

10 December 2015

The Homeless

2014

In 2014, the second survey on the condition of persons living in extreme poverty was conducted, following an agreement between Istat, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, Italian Federation of bodies for homeless persons (fio.PSD) and Caritas Italiana.

It is estimated that 50,724 homeless persons¹, in the months of November and December 2014, used at least one soup kitchen or night shelter in the 158 Italian municipalities where the survey was carried out². This amount corresponds to 2.43 per thousand of the population regularly registered with the municipalities taken into consideration by the survey, a value higher than three years earlier, when it was 2.31 per thousand (47,648 persons).

However, the population observed by the survey also included individuals not entered in the civil registry, or residing in municipalities other than those where they gravitated. About two thirds of homeless people (68.7%) declared they were in the civil register of an Italian municipality – a figure that fell to 48.1% among foreign nationals and reached 97.2% among Italians.

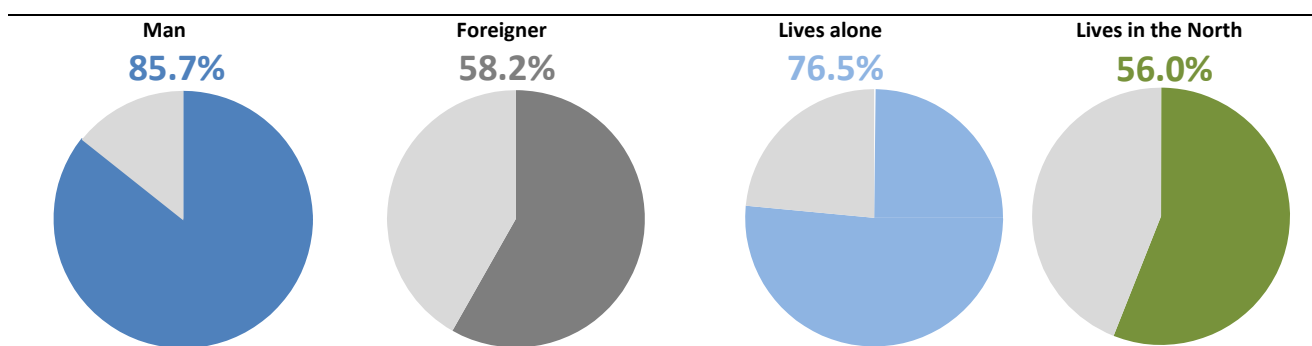
The share of homeless persons recorded in the north-western regions (38%) was entirely similar to that estimated in 2011, as it was that for Centre (23.7%) and the Islands (9,2%). The North-east area, on the other hand, showed a decline (from 19.7% to 18%), countering the increase in the South and Islands area (from 8.7% to 11.1%) (Table 1).

In comparison with 2011, the main features of homeless people were also confirmed. They were mostly men (85.7%), foreigners (58.2%), under 54 years of age (75.8%) – although, following the decline in foreigners under 34 years of age, the average age showed a slight increase (from 42.1 to 44.0) – or with a low level of educational attainment (only one third held at least a secondary school diploma).

The percentage of those living alone grew in comparison with the past (from 72.9% to 76.5%), to the detriment of those living with a partner or child (from 8% to 6%); slightly more than one half (51%) declared they had never been married.

The duration of the condition of homelessness also increased in comparison with 2011: those who were homeless for less than three months declined from 28.5% to 17.4% (those who were homeless for less than 1 month diminished by a half), while the share of those who were homeless for more than two years (rising from 27.4% to 41.1%) and for more than 4 years (rising from 16% to 21.4%) increased.

THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF HOMELESS PERSONS. 2014, per 100 homeless persons



¹ This estimate excludes – in addition to the homeless persons who during the month of the survey never ate at a soup kitchen and never slept in a shelter – minors, Rom populations and all persons who, although homeless, were guests, in more or less temporary form, at private lodgings (for example, those receiving hospitality from friends, relatives, and the like). The estimate is by sample, and is subject to the error that is committed by observing only a part and not the entire population: the confidence interval in which the estimated number of homeless persons is placed ranges, with 95% probability, between 48,966 and 52,482 persons (for more detail, see the Methodological Note).

² For the survey details and the municipalities considered, see the Methodological Note.

TABLE 1. HOMELESS PERSONS BY CHARACTERISTICS. 2011-2014, absolute values and percentage composition.

	Absolute values		Percentage composition	
	2011	2014	2011	2014
Geographical area				
North-west	18,456	19,287	38.8	38.0
North-east	9,362	9,149	19.7	18.0
Centre	10,878	11,998	22.8	23.7
South	4,133	5,629	8.7	11.1
Islands	4,819	4,661	10.1	9.2
Sex				
Male	41,411	43,467	86.9	85.7
Female	6,238	7,257	13.1	14.3
Nationality				
Foreign	28,323	29,533	59.4	58.2
Italian	19,325	21,259	40.6	41.9
Age class				
18-34	15,612	13,012	32.8	25.7
35-44	11,957	12,208	25.1	24.1
45-54	10,499	13,204	22.0	26.0
55-64	7,043	9,307	14.8	18.4
65 and over	2,538	2,994	5.3	5.9
Level of education				
None	4,120	4,789	8.7	9.4
Elementary school diploma	7,837	8,305	16.5	16.4
Middle school diploma	18,409	20,088	38.6	39.6
Secondary school diploma and higher	15,833	16,585	33.2	32.7
No information	1,449	957	3.0	1.9
Who they live with				
Alone	34,755	38,807	72.9	76.5
With children and/or spouse/partner	3,811	3,035	8.0	6.0
With other family members and/or friends	8,791	8,730	18.5	17.2
No information	291	152	0.6	0.3
Duration of the homelessness condition				
Less than 1 month	6,806	3,730	14.3	7.4
Between 1 and 3 months	6,748	5,058	14.2	10.0
Between 3 and 6 months	5,669	5,318	11.9	10.5
Between 6 months and 1 year	7,620	7,593	16.0	15.0
Between 1 and 2 years	6,897	7,487	14.5	14.8
Between 2 and 4 years	5,413	9,967	11.4	19.7
Over 4 years	7,615	10,833	16.0	21.4
No information	881	738	1.9	1.5
Total	47,648	50,724	100.0	100.0

Fewer services but more benefits

Similarly to what was already observed with the previous survey, most homeless persons who used services (56%) lived in the North (38% in the North-west and 18% in the North-east), more than one fifth (23.7%) in the Centre, and only 20.3% in the South and in the Islands (11.1% in the South and 9.2% in the Islands) (Table 2). The result, once again, is strongly connected to the supply of services on the territory and the concentration of the population in the large centres.

More than one third of services (35.2%) were located in the North-west and one quarter (24.1%) in the North-east, with 19.1% located in the Centre. The remaining portion operated in the South and in the Islands area, with shares of 15.1% and 6.5%, respectively.

Milano and Roma accommodated 38.9% of homeless persons: 23.7% in the capital of Lombardia, the share registered a slight decline (from 27.5% in 2011 to 23.7% in 2014), in the capital the share was 15.2%. Palermo was the third municipality in the ranking as far as homeless persons were concerned (5.7%, declining from 8% in 2011), followed by Firenze (3.9%), Torino (3.4%), Napoli (3.1%, rising from 1.9% in 2011), and Bologna (2%).

In 2014, there were 768 soup kitchens and night shelters for homeless persons in the 158 Italian municipalities where the survey was carried out. In comparison with 2011, the number declined by 4.2%: soup kitchen service fell from 328 to 315, and night shelters from 474 to 453. However, if the benefits (lunches, suppers, beds) delivered on a monthly basis are considered, a 15.4% increase (from 749,676 to 864,772) was observed, especially for soup kitchens, where the increase equaled approximately 22% (from 402,006 to 489,255). It follows that, on the whole, the services active in 2014 delivered, on average, more benefits than those active in 2011: from 1,226 meals to 1,553 for soup kitchens, and from 733 beds to 829 for night shelters.

TABLE 2. SERVICES AND HOMELESS PERSONS BY GEOGRAPHIC AREA AND CERTAIN REGIONS AND MUNICIPALITIES.
2011-2014, absolute values and percentage composition

	2011		2014		2011		2014	
	Absolute values		Absolute values		Percentage composition		Percentage composition	
	Services	Homeless persons	Services	Homeless persons	Services	Homeless persons	Services	Homeless persons
North-west	257	18,456	270	19,287	32.0	38.8	35.2	38.0
Lombardia	151	15,802	154	16,003	18.8	33.2	20.1	31.5
Milano	49	13,115	52	12,004	6.1	27.5	6.8	23.7
Piemonte	63	2,112	73	2,259	7.9	4.4	9.5	4.5
Torino	25	1,424	31	1,729	3.1	3.0	4.0	3.4
North-east	209	9,362	185	9,149	26.1	19.6	24.1	18.0
Emilia Romagna	101	4,394	87	3,953	12.6	9.2	11.3	7.8
Bologna	24	1,005	19	1,032	3.0	2.1	2.5	2.0
Centre	165	10,878	147	11,998	20.6	22.8	19.1	23.7
Toscana	75	2,612	71	3,559	9.4	5.5	9.2	7.0
Firenze	28	1,911	27	1,992	3.5	4.0	3.5	3.9
Lazio	71	8,065	56	7,949	8.9	16.9	7.3	15.7
Roma	61	7,827	45	7,709	7.6	16.4	5.9	15.2
South	118	4,133	116	5,629	14.7	8.7	15.1	11.1
Campania	39	1,651	40	2,481	4.9	3.5	5.2	4.9
Napoli	18	909	18	1,559	2.2	1.9	2.3	3.1
Islands	53	4,819	50	4,661	6.6	10.1	6.5	9.2
Sicilia	38	4,625	35	3,997	4.7	9.7	4.6	7.9
Palermo	7	3,829	10	2,887	0.9	8.0	1.3	5.7
Italy	802	47,648	768	50,724	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The supply structure has changed also due to the high *turnover* that characterized the network of services with different dynamics between soup kitchens and night shelters. For both types, the number of services entering in operation after 2011 was less than those that, during the same period, discontinued their activity: for soup kitchens it was 48 against 61, for night shelters 111 against 132. The new soup kitchens, however, delivered benefits with respect to pre-existing ones (the average was 1,111 meals against 1,633); on the contrary, for the night shelters, the new ones delivered more (on average, 848 against 823 night shelters present in both years).

In brief, the decline in services (-4.2%) was offset by a 15.4% increase in benefits, which was not accompanied by an increased number of homeless persons: it is clear that many of the extra benefits were delivered to persons that were already using them, albeit with differentiated dynamics on the territory (Table 4).

TABLE 3. SERVICES AND HOMELESS PERSONS BY MUNICIPALITY DEMOGRAPHIC SIZE. 2011 and 2014, absolute values and percentage compositions

	Absolute values		Percentage composition	
	Services	Homeless persons	Services	Homeless persons
2011				
Metropolitan areas	289	32,792	36.0	68.8
Peripheral municipalities of metropolitan areas	24	227	3.0	0.5
Municipalities with 70-250,000 inhabitants	388	13,339	48.4	28.0
Capital municipalities with 30-70,000 inhabitants	101	1,290	12.6	2.7
Total	802	47,648	100.0	100.0
2014				
Metropolitan areas	280	31,710	36.5	62.5
Peripheral municipalities of metropolitan areas	28	386	3.6	0.8
Municipalities with 70-250,000 inhabitants	363	16,559	47.3	32.6
Capital municipalities with 30-70,000 inhabitants	97	2,069	12.6	4.1
Total	768	50,724	100.0	100.0

The North-west was the only area where the number of services increased (from 257 to 270), both for soup kitchens and for night shelters; however, the estimate of the number of homeless persons was substantially steady (the observed increase is not in fact statistically different from zero), as for the night shelters the bed was occupied by the same person more often than in the past (the number of average individual weekly benefits grew from 3.0 to 3.9).

In the North-east area, the decline in services (from 209 to 185) corresponded with a slight increase in benefits and with a slight decrease in the number of homeless persons; the decline in the number of persons using night shelters (consequent to the decreased number of services and of delivered benefits) was only partially offset by the increase in those using soup kitchens, a more contained increase than that found for the benefits, given that several meals were delivered to the same user (the average grew from 2.9 to 3.1 for lunches, and from 1.6 to 2 for suppers).

In the Centre, on the other hand, a decreased number of services (from 165 to 147) was observed, corresponding to a slight decline in the benefits delivered, and a substantial stability of the estimate of the number of homeless persons. In the soup kitchen services, in fact, the benefits delivered to the same person declined (from 3.2 benefits to 2.8 for lunch, from 1.4 to 0.9 for supper), while no clear differences were observed for night shelters.

In the South area, the reduction in the number of services (from 118 to 116) regarded exclusively the soup kitchens (night shelter services rose from 48 to 51); however, this gave rise to an increase in benefits, which was translated into an increased number of homeless persons and, for the soup kitchens, an increased number of benefits delivered on average to the same person (from 3.3 to 3.5 for lunch and 0.9 to 2 for supper).

Lastly, in the Islands, the increase in benefits that took place despite the reduction in services (from 53 to 50) resulted in the steady number of homeless persons; in this case as well, in fact, more often than in the past, the benefits at the soup kitchens were delivered to the same person (from 1.5 to 2 for lunch, from 0.3 to 1.3 for supper).

TABLE 4. BENEFITS (a) DELIVERED TO HOMELESS PERSONS (NET OF PERSONS WITH DIFFICULTY INTERACTING - PDI) IN THE LAST WEEK BY GEOGRAPHIC AREA. 2011 and 2014, average value

	Northwest		Northeast		Central		South		Islands	
	2011	2014	2011	2014	2011	2014	2011	2014	2011	2014
Soup kitchen at lunch	4.4	3.9	2.9	3.1	3.2	2.8	3.3	3.5	1.5	2.0
Soup kitchen at supper	3.0	2.8	1.6	2.0	1.4	0.9	0.9	2.0	0.3	1.3
Night shelter	3.0	3.9	3.4	2.9	2.3	2.3	3.1	2.5	3.8	3.8
Total	10.4	10.5	7.9	7.9	6.8	6.0	7.3	8.0	5.6	7.0

(a) The datum was surveyed through the weekly log, in which the homeless person has indicated the soup kitchen and night shelter used in the week prior to the interview.

More homeless persons were unable to respond to the interview

In 2014, 14.1% of interviewees had difficulties in interacting directly with the surveyors (persons with difficulty interacting - PDIs), and therefore the basic information was surveyed using the service's operators.

TABLE 5. HOMELESS PERSONS BY PROBLEMS OF DISABILITY OR ADDICTION AND REDUCED/LIMITED KNOWLEDGE OF THE ITALIAN LANGUAGE. 2011 and 2014, percentage composition and absolute values

	Disability or addiction problems		Reduced/Limited knowledge of the Italian language		Without problems disability/addiction or reduced knowledge of the Italian language		Total (=100%)	
	2011	2014	2011	2014	2011	2014	2011	2014
Persons with difficulties interacting (PDI)	76.0	70.3	24.0	29.7	-	-	4,429	7,130
Persons without difficulty interacting	31.0	25.4	26.4	24.6	42.6	50.0	43,219	43,595
Homeless persons	35.2	29.8	26.2	24.8	38.7	45.3	47,648	50,724

The share increased from 2011, when it was estimated at 9.3%, due to the greater presence of persons with a limited knowledge of the Italian language (the percentage between PDIs rose from 24% to 29.7%); at any rate, the weight of PDIs with problems connected with physical limitations or evident disabilities (insufficiency, mental illness or disease) and/or a problems of addiction were still the majority (70.3% of cases, a decline from 76% in 2011) (Table 5).

Average age rising among foreigners

For homeless persons that responded to the interview, detailed information were surveyed not only about socio-demographic characteristics, but also about relationships with family, relatives, and friends, type of working activity, use of services, and main sources of sustenance³.

The increase in the average age was significant (from 42.2 to 44.4 years of age), and it was due above all to the considerable decline in the percentage of the youngest (under 34) among foreigners (from 46.5% to 35.6%) (Table 6): the average age rose from 36.9 to 39.8 years, but held steady at 50.3 years of age among Italians.

The increased average age among foreigners was associated with that of the average duration of the condition of homelessness (from 1.6 to 2.2 years) – an increase that did not involve the Italian component (average duration steady at 3.5 years). In particular, among foreigners, those who were homeless for at least 2 years doubled (from 9.2% to 18.7% if the duration was from 2 to 4 years, from 9.3% to 17.1% if it exceeded 4 years); those who were homeless for less than 6 months registered a significant decline (from 49.7% in 2011 to 32.7% in 2014), and even more so was the case for those who were homeless for less than a month (from 17.8% to 8.8%).

The rise in the average age among foreigners was also reflected in the increase of those with no diploma (from 11.2% to 13.3%) and in the decline of persons with at least a secondary school diploma (from 43.1% to 39.5%); on the contrary, among Italians, the percentage of the most educated rose from 23.1% to 26.9%. The differences between foreigners and Italians were thus diminishing in terms of age, amount of time in the condition of homelessness, and level of education, although the Italian component remained older, less educated, and in a condition of homelessness for a longer time.

The share of homeless persons who declared never having had a home held steady at 6.8%; also the places where the people lived before becoming homeless were unchanged from 2011: about two thirds in their own private home (a figure that rose to 72.5% among Italians) and an additional 15.7% hosted by friends and/or relatives (18.3% among foreigners); 18.9% in a nomad camp, in an occupied dwelling, in an institution for minors, for the disabled, or other (21.8% among foreigners).

³ The analyses presented below (Tables from 6 to 14) refer only to homeless persons capable of responding to the interview.

TABLE 6. HOMELESS PERSONS (NET OF PDIs) BY NATIONALITY AND CERTAIN CHARACTERISTICS.
2011 and 2014, percentage composition and absolute values

	Foreign		Italian		Total	
	2011	2014	2011	2014	2011	2014
Sex						
Male	87.6	86.3	86.2	84.9	87.0	85.7
Female	12.4	13.7	13.9	15.1	13.0	14.3
Age class						
18-34	46.5	35.6	10.4	9.7	31.8	24.3
35-44	27.7	26.5	22.0	21.2	25.3	24.2
45-54	17.4	24.9	30.3	29.1	22.7	26.8
55-64	7.0	10.8	26.5	29.4	14.9	18.9
65 and over	*	*	10.9	10.6	5.3	5.8
Educational level						
None	11.2	13.3	*	*	9.1	8.8
Elementary school diploma	13.4	13.1	19.3	21.1	15.8	16.6
Middle school diploma	32.3	34.2	51.5	48.8	40.1	40.6
Secondary school diploma and higher	43.1	39.5	23.1	26.9	35.0	34.0
Duration of the homelessness condition						
Less than 1 month	17.8	8.8	11.7	6.7	15.3	7.9
Between 1 and 3 months	16.4	11.5	12.8	10.0	15.0	10.9
Between 3 and 6 months	15.5	12.4	7.6	9.3	12.3	11.0
Between 6 months and 1 year	17.1	16.5	15.5	11.4	16.4	14.3
Between 1 and 2 years	14.7	15.0	14.9	14.3	14.8	14.7
Between 2 and 4 years	9.2	18.7	13.6	21.2	11.0	19.8
More than 4 years	9.3	17.1	24.0	27.0	15.3	21.4
Home						
Never had a home	9.2	9.1	5.1	*	7.5	6.8
Where they lived prior to homelessness						
At home	57.5	59.9	73.2	72.5	63.9	65.4
In a home as a guest of friends or relatives	18.7	18.3	11.5	12.4	15.8	15.7
Other	23.7	21.8	15.3	15.1	20.3	18.9
Total (=100%)	25,658	24,531	17,561	19,064	43,219	43,595

* Insignificant datum due to small sample size.

The share of those who have never worked rose, while steady jobs declined

28% of homeless persons declared they worked⁴, this level that held steady in comparison with 2011, and with no major differences between foreigners (28.6%) and Italians (27.2%) (Table 7). However, those who declared they had a steady job declined from 3.8% in 2011 to 2.3% in 2014, and the fact is confirmed since, when speaking of work we are referring mainly to employment that is fixed-term, without security, or occasional, with low qualifications, in services (janitor, porter, transporter, worker loading/unloading goods, gardener, window washer, dishwasher, etc.), in construction (unskilled labourer, mason, construction worker, etc.), and in the various productive sectors (day labourer, carpenter, smith, baker, etc.). Moreover, the share of those who have never worked increased considerably, from 6.7% to 8.7%, especially among foreigners (from 7.7% to 10.4%).

⁴ For the definition of work, see the Glossary.

TABLE 7. HOMELESS PERSONS (NET OF PDIs) BY NATIONALITY AND WORKING CONDITION. 2011 and 2014, percentage composition and absolute values

	Foreign		Italian		Total	
	2011	2014	2011	2014	2011	2014
Has a job	27.8	28.6	29.2	27.2	28.3	28.0
<i>Has a job that is fixed-term, without security, or occasional</i>	24.2	26.4	25.1	25.0	24.5	25.8
<i>Has a steady job</i>	3.6	*	4.1	*	3.8	2.3
Has no job	72.2	71.4	70.8	72.8	71.7	72.0
<i>Has had a steady job</i>	23.7	19.6	28.6	28.7	25.7	23.5
<i>Has had a job that is fixed-term, without security, or occasional</i>	40.8	41.4	36.8	37.5	39.3	39.7
<i>Has never worked</i>	7.7	10.4	5.4	6.6	6.7	8.7
Total (=100%)	25,658	24,531	17,561	19,064	43,219	43,595

* Insignificant datum due to small sample size.

Among persons who worked, the weight of those carrying out an activity for more than 20 days a month declined (from 32.2% to 30.5%); the result may be ascribed exclusively to the Italian component, which fell from 38.6% to 34.2%, in which the share of those working for fewer than 10 days a month increased (from 33.8% to 38.8%) (Table 8). Lastly, the share of those earning more than € 500 a month declined (from 27.7% to 22.6%), as did the percentage of those earning less than € 100 (from 24.1% to 14.8%). The sum earned on average held thus steady with respect to 2011 and amounted to slightly over € 300 a month: € 311 among foreigners and € 319 among Italians.

TABLE 8. HOMELESS PERSONS (NET OF PDIs) WHO WORKED, BY NATIONALITY, NUMBER OF WORK DAYS, AND MONTHLY EARNINGS. 2011 and 2014 percentage composition and absolute values

	Foreign		Italian		Total	
	2011	2014	2011	2014	2011	2014
Work days during the month						
Less than 10 days	40.4	36.6	33.8	38.8	37.6	37.6
From 10 to 19 days	32.1	35.6	27.6	27.0	30.2	31.9
20 days and more	27.5	27.8	38.6	34.2	32.2	30.5
<i>Average number of work days per month</i>	12.0	12.9	14.0	13.7	13.0	13.2
Monthly earnings						
Less than € 100	26.0	15.3	21.3	*	24.1	14.8
Between € 100 and € 499	47.2	62.5	49.7	62.8	48.2	62.7
€ 500 and more	26.7	22.2	29.1	23.1	27.7	22.6
<i>Average monthly earnings</i>	349	311	342	319	347	315
Persons who work (=100%)	7,126	7,024	5,120	5,186	12,246	12,209

* Insignificant datum due to small sample size.

More aid in money from family members, friends, or relatives

Homeless persons who declared having no source of income (17.4%) held steady in comparison with 2011, the value doubled among foreigners (22.2%, against 11.2% of Italians) (Table 9). Only one source of income in a little more than one half of cases (53%), and at least two sources in another third (29.6%, a figure rising among foreigners, from 21.7% to 29.8%).

With regard to what has already been stated, the percentage of those who had work as a sole source of income declined (from 17% to 14.2% among foreigners and from 15.8% to 13.6% among Italians), but the share of those declaring they received aid in money from family members, friends, or relatives increased (from 29.5% to 34% and from 24% to 29.6% respectively). Among foreigners, the weight of those receiving income from external sources (panhandling, volunteer associations, or other), a figure falling among Italians (from 36.5% to 33.8%), increased as well (from 37.3% to 40.7%).

TABLE 9. HOMELESS PERSONS (NET OF PDIs) BY NATIONALITY AND SOURCE OF INCOME. 2011 and 2014 percentage composition and absolute values

	Foreign		Italian		Total	
	2011	2014	2011	2014	2011	2014
Source of income						
No source of income	22.1	22.2	11.8	11.2	17.9	17.4
One source of income	56.2	48.0	59.6	59.5	57.6	53.0
Two or more sources of income	21.7	29.8	28.6	29.3	24.5	29.6
Type of income						
From work	27.8	28.6	29.2	27.2	28.3	28.0
<i>Only income from work</i>	17.0	14.2	15.8	13.6	16.5	13.9
From pension	*	*	19.3	20.2	9.0	10.3
<i>Only pension income</i>	*	*	12.7	13.9	5.9	6.9
From subsidies from the municipality or other public bodies	6.1	6.4	12.4	13.2	8.7	9.4
<i>Only subsidies from the municipality or other public bodies</i>	3.4	*	*	*	3.8	3.4
From family members, friends, and relatives	29.5	34.0	24.0	29.6	27.2	32.1
<i>Only from family members, friends, and relatives</i>	13.8	11.1	8.1	12.6	11.4	11.8
From people I do not know (panhandling) or who do volunteer work, other money	37.3	40.7	36.5	33.8	37.0	37.7
<i>Only people I do not know (panhandling) or who do volunteer work, other money</i>	20.8	18.8	18.7	14.9	20.0	17.1
Total (=100%)	25,658	24,531	17,561	19,064	43,219	43,595

* Insignificant datum due to small sample size.

Separation from spouse was increasingly resulting in the condition of “homelessness”

The loss of a steady job along with the separation from spouse and/or children confirmed as the most important events in the path of gradual marginalization that led to the condition of “homelessness”; poor health conditions (disability, chronic disease, addiction) also had a weight of certain importance, albeit more contained. From 2011 to 2014, a strong increase in homeless persons that experienced a separation, from 59.5% to 63%, was estimated, slightly more accentuated among foreigners (from 54.4% to 57.8%, as against the rise from 67% to 69.6% recorded among Italians) (Table 10). Loss of steady work was no longer the most widespread event: in 2014 it regarded 56.1% of homeless persons (61.9% in 2011), ranging between 48.4% of foreigners (it had been 55.9%) and 66.1% of Italians (as against 70.6%).

TABLE 10. HOMELESS PERSONS (NET OF PDIs) BY NATIONALITY AND LIFE EVENTS EXPERIENCED. 2011 and 2014, percentage composition and absolute values

	Foreign		Italian		Total	
	2011	2014	2011	2014	2011	2014
Type of event						
Illness (a)	23.7	20.8	41.7	31.4	31.0	25.4
Separation from spouse and/or children	54.4	57.8	67.0	69.6	59.5	63.0
Loss of steady work	55.9	48.4	70.6	66.1	61.9	56.1
Number of events						
No event	21.2	23.3	8.3	7.8	16.0	16.5
A single event:	33.0	34.4	27.5	30.3	30.8	32.6
<i>Illness (a)</i>	4.9	5.5	*	6.0	5.2	5.7
<i>Separation from spouse and/or children</i>	13.3	17.8	9.4	13.2	11.7	15.8
<i>Loss of steady work</i>	14.9	11.1	12.5	11.1	13.9	11.1
Several events:	45.8	42.3	64.2	61.9	53.3	50.9
<i>Separation from spouse and/or children and loss of steady work</i>	27.0	27.0	28.1	36.5	27.5	31.2
<i>Illness (a) and separation from spouse and/or children or loss of steady work</i>	9.4	7.4	12.8	12.4	10.8	9.6
<i>Illness (a), separation from spouse and/or children and loss of steady work</i>	9.3	7.9	23.4	13.0	15.0	10.1
Total (=100%)	25,658	24,531	17,561	19,064	43,219	43,595

* Insignificant datum due to small sample size.

(a) The illness event is defined based on the presence, found by the interviewer, of disability or chronic disease and/or forms of addiction (alcohol, drugs, narcotics, etc.); it differs from that published in the press release disseminated in 2012, where “illness” was understood as the self-declared health status.

Slightly more than one quarter of homeless persons (25.4%) had health problems, a decline from 2011, (31%); the decline especially regarded the Italian component: 41.7% in 2011 fell to 31.4% in 2014 (among foreigners, from 23.7% to 20.8%).

The presence of those that experienced none of these events (16.5%) or one of them (32.6%) remained residual; this confirmed that being homeless was almost always the result of a multi-factor process.

The increased spread of the separation event compared with 2011 was reflected in the increase in homeless persons living alone (from 74.5% to 78.3%); among Italians, a significant reduction was also observed in the share of those living with family members other than a spouse/partner/children or with friends (from 12.1% to 9.3%) (Table 11).

Despite living alone, those with contacts with family members remained the majority: 59.3% among Italians and 72.4% among foreigners (but the latter experienced a decline from 78.3% in 2011). Lastly, nearly three quarters of homeless persons declared they had friends (74.9%), especially outside the circle of homeless persons (63.6%).

TABLE 11. HOMELESS PERSONS (NET OF PDIs) BY NATIONALITY AND FAMILY AND FRIENDSHIP RELATIONSHIPS. 2011 and 2014, percentage composition and absolute values

	Foreign		Italian		Total	
	2011	2014	2011	2014	2011	2014
Who they live with						
Alone	71.9	74.1	78.3	83.7	74.5	78.3
With children and/or spouse/partner	7.6	6.1	*	7.1	8.4	6.5
With other family members and/or friends	20.5	19.8	12.1	9.3	17.1	15.2
Contacts with family members						
Yes	78.3	72.4	58.6	59.3	70.3	66.7
<i>Only hears from them</i>	35.5	26.4	7.8	7.2	24.3	18.0
<i>Sees them</i>	42.8	46.1	50.8	52.1	46.0	48.7
No	21.7	27.6	41.4	40.7	29.7	33.3
Friends						
Yes	71.0	77.6	76.2	71.6	73.1	74.9
<i>All homeless</i>	13.8	14.0	*	8.5	12.4	11.6
<i>At least someone with a home</i>	57.2	63.6	65.8	63.0	60.7	63.3
No	29.0	22.4	23.8	28.4	26.9	25.1
Total (=100%)	25,658	24,531	17,561	19,064	43,219	43,595

* Insignificant datum due to small sample size.

Reliance on street units, medicine dispensaries, and counselling centres was greater

Compared with 2011, the share of homeless persons who declared they had been using the services of street units in the 12 months prior to the interview grew (from 27.6% to 36.4%), especially among foreigners (from 27.6% to 39.8%) (Table 12). The contact with counselling centres or similar facilities (from 35.7% to 42.7%) and with the services of medicine dispensaries (from 33.5% to 40.2%) was growing as well. Lastly, but only for foreigners, frequenting of day shelters grew (from 31.5% to 35.5%).

Homeless persons relying on social services increased in number (from 39.8% to 47.1%), while among foreigners reliance on services for employment declined (the percentage fell from 45.2% to 39.4%). Also reliance on services of distribution of food parcels declined (from 40.8% to 34.7%) and, for Italians, night sheltering services (from 77.1% to 69.6%); presumably, the reduction in *turnover* among the users of night sheltering services regarded above all the Italian component that, following this dynamic, showed use rates far more similar to the foreign component than in the past (declining from a difference of 10 percentage points to barely 3 points, settling at 66.9% among foreigners and 69.6% among Italians).

60% of homeless persons managed to sleep at least once (in the month prior to the interview) in a night shelter, and about one half used a night and day shelter service (this percentage actually doubled from 2011, especially among foreigners, whose figure rose from 20.1% to 51.5%) (Table 13).

Those forced to sleep in random places like cars, campers, or train carriages declined (from 22.8% to 15.3%), especially among foreigners (from 22.9% to 12.6%) among whom the percentage weight of those sleeping outdoors also declined (from 44.2% to 40.9%).

TABLE 12. HOMELESS PERSONS (NET OF PDIs) BY NATIONALITY AND TYPE OF SERVICES ^(a) USED OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS. 2011 and 2014, percentage composition and absolute values

	Foreign		Italian		Total	
	2011	2014	2011	2014	2011	2014
At least one:	99.8	99.8	99.7	99.6	99.8	99.7
<i>Distribution of food parcels</i>	37.4	33.1	45.6	36.7	40.8	34.7
<i>Soup kitchens</i>	91.3	89.5	86.5	87.8	89.4	88.8
<i>Clothes distribution</i>	61.4	62.8	59.4	58.7	60.6	61.0
<i>Medicine dispensaries</i>	35.1	43.2	31.1	36.4	33.5	40.2
<i>Personnel hygiene (showers/baths)</i>	67.5	62.3	56.7	52.6	63.1	58.0
<i>Street units (mini-buses, vans, etc.)</i>	27.6	39.8	27.7	31.9	27.6	36.4
<i>Night shelters</i>	67.2	66.9	77.1	69.6	71.2	68.1
<i>Day shelters</i>	31.5	35.5	39.6	41.9	34.8	38.3
<i>Other (counselling centres and the like)</i>	31.9	39.5	41.2	46.9	35.7	42.7
At least one:	76.1	72.3	88.0	86.7	80.9	78.6
<i>Employment services</i>	45.2	39.4	44.8	44.1	45.0	41.4
<i>Civil registry services</i>	23.7	24.0	32.1	31.2	27.1	27.2
<i>Social services</i>	30.3	35.5	53.7	62.0	39.8	47.1
<i>Health services</i>	48.2	45.9	64.1	64.2	54.7	53.9
<i>Other public services</i>	4.2	*	*	*	4.2	3.2
Total (=100%)	25,658	24,531	17,561	19,064	43,219	43,595

* Insignificant datum due to small sample size.
(a) For details see Glossary.

TABLE 13. HOMELESS PERSONS (NET OF PDIs) BY NATIONALITY AND PLACES WHERE THEY WERE FORCED TO SLEEP IN THE MONTH PRIOR TO THE INTERVIEW. 2011 and 2014, percentage composition and absolute values

	Foreign		Italian		Total	
	2011	2014	2011	2014	2011	2014
Street, park, public area	44.2	40.9	36.2	35.9	41.0	38.8
Railway station, the underground	29.3	29.8	22.9	23.9	26.7	27.2
Car, camper, railway carriage	22.9	12.6	22.5	18.7	22.8	15.3
Barrack, shed, abandoned home	25.8	23.7	*	19.5	22.0	21.9
Night shelters	58.4	57.1	65.6	62.6	61.3	59.5
Night/day shelters	20.1	51.5	30.5	56.2	24.4	53.6
Total (=100%)	25,658	24,531	17,561	19,064	43,219	43,595

* Insignificant datum due to small sample size.

Percentage of homeless women stable

Women amounted to 14.3% of the homeless population, a level statistically identical to that estimated in 2011; the percentage of persons who had difficulty responding to the interview, estimated at 14%, was entirely similar to the male percentage.

Slightly less than one half were Italian (46.1%); the average age was 45.4 years, and they had been living in conditions of homelessness for 2.7 years on average (with no significant differences from 2011) (Table 14). More than one fourth (28%) declared they worked, on average, 15 days a month, earning about € 329 (estimates are unchanged from 2011).

Compared to 2011, homeless women lived more often alone (the percentage rose from 56.4% to 62.9%) and more rarely with a spouse/partner or with children (declining from 31.4% to 22.7%). In fact, homeless women who had experienced separation from spouse or children as a single event increased in number (from 19.1% to 24.7%).

TABLE 14. HOMELESS WOMEN (NET OF PDIs) BY CERTAIN CHARACTERISTICS. 2011 and 2014, absolute values and percentage composition

	Absolute values		Percentage composition	
	2011	2014	2011	2014
Nationality				
Foreign	3,184	3,361	56.7	53.9
Italian	2,432	2,878	43.3	46.1
Who they live with				
Lives alone	3,167	3,922	56.4	62.9
Lives with children and/or spouse/partner	1,762	1,415	31.4	22.7
Lives with other family members and/or friends	*	*	*	*
Working condition				
Has a job	1,421	1,746	25.3	28.0
Has no job	4,195	4,494	74.7	72.0
Has never worked	*	*	*	*
Type of event experienced				
Illness (a)	1,804	1,719	32.1	27.6
Separation from spouse and/or children	3,943	4,374	70.2	70.1
Loss of steady work	3,090	3,098	55.0	49.7
Number of events experienced				
No event	*	*	*	*
A single event:				
<i>Separation from spouse and/or children</i>	1,831	2,511	32.6	40.2
<i>Separation from spouse and/or children</i>	1,070	1,540	19.1	24.7
Several events:				
<i>Separation from spouse and/or children and loss of steady work</i>	3,101	3,003	55.2	48.1
<i>Separation from spouse and/or children and loss of steady work</i>	1,535	1,639	27.3	26.3
Total (=100%)	5,616	6,239	100.0	100.0

* Insignificant datum due to small sample size.

(a) The illness event is defined based on the presence, found by the interviewer, of disability or chronic disease and/or forms of addiction (alcohol, drugs, narcotics, etc.); it differs from that published in the press release disseminated in 2012, where "illness" was understood as the self-declared health status.

The services of street units and their homeless users

The population of homeless persons analyzed thus far consisted of homeless persons who used the soup kitchen and night shelter services in the 158 municipalities involved in the survey; it follows that all persons that did not frequent the aforementioned services were excluded.

In order to have an estimate of the number of homeless persons who remained excluded, the possibility was trialed of surveying them through the street units that operated on the territory by providing travelling services in the places frequented by homeless persons. Since the services provided by the operators of the street units cannot be entirely likened to those provided by the operators of the soup kitchens and night shelters, both for their specific nature and for their modes of delivery, the trial was designed as a survey in and of itself, while being configured as complementary to that conducted at the soup kitchens and night shelters.

The first step was the census of the street units services in the 158 municipalities surveyed.

TABLE B1. STREET UNIT BY REGION, GEOGRAPHICAL AREA AND TYPE OF MUNICIPALITY 2014, absolute values and percentage compositions

	Absolute values	Percentage compositions
REGION AND GEOGRAPHICAL AREA		
Italy	229	100.0
Piemonte	20	8.7
Valle D'Aosta/Vallée d'Aoste	-	-
Lombardia	47	20.5
Liguria	9	3.9
North-west	76	33.2
Trentino-Alto Adige	6	2.6
<i>Bolzano-Bozen</i>	3	1.3
<i>Trento</i>	3	1.3
Veneto	16	7.0
Friuli-Venezia Giulia	3	1.3
Emilia-Romagna	20	8.7
North-east	45	19.7
Toscana	12	5.2
Umbria	1	0.4
Marche	1	0.4
Lazio	49	21.4
Centre	63	27.5
Abruzzo	1	0.4
Molise	-	-
Campania	4	1.7
Puglia	4	1.7
Basilicata	-	-
Calabria	5	2.2
South	14	6.1
Sicilia	16	7.0
Sardegna	15	6.6
Islands	31	13.5
TYPE OF MUNICIPALITY		
Metropolitan areas	143	62.4
Peripheral municipalities of metropolitan areas	1	0.4
Municipalities with 70-250,000 inhabitants	79	34.5
Capital municipalities with 30-70,000 inhabitants	6	2.6

Street unit services

The services of street units delivering benefits to homeless persons in the 158 Italian municipalities where the survey was conducted numbered 229 in 2014 (Table B1). One third (33.2%) operated in the North-west, 19.7% in the north-east, and 27.5% in Centre, e with minority shares for Southern Italy, 6.1%, and for the Islands, 13.5%. Lazio was the Italian region with the highest number of services: 49 units, about 21.4% of the total, almost entirely (48) operating in the territory of the municipality of Roma. This was followed by Lombardia (47 services, 20.5% of the total, where about two thirds, 30, operated in the municipality of Milano) and, Piemonte where there were 20 services (8.7% of the total), once again almost all concentrated in the municipality of Torino.

Similar to Piemonte's was the percentage of services operating in Emilia-Romagna where, however, services were much more extensively spread on the territory; in fact, less than one half of the services (8) operated in the municipality of Bologna.

In both Sicilia and Veneto, 16 services (7% of the total) operated; in the region of Sardegna, 15 (6.6% of the total); the share of services in Toscana was 5.2%, in Liguria 3.9%, and in Trentino Alto-Adige 2.6%. Rather scant was the share of services in Calabria (2.2%), in Campania, and in Puglia (both 1.7%).

The percentage of street unit services in Friuli-Venezia Giulia was slightly higher than 1%, while it was lower than 1% in Umbria, Marche, and Abruzzo. Valle d'Aosta, Molise, and Basilicata had no street unit services

for homeless persons.

Street units were decidedly more common in the metropolitan municipalities (those with populations exceeding 250,000 inhabitants), where 62.4% of the total operated; only slightly more than one third (34.5%) offered services in municipalities of intermediate size.

Fully 76.9% of street units were active year round, on top of 18.3% active for at least 7 months; continuity of service was therefore entirely comparable to that guaranteed on average by the soup kitchen and night shelter services. Given that nearly one half (47.2%) of these services operated only one day a week and about one third (31.9%) for a maximum of 3 days, fully 13.5% of street units were active for 4-6 days a week, and the share of those active every day equaled 7.4%.

Schedules differed greatly, and were concentrated in the late evening and night-time hours; most interventions were in fact carried out after 8:00 PM. In other words, about 60% of the activity's time was scheduled during evening or night-time hours; about 30% was dedicated to afternoon hours, while only 10% of the activity was performed in the morning. 82 (35.8%) street units could count above all on economic support from the Church or other religious organizations; for one fourth, however, the prevailing source of economic resources was public funding (25.8% of services); an additional 28.4% was financed mainly through donations or, more generally, by private citizens.

The prevailing mission of 47.5% of the services, which is to say those that distribute blankets, hot drinks, and other essential items was responding to the primary and immediate needs of the persons encountered on the street.

On the other hand, 38.4% indicated relationship support as a prevalent action, while the share of those dealing above all with mapping the territory fell to 6.6%.

It ought to be stressed at any rate that more than one half of the street units performed a relationship support service (also as a non-prevalent action) and that the percentage of those dealing, even if not as a priority, with mapping the territory rose to 38.6%.

Lastly, only one fifth of the street units interviewed was not in contact with the social/healthcare services present on the territory, and, among those that were, one third operated formally, through protocols and agreements; more than one half of the street units were in close contact with the hospitals and more than two thirds with social services. The share of units collaborating with other care and assistance facilities such as clinics and SERT (addiction services)/SERD (pathological addiction services) (respectively 45.4% and 43.2% of services) was high, too.

HOMELESS PERSONS CONTACTED BY STREET UNITS – a case study: the city of Torino

The survey on the homeless persons contacted by the street units could go no further than the city of Torino, due both to the size of the homeless phenomenon and to the widespread presence of street units on the territory. In fact, in other situations that were analyzed, even where there was a rather high number of street units (such as, for example, in Milano, Roma, Padova or Firenze), the reduced coordination characterizing their activity did not allow a statistical survey to be organized.

In the week from 9 to 15 December 2014, 50 homeless persons randomly selected among users of the street units in Torino were interviewed; during that week, the Street units had 218 contacts with homeless persons and observed 60 more persons in conditions of hardship (without having any contact).

40% of interviewees declared having also been users of other street units during the week of survey; about one half (49.7%) declared also frequenting soup kitchen and/or night shelter services (therefore belonging to the population estimated by the survey at soup kitchen and night shelter services), 36.8% that they frequented neither soup kitchens nor night shelters, with the remaining 13.5% was unable to provide information.

It is estimated, then, that the share of homeless persons not included in the survey's estimate at soup kitchen and night shelter services came to 3.5%, a figure obtained from the ratio between homeless persons contacted by the street units that did not attend soup kitchens or night shelters (estimated at 63), and the total number of homeless persons in Torino (estimated at 1,792); if that estimate also included homeless persons that did not provide information (hypothesizing in these cases that they were all persons that did not frequent soup kitchens or night shelters) the percentage rose to 4.7%.

The hypothesis was then confirmed that homeless persons that did not frequent soup kitchen or night shelter services were a decidedly minority share of the population of homeless persons, albeit presumably higher than the estimate obtained for the city of Torino where the high presence of services (both soup kitchen/night

shelter and street units) and the high level of coordination between them considerably eased the path of gradual re-entry.

In addition to being a highly contained share, the homeless persons who did not use soup kitchens and night shelters had features partially different from those of the population of the homeless that turned to these services. In addition to sleeping more often in the street (especially open-air places, stations, or cars), they were more often Italian (about one half) and more often had never formed family bonds; quite rarely did they work, and a decidedly high portion had never worked. Lastly, they more frequently presented problems with addiction – especially alcohol addiction.

Glossary

Work: Any activity performed in exchange for compensation or monetary payment. The accepted meaning of work used in this research is the broadest possible: it does not necessarily have an institutional character, and is not based on a contract; it consequently also includes undeclared work.

Homeless person: A person is considered homeless when he or she is in a state of material and immaterial poverty, marked by extreme hardship, which is to say having no possibility and/or ability to autonomously see to obtaining and maintaining a proper home. With reference to the ETHOS (European Typology on homelessness and Housing Exclusion) developed by the European Observatory on Homelessness, the definition includes all persons who: live in public spaces (on the street, in barracks, abandoned cars, campers, sheds); live in a night shelter and/or are forced to spend many hours of the day in a public (open) space; live in homeless shelters/temporary lodgings; live in lodgings for specific social support interventions (for single homeless persons, couples, and groups). Excluded are all persons who: live in a condition of overcrowding; receive hospitality ensured by relatives or friends; live in occupied lodgings or in structured camps present in cities.

Service: Type of benefit delivered at a given site. The delivery of the individual benefits must take place: i) distinctly from any other benefit (it must be possible to identify the physical place of delivery, the time of delivery and the dedicated personnel); ii) on an ongoing basis or repeatedly over time (for example, a group of volunteers that, on a one-time basis and autonomously, decide to distribute old clothes to the homeless persons sleeping at the station is not a service, and neither is that of the parish priest who, when he has old clothing offered by the parishioners, decides to make them available to those in need); iii) socially recognized and exploitable (the potential users can obtain information on existence and access procedures).

Service of:

Distribution of food parcels: facilities that distribute food support free of charge, in the form of a staples parcel and not in the form of a meal to be consumed onsite.

Clothing distribution: facilities that distribute apparel and footwear free of charge.

Medicine dispensaries: facilities that distribute medicines (with or without prescription) free of charge.

Personal hygiene (showers/baths): facilities that allow services for personal care and hygiene to be used free of charge.

Soup kitchens: facilities that distribute, free of charge, meals to be consumed at the place of delivery where access is normally subjected to constraints.

Night shelter services: include emergency shelters (night sheltering facilities usually set up in certain periods of the year, such as for example due to weather conditions); dormitories (facilities managed on an ongoing basis during the year that involve only the sheltering of guests during night-time hours); semi-residential communities (facilities where overnight accommodation activities alternate with daytime activities without interruption); residential communities (facilities where the possibility is ensured of lodging on a continuous basis on premises, even during daytime hours, and where social and educational support is also ensured), protected lodgings (facilities where outside access is limited and where there is a frequent presence of social workers, on an ongoing or occasional basis); self-managed lodgings (shelter facilities where people have a large degree of autonomy in managing the living space – third-level accommodation).

Street units: we define the street work done by street units (hereinafter defined as “street units”) with homeless persons as the activity carried out through constant presence in areas of the city, directly on the territory, where it is possible to contact the intervention’s target population, in order to create a contact that may be constructive and non-repressive, that can be a reference for urgent demands requiring conditions of protection, and that proposes margins for possibly improving the life led by the person.

Street units must monitor the territory they belong to and, at the same time, gather a hardship mapping in order to build a support network for persons in difficulty, and to reassure and inform citizens so as to raise social awareness and active participation.

In the street, the street unit does not wait for the person to come along. It acquires visibility on the territory so as to guarantee direct exploitation of the service; it moves within a context that is not its own, but is that of the persons living in a state of social marginalization, and thus streets, stations, squares, parks, gardens, and abandoned homes, without there being an explicit request for help: this is out of the need to meet and to

bring out a demand that does not arrive spontaneously for services, but that is indispensable to “intercept” in order to carry out interventions of secondary prevention, reduce risk, and ease access to the services system.

Working on the street must have the relationship as the first operative tool. Relating on an ongoing basis with people by listening makes it possible to gradually read the person’s needs, helping him or her to gradually and with motivation reconquer the relationship skills that have been eroded over the course of the marginalization path. The activity will then have to be organized to be constantly on the street; to contact homeless persons; to listen, hear, and recognize the real content of hardship on the one hand, and on the other hand of the potential that these people bear in interpersonal relationships; to provide motivational support where inclusion paths are embarked upon; to monitor people’s living conditions and recognize any worsening; to deploy the right resource at the right time; to bear up with the frustration and the weight of the suffering of others, without losing sight of the service, aware of the resolution time that an individual situation requires. Street work can take on the characteristics of long-term service to resolve or comprehend complex situations due at times to the taking on of services and/or the resistance of certain users.

To carry out its function, the street unit must be the instrument – intentional, strongly organized and as professional as possible – of an integrated network of local services, in order to map situations of marginalization in the territory in question, constitute an access way to the local services of the social private and public sphere, by means of recognized and formalized procedures, monitor the phenomenon of extreme marginalization, and be the significant interlocutor thereof for the citizenry, as well as a privileged observatory of hardship.

The street unit must guarantee accessibility to all persons affected by the service offered, with no specific prerequisites, in a situation of guaranteeing privacy and anonymity.

Methodological note

Through an agreement with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Istat, fio.PSD and Caritas Italiana, a second survey on homeless persons was carried out in order to monitor the development of the phenomenon of extreme adult marginalization in Italy, 36 months after the first national survey was carried out (conducted in 2011).

A feasibility study has also been planned with regard to conducting a survey on homeless persons through the use of street units, in order to intercept that part of the population that did not use soup kitchen or night shelter services.

The work was characterized by a total sharing among all the research partners (including the operators of soup kitchen services, night shelters and street units involved in the project) for all the phases in the process, starting from definitions and including the survey tools and the conducting of interviews of homeless persons.

Second survey on homeless persons

The conduct of the survey required three essential steps:

- updating the archive of soup kitchen and night shelter services;
- preparing the sampling plan and the tools for the survey on homeless persons;
- conducting the survey.

Updating the archive of services

The information acquisition during the prior survey made it possible to create an archive of the soup kitchen and night shelter services whose users included homeless persons. For the update of the aforementioned archive, the census of soup kitchen and night shelter services was conducted, by CATI technique, starting from the month of December 2013: the facilities involved in the previous survey were contacted by phone by fio.PSD operators, on behalf of Istat, in order to confirm or update the information present in the archive; the survey also made it possible to survey the existence of new services on the territory, which were interviewed with consequent insertion into the archive.

As for the previous occasion, the census of services was conducted for 158 Italian municipalities selected based on their demographic size: all municipalities with more than 70,000 inhabitants – 81 municipalities, including 12 metropolitan municipalities – provincial capitals with more than 30,000 inhabitants – 37 municipalities – and all municipalities, again with at least 30,000 inhabitants, in the first tier of municipalities with more than 250,000 inhabitants – 40 municipalities.

768 active services were surveyed, of which 315 soup kitchens (203 serving lunch and 112 serving supper) and 453 night shelters.

Preparation of the sampling plan and of the tools for the survey on homeless persons

Like the earlier one, this survey belongs to a methodological approach different from that usually adopted at Istat for surveys on households and individuals, since there is no *a priori* list of the population being surveyed. Starting from the methodology that finds its theoretical foundation in indirect sampling, it is possible to use as a sampling base a population indirectly connected to the one being studied, and for which the sampling list is available.

In the specific case, for the study of homeless persons, the sampling base was represented by the benefits provided (meals served and beds) at the types of services taken into consideration (soup kitchens and night shelters).

It is specified that the shelter services did not include domestic abuse shelters or refugee shelters; although these centres are certainly a service for a population segment that may belong to that of homeless persons, the specific nature of these services and, in the former case, the difficulty of making contact, due to their high level of security and confidentiality, led to deferring an estimate of the persons these facilities address to a later analysis.

The survey on homeless persons was conducted for a period of thirty days (21 November - 20 December 2014), in order to gather a large number of users of the services. The sampling design involved all the censused centres, and interviews were randomly distributed on the centres' opening days and hours in the

month of reference. A two-stage sampling plan was followed, and the selection involved, in the first stage, days of surveying and, in the second stage, the benefits provided.

The estimate of homeless persons, by adopting an estimate method known in the literature as *weight share method*, was done taking into account the number of *links between each interviewee and the benefits enjoyed by said interviewee in the week leading up to the interview: by compiling a weekly log, the interviewee's visits to the individual centres belonging to the list of reference were surveyed*. In this way, the correctness of the estimates is ensured with respect to possible distortions derived from the multiple counting of persons who repeatedly frequented the centres during the survey period and that might therefore be counted more than once.

The survey on homeless persons at soup kitchen and night shelter services

During the survey month (21 November-20 December 2014), 639 centres were visited: 174 soup kitchens at lunch, 89 soup kitchens at supper, and 376 night shelters. The operation in the field involved 65 local contacts and 516 surveyors, with the objective of interviewing 4,864 homeless persons: 2,830 (58.2%) at soup kitchen services (38.2% soup kitchens at lunch and 20.0% soup kitchens at supper) and 2,034 (the remaining 41.8%) at night shelter services (19.2% dormitories, 8.8% overnight residential and semi residential communities, 8.2% emergency shelters, and 5.7% protected or self-managed lodgings).

The number of contacts equalled 7,322 and led to carrying out 4,726 valid interviews (3,918 complete interviews and 808 summary data sheets compiled for persons unable to respond to the interview). In general, at soup kitchens several contacts were needed to obtain interviews; at these services, in fact, homeless persons can also be contacted. 67.4% of contacts were made at a soup kitchen, and 32.6% at night shelter services.

The sample size reached equalled 97.2% of the theoretical one, and was slightly higher for night shelters (97.7% against 96.8% for soup kitchens), with some differences with respect to type of service (the percentage varies from 91.5% of self-managed lodgings to 99.6% of dormitories).

In almost one half of the cases, the 2,596 contacts that produced a non-interview (47.1%), were due to the fact that the contacted person was not homeless; an additional 46.7% were refusals or interrupted interviews, and the remaining 6.3% regarded persons already interviewed. For the soup kitchens, the percentage of homeless persons rose to 55.7% of the contacts, reaching 56.1% for soup kitchens at lunch; for night shelter services, the presence of homeless persons was zero.

Analysis at the territorial level showed how the size reached, expressed as a percentage of the theoretical size, was virtually uniform: 96.8% in the North, 97.1% in the Centre, and 98.1% in the South. It ought at any rate to be kept in mind that 59.0% of theoretical interviews involved services with location in the North area, 17.8% with location in the Centre, and 23.2% in the South and the Islands; the territorial difference was further accentuated for night shelter services (60.4% in the North, 18.2% in the Centre, and 21.3% in the South and the Islands). The highest values of sample size reached with respect to the theoretical size were recorded in Calabria, Sardegna, Puglia, Campania, and Abruzzo (equal to 100%), and the lowest in Valle d'Aosta, Liguria, and Basilicata (under 90%).

South and the Islands were marked by the lowest level of refusals and interrupted interviews against the unsuccessful contacts, equalling 42.6% (against 43.3% and 49.3% in the Centre and the North).

In the passage from the Northern to Central/Southern Italy, the percentage of contacts with persons with homes, against unsuccessful contacts, increased (from 42.0% in the North to 54.2% in South and the Islands, and 54.8% in Centre), while in the North, contact with persons already interviewed was decidedly more frequent (8.7% against 1.9% in the Centre and 3.2% in the South and the Islands).

It also bears stressing that the refusals of the individual contacted persons came on top of the refusals or impossibility of taking part in certain services: in total, 129 (77 night shelter services, 29 soup kitchen services at lunch, and 23 soup kitchen services at supper).

Experimental survey on the homeless persons contacted by street units

The conduction of the experimental survey on the homeless persons contacted by the street units required preparing the archive of the street units present in the 158 municipalities considered in the survey on homeless persons, as well as preparing the sampling plan and the instruments to conduct the survey.

Between June and September 2014, starting from the 85 street unit services recorded with the survey on homeless persons conducted in the prior survey, a census of the street units was done with the PAPI

technique, defining a list of 210 services (54 of which already present in the prior survey) addressing homeless persons.

84.8% were interviewed, while the remaining 15.2% were unable or refused to take part (10.4% and 4.8% respectively). The 178 street units interviewed corresponded to 229 operative street unit services, which is to say services that, every time they go out, operated in the same territory or, if travelling, followed the same route.

The services provided to homeless persons by the operators of the street units cannot be likened to those provided by the operators of the soup kitchens and of the night shelters, both for their specific nature and for their modes of delivery. The soup kitchens and the night shelters are physical places easily identifiable by homeless persons, while the street units are mobile units not always recognizable by the contacted homeless persons. For these reasons, it was deemed appropriate to treat the services provided by the street units as a survey apart, and not as a single system of services along with those of soup kitchens and night shelters. An autonomous survey was thus designed that all the same was configured as complementary to that based on the use of soup kitchen and night shelter services by homeless persons.

In the various phases of designing the survey, account was taken not only of the particular features of the services provided by the street units (defining surveying instruments), but also of the willingness of street unit operators to take part in the survey, and the feasibility of proceeding with direct interviewing of homeless persons, without altering the ordinary activities of the street units in their rounds.

For the sampling strategy, reference was made, in this case as well, to indirect sampling, and for the count of the population of interest, an adaptation of the *weight share method* to the specific context was made. The sampling design was defined starting from the benefits provided by the street units, while for the estimate procedure based on the *links*, account was taken only of the homeless persons' connections with the street units involved in the survey.

The choice of territorial situation in which to perform the trial was guided by two main characteristics: the size of the homeless phenomenon found in the 2011 survey, and the widespread presence of street units on the territory. Of the analyzed situations, Milano, Roma, Padova, Firenze, and Torino, the latter was identified as the one in which to perform the survey of homeless persons living on the street. This choice was determined not only by the described criteria, but by the concrete willingness of the street unit coordinators to take part in the survey, and by their centralized organization.

To carry out the complementary survey, a number of interviews equal to 50 was defined, to be administered in the week from 9 to 15 December 2014 to a random sample of homeless persons contacted by the Torino street units to deliver their services. It was done in such a way that the survey week fell in the month identified for the survey performed at the soup kitchen and night shelter services.

In this survey, unlike the one done at the soup kitchens and night shelters, given the scant number of interviews and the low *turnover* of the street phenomenon (information recorded during the survey on street unit services), the survey period was limited to a single week.

Homeless persons were intercepted by street units in open public spaces (streets, squares, parks, etc.) where they stopped to deliver their services (supplying meals or hot drinks, supplying blankets, etc.).

In the city of Torino, during the period when the survey design was defined, 18 street units were operative on the territory; the survey, however, involved only 6 street units, chosen based on the coverage of territory and time, and their service. The number of interviews (50) to be attributed to each street unit was defined based on the weekly contacts of the individual street units, estimated starting from the monthly contacts recorded with the PAPI survey of street units (taking place in the month of September 2014) and distributed so as not to overload ordinary activity. For the allocation of the number of interviews to the street units, account was also taken of the number of weekly contacts and the interviews were broken down over the days when the street units went out.

Confidence intervals and significance of variations

To assess the accuracy of the estimates produced by a sample survey, it is necessary to take into account the sample error derived from having observed the variable of interest only on one part (sample) of the population. This error may be expressed in terms of absolute error, (*standard error*), or relative error (which is the absolute error divided by the estimate, which takes the name of variation coefficient, VC).

Starting from these, it is possible to construct the confidence interval which, with a pre-set confidence level, contains within it the true yet unknown value of the parameter being estimated. The confidence interval is calculated by adding to and subtracting from the point estimate its absolute sample error, multiplied by a

coefficient that depends on the confidence level; considering the traditional confidence level of 95%, the corresponding coefficient equals 1.96.

By simple calculations, it is possible to obtain the confidence interval with a confidence level equal to 95% ($\alpha=0,05$). This interval therefore includes the unknown parameters of the population with a probability equal to 0.95. The following table A1 shows the relative error and illustrates the calculations for constructing the confidence interval.

TABLE A1. SAMPLE CALCULATION OF THE CONFIDENCE INTERVAL. 2014

	Homeless persons
Point estimate	50,724
Relative error (VC)	0.01768334
Interval estimate	
Semi-amplitude of interval:	$(50,724 \times 0.01768334) \times 1.96 = 1,758$
Lower limit of confidence interval:	$50,724 - 1,758 = 48,966$
Upper limit of confidence interval:	$50,724 + 1,758 = 52,482$

The following tables (A2-A5) report the variations that between 2011 and 2014 were statistically significant (that is, other than zero) based on the test verifying hypotheses between two proportions (parametric Z test method):

$$Z = \frac{\frac{x_1}{n_1} - \frac{x_2}{n_2}}{\sqrt{\hat{p}(1-\hat{p})\left(\frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2}\right)}}$$

With:

$$\hat{p} = \frac{x_1 + x_2}{n_1 + n_2}$$

n_1 e n_2 : number of observations in the two years.

TABLE A2. STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT VARIATIONS BETWEEN 2011 AND 2014 IN THE PERCENTAGE COMPOSITION OF HOMELESS PERSONS BY CHARACTERISTIC

	2011	2014
Homeless persons		
Milano	27.5	23.7
North-east	19.6	18.0
Emilia Romagna	9.2	7.8
Toscana	5.5	7.0
South	8.7	11.1
Campania	3.5	4.9
Napoli	1.9	3.1
Sicilia	9.7	7.9
Palermo	8.0	5.7
Lives alone	72.9	76.5
Lives with children and/or spouse/partner	8.0	6.0
Homeless for at least 1 month	14.3	7.4
Homeless between 1 and 3months	14.2	10.0
Homeless between two and four years	11.4	19.7
Homeless for more than 4 years	16.0	21.4
With problems of disability or addiction	35.2	29.8
Without problems of disability or addiction / reduced knowledge of Italian language	38.7	45.3
Homeless persons with difficulty interacting (PDIs)		
With problems of disability or addiction	76.0	70.3
With reduced knowledge of the Italian language	24.0	29.7
Homeless persons without difficulty interacting (net of PDIs)		
With problems of disability or addiction	31.0	25.4
Without problems of disability or addiction / reduced knowledge of Italian language	42.6	50.0
18-34 years	31.8	24.3
45-54 years	22.7	26.8
55-64 years	14.9	18.9
Homeless for less than 1 month	15.3	7.9
Homeless for between 1 and three months	15.0	10.9
Homeless for between 6 months and one year	16.4	14.3
Homeless for between two and four years	11.0	19.8
Homeless for more than 4 years	15.3	21.4
Has a steady job	3.8	2.3
Has had a steady job	25.7	23.5
Has never worked	6.7	8.7
One source of income	57.6	53.0
Two or more sources of income	24.5	29.6
only income from work	16.5	13.9
Pension income	9.0	10.3
Income from family members, friends, and relatives	27.2	32.1
Only persons I do not know (panhandling) or that do volunteer work, other money	20.0	17.1
Illness (a)	31.0	25.4
Separation from spouse and/or children	59.5	63.0
Loss of steady work	61.9	56.1
One experienced event: separation from spouse and/or children	11.7	15.8
One experienced event: loss of steady work	13.9	11.1
Separation from spouse and/or children and loss of steady work	27.5	31.2
Illness, separation from spouse and/or children, and loss of steady work	15.0	10.1
Lives alone	74.5	78.3
Lives with children and/or spouse/partner	8.4	6.5
Lives with other family members and/or friends	17.1	15.2
Has contacts with family members	70.3	66.7
Only hears from them	24.3	18.0
Sees them	46.0	48.7
At least some friends have a home	60.7	63.3
Reliance on distributions of food parcels	40.8	34.7
Reliance on medicine dispensaries	33.5	40.2
Reliance on personal hygiene services (showers/baths)	63.1	58.0
Reliance on street units (mini-buses, vans, etc.)	27.6	36.4
Reliance on night shelters	71.2	68.1
Reliance on daytime shelters	34.8	38.3
Reliance on other types of service (counselling centres and the like)	35.7	42.7
Reliance on employment services	45.0	41.4
Reliance on social services	39.8	47.1
Reliance on other services	4.2	3.2
Has slept on the street, in the park, in a public area	41.0	38.8
Has slept in car, camper, railway carriage	22.8	15.3
Has slept in overnight/daytime shelter facilities	24.4	53.6
Has never had lunch at soup kitchen	36.4	42.3
Has had lunch at soup kitchen between 1 and 5 times	22.6	18.5
Has never had supper at soup kitchen	58.6	62.0
Has had supper at soup kitchen between 1 and 5 times	20.4	16.9
Has slept in night shelter between 1 and 5 times	9.7	6.6
Has slept in night shelter between 6 and 7 times	38.7	42.3
Has worked for 20 days and more a month	32.2	30.5
Earns less than € 100 a month	24.1	14.8
Earns between € 100 and € 499 a month	48.2	62.7
Earns € 500 and more a month	27.7	22.6

TABLE A3. STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT VARIATIONS BETWEEN 2011 AND 2014 IN THE PERCENTAGE COMPOSITION OF HOMELESS PERSONS (NET OF PDIS) BY CHARACTERISTIC.

	2011	2014
Foreign homeless persons (net of PDis)		
18-34 years	46.5	35.6
45-54 years	17.4	24.9
55-64 years	7.0	10.8
No diploma	11.2	13.3
With secondary school diploma and higher	43.1	39.5
Homeless for less than 1 month	17.8	8.8
Homeless for between 1 and 3 months	16.4	11.5
Homeless for between 3 and 6 months	15.5	12.4
Homeless for between two and four years	9.2	18.7
Homeless for more than 4 years	9.3	17.1
Has had a steady job	23.7	19.6
Has never worked	7.7	10.4
One source of income	56.2	48.0
Two or more sources of income	21.7	29.8
<i>only income from work</i>	17.0	14.2
Income from family members, friends, and relatives	29.5	34.0
<i>Only from family members, friends, and relatives</i>	13.8	11.1
Income from persons I do not know (panhandling) or that do volunteer work, other money	37.3	40.7
<i>only from persons I do not know (panhandling) or that do volunteer work, other money</i>	20.8	18.8
Illness (a)	23.7	20.8
Separation from spouse and/or children	54.4	57.8
Loss of steady work	55.9	48.4
No event experienced	21.2	23.3
Has experienced one event:	33.0	34.4
<i>Separation from spouse and/or children,</i>	13.3	17.8
<i>Loss of steady work</i>	14.9	11.1
Has experienced several events:	45.8	42.3
<i>Illness, separation from spouse and/or children and loss of steady work</i>	9.4	7.4
Has contacts with family members	78.3	72.4
<i>Only hears from them</i>	35.5	26.4
<i>Sees them</i>	42.8	46.1
Has no contacts with family members	21.7	27.6
Has friends	71.0	77.6
<i>At least some friends have a home</i>	57.2	63.6
Has no friends	29.0	22.4
Reliance on distributions of food parcels	37.4	33.1
Reliance on soup kitchens	91.3	89.5
Reliance on medicine dispensaries	35.1	43.2
Reliance on personal hygiene services (showers/baths)	67.5	62.3
Reliance on street units (mini-buses, vans, etc.)	27.6	39.8
Reliance on daytime shelters	31.5	35.5
Reliance on other types of service (counselling centres and the like)	31.9	39.5
Reliance on employment services	45.2	39.4
Reliance on social services	30.3	35.5
Has slept on the street, in the park, in a public area	44.2	40.9
Has slept in car, camper, railway carriage	22.9	12.6
Has slept in overnight/daytime shelter facilities	20.1	51.5
Has never had lunch at soup kitchen	32.0	41.4
Has had lunch at soup kitchen between 1 and 5 times	24.2	17.8
Has had lunch at soup kitchen between 6 and 7 times	43.9	40.8
Has never had supper at soup kitchen	54.2	61.9
Has had supper at soup kitchen between 1 and 5 times	23.5	16.7
Has slept in night shelter between 1 and 5 times	9.8	7.2
Has slept in night shelter between 6 and 7 times	34.8	39.6
Foreign homeless persons who work (net of PDis)		
Works less than 10 days a month	40.4	36.6
Works from 10 to 19 days a month	32.1	35.6
Earns less than € 100 a month	26.0	15.3
Earns between € 100 and € 499 a month	47.2	62.5
Earns € 500 and more a month	26.7	22.2

TABLE A4. STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT VARIATIONS BETWEEN 2011 AND 2014 IN THE PERCENTAGE COMPOSITION OF HOMELESS PERSONS (NET OF PDIS) BY CHARACTERISTIC.

Italian homeless persons (net of PDis)		
55-64 years	26.5	29.4
With secondary school diploma and higher	23.1	26.9
Homeless for less than 1 month	11.7	6.7
Homeless for between 1 and 3 months	12.8	10.0
Homeless for between 6 months and 1 year	15.5	11.4
Homeless for between two and four years	13.6	21.2
Homeless for more than 4 years	24.0	27.0
Income from work	29.2	27.2
<i>Only income from work</i>	15.8	13.6
Income from family members, friends, and relatives	24.0	29.6
<i>Only from family members, friends, and relatives</i>	8.1	12.6
Income from persons I do not know (panhandling) or that do volunteer work, other money	36.5	33.8
only from persons I do not know (panhandling) or that do volunteer work, other money	18.7	14.9
Illness (a)	41.7	31.4
Separation from spouse and/or children	67.0	69.6
Loss of steady work	70.6	66.1
No event experienced	8.3	7.8
Only one event:	27.5	30.3
<i>Separation from spouse and/or children</i>	9.4	13.2
Separation from spouse and/or children and loss of steady work	28.0	36.5
Illness, separation from spouse and/or children and loss of steady work	23.4	13.0
Lives alone	78.3	83.7
Lives with other family members and/or friends	12.1	9.3
<i>Only hears from them (family members)</i>	7.8	7.2
Reliance on distributions of food parcels	45.6	36.7
Reliance on services of medicine dispensaries	31.1	36.4
Reliance on personal hygiene services (showers/baths)	56.7	52.6
Reliance on street units (mini-buses, vans, etc.)	27.7	31.9
Reliance on night shelters	77.1	69.6
Reliance on other types of service (counselling centres and the like)	41.2	46.9
Reliance on social services	53.7	62.0
Has slept in car, camper, railway carriage	22.5	18.7
Has slept in overnight/daytime shelter facilities	30.5	56.2
Has slept in night shelter between 1 and 5 times	9.4	5.7
In homeless persons who work (net of PDis)		
Works less than 10 days a month	33.8	38.8
Works 20 days and more a month	38.6	34.2
Earns between € 100 and € 499 a month	49.7	62.8
Earns € 500 and more a month	29.1	23.1

TABLE A5. STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT VARIATIONS BETWEEN 2011 AND 2014 IN THE PERCENTAGE COMPOSITION OF HOMELESS WOMEN (NET OF PDIS) BY CHARACTERISTIC.

Homeless women (net of PDis)		
Lives alone	56.4	62.9
Lives with children and/or spouse/partner	31.4	22.7
Has experienced one event:	32.6	40.2
<i>Separation from spouse and/or children</i>	19.1	24.7
Has experienced several events:	55.2	48.1

(a) In tables A2-A5, the illness is defined based on the presence, found by the interviewer, of disability or chronic disease and/or forms of addiction (alcohol, drugs, narcotics, etc.); it differs from that published in the communiqué disseminated in 2012, where "illness" was understood as the self-declared health status.