



OUT MORE THAN IN

The new reception system for asylum seekers and refugees and the conditions of those left out. A qualitative analysis.

The new Report *Out more than In – The new reception system for asylum seekers and refugees and the conditions of those left out. A qualitative analysis* is the fourth in a series of studies undertaken by Naga's Observatory group **with the objective of monitoring and analysing the status of the reception system for asylum seekers and refugees as well as the conditions of those excluded from it, with a particular focus on Milan** where the association has been active since 1987. On the one hand it describes the changes in the law introduced by the so called "Lamorgese decree" (December 2020) along with an in depth analysis of the SAI (Sistema di accoglienza e Integrazione, Reception and Integration System). On the other hand, it denounces the immense difficulties faced by those who find themselves living in the metropolitan area with no accommodation at all. The last section of the Report presents testimonies gathered in collaboration with Progetto Drago Verde (Green Dragon Project) in the course of 2021 and includes records of those directly affected by the lack of accommodation, interviews with case workers and other employees of the reception system, articles from the media and Naga's own views.

The Report is the result of activities carried out during 2020-2021, which have been dramatically impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Milan is one of the Italian cities and provinces with the highest number of Covid-19 cases, hence the research methodology followed in previous reports had to be adapted to this new context: the Observatory turned to online meetings and interviews, conducted remote visits of the reception centres, strengthened its network with other associations active on the ground, interviewed and consulted asylum seekers and refugees encountered during its daily activities.

The first chapter, *Update on the reception system for asylum seekers and refugees in Italy* gives **an overview of the legislative changes regarding the reception system**, most notably the introduction of the status of **Special Protection** and ensuing residence permit, as an additional form of protection with respect to International Protection; the reform of the asylum seeking procedure (even though not strong enough to remedy the erosion of the right to asylum brought about by the "Salvini Decree"); the **reform of the reception system**. On the last item, services and goods provided (for example Italian language classes) have been increased; moreover, those who are still seeking asylum have been readmitted to access the SAI projects (promoted by local authorities and previously called SIPROIMI and SPRAR), no longer reserved only to those refugees whom the permit had already been granted to. However, problems remain concerning the number of places available as these are insufficient to meet the demands of those needing reception.

The second chapter, SIPROIMI/SAI, a delicate and difficult passage, **offers an in-depth analysis of reception conditions within the SAI**. By using official data as well as interviews with staff and guests, it highlights improvements in the reception projects together with some critical aspects such as the consequences of **the two tier system**, which establishes a significant difference in services between asylum seekers and refugees, and the difficulties in managing projects during the pandemic. The increasing number of people who live homeless either during or after the course of the asylum procedure, is a constant reminder that housing remains a major critical issue.

The third chapter, *Reception in Milan – our field observations*, **presents a picture of the situation in Milan**, from the *Piano Freddo* project (Winter Plan – winter night shelters) for people with no fixed abode, to the introduction of the “fictitious residence” for foreign citizens, to the initial reception for asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors. **The emerging image goes far from that of a welcoming city of solidarity as portrayed by the media: the pandemic worsened a system often run under emergency management which fails to respond to the real needs of the people it is supposed to assist. As a consequence a part of the population has no access to rights they should be entitled to, such as the right to health.**

The fourth chapter, *Giving voice to those who are being silenced*, **is a collection of precious testimonies from people who live or have lived on the street during the pandemic**. Regularly Naga accompanied the **Drago Verde Project** during its outreach activities at night, with the double objective of providing material support and giving voice to the people encountered. Worries about personal health, looking for jobs, family issues and attaining some sort of dignified living sum up with feelings of disenchantment, hardship and loneliness, in a state of constant waiting and invisibility.

The final part summarises the **most significant changes introduced by the “Lamorgese Decree” and some of its critical aspects** referring to the new reception system (such as the significant under-resourcing of the workforce compared to the number of guests). **The many obstacles faced by people without accommodation in Milan reveal a system unable to propose structural solutions**, lacking in adequate and well directed public investments as well as flexibility and creativity, unable to propose concrete answers to the needs of those who are without an accommodation and a place to call home.

The Report is accompanied by some proposals that Naga addresses to the Institutions, relating to the reception of asylum seekers and homeless people, the overcoming of the Winter Plan, the “fictitious residence”, and emergency interventions for families and minors.