

POVERTY WATCH 2023

Poverty and social exclusion
in Italy and Europe

Numbers | Stories | Recommendations



Cilap Eapn Italia

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1. INTRODUCTION TO POVERTY WATCH 2023

by Nicoletta Teodosi

In 2023 we have reached the fourth edition of the Poverty Watch: the **Observatory on Poverty** curated by those who work, live and study the phenomena behind a condition of social exclusion, economic, environmental and cultural poverty.

It is a **year of transition**, of passage from a Measure to support people in poverty with the abolition of the Citizenship Income from 31 July, the consequences of which are putting the people and families who have been beneficiaries of it even more at risk of exclusion. But it is also a year of evaluation of the PON inclusion, of revision of the PNRR, of introduction of new measures such as food income, the consequences of which we will see in the coming months. It is also a year of discussion and public debate around the minimum wage (we talk about it in the following paragraphs) and poor work, and the failure of measures for active inclusion.

What are our observation points: **institutional**, because Cilap participates in the Supervisory Committee of the PON Social Inclusion; **territorial**, because Cilap volunteers work in social services with administrative, **planning** and evaluation roles of the measures implemented also with the PNRR; **associative and cooperative** because Cilap is a third sector body, established as an association in 1992, recognized by the ETS in 2022 and registered with the RUNTS.

Above all, our privileged observation point is the people in poverty who meet every year in a European Meeting to discuss, compare and propose solutions that they themselves have advanced because they have experienced it firsthand. This has been the case since 2001.

The European meeting of PeP (People experiencing Poverty) this year takes place in Madrid, where hundreds of people who directly live or have experienced the condition of poverty meet. They could be beneficiaries of a minimum income, poor workers, homeless or living in shelters. Therefore, there are many observation points, also thanks to the contribution of social policy scholars.

This year's theme is "the extremely high cost of living".

The resulting product, the Poverty Watch, is both articulated and complex, but we want it to reach the widest possible audience and not just professionals. In fact, our aim is what we started from in 1990, when the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) was established: **to connect the local level with the European one**, to ensure that citizens participate in social life through processes of speaking out. , awareness of one's conditions, improvement of one's abilities. This is the work we do and the PW is the result of it.

2. POVERTY IN ITALY: NUMBERS AND STATISTICS

by Martina Arachi and Vincenzo Maesano

2.1 Economic poverty

In 2022, the share of the **population in Italy at risk of poverty or social exclusion** (AROPE, composite indicator Europe 2030, which from 2021 replaced the Europe 2020 indicator), **was equal to 24.4%** (it was equal to 25.2 % in 2021). Economic growth, the increase in employment and family incomes have favored a marked reduction in the population in conditions of serious material and social deprivation (4.5 percent in 2022 compared to 5.9 percent in 2021) while it remains the population at risk of poverty is stable (20.1 percent), approximately 11.8 million people. The figure is stable compared to previous years, despite the pandemic, but remains high in European comparison: the EU27 average in 2021 is equal to 16.8%, a value which places Italy in twenty-second place in the ranking of EU countries. The indicator by age group shows how the youngest are at greater risk of poverty (25.4% in 2022) compared to the national average, and once again highlights the economic difficulties of families with minor children. On the contrary, **the risk of poverty for older people** (18.9% in 2022) **has been stably lower than the national average since 2010, confirming the economic protection role played by pension transfers**. However, in the last year the risk of poverty decreased for people up to 34 years of age (in particular, for the 18-24 age group, by 3.2 percentage points, going from 25% in 2021 to 21.8 % of 2022), while it increases for people aged 55 and over (in particular for people over 75 it increases from 16.4% in 2021 to 18.9% in 2022). Regarding the last of the three indicators that make up the AROPE, the indicator of low work intensity, data for the year 2022 is not yet available for Italy; however, until 2021, it emerges that in all age groups, low work intensity has worsened, together with severe housing deprivation.

The disposable income of families grew in 2022, but high inflation eroded its real value, with greater intensity in the second half of the year. In fact, in the first quarter of 2022, although the disposable income of consumer families increased by 2.2% compared to the previous quarter, due to the general increase in prices, **the purchasing power of families decreased by 0.4%** to reach a decrease of 3.7% in the fourth quarter, also due to the particularly strong growth in consumer prices.

The increase in employment, in particular the less qualified, and the government measures to combat energy price increases have supported the income of less well-off households and mitigated the regressive characteristics of the price rise. From next year the Citizenship Income will be replaced as a measure to combat poverty and social exclusion by the more selective Inclusion Allowance; the latter will be aimed only at a part of the families in economic difficulty identified on the basis of some demographic or disability characteristics.

With Legislative Decree 48/2023, the Government has redesigned the measures to combat poverty and social exclusion by introducing the **Inclusion Allowance (AdI)**, which from 2024 **will replace the RdC (Citizenship Income)**. The AdI will also be a subsidy to supplement family income up to the threshold of 6,000 euros per year for households made up of a single person, an increased value with pre-established equivalence coefficients for households of different size and composition. Compared to the RdC, the coefficients will be higher for disabled individuals, but lower for adults between 18 and 59 without care burdens and for minors; however, families with dependent children up to 21 years of age who benefit from the single and universal allowance (AUU) will enjoy full cumulation between the latter and the AdI; in current legislation, however, the part of RdC relating to children who are entitled to the Single Universal Allowance is deducted from the amount of the same. Families who live on rent will also continue to receive a contribution to cover the rent, up to a maximum of 3,360 euros per year. The AdI will be paid for a continuous period of 18 months and, after one month of suspension, it will be renewable.

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To encourage participation in the labor market of adults between 18 and 59 years old without care burdens and in conditions of economic hardship, Legislative Decree 48/2023 also

introduced support for training and work (SFL), which is provided by September 2023. In the case of participation in training programs or projects useful for the community, **the SFL will provide for the provision of a fixed sum allowance (350 euros per month), for a period not exceeding 12 months and not renewable**. Access to the SFL will be reserved for those with an ISEE not exceeding 6,000 euros. To encourage the reintegration into the labor market of both AdI recipients deemed employable by social services and SFL beneficiaries, the new measures will also include the obligation to participate in activation paths and to accept job offers that satisfy specific conditions, to which incentives will be added to beneficiaries and employers in the event of starting a work activity.

Regarding the measures implemented by the Next Generation EU, **the Italian National Recovery and Resilience Plan includes, within it, around 300 measures and over 1000 deadlines for their implementation by 2026**. Among these, around 60 measures have been identified (for over 250 objectives and goals) of interest to Third Sector bodies (ETS) for an investment value of over 40 billion euros. Of the 58 measures and sub-measures of interest to the Third Sector, as of 1 March 2023, 27 have already seen the allocation of the expected funds or at least part of them.

In particular, mission number 5 "Inclusion and Cohesion", component 2 "Social infrastructures, families, communities and the third sector", provides for investments dedicated to **supporting the most vulnerable people (elderly, people with disabilities and those without a fixed abode)** and who takes care of them, both within the family and in more structured contexts. Among the measures of the M5C2 there are 3 measures of particular interest, for a total value of approximately 1.45 billion:

- "Support for vulnerable people and prevention of the institutionalization of non-self-sufficient elderly people";
- "Paths to autonomy for people with disabilities";
- "Temporary housing and post stations".

What is important to underline, however, is that the current Italian government presented a proposal to revise the PNRR to the European Commission in August 2023, the reworking of which took place in a situation of limited transparency given the insufficiency of the data made public as well as the lack of involvement of the social partners and in particular of third sector bodies.

Furthermore, it should be remembered that, based on what appears from the report published on 8 June 2023 by Anac, the priority objective of the Pnrr regarding the inclusion and hiring of people under 36 and women was disregarded: "almost 70% of the contracts of the Pnrr and the Pnc (complementary national plan) provide for a total derogation from the clause that obliges the companies that win the tender to employ at least 30% of young people under 36 and women".

2.2 Educational poverty

The income gap between generations is growing. The weakest groups pay the most, with repercussions on their academic performance. From here also arises the risk of not allowing the new generations to make a leap forward - who experience higher levels of impoverishment than their parents - everything turns into a sort of cage, especially for the young and very young. A trend that has strengthened in Italy during the pandemic emergency. According to Istat data, **over 13% of minors slipped into a condition of absolute poverty after the spread of the epidemic**. And in the 18-34 age group, the share of poor people has grown by more than 11 percentage points.

Therefore, **economic poverty is paired with educational poverty**, as if to support the widespread thesis according to which the higher the rate of poverty in an area, the higher the level of education and professional training will be. The data, in fact, show how economic poverty and educational poverty feed each other, because the lack of cultural means and social networks also reduces employment opportunities. At the same time, **economic constraints limit access to cultural and educational resources**, constituting an objective obstacle for children and young people who come from disadvantaged families. In the short term, this condition undermines the child's right to personal fulfillment and gratification. In the long term, it reduces the very probability that as an adult he will be able to escape from a condition of economic hardship. For this reason, **investing in policies for children and adolescents and in the fight against educational poverty is a long-term investment**, to be monitored also from a territorial perspective.

Since this is a complex phenomenon, it is not easy to give a synthetic measurement. Indeed, educational poverty concerns **various dimensions (cultural, scholastic opportunities, social relations, training activities)** which must be kept in relation to each other. However, some data can help us contextualize. In Italy, 12.5% of children under 18 are in absolute poverty. It means that over 1.2 million young people live in a family that cannot afford the minimum expenses to lead an acceptable lifestyle. Of these, half a million live in the south. An economic hardship that often translates into an educational gap. The most recent OECD-Pisa data processed by the University of Tor Vergata for Save the Children show us how children from the poorest families have much lower results in reading and mathematics than their peers. 24% of children from the most disadvantaged families do not achieve minimum skills in mathematics and reading, compared to 5% of those living in wealthy families. A negative phenomenon, because it leads to economic, educational, cultural and social inequalities being passed down from parents to children. 61% of 15-year-olds in the highest socio-economic and cultural quartile have reached a level of skills that will allow them to learn throughout the rest of their lives. This percentage drops to 26% among children in the lowest quartile. Further data helps us to contextualize the lack of educational, cultural and sporting opportunities among minors: 53% did not read books in the previous year, 43% did not practice sports and 55% did not visit museums or exhibitions.

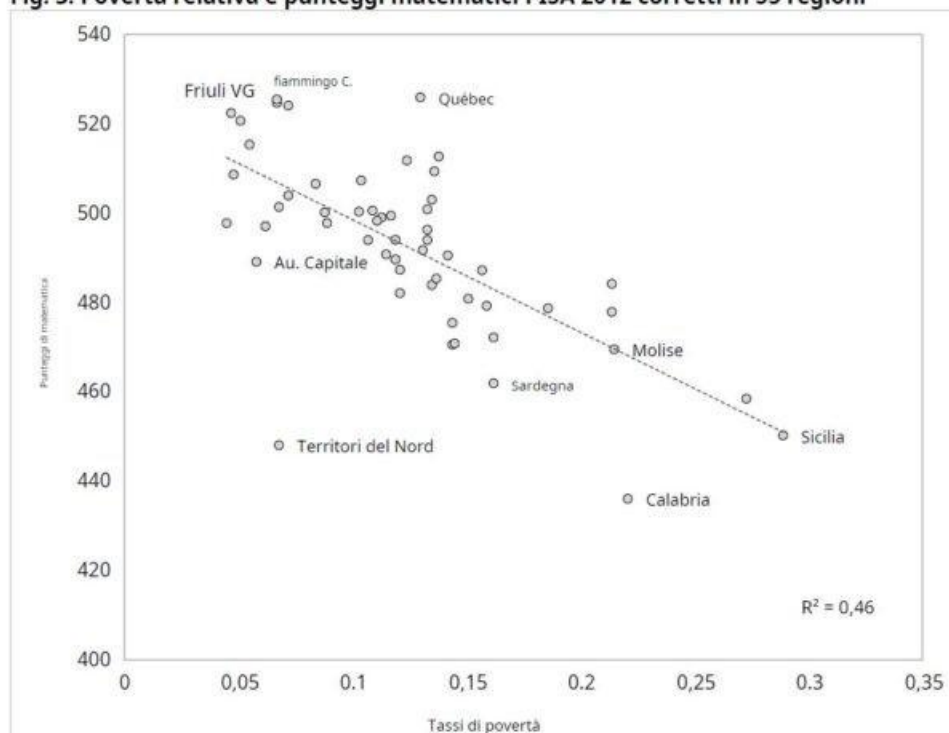
According to the 2022 Save the Children report on educational poverty **in Italy, 67.6% of children under 17 have never gone to the theater, 62.8% have never visited an**

archaeological site and 49.9% have not never entered a museum. 22% did not practice sports or physical activity and only 13.5% of boys and girls under three years old attended a nursery.

Educational poverty is defined by Save the Children as the "**deprivation of the opportunity to learn, experiment, develop and freely flourish the abilities, talents and aspirations of children, girls and adolescents**". It is the impossibility of accessing economic, cognitive and cultural resources for the promotion of one's individual freedom, i.e. educational experiences of various kinds offered by the territory in which boys and girls live. It is therefore not a question of a violation of the right to study alone, but of the lack of educational opportunities across the board: from those connected with cultural enjoyment to the right to play and sporting activities. Fewer opportunities that negatively impact the child's growth. Generally it concerns children and adolescents who live in disadvantaged social contexts, characterized by family hardship, job insecurity and material deprivation. This phenomenon impacts, in the medium term, on the development and job placement opportunities of young people, generating a related case, that of **NEETs**, who do not work and do not look for employment. In Italy, according to ISTAT surveys, NEETs between the ages of 15 and 34 are over 5.7 million (March 2023). Specifically, there are 4,252,000 in the 15-24 age group and 1,493,000 in the 25-34 age group. Italy has thus reached a sad record, it is the country in which there are more NEETs than all the other states of the European Union.

Vittorio Daniele, professor of Economic Policy at the "Magna Graecia" University of Catanzaro, has curated some interesting studies on the correlation between scholastic skills and social inequality. In a paper, the teacher highlighted how the socio economic condition of families has a fundamental role in academic performance. But not only that, there is also the context in which children have lived since childhood.

Fig. 3. Povertà relativa e punteggi matematici PISA 2012 corretti in 55 regioni



Prof. Daniele's study relating relative poverty and Pisa scores

In regions where relative poverty is higher, school test results are lower on average. In the Invalsi tests (National Institute for the Evaluation of the Education and Training System), southern students systematically obtain lower scores than their northern peers.

What can be done, then, to combat the phenomenon of educational poverty? It is necessary to strengthen some educational policy initiatives, such as:

- Qualify early childhood education services;
- Strengthen and qualify the training and teaching offer of schools;
- Promote community educational pacts, accepted by the Ministry of Education and Merit in the School Plan, created and signed locally, which contribute to the construction of an effective educational co-responsibility pact with families based on the principles of learnfare;
- Investing in teacher training and inclusive and participatory teaching, to develop, from an early age, those transversal skills that facilitate learning and growth, also on a personal and socio-environmental level;
- Rethinking the territory as an ecosystem for learning starting from the design of the physical space at school, broadening the field to the surrounding environment, exploiting digital potential, to the point of transforming places of deprivation into large areas of learning, resilience and both educational and social.

What is Europe doing to combat the phenomenon of educational poverty?

There are 3 key investments through the PNRR, all interventions touch on areas capable of **accompanying the life of the minor from birth to the end of the entire training course.**

Starting from the investment in nursery schools, to be increasingly considered as the first step in the child's educational journey. Then there is the plan for the construction of new schools, to equip the national education system with innovative, safe and sustainable learning environments, also in terms of energy consumption.

Finally, **investment against the reduction of territorial gaps in schools appears central**. In particular, **to contain the risk of dispersion and early leaving**, often the consequence of an educational path characterized by poor learning. An intervention to be considered functional to the achievement of the new European objectives. In particular those on improving student skills and reducing early leaving, to be reduced to below 9% at continental level by 2030. We are talking about 1.5 billion euros in total, with the aim of reducing the rate of abandonment from 12.7% currently to 10.2% in 2026.

3. AUSTERITY MEASURES OR FINANCING OF SOCIAL RIGHTS. A CHOICE TO MAKE

by Alessandro Scassellati Sforzolini and Luigi Colombini

3.1 Introduction

The approach to the phenomenon of poverty has been characterized, as regards the institutional and operational choice by the governments that have followed one another over the course of twenty years, by decidedly contrasting and opposing ideological connotations.

After the framework law 328/2000 which outlined the system of interventions and social services, which in relation to the fight against poverty proposed the **minimum income**, the subsequent center-right government already with Law 25 June 2003, n. 155, "Discipline of the distribution of food products for the purposes of social solidarity. Distribution of food products for the purposes of social solidarity", initiated the plan to divide the poor into categories and subcategories. Among these he actually introduced the concept of food poverty, and the role of non-profit organizations dedicated to this purpose both as recipients of food products and their distribution to the poor, who were thus recognized in their task of discretionary identification of people in conditions of poverty, and the methods of providing food, becoming the "secular arm" of the fight against poverty.

The subsequent center-right government in 2008 (fifteen years ago), with Legislative Decree no. 112/2008 established a special fund intended to meet the needs, primarily of a food nature and subsequently also energy and health, of less well-off citizens by introducing the "shopping card": support for less well-off people who, following the extraordinary increase in food prices and energy bills caused by the economic crisis, had found themselves in a state of particular need.

After the interlude of the Governments of the years 2011-2022, characterized by the objective of defining a programmatic and operational institutional "system" for the fight against poverty, based a) on the observance of the principle of vertical subsidiarity (also in relation to European programs) through the ATS; b) on horizontal subsidiarity, c) on the connection with European Funds, d) on the role of Social Workers to carry out the Professional Social Service as the "pivot" of the system, defining adequate strategies (Legislative Decree 147/2017, R.d.C, Plans national fight against poverty, social worker hiring plans); the current Government has started, already with the 2023 finance law, a systematic attack aimed at modifying, if not profoundly destroying, the system laboriously built by previous governments.

3.2 The current operations launched by the center-right government

Already in the electoral programmes, in the wake of a growing "**inverted class envy**" on the R.d.C, fueled by the media, and by continuous reports of abuses (which, according to the former President of the INPS, represented only 1.% , with an undue expenditure of 1.6%), specific actions were indicated to combat it, until its suppression, and with the 2023 finance law the foundations were actually laid for an absolutely different way of identifying poverty.

Food poverty

With law 29 December 2022, n. 197, State budget forecast for the financial year 2023 and multi-year budget for the three-year period 2023-2025, in paragraph 434 the **Fund for the experimentation of food income was established**, managed by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies with the provision of 1.5 million euros for the year 2023 and 2 million euros per year starting from the year 2024, intended to finance, in metropolitan cities, the experimentation of food income, as a measure to combat food waste and poverty, through the provision, to subjects in conditions of absolute poverty, of food parcels made with unsold food from food distribution, to be booked through an application and collected at a distribution center or received at one's home in the case of subjects belonging to categories fragile.

Five months later, with Decree 26 May 2023, n. 78, "Fund for testing food income", provisions have been given for its implementation.

This decree constitutes a retreat compared to the law of 3 June 1937 n. 847, which abolished the Charity Congregations to establish the Municipal Body (ECA) in each municipality of the Kingdom of Italy and the Governmental Assistance Body (Ega) in Rome. These bodies continued the work of supporting the needy offered by the Charity Congregations, and formed the basis for the definition of legal assistance, with the main task of providing economic benefits and food aid to people and families in conditions of proven poverty. . Decree no. 78 in 2023 completely ignores the role of the Regions in carrying out programs to fight poverty, as well as the role of the Professional Social Service.

In absolute conflict with the articles. 2, 3, 38 and 97 of the Constitution, a disparity in treatment is envisaged between citizens residing in metropolitan cities and residents in municipalities that do not fall within them, and third sector bodies are seen as interceptors of need and provision of benefits. Beyond any inclination to give continuity to the intervention, its duration is foreseen for just three years.

With paragraph 450 (budget law 2023) a fund was established, managed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry, with an endowment of 500 million euros for the year 2023, intended for the purchase of goods basic food supplies by individuals in possession of an equivalent economic situation indicator not exceeding 15,000 euros, to be used through the use of a specific enabling system.

This was followed by the Decree of 18 April 2023, "Criteria for identifying families in need, beneficiaries of the economic contribution provided for by article 1, paragraphs 450 and 451, of law 29 December 2022, n. 197", which taking up the provisions of the Legislative Decree 112/2008, and law 197/2022, contains the implementing and application provisions of the aforementioned fund, identifying family units composed of no less than three members and with an ISEE of less than €15,000. The economic benefit, called "Social Card" (dedicated to you), made operational starting from July 2023, is €382.50, i.e. 2.10 euros per day to be divided into three, provided through the Postepay network. This provision, reserved for 1,300,000 poor people, excluding others, contrasts with the art. 2, 3, 38 and 97 of the Constitution, prefiguring a donation system connected both to the predetermined choice of beneficiaries (who must verify with the Municipality whether or not they fall within the lists sent by INPS) and to the configuration of a sort of digitalisation of the poor, immersed in the computer system.

The cutting of the state of poverty

In addition to the identification of absolute poverty and food poverty, in the financial law in paragraph 313 it was provided that "pending an organic reform of the measures to support poverty and active inclusion, from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023 the measure of citizen's income is recognized up to a maximum of 7 monthly payments", and therefore expires in July 2023.

Paragraph 314 specifies that "the provisions referred to in paragraph 313 do not apply in the case of families within which there are people with disabilities, as defined pursuant to the regulation referred to in the decree of the President of the Council of Ministers of 5 December 2013 , n. 159, minors or people at least sixty years of age".

With the legislative decree 4 May 2023, n. 48, containing "Urgent measures for social inclusion and access to the world of work, converted with Law 3 July 2023, n. 85, new social and work inclusion measures were dictated, confirming both what was already indicated in the finance law and defining the inclusion allowance by distinguishing between the employable poor and the non-employable poor as well as support for training and work.

3.3 The consequences

Already in the month of July, brutal procedures were initiated by the INPS to communicate to interested parties the suspension of the RdC, which affected 196,000 families (and others followed in August). The social service of the Municipalities (and not the ATS) is entrusted with a second level of intervention, dumping on it the people rejected from 1 August 2023.

3.4 Conclusions

On the occasion of the World Conference on World Hunger, the current Prime Minister hoped **"that everyone should live with dignity"**, and this assumption should constitute the fundamental reference for the implementation of social policies and the fight against poverty. With the measures implemented in just seven months, these intentions seem unimplemented and do not take into account the constitutional principles that they presuppose according to the art. 3 the pursuit of promoting the best opportunities for citizens and poor citizens to live a dignified and peaceful quality of life, in compliance with respect for social rights and the right to benefit from essential levels of benefits for the exercise of their rights.

In fact, a direct relationship between the State and the poor is prefigured which ignores any reference to true solidarity, to institutional and relational closeness as it is configured in society, and the institutional framework prefigured by constitutional law no. 3/2001, which identifies the Regions in their decisive role also in programs to fight poverty; as well as the role of the associated Municipalities in the ATS for the implementation, in the Area Plans, of specific actions and interventions to fight poverty already started on the basis of the national and regional Plans to fight poverty.

Instead, a policy is implemented aimed at "breaking up" the picture of poverty into many categories, and with various institutional subjects responsible for managing various funds (Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Labor and Social Policies), relegating the Municipalities and the social service to a secondary function, without providing them with the necessary resources and personnel (Social Workers). **Poverty and poor families are the subject of attention linked to electoral consensus and proclamations through specific**

communication strategies, to the extemporaneous granting of support (the inclusion allowance lasts eighteen months, aid for food poverty lasts three years), no longer included in a system policy, but in a concession policy that can vary from year to year.

3.5 What has been implemented and/or proposed so far?

As a preliminary point, it should be noted that in the two-year period 2021-2022, two governments followed one another which characterized two different concepts and actions in addressing policies to combat poverty, also connected to the unleashing of external events (COVID, Russian invasion of Ukraine) which on their behalf have caused an economic and energy crisis which has accentuated the conditions of hardship and poverty of millions of people and families.

It is therefore in this context that the measures carried out in terms of controlling and overcoming economic crises must be identified (which are also recurring in a cyclical manner in Western countries, recalling those of 1973, 1980, 1992, 2008 and the current one), and the concomitant action aimed at guaranteeing and financing social rights. In this regard, it is underlined that this analysis was conducted using state legislation as a reference source as it was expressed in the 2021 and 2023 governments.

In the 2021-2022 government, specific actions were carried out to fight and combat poverty, and the Plan for interventions and social services to combat poverty was approved (with the Ministerial Decree of 30 December 2021 of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies), and the fund for the fight against poverty and social exclusion for the three-year period 2021-2023 was distributed - which follows the previous 2018-2020 plan - with financing of 619 million euros for 2021, 552 million for 2022, 439 million for 2023. The plan, accompanied by specific guidelines and technical sheets, aimed to define homogeneous and uniform intervention actions throughout the national territory, linked to the "LEPS": strengthening of services for implementation of the Citizenship Income, multidimensional evaluation, personalized project and activation of supports; emergency social intervention; services for poverty and extreme marginalization; accessibility to enforceable rights: residence; taking charge and accompaniment for access to universal services-service centers to combat poverty.

In relation to the COVID emergency, various measures have been introduced not only in the health but also social fields, by the State and by the various Italian Regions. Particular attention was given to the development and financing of the Professional Social Service implemented in the Territorial Social Areas. The Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies, with the Ministerial Decree 26/7/2021, approved the annual food distribution program for the year 2021, equal to 46.9 million euros. Similarly, with Ministerial Decree 05/17/2022, Program for the distribution of food to poor people - year 2022, the annual program for the distribution of food to poor people for the year 2022 was adopted, using the resources of the Fund for the distribution of foodstuffs to poor people, amounting to 7,900,000.00 euros. The Interministerial Committee for Economic Planning and Sustainable Development with resolution of 9 June 2021 approved the complementary operational program (POC) of action and cohesion «inclusion 2014-2020». in which context the axis 1 program "support for people in poverty and extreme marginalization" is included, with funding of €58,406,250.00, distinguishing between less developed regions (€48,278,268.00) and regions in transition (€10,127 .982.00).

The current government, which took office in October 2022, has launched a policy that has effectively limited interventions towards the fight against poverty, according to an approach which, also following sensational abuses and an absolute criticality in governing the R.d.C, has led to a conceptual separation between the poor in conditions of employability, blamed for their state and induced to find a job, and the disabled and unemployable poor, beneficiaries of economic aid: the R.d.C. it was abolished and replaced by the inclusion allowance, intended as a possible right to benefit from the benefit only under certain conditions.

Furthermore, a clear separation was highlighted between the condition of full-blown poverty, certified and stigmatized with specific indications, aimed at defining the area of welfare stagnation, defined in specific provisions which are aimed at providing very limited economic support funding (around one euro per day) to 1,300,000 families, with the "Social Card", (for food expenses; medical expenses; electricity and gas bills), and the financial reduction of the program for the distribution of food to poor people - year 2023, which passed from 7,900,000.00 euros for the year 2022 to 6,900,000 euros for 2023.

A set of actions was therefore determined, aimed on the one hand at monetizing the need, and on the other at providing support measures for people and families, certified indigent, of a food and energy nature, which were however absolutely limited and reduced compared to previous years.

3.6 What discrimination do people in poverty face? Do particular disadvantaged categories emerge?

The condition of economic, social and relational disadvantage of people in poverty was addressed in the previous 2021-2022 government with the approval of the National Social Plan 2021-2023 and with the Plan to fight poverty 2021-2023.

With the incoming government, a reverse action has been taken: poor people are indicated as recipients of specific support measures, indicated above, and which consist of the provision of approximately one euro per day (380 euros per year), but at the same time, discrimination is made within the same conditions of poverty expressed by citizens and families, distinguishing a graduation of poverty and conditions of indigence linked to their entitlement to be subject to specific benefits: households receiving income of citizenship; inclusion income; any other measure of social inclusion or support for poverty or in which at least one of the members is a recipient of social insurance for employment-Naspi and monthly unemployment allowance; mobility allowance; solidarity funds for income integration; earnings redundancy fund; any different form of wage supplement or support in the case of involuntary unemployment, provided by the State.

Contrary to an approach already recommended by law no. 328/2000, aimed at defining a single system of support for people in conditions of poverty, with the minimum income, through the qualified role of the Professional Social Service, we are witnessing a unpacking of funds and recipients, with the prefiguration of a single Provider body, the INPS, and a single instrumental body for the digitalisation of the application, Poste spa, with the overcoming of the observance of the principle of vertical subsidiarity which would see the Municipality as the primary institutional subject in relations with the citizen, and the use of the third sector as an auxiliary body for accepting requests for support and providing food.

3.7 Impact (positive and negative) of the measures implemented

As the National Plan to fight poverty continues to be in force until 2023, specific actions and interventions have been identified aimed at defining an institutional and operational system that respects the principle of vertical and horizontal subsidiarity, we are witnessing a surreptitious change which in effect tends to change policies to fight poverty.

In particular, the Plan, which occurred coinciding with the expansion of the COVID pandemic, highlighted the aspects concerning absolute poverty, identifying specific intervention priorities both by building an adequate institutional system and by identifying the Professional Social Service as the central hub for carrying out the interventions to fight poverty, both by confirming the Citizenship Income and by indicating interventions aimed at overcoming the condition of poverty with the already mentioned interventions: multidimensional assessment, personalized project and activation of supports; Emergency social intervention; Services for poverty and extreme marginalization, and finally the support and support for access to universal services - Service Centers to combat poverty.

Alongside this commitment, specific programs to fight and combat poverty have been developed on the regional front, identifying further specific support and aid measures for people and families in difficult conditions (Emilia Romagna, Lombardy, Puglia, Veneto) and identifying the Social Territorial Areas as optimal locations for local planning and implementation of measures.

At present, the suppression of Citizenship Income, the introduction of the Inclusion Allowance, which is also absolutely limited in terms of defining the requirements necessary to access it, the reduction in funding, the introduction of absolutely inadequate support measures, are believed to reveal the overcoming of a system that was based on an operational network based on the role of Municipalities, Employment Centres, etc.

3.8 How does Italy protect essential services? How are they funded and allocated?

It is considered appropriate to define an organic framework of reference that takes into account primarily the founding aspects declared in the Constitution of the Republic: work, dignity, social rights, solidarity, and, in the context of economic relations, assistance.

The references are the articles. 1, 2 and 4 of the Constitution, where on the one hand it is stated that Italy is a democratic Republic founded on work, and on the other the inviolable rights of man are recognized and guaranteed, both as an individual and in social formations where develops its personality, and requires the fulfillment of the mandatory duties of political, economic and social solidarity.

The art. 3 of the Constitution declaring that all citizens have equal social dignity and are equal before the law, without distinction of sex, race, language, religion, political opinions, personal and social conditions, in effect confirms the possibility of all members of the national community to participate on equal terms in the opportunities arising from associated life.

Equally fundamental is the statement according to which it is the duty of the Republic to remove the economic and social obstacles which, by effectively limiting the freedom and equality of citizens, prevent the full development of the human person and effective participation of all workers to the political, economic and social organization of the country.

The art. 29 (The Republic recognizes the rights of the family as a natural society founded on marriage); art. 31 (The Republic facilitates the formation of the family and the fulfillment of related tasks with economic measures and other provisions, with particular regard to large families); article 32 states that the Republic protects the individual's right to health as an inalienable subjective right; art. 38 specifies that "Every citizen unable to work and without the necessary means to live has the right to maintenance and social assistance".

The essential services are indicated in the «essential levels of social services (LEPS)»: the processes, interventions, services, activities and integrated performances must be ensured throughout the national territory on the basis of the provisions of article 117, second paragraph, letter m), and in this regard the "Control Room" was established for the definition of the LEPS, which at present, according to law 328/2000, are: professional social service and social secretariat for information and consultancy for individuals and families; emergency social intervention service for personal and family emergency situations; House assistance; residential and semi-residential structures for people with social fragility; residential or day reception centers of a community nature.

Funding for essential services occurs through various state and regional funds.

At the national level the main source of financing is the **National Fund for Social Policies**. The Fund was established with law. n. 449/1997 containing "Measures for the stabilization of public finances", into which resources from other funds were brought together, the purposes of which fell within those of social policies. The primary objective was to bring the allocations foreseen by sectoral laws into a single Fund, thus achieving an initial rationalization of the sector legislation which was then concluded with the enactment of law 8 November 2000, n. 328 containing "Framework law for the creation of the integrated system of social interventions and services".

The **Fund for family policies** established at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers by the legislative decree 223/2006 converted by law. 248/2006, finances the functioning of the National Observatory on the Family, the development of the National Plan for the Family, supports international adoptions, life and work conciliation initiatives, the Credit Fund for newborns and interventions relating to activities of regional competence.

The **Fund for youth policies**, established by the legislative decree 223/2006 converted by law. 248/2006, is aimed at promoting the right of young people to cultural and professional training and inclusion in social life, through interventions aimed at guaranteeing young people's right to housing and access to credit. The Fund finances projects of significant national interest, actions aimed at the territory, with a share of the resources that is divided between the Regions and in compliance with the framework program agreements signed, projects initiated by public and private entities.

The **National Fund for the employment of disabled people** was established with law no. 68/99, and aims to encourage the employment of disabled people in the public administration, private employers and cooperatives. Since 2016 the Fund has been managed by INPS.

The **Fund for non-self-sufficiency**, established by the 2007 financial law, guarantees, throughout the national territory, the implementation of the essential levels of welfare benefits for non-self-sufficient people; the resources are distributed annually between the Regions on the basis of data relating to the non-self-sufficient population and other

demographic and socio-economic indicators. The acts and provisions relating to the use of the fund are adopted in concert, subject to agreement with the joint State-Regions conference.

Fund for the fight against poverty and social exclusion, established with the 2016 Stability Law (Law 208/2015) the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies the Fund for the fight against poverty has the aim of guaranteeing the implementation of a National plan to fight poverty and social exclusion and finance the launch of a measure to combat poverty throughout the national territory.

The aforementioned funds are disbursed to the Regions which transfer them to the Social Territorial Areas established by individual or associated Municipalities, for the implementation of interventions and social services based on specific criteria and operational lines indicated in the regional planning documents.

At present, since the standard needs of social services have not yet been defined on the basis of the specific Technical Commission, a condition of disparity and gap remains between the northern regions and those of the central-south regarding the level of uniform necessary funding for the whole country.

In this regard, we note the commitment of the current Government "For the purposes of the complete implementation of article 116, third paragraph, of the Constitution and the full overcoming of territorial gaps in the enjoyment of services, to determine the essential levels of services concerning the rights civil and social services which must be guaranteed throughout the national territory, pursuant to Article 117, second paragraph, letter m) of the Constitution, as a constitutionally necessary spending threshold which constitutes an insurmountable core for providing social benefits of a fundamental nature, for ensure the fair and transparent conduct of financial relations between the State and the territorial autonomies, to promote a fair and efficient allocation of resources linked to the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, approved with the decree-law of 6 May 2021, n. 59, converted, with amendments, by law 1 July 2021, n. 101, and the full overcoming of territorial gaps in the enjoyment of benefits relating to civil and social rights and as a condition for the attribution of further functions.

This provision peremptorily refers to the art. 2 and 3 of the Constitution, as well as art. 97, where they affirm, within the framework of the non-negotiable fundamental principle of the indivisible unity of the Republic, the State's commitment to guaranteeing the equality of rights and duties of citizens, to carrying out adequate policies to overcome the obstacles that prevent the full realization of citizens, and to overcome unequal treatment in the provision of services.

3.9 Taxation in Italy: is the tax system progressive and fair?

According to Prof. Piketty, Nobel Prize winner for economics, **the welfare state cannot ignore the fiscal state, which fuels it**. Over the last thirty years, the tax system in Italy has been the subject of various amnesty measures and therefore with the renunciation by the State of an effective pursuit of tax evasion and the evasion of social and social security contributions, with the absolute impossibility of defining a fair and sustainable system, which is based on the universal contribution of everyone to the composition of public spending.

The **lack of a policy of equity and rigor** in the definition of tax policies, on the one hand, leads to contribution and distribution **inequity to the advantage of many categories of tax**

evaders; on the other hand, ignoring the principle that many drops of water make up the oceans, leads to the creation of many limited and easily identifiable reservoirs which in effect are destined to dry up, and never reach the oceans. Those who do not evade become the object of tax harassment with a tangle of taxes, duties and duties.

Ultimately, the tax system must be understood in its function of "fiscal return" in terms of services and organization of the Public Administration, such as to restore the citizen in his duty to contribute, as a producer of income, to the expenses of the State.

The lack of decisive action aimed at defining a fair tax system according to principles already indicated in the Constitution, leads to the abnormal growth of public debt which makes our country the most exposed to the danger of default (already over 80 billion of euros to pay interest on the debt). In the current perspectives, which see the solution in "fiscal peace", it is believed that many doubts remain regarding the pursuit of the objectives of reducing public debt, with the consequent reduction of funds for the implementation of social policies and the strengthening of public services, favoring the use of privatization of social services.

3.10 What reforms is Italy adopting to invest in the coverage and accessibility of social protection?

In general terms, social protection should be considered an achievement of Europe, which has initiated and progressively developed social protection policies since the end of the 19th century. The reference basis for our country is the Constitution of the Republic, and in this perspective the attention paid by successive Governments over the course of thirty years to making adequate social investments in the construction of the social protection system has been varied, based on social security, healthcare and assistance, according to the classic canons of European welfare. In light of what is envisaged by law 833/1978 on the National Health Service and by law 328/2000 on the Integrated System of Social Services, there is a reduction in financial and structural commitment for the development and strengthening of social protection policies. On the one hand we are witnessing the rigid determination of classes of beneficiaries in relation to their existential condition (absolute poverty, relative poverty, disability) and on the other the launch of decisive systemic policies aimed at the elderly and non-self-sufficient people. The determination to define, through the control room, the standard needs of social services and related financing is believed to be an absolutely decisive start to guaranteeing all citizens the exercise of civil and social rights through the definition of the LEPS.

3.11 The controversial issue of the minimum wage in Italy

Why the legal minimum wage

In the last century, in Italy and Europe the poor were the unemployed. In this century, however, the phenomenon of the working poor has spread, affecting people who have a job but who also have an income lower than 60% of the national median income. To combat this phenomenon, the European Union launched Directive 2041 of 19 October 2022, relating to adequate minimum wages, which must be implemented by the Member States within two years of its entry into force. In Italy there are 4,578,535 workers who earn less than 9 euros gross per hour (if thirteenth salary and severance pay accruals are not taken into account, with an income that does not reach 12 thousand euros per year, below the threshold of the so-called "relative poverty"), including more than 90% of domestic workers, 35.1% of those who work in agriculture and 26.2% of employees of private companies. In particular, 38% of

people under 35 and 26% of workers earn less than 9 euros. Numbers that make clear the dimension of an explosive phenomenon that undermines the social and territorial cohesion of the country.

There is, therefore, a widespread problem of **wages that are too low**, and the phenomenon is growing. There are, therefore, the social reasons for a legislative intervention, which can no longer be replaced by the jurisprudential minimum wage, which is increasingly less capable of guaranteeing an effective application of the constitutional provision regarding sufficient remuneration. The proof lies in the appearance with increasing frequency in jurisprudence of sentences which declare inadequate, and therefore in conflict with the art. 36, co. 1 of the Constitution, the remuneration is fixed by the national collective agreements stipulated by the comparatively more representative organizations.

The defenders of the status quo (including the majority that supports the current government, but also a large union like the CISL) argue that **the legal minimum wage would not be the solution**, because there are Italian companies that cannot pay it. But, with this criterion, the art should not exist. 36, co. 1 of the Constitution, which states that "**The worker has the right to remuneration proportionate to the quantity and quality of his work and in any case sufficient to ensure a free and dignified existence for himself and his family**". From the economic point of view of a market economy, companies that are unable to survive by respecting the rules should go out of business to allow for a more efficient allocation of the capital factor.

Furthermore, the experience of Germany - the country that most recently, in 2015, introduced the legal minimum wage and in which this year it amounts to 12.41 euros per hour - has shown the positive effects of the legal measure.

Italy and the European Directive

Only Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Austria and Italy are the countries in the Union without any legislation on the minimum wage. However, ever since the Commission's proposal, the Directive has been very clear in providing that it does not create an obligation on Member States to introduce a legal minimum wage in the States in which wages are set by negotiation, nor to give *erga omnes* effect. to the negotiation itself (art. 1, §4 definitive). The directive, however, requires that, in the event that collective bargaining does not cover at least 80% of working people, States promote "a framework of conditions favorable to collective bargaining, by law following consultation with the social partners or through an agreement with the latter. This Member State also defines an action plan to promote collective bargaining" (art. 4, par. 2).

There are doubts about the reliability of the estimates that assume this threshold has been achieved in Italy, as they do not consider false self-employed workers and illegal workers, contrary to what is required by the art. 2 of the Directive, and in any case it would be necessary to raise the question whether the 80% threshold can be considered reached through the very abundant contractual production of employers' and trade union organizations lacking effective representativeness or dubious representativeness, even if perhaps represented in the CNEL (National Council of Economy and Work). From the CNEL data itself, it emerges that 13% of workers whose employment relationships are declared as subordinate and for whom the applied collective agreement is known - therefore already a narrower base than the total - do not see a collective agreement applied stipulated by employers' and trade unions' organizations represented in the CNEL itself.

Therefore, **something must be done**: and moreover, in the last legislature representatives of different parliamentary groups had presented nine different bills in the two branches of Parliament; and in this legislature there are at least six in the House and one in the Senate.

The problematic issues of a possible legislative intervention

There are several main issues that Parliament should address if it were to move towards legislative intervention.

First of all, there is the issue relating to the **relationship between law and collective bargaining**. In order not to undermine the right of the social partners to carry out their activities freely (and to prevent the legislative intervention from resulting in a downward flattening of wages and in an undesirable flight of companies from their associative system of representation, thus being more convenient apply the legal wages rather than those of the collective agreements) **the legislator should pay attention to setting as the minimum legal wage that foreseen for each level of classification by the collective agreements stipulated by the comparatively most representative organizations**. This is proposed by almost all the proposals filed in this legislature, showing themselves to be very respectful of the traditional role of wage authority recognized in Italy by collective agreements, and capable of making autonomous regulation and heteronomous regulation complementary, rather than competing. The only exception is a proposal that simply indicates a minimum fixed amount, exposing itself to the aforementioned risk.

Nor would a possible objection have any value, according to which in this way the collective agreement would be made effective *erga omnes*. In fact, there is the position taken a few years ago by the Constitutional Court with sentence 26 March 2015, n. 51, regarding a similar provision in force for work in cooperatives.

Then there is the issue relating to the scope of application of a possible law which would be conditioned by what the European Directive prescribes, which addresses it in art. 2 prescribing that "This Directive applies to workers in the Union who have an employment contract or an employment relationship as defined by the law, collective agreements or practices in force in each Member State, taking into account the jurisprudence of the Court of justice". This leads us to believe that we should include all the figures mentioned in Considerandum n. 21 of the agreed text of the Directive ("Provided that they meet these criteria, public and private sector workers, as well as domestic workers, on-call workers, intermittent workers, voucher workers, digital platform workers, trainees, apprentices and other atypical workers as well as bogus self-employed workers and undeclared workers could fall within the scope of this Directive."

On this topic, however, the legislative proposals known so far in this legislature are more varied, some limit themselves to considering subordinate workers, others include the hetero-organized collaborations referred to in the art. 2 Legislative Decree 81/2015, others also extend to coordinated and continuous collaborations, to agents and non-subordinate sales representatives.

Open questions and possible solutions

Currently, in Italy the debate revolves around various topics, such as the level of the minimum wage, the procedures and criteria to be established to establish it and to establish its

periodic adjustment and the involvement of trade unions and employers' organizations in the definition of the same.

Many European countries have a technical or tripartite Commission between the Government and the social partners in their minimum wage legislation, with various functions. The solution depends on the fact that none of the countries of the Union have so far chosen the path of referring to collective agreements for determining the minimum wage.

This provision, present in four of the bills currently under discussion in the Chamber, is however problematic. In fact, if the Commission for dialogue between institutions, trade unions and employers' associations had real power to update the legal minimum wage, or even just the mandatory legal minimum threshold thereof, we would be faced with the establishment of a third wage authority, in addition to collective agreements and the law. If the Commission then provided for significant participation of the social partners, it would constitute a parallel forum for wage negotiation, which would be detrimental to collective bargaining as a wage authority.

The set of different legislative proposals also demonstrates that superimposing legislative intervention on the minimum wage on issues such as those of the general effectiveness of collective agreements or the measurement of union representativeness, with all the complex technical and political problems that characterize them, each and every in their combination, it could have the effect not of simultaneously resolving the issues around which the legislator, the doctrine and the social partners have been racking their brains for decades, but of bogging down the discussion on the legal minimum wage, making it extremely difficult to approve a legislative intervention of any kind.

Then there is the question of what the mandatory minimum wage should be. Is it necessary to provide by law a figure below which not even the minimum wage (established by law but specifically identified by the national collective agreement) can go? The major trade union confederations believe that it is sufficient to extend, even as a parameter, the remuneration of the national collective agreements stipulated by the major organizations. However, the numbers of poor labor in Italy deny that collective bargaining between the comparatively more representative employers' and trade union organizations has succeeded in averting the phenomenon of poor labor.

When analyzing the figures that the national legislator could set, it should be remembered that the parameters of the Directive consist of 60% of the median salary or 50% of the average salary. It should be kept in mind that according to ISTAT, the threshold of two thirds of the median value of wages - which defines low wage earners in Europe - was 8.5 euros in 2018, while on the same date the average gross salary was 15, 8 euros, of which 50% would therefore have been 7.9 euros gross. Furthermore, the minimum contribution, in the hypothesis of a part-time relationship with a 40-hour week, is 8.09 euros for 2023.

Beyond the updating of statistical data, any proposals which, once deemed indispensable to set a mandatory minimum figure, set it at a figure lower than the nine euros mentioned in two of the six current proposals would therefore not comply with the criteria set out in the Directive. under discussion, from which the one that sets it at ten stands out.

At the same time, reliance - chosen by three of the proposals under discussion - on collective bargaining alone for the identification of minimums would not be satisfactory: daily news and jurisprudence show us that there are sectors where this is not at all suitable to guarantee

to those who work a free and dignified existence, and very dangerous criminal sanctions may even arise for employers who in good faith have relied on the provisions of the national collective labor agreements stipulated by the comparatively most representative organizations.

The update of the legal minimum wage defined by reference to collective agreements would naturally derive from the contractual renewals themselves. Particularly careful, however, in the face of chronic delays in contractual renewals, and especially those that provide for lower salary levels, is the bill that provides for automatic revaluation, based on changes in the consumer price index for families of workers and employees, of the amounts foreseen by the CCNL which have expired and not yet been renewed. As regards the mandatory minimum figure set by the legislator, in this case too the choice is between indexing the minimum figure set by the legislator (whatever the amount), or entrusting it to ministerial commissions and decrees.

3.12 From citizenship income (2019) to inclusion allowance (2024)

We have restricted this intervention to the last 4 years, to facilitate the reading of what is happening and make it more up to date for those who are less familiar with the subject. In fact, reading the laws, decrees and regulations that accompany the measures to combat poverty (and not only) is not very simple, also due to the language which is not very fluid in reading and understanding unless you are the one who wrote them.

One of the principles that have accompanied Cilap in recent years has been to facilitate access: **to information, to rights, to participation of people in poverty**. Principle already recognized in the European Treaties and in the European Charter of Fundamental Rights (to summarize).

Cilap Eapn Italy has never considered the RdC a complete measure to combat poverty because it did not take into account people in poverty or in conditions of social exclusion who have never entered the world of work or who have left it for various reasons (psycho - socio-environmental) and cannot be included. The RdC has also excluded those who work with a low income (working poor) who, despite having the requirements, cannot contribute to the Municipalities' projects or give further availability of time to the Employment Centres.

The RdC excluded the Municipalities from accepting the application and from the initial assessment of the requirements and needs of the applicants.

Lastly, not having hired social workers as Navigators, the only ones competently able to analyze needs, and professional educators, the only ones able to initiate accompanying measures, has in fact contributed to the failure of the second leg of the RdC.

The RdC's objectives were acceptable, even if two out of three concerned work: improving the match between job supply and demand; increase employment; fight poverty and inequalities.

With the Citizenship Income, poverty entered the political battle, it was used as a weapon whose results are the **criminalization of people in poverty**.

In this regard, Cilap has as its reference the Adequate Minimum Income which is aimed at those who at a specific moment in their lives are not able to work and who need active inclusion paths, as per the European Parliament Resolution of 2010.

The adequate minimum income, of which Eapn with the "Emin" project (European Minimum Income Network) carried out two studies and analyzes at European level between 2013 and 2018 with data collected on the "ground" with which the measures were identified on the basis of which it is possible to consider the effectiveness of a measure to combat poverty such as the Adequate Minimum Income:

- Recipients for relevant inclusion actions must be identified;
- Establish that women should be the recipients of the economic benefit for families, considered more responsible;
- The adequate minimum income is an integral part of the activities of the professional social service, because this measure cannot be considered as a function of a job;
- Adequate work and minimum income are two sides of the same coin, full social integration, but not dependent;
- The skills of social services operators must be improved with specific Master's degrees.

But let's get to today.

Inclusion Allowance

The inclusion allowance was established from 1 January 2024 as a national measure to combat poverty, fragility and social exclusion of vulnerable groups through social inclusion, as well as training, work and active policy paths. of work. The applicant's family unit must be in possession of a valid ISEE not exceeding €9,360.00. (this is for all types of families)

As a fundamental premise, it should be underlined that a clear distinction is made between employable people (the unemployed) and therefore in a position to work, and unemployable people, due to seniority or disability, thus cutting out the audience of people in poverty, ignoring the constitutional pursuit to promote the quality of life and respect for the dignity of individuals and families.

The primary importance of work in the process of social inclusion is underlined (as stated by an ancient and sad motto "work makes you free"), and the secondary referral to the unspecified social services of the Municipalities for people in fragile conditions .

The Inclusion Allowance is defined as a **measure of economic support and social and professional inclusion**, conditioned on means testing (demonstrating that you meet the requirements) and adhering to a personalized path of activation and social and work inclusion.

To this end, the members of the group who receive the inclusion allowance who are unemployed, adults, not engaged in courses of study, must undertake the process of job placement after registering with the SIISL (information system for social and work inclusion) which transmits the data to the competent Employment Centre.

Beneficiaries of the Inclusion Allowance between the ages of 18 and 29, who have not fulfilled their education obligations, must attend first level adult education courses.

Once the digital activation agreement has been signed, the families benefiting from the Inclusion Allowance are required to join a personalized social and work inclusion path.

The path is defined as part of one or more projects aimed at identifying the needs of the family unit as a whole and of the individual members.

The (economic) benefit consists of:

- **income support** of up to 6 thousand euros per year with a minimum amount of 480.00 euros per month increased to 560.00 if all members are at least 67 years old or if there are severely disabled people;
- **rent supplement** up to a maximum of 3360.00 euros per year or equal to 1800.00 euros for families made up of over 67s or those with serious or non-self-sufficient disabilities.

The inclusion allowance will last 18 months with a 1-month stop and possible renewals for a further 12 months, always with a 1-month stop. In the event of starting a work activity, the allowance will be cumulative with the relevant income up to 3000.00 euros per year, which will be communicated to INPS.

The grant will lapse in the event of refusal of the first suitable job offer, as indicated below:

- permanent contract without distance limits, full time or at least part time for at least 60%, with salary foreseen by the CCNL;
- fixed-term contract within 80 km of residence. Only if there are children under the age of fourteen in the family unit, even with legally separated parents, the offer must be accepted if the place of work does not exceed a distance of 80 kilometers from the home or can be reached within the maximum time limit of 120 minutes by public transport. The allowance is suspended for the period of any employment contracts of up to 6 months and resumes at the end.

Returning to what has already been indicated in the law establishing the RdC, it is specified that as part of the personalized path, a commitment to participation in projects useful to the community (PUC), owned by municipalities or other public administrations for this purpose affiliated with the municipalities, in the cultural, social, artistic, environmental, educational and protection of common goods fields, to be carried out in the municipality of residence, compatibly with the beneficiary's other activities. The carrying out of these activities is free of charge, is not comparable to a subordinate or para-subordinate job and in any case does not involve the establishment of a public employment relationship with the public administrations. We would also have something to say about this measure: did it work? How were the PUCs received by the rest of the citizens?

With Presidential Decree n. 616/1977, the powers to provide economic benefits and food aid to people and families in conditions of proven poverty and who have carried out economic assistance programs through the Municipalities were transferred to the Regions.

The strategies for fighting poverty have been illustrated above, and in any case at present it is believed that the complex process of establishing a network system, based on the principle of vertical subsidiarity (the most immediate relationship between the citizen and the institutions is represented by the Municipality), which presupposes, according to the European Charter of Local Autonomy and the Legislative Decree. lgs. 267/2000 adequate funding for the exercise

of functions, and horizontal subsidiarity (relationship between civil society and institutions, has been interrupted.

In effect, a process based on the acceptance of the application, on its interpretation, on the definition, based on the "social anamnesis" and the formulation of the "social diagnosis" and, consequently, of the "Treatment Plan", implementation is carried out and verification of the intervention, according to the classic canons of the Professional Social Service", the exclusive competence of the Social Worker", in a universal manner, and which all citizens and their families must observe, but this is sent in second instance to a non better identified "social service" of the Municipality, which is glimpsed, despite the absence of adequate resources and social personnel (in any case started by the previous Government), as a second level institution compared to the INPS and the CAF (Fiscal Assistance Centres) .

We are witnessing a "digitalisation" of the poor, and based on what they declare, they are admitted or not admitted to the benefit.

The condition of poverty, its stigmatization, the absence of any approach based on solidarity, on charity, on the perception of an audience of crafty and exploiters, who therefore must be warned and punished (which in any case was already foreseen in the R.d.C., but not implemented) on the consideration that poverty is not a priority, but residual compared to development policies which give priority to fiscal peace, the collaboration of tax evaders, and prefigure a reduction in tax revenues (the only source for feeding the welfare state), portend dark times.

It remains to be seen what prospects will emerge in relation to the National Plan to fight poverty which expires in 2023, and how much the Regions that have carried out meritorious work in this regard will be able to do from 2024.

4. STORIES OF POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

by Giulia Segna

4.1 Addictions, educational poverty and illegal employment: the interventions of Parsec

Claudio, Barbara and Luca are operators of Parsec Social Cooperative, active in the suburbs of **Rome**. Everyone is the representative of a specific area of action: **consumption and addictions; minors and families; migration, trafficking and exploitation**. “The element that distinguishes us”, they explain, “is the strong component of social research, which allows us to perceive and analyze new needs and emerging phenomena”. “We do it by studying literature”, they continue, “but also through interviews, questionnaires and focus groups with people, to ensure we are always in contact with the territory”. Based on the phenomena they identify, they then plan intervention responses that are as concrete and effective as possible.

During 2022, the addiction sector (e.g. alcohol, psychotropic substances, gambling) counted **604** people taken into care. Many of these are young, even teenagers, and the type of **addiction varies depending on their socio-economic background**: “Regarding drugs”, they specify, “crack and heroin are considered poor and/or very poor consumption because they are cheap and are easily available, while cocaine is more typical of a medium-high range”.



The impact of an addiction, whatever it is, is devastating not only on direct consumers but also and above all on families and the entire community. For this reason, in addition to risk containment and damage reduction activities through actions such as distribution of sterile material and legal assistance, Parsec is committed to information and public awareness campaigns in places of social gathering such as schools, neighborhood festivals, supermarkets or senior centers.

Any initiative, however, follows the approach of **proximity to the territory**: in parallel with the activities at the day centers and residential communities, the Cooperative also relies on mobile units, groups of operators who roam the streets of the city. “The

stages are always the same”, they specify, “so that users have points of reference: the outings are spread over three days a week and each day is dedicated to a specific neighborhood”.

In 2022, the minors and families area counted **298 people** taken into care. These are unaccompanied foreign minors, young Italians moved away from their families, young people in precautionary custody or under house arrest. For them, among other services, those

to combat educational poverty: in agreement with a local public school, they offer remedial courses and teaching repetitions. “The demand from families is very high, we have a waiting list that is always full!”.

The initiatives related to the migration, trafficking and exploitation sector, in 2022, counted **229 people**. One of the most relevant areas of intervention is that of combating illegal employment, a widespread phenomenon in Italy and, in particular, in southern Lazio. Also in this case the preferred approach is territorial, close to the users, so the mobile units move from area to area to legally assist the victims, support them in reporting, disseminate information and raise awareness about the **dignity of work**. In this case, the groups of operators travel via a camper which, once parked, easily transforms into an office, where they welcome users.

Although the actions to combat illegal employment can expose them to serious risks, they say they do not feel in danger. “In 15 years of activity, there has only been one episode of actual threat.” What protects them is discretion: “we do not behave as champions of justice, nor do we deal harshly with the realities that exploit them, rather we propose alternatives and highlight the advantages of regular employment”. The objective, therefore, is to **arouse interest in the executioner, as well as in the victim**.

For info: www.cooperativaparsec.it - info@cooperativaparsec.it

4.2 Binario 95, the Roman social center that welcomes, supports and listens to homeless people

An Istat survey (2022) shows that in **Rome** more than **23,000 people live on the streets**. The most represented age group is **35-54 years** and there are approximately twice as many males as women.

Among the most involved organizations on the front is Binario 95, a social hub that has been offering hospitality and support to homeless people for over twenty years. Fabrizio Schedid, an expert operator with a profound knowledge of local social dynamics, says that the services range from responding to more concrete needs such as eating, sheltering from the cold, taking a shower and getting dressed, to more complex ones such as legal assistance and orientation to the healthcare system.



Ph: www.binario95.it

“Over time”, he explains, “the users have changed: the homeless have always existed but before they were mostly elderly, while today many are young people - especially foreigners - waiting to be called for a house or a job”. “The limbo condition in which they are forced to live,” he continues, “prolongs for so long that then the situations worsen, to the point of becoming dangerous or uncontrollable: **they are kids full of dreams and energy, you don't keep them, they get exasperated!**”

Thus, as vulnerable as eager to give a meaning to their days, many of them end up in the trap of drug dealing, and therefore in prison or in a psychiatric hospital. Fabrizio uses the expression "stratification of problems" to indicate that the frustration caused by life on the street adds to already seriously precarious psychological conditions: the majority of homeless men and women have suffered traumatic stress which, if not treated for time, can only get worse. In fact, isolation from the family, migratory past, violence, loss of job or sudden poverty are the most common phenomena. Theoretically, the national health system - due to its public nature - should take care of it, but **the medical staff is always under pressure and the hospitals are overcrowded**, so it only works in emergencies and never in a planned and constructive way. This applies both to medical-surgical interventions and to psychological assistance.

According to Fabrizio, after the Covid pandemic things have even gotten worse: the marginalized are even more marginalized. In fact, during the months of lockdown, almost all the services normally provided in person moved online, **cutting out anyone who did not have the tools and knowledge to access them**. Among these, obviously, those who lived on the streets.

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5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AN INCLUSIVE FUTURE

by Cilap - Eapn Italy

Over the course of thirty years, **the phenomenon of poverty, despite the commitment of States to address it with adequate measures, has increased**, rather than decreased, as various studies show, and inequalities and poverty have grown, also in relation to decisions of a global nature which have led to free trade, globalization, delocalization from typical regions for their production of specific goods (textiles, manufacturing, etc.) to other countries, for pure cynical economic convenience, ignoring the principle of social responsibility business, to the accentuation of policies of exploitation of raw materials by multinational companies that have impoverished entire countries, in search of tax havens, with transfers of headquarters and administrative apparatus from one country to another.

Against this backdrop, it is considered absolutely necessary to **relaunch and strengthen the "welfare state"**, which has characterized Europe since the last century, and which has led to the configuration, unique on the planet, of European "welfare", despite its contradictions and its limits.

It is also believed that the **"fiscal state"** is strengthened (with its strong points being the progressive income tax and fiscal equity) which feeds the welfare state with its own resources, for the implementation of social policies aimed at guaranteeing the exercise of fundamental rights by the person which are articulated in the creation of specific services and interventions of a universal nature (education, health, social security, assistance, training, overcoming inequalities, promotion of distributive justice).

In this context it is also necessary to refer to the Europe of social rights, as a legal basis for the exercise and demand of adequate interventions and actions; we therefore refer to the art. 30 of the European Social Charter, which sets out the right to protection against poverty and social exclusion. It is on this basic approach that the programs to fight against poverty have been developed, and, in relation to the recognition of civil society and its organized expressions, and in this context the action of CILAP is underlined, with its articulation network in Europe, which operates in synergy with European and national institutions and qualifies itself as a "social sensor" and bearer of the interests of people in poverty, bearing witness to their hardship and proposing the most appropriate measures to promote overcoming this condition, and the document developed outlines the policies for their pursuit.

Since the birth of social networks (1990), **programs have been launched to fight against poverty and not against poor people**. We complained that this theme was limited only among those who worked in the social sector and in particular with the homeless, Roma, migrants, etc.

Until poverty was a land of political conquest, we felt that we were unable to get out of the "fence of silence", **we felt ignored**: the media didn't talk about it, public opinion wasn't interested, much less the parties.

Considering how things went, maybe it was better this way.

6. INFO AND CONTACTS

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