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Item A of the provisional agenda

**Disaggregation of poverty indicators for monitoring the
2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

ISTAT strategies for bridging statistical gaps on living conditions of hard to reach population: the cases of Roma people and homeless (*Draft*)

Note by the National Statistical Office of Italy (ISTAT)*

Summary

Since 2013, ISTAT has been involved in the production of data that could measure social inclusion policies for the Roma population. ISTAT together with the National office against racial discrimination (UNAR) and the National association of Italian municipalities (ANCI) signed an agreement to design a pilot information system for monitoring the social inclusion of the Roma, Sinti and Caminanti (RSC) population, with the goal to improve the statistical knowledge on these populations. The project involved a detailed survey of the existing data sources and was carried out in four municipalities (Napoli, Bari, Catania and Lamezia Terme). The paper describes the project and summarized the results of the survey.

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Roma population project

Since 2013, Istat has been involved in the production of data that could measure social inclusion policies for the Roma population. In July 2013 the National office against racial discrimination (UNAR), the National institute of statistics (Istat) and the National association of Italian municipalities (ANCI) signed an agreement to design a pilot information system for monitoring the social inclusion of the Roma, Sinti and Caminanti (RSC) population, with the goal to improve the statistical knowledge on these populations. The project involved a detailed survey of the existing data sources in four municipalities (Napoli, Bari, Catania and Lamezia Terme).

By means of "snowball" technique, the starting list has continuously been updated during the research to obtain a complete list of either holders or users of data in the areas of interest.

The questionnaire investigated the knowledge and use of data on RSC population, distinguishing between producer (the entity/organization responsible and collecting data), principal (in charge of data but delegating to a third party their collection) and user (using and processing data with a specific purpose, excluding the mere consultation). The questionnaire also collected information on sources allowing only an indirect identification of the RSC population.

The main outcomes on data sources on RSC showed that basic data were mainly referred to the situation of the camps, that sanitary conditions and children school attendance information were largely available, but they were collected without any coordination, extemporaneously, with occasional frequency and using different methodologies. Moreover, the data had a disaggregated territorial coverage, which in some cases reached the municipal sub-area.

It clearly emerged the strong need of standardizing and organizing the data collection that fed the different data bases available. Shared vocabulary, the use of official classifications and appropriate data collection techniques represent the only tools enabling to get high quality information, comparable over time and space. On the other hand, sharing information, enhancing awareness of the institutions in contact with RSC populations and of institutions collecting data, coordinating the production of statistical information, even within the National Statistical Program, appear to be the only effective strategies to fill the information gap.

After this experience Istat started (2017) to coordinate a Statistical Working group on RSC population, with the aim to achieve a shared perspective on scopes and methods of data collection.

In 2018 Istat and UNAR signed a new agreement, aimed at developing a system of indicators to assess the effectiveness of inclusion policies toward RSC, with a special focus on housing. The Italian National Statistical Program 2017 – 2019 (in its update 2018 – 2019) has included a “work – sheet” (02741; renewed in the National Statistical Program 2020 – 2022) scheduling survey activities on Roma people. A web survey (involving UNAR and RSC Associations) was launched in October 2019, in order to assess all housing inclusion projects carried out by municipalities (all municipalities over 15,000 inhabitants; 745 municipalities) and regions.

The scope of this background survey was to map all the projects carried out on their own or in cooperation by municipalities, targeting housing exclusion and with the objective to overcome formal and informal settlements. The questionnaire included also a section on settlements that will allow to update the picture of camps in Italy.

The further step will focus on the comparison between living condition of RSC people who left the camps and those still living in formal and informal settlements, in the same territories. Questions will deal with living conditions, and in particular with the issues of employment and access to education and health. Information will be also collected on social and demographic variables (age, sex, etc.), access to basic housing facilities (water, electricity, etc.), access to public facilities (bus, trains, hospitals; etc.).

The goal of the survey is to build a system of indicators that can monitor regularly the gap in terms of inclusion between RSC in public or private dwellings, and the ones still living in settlements.

A mixed quali - quantitative research method will be adopted, as the target group are too small to allow only a quantitative approach.

The core principles of the survey are: self-identification; voluntary and anonymized data collection, provided with the explicit consent of individuals; involving Roma representatives through the National Roma Associations Platform.

Previous results and future development of statistical information about homeless

In 2014, the second survey (the first one was carried out in 2011) on the condition of persons living in extreme poverty was conducted, following an agreement amongst Istat, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, Italian Federation of bodies for homeless persons (fio.PSD) and Caritas Italiana.

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). 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.

It is estimated that 50,724 homeless persons, 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 out. 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).

National Statistical Program 2020 – 2022 includes a “work – sheet” (02592) aimed at carrying out a new edition of the survey in order to provide policy makers and users with a complete and updated representation of poverty and inequalities in our country.