**CALL FOR SUBMISSION FOR THE REPORT OF THE SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF SLAVERY, INCLUDING ITS CAUSES AND ITS CONSEQUENCES**

**“Homelessness as a cause and consequence of contemporary forms of slavery”**

***Report submitted by: Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG23)***

***NGO in Special Consultative Status***

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The main source of this report is based on Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII‘s (APG23)[[1]](#footnote-1) experience both in Chile, Greece, and Italy[[2]](#footnote-2).

**QUESTION N°1**

**What are the main causes/drivers of homelessness in your country?**

**CHILE**

Chile conducted two censuses of homeless people: the first one was conducted in 2005 and recorded 7,254 homeless people; in the 2012 census the number of homeless people reached 12,255.[[3]](#footnote-3) The latter also reported that the main causes of homelessness are family problems (36,9%)[[4]](#footnote-4), alcohol consumption (15,5%), economic problems (13,8%). Moreover, around 56.4% of homeless peoples have a disability, and 49% requires specific drugs due to health issues[[5]](#footnote-5). The homelessness phenomenon has been increasing in recent years, influenced also by the migration flows mostly from Ecuador and Venezuela.

**GREECE**

The economic crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic have worsened the homelessness situation in Greece. Based on APG23’sexperience, the origins of this phenomenon lie often in a breakdown in family relations due to a few factors such as divorces, and inability to manage money (pathological gambling, drugs consumption). Concerning migrants, the issue is linked to access to documents. Those who cannot obtain them, cannot access welcoming services and regular labour, so they are not able to get any form of livelihood to afford housing. Single men and women with children represent the majority of cases.

**ITALY**

According to ISTAT data, in December 2022 there were 97,197 homeless persons registered in the fictitious registry office[[6]](#footnote-6). One of the main causes of this situation can be found in the economic hardship, which recently has taken on enormous proportions; this is even more evident in large urban metropolises. A relevant example is constituted by foreign caregivers losing their domestic care jobs, and risking finding themselves on the street until they are re-employed.

Among homeless people, there are both locals and people coming from the countryside to large Italian cities; there is also a high presence of homeless people of foreign nationalities[[7]](#footnote-7).

When migrants arrive, they are placed in reception projects while waiting to receive international protection. However, if their application is rejected, they are excluded from the reception project and remain in Italy without any prospects for the future.

With regard to refugees, once their residence permit expires, the renewal time is very long (up to one year); during this time, people end up on the streets, as without a new residence permit they cannot work, and risk falling into the networks of organised crime.

**QUESTION N°2**

**Is there evidence of persons experiencing homelessness, being exploited in contemporary forms of slavery such as forced of bonded labour, worst forms of child labour, sexual exploitation which may amount to slavery and other forms of exploitation in your country? If so, please provide details in relation to:**

1. **Profiles of victims (e.g. age, sex, gender identity/sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, migration status, socio-economic status, race and any other features).**
2. **Profiles of exploiters (e.g. criminal organisations; human traffickers; private businesses/employers, others);**
3. **Methods of recruitment of persons experiencing homelessness, including children in street situations.**
4. **Manifestation of exploitation (e.g. sexual exploitation and/or labour exploitation in various sectors such as agriculture, domestic work and construction, as well as criminal exploitation (e.g. forced begging, drug production/trafficking, theft, etc.)), including their gender dimensions.**

**CHILE**

In Chile no research has yet been conducted to explain this phenomenon. However, the testimonies of people joining APG23’s canteen and shelter often include situations where homeless people experience abusive treatments by their employers, and are only able to receive a sporadic income.

1. **Victims’ profile:**

People in this situation are mostly migrant women, aged 50 approximately, and men with problems of drug and/or alcohol consumption. Women are exploited in domestic work, men as delivery boys.

1. **Exploiters’ profile:**

The profile of exploiters is mostly recognisable in people who have their own business, which sometimes is also illegal. These economic activities are related to the sale of fruit and vegetables at free fairs or in shops selling different types of products, either in an established location or in illegal trade. They attract homeless people in places where they gather to consume drugs and/or alcohol.

**GREECE**

1. **Victim profile:**

The victims are mostly migrants, both adults and minors, in vulnerable situations who risk being sexually exploited, as well as in the workplace.[[8]](#footnote-8)

1. **Exploiters’ profile:**

In most cases they are migrant men who ask for sexual performances in exchange for hospitality.

1. **Recruitment methods:**

With regard to sexual exploitation the recruitment happens in a hidden way and through word-of-mouth. In addition, quite frequently Sinti and Roma children are obliged by the family to beg or to work as window cleaners in the streets of the city. They dropped out of school and they live in inadequate conditions such as on the streets , in cars with their parents or in abandoned buildings.

**ITALY**

1. **Victims’ profile**:

APG23 can certainly identify migrants as the main victims, particularly male migrants aged between 20 and 40 who are undocumented and already on the street or awaiting renewal and cannot work regularly. Most of these people are exploited through various forms of undeclared work such as cultivation and harvesting in agricultural fields in both northern and southern Italy.

1. **Exploiter profile**:

In case of migrants in an irregular situation, the exploiters are often part of criminal organisations that take advantage of the victims' extremely vulnerable situation. In fact, most victims are drug addicts: they are more likely to feel like they have no hope for their future or nothing to lose, which increases their chance of being exploited by the underworld as drug dealers. In the summer of 2022, APG23 noticed a higher consumption of crack than in previous years as it is very cheap. This situation has created many violent incidents as the effects of this drug are devastating on people.

1. **Recruitment methods**:

Most people are recruited in big city squares and station squares. The word-of-mouth method is also very effective.

1. **Manifestations of exploitation**:

Manifestations of exploitation occur in the agricultural sector through the so-called 'caporalato'[[9]](#footnote-9). In spring, migrants move to different parts of Italy to help harvest fruit and vegetables. People work without housing and are exploited with inhuman and false work contracts. Many young foreigners arrive from their countries of origin to work for a few months and send the incomes home.

**QUESTION N°4**

**Are there examples of positive measures taken by your Government to prevent persons experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness, including children in street situations or discharged from child or foster care, from being subjected to contemporary forms of slavery? If so, please provide details, which may include, but are not limited to, development/implementation of legislative, policy and institutional frameworks, material/financial support, and promotion of access to housing, education/training, decent work, health/public services, as well as justice and remedies.**

**GREECE**

Different forms for economic support exist for registered and recognized homeless people.[[10]](#footnote-10) Thanks to EU funding, “Housing First”[[11]](#footnote-11) programmes allow homeless people to receive economic support for a year to pay rent and utilities.

There are also welcoming structures for regularised homeless people, in which they can be hosted for a medium-long period.

However, there are still missing elements, such as a structural accompaniment in the job research and sociomedical support, that could lead to their complete independence. In fact, the actual response to the phenomenon lacks solutions in the long term, sometimes running the risk of being limited to short-term aid.

**ITALY**

Even if reintegration projects have been activated through the PNRR[[12]](#footnote-12) and the European social fund plus some projects, there is no real public, as well as political, programme to implement measures against the risk of exploitation of homeless people.

**QUESTION N°5**

**Are there examples of positive measures implemented by civil society organisations or other non-governmental stakeholders in protecting and promoting the rights of persons experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness and in preventing them from being victimised in contemporary forms of slavery? If so, please provide details.**

**CHILE**

In Chile there is a small number of civil society organisations dedicated to working with homeless people. These organisations, at first, try to restore the enjoyment of basic rights and then initiate a process that includes strengthening social ties and/or networks, job placement, and a path towards autonomy. Some associations work with the “Housing First” model[[13]](#footnote-13). Most of the organisations are related to the Catholic and Evangelical Church, however, there are also some secular associations.

**GREECE**

NGOs implement welcoming programmes that promote pathways to independence, as well as housing and assistance in general.

APG23, in particular, provides a medium to long term path to prevent people, especially migrants, from falling into exploitation. It develops in different steps, starting with the first reception that happens in “Capanna di Betlemme”[[14]](#footnote-14), APG23’s overnight shelter. They are subsequently hosted in Family Homes[[15]](#footnote-15) so as to create a support network to foster independence.

**ITALY**

The most active forms of combating the exploitation and enslavement of homeless people are organised by Church bodies, but also by secular associations that provide temporary or unlimited accommodation in structures that can restore the person's dignity. Through the “Housing First” project, the following objectives have been achieved: approach to services, therapeutic and care pathways, improvement in interpersonal relations, improvement in self-care, and work reintegration.

In the recent years, housing projects have started in the territories through the collaboration between parishes and cooperatives: the former provide the premises, the latter the professionalism. However, these projects fail to meet demand because the number of homeless people remains high.

**QUESTION N°6**

**What are remaining challenges – in law and practice - in preventing persons experiencing homelessness from being subjected to contemporary forms of slavery and to prevent and eliminate homelessness in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal 11.1 and international human rights law?**

**CHILE**

A clear challenge for the national street policy to face is the management of the increasing flow of migrants. Once they are in the country, migrants are vulnerable subjects, who often find themselves without a job and a home, and for these reasons they should be protected from the risk of being exploited. At the moment, the State does not recognize their vulnerability in the law.

**GREECE**

Especially in the case of migrants, a serious housing support project is missing once they conclude the process of recognition of their legal status. In those cases, they do not have the right to any support, since they are considered regular, and they are left without any economic perspective. This situation encourages their flow towards other European countries.

**ITALY**

Despite its positive impact, the actual implementation of the “Housing First” project has encountered critical issues. Indeed, associations participating in the project often have difficulty finding properties to make available. Also due to the stigma against migrants and homeless people, landlords are reluctant to make their properties available despite guarantees and the mediation offered by organisations. Finally, the high costs of maintaining and using the properties can also become a burden for the associations.

The implementation of projects for homeless people, and for migrants, is therefore actively hindered by the stigma surrounding their condition. It is therefore crucial to push, in law and in practice, for a profound cultural change, which aims at the elimination of this stigma, and which supports them with an approach that is not welfarist and purely economic but offers human and relational support.

**QUESTION N°7**

**What practical recommendations would you propose to overcome these ongoing challenges?**

**CHILE**

The State should involve civil society organisations in a roundtable discussion.

Furthermore, homelessness should be addressed from a multifactorial perspective, and not only a housing one, to deal with its deep causes (poverty, employment, family, health, immigration) and consequences.

It is essential to raise awareness on the condition of homeless people and the new reality they have to face; it is also crucial to carry out a census update for people living on the streets, since the latest data dates back to 2012.

**GREECE**

APG23 recommends the implementation of housing projects and long-term support services leading to independence, guided and monitored by professional figures (psychologists and social workers) whose work could facilitate the access to job and social reintegration.

**ITALY**

APG23 believes that the creation of a serious solidarity network, embracing the political system and all initiatives committed to overcoming a welfarist approach to the issue, can no longer be postponed.

Regarding the citizenship income disbursed also to homeless people, APG23 underlines some criticalities. Indeed, in the cases in which people were already suffering from pre-existing addictions, the subsidy has worsened them, exacerbating their marginalisation. As a matter of fact, some beneficiaries of the citizenship income, having at their disposal about €400/€500 per month, started reselling their groceries to friends, and using the earned money to buy alcohol and drugs.

APG23 also recognises the urgency of helping people in difficulty, but also that delicate situations require a particular supervision. Knowing the difficulties of some beneficiaries, educators have to be actively involved in order to report these dynamics first, and in order to accompany them along an actual path toward economic and social autonomy.

For what concerns non-EU citizens it is necessary to speed up the time of renewal of residence permits. Without a legal residence permit, they cannot enjoy the guarantee of a regular job, medical care, residence, and the right to housing.

Moreover, APG23 believes it necessary to increase the access of migrant addicted people to the path of recovery from their addiction, with awareness and information campaigns, and by making those services more easily available and accessible. Because of their status, migrants often lack a social net that could push them into exiting the vicious circle of their addiction, which instead often becomes an easy access to organised crime.

Finally, APG23 claims that reception projects are strongly needed in the agricultural sector, especially in collaboration with Coldiretti[[16]](#footnote-16) and the related associations, considering that many homeless people, especially immigrants, are essential for their activities.

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1. https://www.apg23.org/en/ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See the Annex. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://bibliotecadigital.indh.cl/handle/123456789/875?show=full> pg 76 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. With regard to family problems, we can highlight 26% claim to have been forced to move out of the house by another relative, 25% because of a love break-up, and 24% due to the death of a relative. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. En Chile Todos Contamos, SEGUNDO Catastro Nacional de Personas en Situación de Calle, 2012 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. https://www.secondowelfare.it/povert-e-inclusione/persone-senza-dimora-i-dati-del-censimento-istat/ [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. For instance, coming from African and Asian countries: Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Burkina Faso, and in the most recent months a migrant flow from Pakistan whose migrants are often with a degree. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. According to testimonies collected, a Congolese woman has been sexually exploited in exchange for a home. When she got a positive response to her asylum request, she found herself homeless with her three-year-old daughter. While waiting to receive her documents, she could not stay in a camp and found a house in the centre of Athens. She lives there also with a man that asks her sexual intercourses, even becoming aggressive in case of negative response.

   Moreover, an Afghan minor attempted to sell his kidney, to have necessary money to pay, through an illegal network, for the travel towards Athens, which would have allowed him to no longer live in the inadequate conditions of the camp.

   Another case is constituted by a Cameroonian young man, whose request of asylum was rejected; he lived in makeshift accommodation in Athens and was a victim of sexual exploitation to have money to survive. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. A criminal phenomenon dealing with the exploitation of labour. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. <https://keaprogram.gr/pubnr/Home/Contact> e in particolare la decisione interministeriale n.3359 del 28.07.2021 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. https://housingfirsteurope.eu [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. https://www.lavoro.gov.it/strumenti-e-servizi/Attuazione-Interventi-PNRR/Pagine/default.aspx [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Housing First is a model of homelessness intervention that is targeted towards people experiencing chronic homelessness - https://eurosocial.eu/actualidad/arranca-el-trabajo-con-el-ministerio-de-desarrollo-social-de-chile-en-la-adaptacion-del-modelo-europeo-housing-first/. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. https://www.apg23.org/en/bethlehem\_huts/ [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. https://www.apg23.org/en/family\_homes/ [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Coldiretti (National Confederation of Direct Farmers) is the largest association representing and assisting Italian agriculture. <https://www.coldiretti.it> [↑](#footnote-ref-16)