazione.mostra_pagina?id_pagina=9114&rifi=guest&rifp=guest)

<sup>4</sup> Caritas Counselling Services are "advice and support places". CCS offer material and relational supports generated through food distribution, information, (occasionally) economic support, (occasionally) housing provision, intermediation with other territorial services.

<sup>5</sup> This is the result of two surveys carried out by Caritas Italiana in April and June, that involved 149 Diocesan Caritas (on 218).

<sup>6</sup> Caritas Italiana, Flash report su povertà ed esclusione sociale, 2019, For details visit [https://www.caritas.it/pls/caritasitaliana/v3\\_s2ew\\_consultazione.mostra\\_pagina?id\\_pagina=8489](https://www.caritas.it/pls/caritasitaliana/v3_s2ew_consultazione.mostra_pagina?id_pagina=8489)

Finally, another source for studying severe marginalisation and homelessness sector in Italy is [fio.PSD's Observatory](#)<sup>7</sup>.

Since 2017 fio.PSD has invited its members (over than 120 public and private organisations providing homeless services) to compile a questionnaire about services provided (emergency provisions, outreach, health services, training and job, counselling, housing etc), the number and profile of beneficiaries, changes and any challenges raised<sup>8</sup>.

Moreover, fio.PSD launched two surveys<sup>9</sup> among their members, with the aim to understand the impact of emergency measures, such as lockdown, on service for homeless people.

### Demographics of the homeless population<sup>10</sup>

#### ISTAT 2015

National survey showed that the typical profile of homeless people is male (85.7%), migrant (58.2%), living in the north (56.0%), and is alone (76.5%).

He is 44 years old on average (migrants are younger than Italians). He works for a few hours during the week getting an average of 300 euros of earnings a month. He has lived on the street for a long time (2.5 years). The lack of a secure relationship (with family and parents), trauma, inability to work, long term unemployment, social and behavioural issues, divorce/separation are some of triggers, events or factors influencing the homeless condition.

Only 14% out of 50,724 homeless people were affected by a severe physical disease, mental disorder or severe communicative obstacle.

---

<sup>7</sup> fio.PSD is a non-governmental umbrella organization within Homelessness sector in Italy. It is a full member of FEANTSA. Since 1980, fio.PSD promotes analysis, studies and advocacy action for improving services and protection of the most vulnerable people. Currently 130 organizations are members. For details visit [www.fiopsd.org/en](http://www.fiopsd.org/en)

<sup>8</sup> More than 30% of organisations involved in the questionnaire, provide services to 300 people every month. Prevalent services are: orientation and accompanying measures; emergency accommodation and help desk; night shelter; day centre; material support for basic needs.

Women totalled 6,239 (14.3%). They have similar characteristics as men, but a majority are victims of divorce/separation, personal trauma and forced separation from children.

Observing the geographical distribution of homelessness in Italy, the city of Milan has the highest homeless population of any Italian city (12,004 people counted in shelters and canteens), followed by Rome (7,709) and Palermo with 2,887 severely disadvantaged people counted.

#### ITALIAN CARITAS 2020

Based on Caritas Report 2020, people visiting Caritas services are **italian (52%)** and migrants (47%), **female (54%)** and male (46%), **married (46%)**, unmarried (27%), divorced/separated (17%). They are **unemployed, people that lost their job** due to the lockdown **and workers waiting for social benefits**.

During the first months of Covid-19 crisis, **new users** increased by 105%, especially in **South Italy** (+153%).

#### ITALIAN CARITAS 2019

Homeless people supported by Caritas Counselling Services were 27,500, under 44 years old (53%) live in the north of Italy (64%), men (75%), migrants (66%), unmarried (48%).

#### Fio.PSD SURVEYS 2020

The Impact of Covid-19 emergency has been strong for service working with homeless people and for users too. According to fio.PSD surveys, organizations have faced emergency rearranging services but continuing to provide support to users.

In the initial phase of the emergency, some night shelters were closed, others were switched to 24h shelters, soup

<sup>9</sup> First was carried out in March (more details to <https://www.fiopsd.org/i-servizi-di-accoglienza-ai-tempi-del-covid-19/>), the second in June, in collaboration with IREF-ACLI and Caritas Italiana

<sup>10</sup> Attention: Data furnished by Istat and data furnished by Caritas are not comparable. They represent two different ways for collecting statistics on homelessness in Italy. The new follow up of the Istat survey would be necessary. Italian Caritas Report represents the most recent statistic available on homelessness. It is representative only of Caritas services.

kitchen was converted into food distribution services, personal safety equipment – if available - were distributed to users and workers, interviews and individual projects were stopped or, when possible, provided by phone or by appointment.

Accommodation centers for migrants were working, but new entrances were stopped. Refuges for women victims of violence provided support by phone.

On the other hand, housing first users could stay safe at home, supported by a team through phone call and online tools, such as video call, chat, occasional visits, alternative labs, and so on.

Nevertheless, some problems emerged, such as problems of cohabitation, difficulties in managing people with psychiatric issues, interruption of individual projects.

## INCREASE/DECREASE IN NUMBER OF HOMELESS PEOPLE

Based on Italian Caritas Report (2020), during the initial phase of emergency, there was a strong increase of people asking for support, from 195.541 users (2019) to **445,585 people (April-June 2020)**. The incidence of newcomers has been strong (+105%). Due to the lockdown, they are facing unexpected economic hardship, can't pay rent and bills and are at risk of eviction.

However, the number of users and newcomers rapidly decreased in summer (176.284 people in June-August), on the one hand because of summer closure of services, on the other people found seasonal work.

The proportion of **women** has increased from 50% to 54%.

The number of **homeless migrants** has decreased, and the number of homeless Italian citizens has risen from 48% to 52%. **Youth users** increased from 20% in 2019 to 23% in 2020 (18-34 years old).

A special attention toward Family **Homelessness**. The number of people married raised from 44% in 2019 to 46% in 2020. The amount of people unmarried decreased from 28% in 2019 to 27% in 2020. Users with children increase from 73% of 2019 to 75% of 2020.

---

<sup>11</sup> Annual Activity Report FEAD-OP I, 2019, available at <http://lavoro.gov.it/temi-e-priorita/europa-e-fondi->

fio.PSD members observe an increase of vulnerable groups – families with children, people that suddenly lost their jobs, merchants, people working in the restaurant and tourism sector, caregiver, young with precarious job - visiting their services, affected particularly strong by the effect of lockdown and consequent economic crisis.

Material goods, housing provision, economic support are the most frequent requests. In addition, the need for psychological support is also increasing.

## POLICIES & STRATEGIES

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy has committed to paying special attention to homelessness during the period of **2014-2020**. Homelessness is recognised as urgent issue within the National Anti-Poverty Plan (ESF) in order to address two priorities:

**reducing homelessness; making Housing First the first way to tackle homelessness.**

The actual Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has allocated in the Structural Funds 50million + 50 million € in seven years (2016 2022) to policies for homeless people:

- 50% ESF funds NOP Inclusion (National Operational Program)
- 50% FEAD (Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived)

In August 2020, Italian government confirmed the second loan of 50 millions for interventions to combat severe adult marginalization.

Local Authorities receive these funds, in relation to the number of homeless people, to plan services for homeless people on the basis of Guidelines to manage with innovative solutions for homeless people (HF).

Homeless people represent 4% of target groups. From 2015 to 2018, more than **160million meals** has been distributed to more than **550.000 homeless people reached**, due to FEAD funds<sup>11</sup>.

Recently, the use of ESF and FEAD to address Homelessness has get good results in Italy, in term of:

- **Activation** of capacity building process within public services
- **Enforcing** of the multilevel governance
- **Housing first/Housing Led** are promising approaches
- **More than 1,000 homeless** people are housed now (Turin, Bolognue, Trieste, Trento, Padua, Catania...) <sup>12</sup>

According to fio.PSD and University of Boulogne, in 2019, most part of local projects are housing orientated. Half the municipalities used 10-20% of FEAD funds to finance Housing First projects.

Moreover, most of 22 municipalities monitored the financed distribution of material goods for **2,000 homeless people**.

## REMARKS ON KEY POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

### Perspectives

- Overcoming emergency approach and renovating services
- Effective and innovative use of funds <sup>13</sup>
- Making policies against homelessness more innovative and uniform on the national territory
- Housing First as “the best way” to tackling Homelessness
- The partnership between the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and fio.PSD has been consolidated
- Promoting advocacy action for consolidation of Minimum Income Scheme
- Promoting advocacy action for the second follow up by Istat on Homeless People in Italy

---

<sup>12</sup> fio.PSD and University of Boulogne, 2019, *Monitoring Measure 4/2016 PON I-FEAD*. More information at...

<sup>13</sup> On critical aspects is that only small material goods were allowed by FEAD, while for homeless people would

be more useful also other aids (i.e rental support, equipment for housing, etc ...)