

# HOMELESSNESS IN ITALY

## 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 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 to the latter two reports, we can observe that 26,078 homeless people get in touch with the 1,801 Caritas

Counselling Services<sup>3</sup> in 2016<sup>4</sup>. They are the 17% of the whole beneficiaries of supports.

Based on the last dataset, **28,697 homeless people** (21% of the whole beneficiaries) have visited 1,982 Caritas Counselling Services in **2017**<sup>5</sup>. However, the increase (+4%) is due more to adjustments in methodological mechanism than to numerical increasing of people.

### Key pull-out statistics

*Official statistic reveals that 50,724 people were homeless in Italy (Istat 2015)*

*Recently, Italian Caritas Report shows that 28,697 homeless people habitually visit Caritas's services in 2017*

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

*Data-collecting are not comparable, but they all confirm that homelessness is a permanent phenomenon affecting migrants, working poors, women and young people ever more*

<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 every year data on people visiting Caritas Counselling Services around the country.

<sup>3</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. Counselling involved are 1,982. They represent the 80% of the whole counselling service system of Caritas in Italy.

<sup>4</sup> Caritas Italiana, Futuro Anteriore, 2017. For details visit <http://bit.ly/2zxxGfS> and <https://www.fiopds.org/analisi-del-rapporto-caritas-futuro-anteriore/>

<sup>5</sup> Caritas Italiana, Povertà in attesa, 2018. For details visit [http://www.caritasitaliana.it/home\\_page/area\\_stampa/0007847\\_17\\_ottobre\\_presentazione\\_Rapporto\\_Poverta\\_in\\_attesa\\_.html](http://www.caritasitaliana.it/home_page/area_stampa/0007847_17_ottobre_presentazione_Rapporto_Poverta_in_attesa_.html) and <https://www.fiopds.org/poverta-in-attesa/>

The number of Homeless people stays stable in the last two years. “**Chronicization**” of severe poverty, multi-dimensional needs, and the high number on new requests, are signals for the progressive worsening of living situation of people and increasing of multiple disadvantages: **the 33% of homeless people visit Caritas Counselling Services from more than 3 years**; 20% from 1-2 years, and the 47% of requests come from “new users” in 2017.

Finally, another source for studying severe marginalization and homelessness sector in Italy is **fio.PSD’s Observatory**<sup>6</sup>.

Since 2017 fio.PSD invites its members (over than 120 public and private organizations providing homeless services) to complete a questionnaire about services provided (emergency provisions, outreach, health services, training and job, counselling, housing etc), number and profile of beneficiaries, changes and challenges raised up.

More than 30% of organizations involved in the questionnaire, provides services to 300 people every month. Prevalent services are: Orientation and Accompanying measures; Emergency accommodation and Help desk; Night shelter; Daily center; Material support for basic needs.

## Demographics of the homeless population<sup>7</sup>

### ISTAT 2015

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<sup>6</sup> fio.PSD is non governative umbrella organization within Homelessness sector in Italy. It is 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>7</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 it would be necessary. Italian Caritas Report represents currently the most recent statistic available on homelessness. It is representative only of Caritas services.

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

He has 44 years old average age (migrants are younger than Italians). He works for few hours during the week getting an average of 300 euros of earning at month. He lives on the street for a long time (2,5 years). The lack of secure relationship (with family and parents), trauma, inability to work, long term unemployment, social and behavioural disturb, divorce/separation are some of triggers events or factors influencing the homeless condition.

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

Woman were 6,239 (14.3%) They have similar characteristic of men but the major part of them is victim of divorce/separation, personal trauma and forced departure 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 2018

Based on Caritas Report 2018, homeless people visiting Caritas services are **migrants (67%)**<sup>8</sup> and Italian (43%), man (70%) and **women (30%)**, unmarried (43%), married (34%), divorced/separated (17%). They are **unemployed (70%)** and **with a low level of education**. This latter is true mainly for the young people.

Homeless people (**average age 42 years old**) live in the Northern of Italy (64%), rather than the Centre (24%) or in the Southern (12%). The region of Lombardia (Milan is the regional county seats) has the highest number of homeless people hosted in in the Counselling Services (32%); follow the region of Emilia Romagna (19%) (Boulogne is the regional county seats) and the region of Lazio (11,8%) (Rome is the regional county seats).

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<sup>8</sup> They come from Marocco and Rumenia, Tunisia, Senegal.

Tab. 1 - Homeless People encountered into the Caritas Counselling Services (Total 28,697) – Year 2017

	2017 %
<b>Regional Macro Area</b>	
Northern	64
Center	24
Southern	12
<b>Gender</b>	
Man	70
<b>Woman</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Age</b>	
Under 18	0.2
<b>18-34</b>	<b>33</b>
35-44	23
45-54	24
55-65	15
Over 65	5
<b>Average age</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Nationality</b>	
Italians	33
<b>Foreigners</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Marital Status</b>	
Unmarried	43
Married	34
Separated	9
Divorced	7
Widow	3
Other	3
<b>Parental Status</b>	
<b>Yes</b>	<b>45</b>
No	55

Source: fio.PSD Elaboration by Italian Caritas Dataset (2018)

Tab. 2 - Homeless People encountered into the Caritas Counselling Services per Educational and Occupational status (Total 28,697) – Year 2017

	2017 %
<b>Educational level</b>	
No title or Primary education	30
<b>Lower secondary education</b>	<b>40</b>
Upper secondary education	25
Bachelor	5
<b>Occupational status</b>	
Employed	8
Inable to work or retired	4
<b>Unemployed</b>	<b>80</b>
Irregular job	2
<b>Other</b>	<b>6</b>

Source: fio.PSD Elaboration by Italian Caritas Dataset (2018)

#### Fio.PSD MONITORING (2017)

A confirm of these trends arrives from evidences registered by the questionnaire filled by fio.PSD's members.

Amount all organizations host migrants (regular), 78% young people (18-25 years old), 70% people with alcohol abuse, more than half aid with irregular migrants, refugees, asylum seekers. Amount the 50% of organizations host women victims of violence or victims of gender discrimination. Also care leavers (ex unaccompanied foreigners) visit emergency accommodation system.

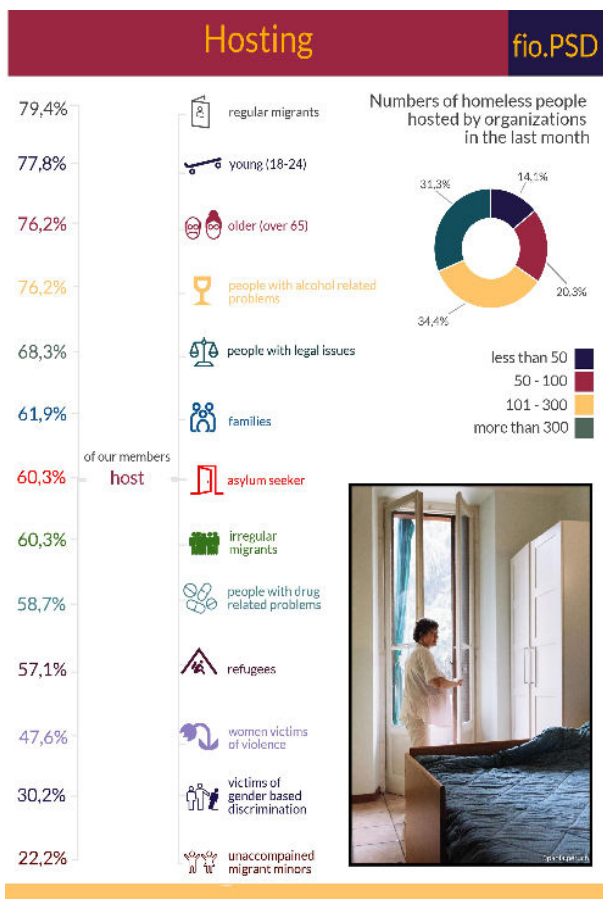


Fig. 1 - Hosting by fio.PSD's members (2017)

Source: fio.PSD Elaboration

Note: Every organization hosts different target groups

## INCREASE/DECREASE IN NUMBER OF HOMELESS PEOPLE

Based on official statistics (Istat 2015), homelessness has increased from 47,648 in 2011 to 50,724 in 2014 (an increase of 3,076 people).

Chronic homelessness has increased. The proportion of homeless people living in the street between two and

four years has increased from 11% in 2011 to 20% in 2014 and the proportion of people living in the street for over four years has increased from 16% in 2011 to 21% in 2014.

The proportion of women as part of the overall homeless population has increased from 13% to 14%.

The number of homeless people with mental health disorders or drug/alcohol abuse problems has increased from 4,429 in 2011 to 7,130 in 2014.

The number of homeless migrants has decreased, and the number of homeless Italian people has risen between 2011 and 2014.

Based on Italian Caritas, **Youth Homelessness** increased from the 30% of 2016 to **33%** in 2017. They are between 18-34 years old.

A special attention toward the **Family Homelessness** that seems to be a more frequent into the Caritas Counselling Services. The number of people married raised from 30% of 2016 to 34% of 2017. Stable the amount of people unmarried. Almost 1 out 2 people declared to have children.

Material goods, housing provision, economic support and health services are the most frequent requests from homeless people. Migrants usually ask orientation, education, health support, and housing solutions; Italian people ask material support, orientation, and inclusive project.

Based on **Fio.PSDs Members Monitoring (2017)**<sup>9</sup> the 48% of providers had managed a change of services. That means additional night services for new comers; help centres for asylum seekers; food and hygienic aid stations; accompanying measures for favouring inclusion (job orientation, legal assistance, residence documental support; counselling); housing led oriented projects (Housing First, co-housing, pilot projects to ensure housing rights).

From 2014 to 2016, the fio.PSD survey reveals two trends:

- Appearing of new profiles of homeless people
- Increasing number of traditional shelter users

<sup>9</sup> Fio.PSD counts amount 130 members in 2018. They are public and private organizations providing directly services to homeless people (from night shelter to Housing First projects).

On the one hand, young people (18-25 years old), asylum seekers, irregular migrants, family homelessness and job seekers with lower skills, appear more and more as new users. “People at a crossroad” with precarious job, insufficient income to living dignitously, unable to work without adequate social insurance, people affected by disability not officially recognized, **people waiting for...** something (new job, minimum income, allowance, subsidized housing, documents, family reunification, medical therapy ...). Addressing these people is really challenging for institutions because the major part of them are based on standard solutions and one size fit for homeless people.

On the other hand, the number of women, survivors of domestic violence and abuse, migrants and Italian people increased. There were more people asking for orientation, counselling and psychological support in homelessness services, mainly from young people.

The weak integration between assistance and public health makes hard dealing with the homelessness affected by mental illness or psychological disorder. It is more frequently to find pilot projects (Turin, Padua, Ravenna, Sanremo, Milan...) and trial mixed projects including light-ambulatory and aid stations through doctor-volunteers, occasional collaboration of medical staff, post-acute surgery, psychological desk-help for young people or migrant victims of trauma. Ever more Co-Housing, Housing First and other Housing Solutions are more frequent.

## POLICIES & STRATEGIES

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

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

Several actions were carried out by the national government with the aim to improve strategy against homelessness in Italy:

- National Survey on Homeless People and Services (2012; 2015) by the National Institute of Statistics in collaboration with fio.PSD, Caritas, Ministry of LSP

- Roundtable and inter-institutional dialogue with main actors within poverty and homelessness sector for two years
- Permanent dialogue with fio.PSD as umbrella organization

These actions were useful for complete strategy with two tools:

- **National Guidelines for tackling Homelessness in Italy** (2015) – by Ministry Social Policy

The Guideline represents the main document for Regional governments and Municipalities to offer homogenous measures and interventions for ending homelessness. For the writing of the Guideline, the Ministry has involved various levels of government and relevant economic and social partnerships operating in the homelessness sector.

- **Large scale funding** for amount 100 million € in seven years to policies for homeless people (50% European Social Fund and 50% FEAD (Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived) + 20 million every year (National Poverty Fund)

Local Authorities receive these funds, by project proposals, in relation to the number of homeless people, and plan services for homeless people on the basis of Guideline. New projects and services using mixed resources (ESF and FEAD) are arising in these months.

## REMARKS ON KEY POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

After the change of government (March 2018), nothing has changed in the homelessness strategy compared to the former, but the sector lives a sort of “stand by” now. Unfortunately, the “iron hand” of the Government against migrants<sup>10</sup> could have serious consequences for the homeless sector.

Abrogation of “residency permit for humanitarian reasons”, exclusion of asylum seekers in the anagraphic office and assign residence; closing of SPRAR (hosting system for refugees and asylum seekers) are some of warnings of “Decreto Salvini”. As consequence, homeless people and “invisible” people without rights and hope could raise – wherever the law will be approved by the Parliament.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.fiopd.org/cs-decreto-sicurezza/>

There are not remarks or special updating on policies (local authorities start now to realize projects), but we have perspectives for the future.

## Perspectives

- Overcoming emergency approach and renovating services
- Effective and Innovative use of funds<sup>11</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
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<sup>11</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 ...)