

## 2023 NATIONAL CONFERENCE EUROPEAN MIGRATION NETWORK (EMN)

### PREVENTING AND COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST FOREIGN CHILDREN

Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child requires States Parties to the Convention to take "all legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect children and young people from all forms of violence, physical or mental abuse or brutality, abandonment or neglect, ill-treatment or exploitation, including sexual violence". Other articles of the Convention further specify the right to protection of children from all forms of violence (Article 34 on sexual exploitation and violence, Article 35 on trafficking, Articles 32 and 36 on economic exploitation and other forms of exploitation). Article 39 of the same Convention also provides that States Parties are to take all appropriate measures to facilitate the physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of any child who is a victim of neglect or abuse. States must therefore prepare all actions and interventions aimed at treating the serious consequences that violence causes on subjects in developmental age. Prevention and protection, therefore, should be the first commitment of the institutions.

The exposure of foreign minors to violence and mistreatment turns out to be much greater than that of Italian minors. **The percentage of foreign minors in charge of social services for maltreatment is three times higher than that of Italian minors:** out of a sample of 1,000 resident Italian children, there are 7 victims of violence, while considering a sample of 1,000 foreign resident children the victims of maltreatment rise to 233<sup>1</sup>. It should be noted that this figure is in sharp increase compared to that found in the previous survey of the Authority for Childhood and Adolescence (2015), when the percentage of foreign minors taken in charge by social services due to mistreatment was in fact little more than double that of Italian children, with 20 mistreated foreign children per thousand, against 8.3 per thousand of Italians.<sup>2</sup>

**It is also known that, despite the increase in complaints and interventions, this phenomenon has a large grey area that escapes official statistics and that seems to be even more difficult to highlight where foreign families live situations of marginality and / or irregularities.** The literature has long indicated both the existence of a positive – although not necessary – correlation between economic poverty and the risk of mistreatment, and the multidimensionality of the phenomenon, which is affected, among other things, by factors such as the activation of the extra-family support network and the social environment in which the family lives. Immigrant families are more vulnerable as they often have a lack of knowledge of the Italian system of guaranteeing the rights of the child and a culture of his rights different and in some cases less attentive to those considered secondary (right to play, to listen, to participate). In addition, children with a migrant background have high

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<sup>1</sup> The national survey on the maltreatment of children and adolescents in Italy. Results and perspectives, Authority for Childhood and Adolescence – Cismai –Terre des Hommes Foundation Italy, 2021.

<sup>2</sup> National survey on the maltreatment of children and adolescents in Italy. Results and perspectives, Authority for Childhood and Adolescence – Cismai –Terre des Hommes Foundation Italy, 2015.

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levels of early school leaving, performance gaps and are often victims of discriminatory attitudes by peers. In this context of complexity, services are required to guarantee the right of every child, whatever their legal status or nationality, to be protected from forms of violence and mistreatment, but they are not always equipped with the necessary skills to detect, decode and deal with critical situations in multicultural contexts.

The conference aims to trace the **theoretical framework and the concrete challenges of combating violence against foreign minors at national and European level, through the comparison between experiences and practices.**

The event aims first of all to define the national context, starting from the **survey** promoted by the **National Guarantor for Childhood and Adolescence** in collaboration with **Terre des Homes and CISMAI**: the attempt to quantify the epidemiological dimension of child maltreatment in Italy, in fact, responds to a need felt not only by our country but internationally.

In this context, it is essential to ask ourselves about the various challenges linked to this phenomenon: on the one hand, the essential duty to protect minors regardless of their origin or legal status, on the other the complexity of moving in multicultural contexts, which need to abandon stereotypes and prejudices, thus opening up to the world of the possibilities offered by the encounter with cultural diversity.

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#### NATIONAL CONFERENCE AGENDA

21<sup>st</sup> June 2023

ONLINE 9:00 – 13:00

9:00 – 9:15

#### **Registration**

**Chair** - *Mariella De Santis*, Social Work Methodologist, Policy Officer, Central Directorate for Migration Policies - Asylum, Migration Integration Fund Authority, Ministry of the Interior

9:15 – 10:00

#### **Institutional greetings**

- *Maria Forte*, Prefetto, Deputy Head of Department, Central Director for Migration Policies – Authority for Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund at the Ministry of the Interior.
- *Magnus Ovilius*, Head of Sector, Forecasting, Preparedness and Policy Monitoring, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission
- *Anna Schmidt*, Policy Officer, Asylum Unit, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission

10:00 – 10:15

#### **National survey on the maltreatment of children and adolescents in Italy. Results and Prospects**

*Carla Garlatti*, National Authority for Children and Adolescents

10:15 – 10:30

#### **From the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to dedicated protection actions**

*Nicola dell'Arciprete*, Italian UNICEF Regional Office Coordinator for Europe and Central Asia

10:30 – 10:45

#### **The multilevel approach of the Social Service between emergency and system interventions**

*Barbara Rosina*, Vice president of the National Order of Social Workers (CNOAS)

10:45 – 11:00

#### **The contribution of the new generations to the prevention of violence against foreign minors**

*Simohamed Kaabour*, President of the National Coordination of the New Italian Generations (CoNNGI)

11:00 – 11:15

Coffee break

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- 11:15 – 11:35 **The eloquent violence: young migrants in a time of chaos**  
*Roberto Beneduce*, Professor of Medical and Psychological Anthropology and Cultural Anthropology at the Department of Culture, Politics and Society, University of Turin
- 11:35 – 12:30 **Panel “Territorial networks and innovative interventions to combat violence against foreign minors”**
1. Prevention/reporting  
*Maria Grazia Foschino Barbaro* - Rapporteur for the AMIF Working Group 'Prevention and reporting of violence against foreign minors'
  2. Training  
*Silvana Mordeglia* - Rapporteur for the AMIF Working Group 'Training of operators'
  3. Taking charge/community approach  
*Raffaele Bracalenti* - Rapporteur for the AMIF Working Group 'Taking in charge of foreign minors victims of violence and the community approach'
- 12:30 – 12:45 **Experiences in Europe**
- *Sofia Figueiredo*, Akto - Human Rights and Democracy, General Director – **Portugal**
- 12:45 – 13:00 **Conclusion**  
*Maria Assunta Rosa*, Viceprefetto Central Directorate for Migration Policies - Authority for Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund, Ministry of the Interior

*Simultaneous translation from English to Italian and from Italian to English will be made available.*

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- 1. *Maria Forte*** throughout her career has held various positions, including Director of the Office of Study, Research, and Consulting at the Department of Public Security. She has also been a member of several delegations assigned to the European Commission and the United Nations, of relations with the Committee for the Prevention of Torture and the Human Rights Committee to discuss issues related to the protection of rights, referring to immigration and public order. In 2017 she was appointed as Prefetto of Reggio Emilia, where she served until 2020, after which she assumed the position of Prefetto at the city of Siena. Since 2023, she is the Deputy Head of Department, Central Director for Migration Policies at the Authority for Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund at the Ministry of the Interior.
- 2. *Magnus Ovilius*** is Head of Sector for the European Commission's Home Affairs Migration Forecasting, Contingency Planning, Preparedness and Policy Monitoring. He is responsible for monitoring and anticipating the developments of the EU migration flows on legal and irregular migration, including asylum. Moreover, he is responsible for inputs and support to policy making, including through the European Migration Network (EMN). Magnus Ovilius is also Chair and Manager of the EMN, which includes horizontal coordination, representation and negotiations with EU Member States and EMN Observer countries.
- 3. *Anna Schmidt*** is a Policy Officer at the Asylum Unit, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs of the European Commission. Currently, Schmidt's work focuses on the Temporary Protection Directive and, more broadly, on the analysis of migration policies concerning displacement following the outbreak of the conflict in Ukraine. Previously, she worked as a Policy Officer, with a focus on migration, forced displacement, fragility, and resilience issues. Throughout her career, she has participated in EU delegations on missions in Jordan and Somalia, contributing to the coordination of initiatives aimed at promoting stability and sustainable progress in complex contexts.
- 4. *Carla Garlatti*** graduated in Law from the University of Padua. She entered the judiciary in 1986 and served as a judge in the courts of Udine, Milan, Venice, and Padua. In addition, she was a counsellor at the Court of Appeal in Venice. She worked in the legislative office of the Ministry of Justice and participated in various organizations related to family law and minors, including the National Observatory for Childhood and Adolescence. She presided over the Juvenile Court of Trieste for four years. Since January 14, 2021, she has held the position of head of the Authority for the Protection of Children and Adolescents.

**Abstract:** Violence is a serious and complex phenomenon due to its origin, tragic nature, necessary responses, and the difficulty of detection. Preventing and combating maltreatment are specific duties determined by a series of norms from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Adolescence. It is among the responsibility of the states to adopt every legislative, administrative, social, and educational measure to protect minors from all forms of violence. Similarly, the Convention calls for the adoption of every necessary measure to facilitate the physical and psychological rehabilitation, as well as the social reintegration, of every minor.

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The Authority for the Protection of Children and Adolescents has followed the guidelines set forth by the provisions of the New York Convention, focusing its efforts primarily on the definition of the broader category of violence against children and emphasizing the need for data collection. Effectively combating violence against children requires, first and foremost, the identification and analysis of statistical data from both a quantitative and qualitative perspective.

- 5. *Nicola dell'Arciprete*** first held the position of Public Sector Partnerships Officer (2018-2020) and later served as Regional Programme Coordination Officer at the Private Fundraising and Partnerships Division (2020-2023) at the UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO). In these roles, he developed collaborations with BMZ/KFW, the European Union, various UNICEF National Committees, and other UN agencies while ensuring coordination of several regional programs related to migration and COVID-19. Before his experiences at UNICEF, he worked at the European Parliament (2005-2013) and served as a consultant to the Minister of European Affairs (2006-2008).

**Abstract:** The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Adolescence is currently the most ratified in the world and, for the first time in history, recognizes children and adolescents as holders of their rights. This contribution focuses on foreign minors, including unaccompanied minors, and particularly those who undertake long journeys by sea and land, fleeing contexts of deprivation, poverty, conflicts, lack of access to fundamental rights, and climate change. Italy represents the entry point to Europe for many of them. Their experiences are particularly dramatic, often characterized by situations of abuse, and violence, including gender-based violence, exploitation, and torture throughout their migration journey. It is crucial to reflect on the mechanisms that allow for effective prevention and support, valuing the contributions and roles of each actor within the system, from central to local institutions, as well as third-sector organizations and civil society, adopting a multi-level and multi-sectoral approach.

- 6. *Barbara Rosina*** is a Social Worker specialized in the national healthcare system within the field of mental health. She is the Vice President of the National Council of Social Workers (CNOAS) and has previously served as an adjunct professor at the Universities of Turin, Milano Bicocca, and Eastern Piedmont. She holds a PhD in Sociology with a curriculum in Social Work. She has published works on social work topics, primarily focusing on mental health, violence against social workers, oppressive practices, and coping strategies.

**Abstract:** The intervention aims to highlight aspects of the professional social work's role in combating violence against children and supporting families, with a focus on prevention, the multidimensionality of the phenomenon, and the management of situations through teamwork involving social services, specialized services, schools, and the third sector. Other overarching themes include the need to work towards inclusion projects for individuals within their communities, the necessity of stable resources to integrate organizational practices and resources after the experimental phase, and the importance of listening to experts based on their experiences.

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7. **Simohamed Kaabour** holds a degree in Intercultural Communication and Programming of Social Policy and Services. He is the president of CoNNGI - National Coordination of New Italian Generations and a founding member of Nuovi Profili, the first organization of young people with a migration background in Liguria. He is a teacher of Arabic language and civic education at G. Deledda Language High School in Genoa. As a co-founder of Communi Culture, he works as a consultant and trainer in intercultural communication.

**Abstract:** The subject highlights the educational challenge within a new cultural and social context involving migrant parents and their children. Alongside the generational relationship comes the need to preserve the culture of origin and safeguard traditional educational models. In this educational and transformative process, there may be instances of violence against foreign minors, where parents demand a role and authority that cannot be granted without a cultural negotiation capable of building a nurturing relationship with the new generations. This relationship must focus on the true educational purpose, which is the well-being and serenity of the child, along with harmonious interactions with parental figures. Undoubtedly, this is a challenge for the entire educational community, which must take it upon itself to practise an intercultural approach and infuse every intervention area to prevent violence.

8. **Roberto Beneduce** is an anthropologist and psychiatrist who teaches Anthropology of the Body and Violence at the University of Turin. He founded the Frantz Fanon Center (Turin) in 1996. Since 1988, he has conducted research in sub-Saharan Africa (Mali, Cameroon, Mozambique, Eritrea, Democratic Republic of Congo), focusing particularly on mental health, social violence, and local medical knowledge. Among his most renowned works are "Archeologie del trauma; Un'antropologia del sottosuolo" (Laterza, 2019) and "Frantz Fanon, Psychiatry and Politics" (with N. Gibson) (Rowman and Littlewood, 2017).

**Abstract:** How should we interpret the violence exhibited by young foreigners, often occurring within prison institutions? How can we relate it to the family and social contexts of their countries of origin? What horizon do their actions speak to? Why do we often observe self-harming behaviours that paralyze the usual diagnostic and therapeutic strategies? The proposed reflections aim to explore some of these issues within the perspectives of critical ethno-psychiatry, which can delve into the political as well as individual factors behind these forms of suffering and the misunderstandings they often encounter.

9. **Maria Grazia Foschino Barbaro** is a psychologist and psychotherapist. She serves as the coordinator of the working group for the governance of the network of services for combating violence against children in the Puglia region. She has previously held positions as head of the Psychology Department at GIADA (Interdisciplinary Group for the Assistance of Abused Women and Children) and the Multidisciplinary Commission for the Socio-sanitary Assessment of Unaccompanied Foreign Minors at the Pediatric Hospital of Bari. She is a representative of CISMAI

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(Italian Coordination of Services against Child Abuse and Mistreatment) for the national table on migrant minors and she has coordinated the CISMAI scientific commission on the mental health of unaccompanied foreign minors. She also participates in the REMI project (Networks for Combating Violence against Migrant Minors) funded by AMIF. She is also a trainer and author of scientific works on the subject.

**Abstract:** the contribution of the "Prevention and Emergence" working group presents actions aimed at promoting the inclusion of foreign families and minors as a primary strategy to combat violence. By adopting a network approach that involves both institutional services and informal supportive networks, activities aimed at promoting access to socio-educational services, raising awareness of family rights and responsibilities, and fostering a shared culture of child protection that guarantees social equality and equal rights will be illustrated. The emergence and detection of violence presuppose the care of encounter, which entails attention, listening, and respect for "differences" to explore the socio-cultural context, migratory experiences, values, norms, and parenting behaviours, and to understand the meaning of children's suffering.

**10. *Silvana Mordeglia*** holds a PhD in Social Work, she is an adjunct professor of Methods and Techniques of Social Work and Social Project Design in the master's and bachelor's degree programs in Social Work at the University of Genoa. Her main research interests include professional responsibility, social rights, immigration, juvenile delinquency, and emergency intervention methodology. She works as a social worker in the Ministry of Justice - Department for Juvenile and Community Justice. She has previously served as the president of the National Council of Social Workers and is currently the president of the National Foundation of Social Workers.

**Abstract:** the training of professionals represents a necessary and essential practice to ensure effectiveness, continuity, concreteness, and a strategic dimension to services and interventions for the prevention and combating of violence against foreign minors. The best strategy is to create multi-level and multi-agency alliances involving all actors (both public and private) in the various stages that build the training process, from needs assessment to goal definition and implementation of training activities. It is important to bridge the gap between what is known (or believed to be known) and what one is called to do, providing all professionals with the necessary skills, tools, and awareness of being strategic actors in preventing and combating violence against foreign minors.

**11. *Raffaele Bracalenti*** is a medical doctor and psychotherapist with a psychoanalytic approach. He has always been interested in applying psychoanalysis in social contexts and has contributed to training teachers, social workers, and educators. He is a founding member of the IPRS (Institute of Psychoanalysis for Social Research) and served as its Vice President until 2002, when he became President. Over nearly thirty years of research activities, he has focused on topics such as minors and deviance, bullying, school dropout, restorative justice, juvenile justice,

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foreign minors, immigration, discrimination, and racism. He has served as Scientific Director and Coordinator in several national and European projects on childhood, adolescence, migration, and integration.

**Abstract:** The "Taking Charge" working group will focus on the "essential elements of taking charge and caring for foreign minors who are victims of violence or have been exposed to it." Introducing the conceptualization of the phenomenon and the presentation of the actors involved. The discussion will focus on the challenging aspects of this type of intervention (coordination of services and multi-agency work) and then consider the problems and areas for improvement.

**12. Sofia Figueiredo** holds a degree in Law and a specialization in Human Rights and Democracy from the University of Coimbra. She was the creator and coordinator of the Center for Reception and Protection (CAP) for Male Victims of Human Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation. Currently, she serves as the General Director of Akto - Human Rights and Democracy. She is also a representative of PpDM (Portuguese Platform for Women's Rights) within the European Civil Society Platform Combating Human Trafficking and a representative of Akto within RAPVT and the working group of the National Referral System for Child Victims of Human Trafficking. As part of this work, she was part of the team that drafted the Protocol for the definition of procedures for the prevention, identification, and protection of child victims of human trafficking - National Referral System.

**Abstract:** Violence against foreign children represents a violation of their fundamental rights and provides a significant challenge to democratic societies. In Portugal, the government and civil society organizations have made remarkable efforts to address this issue, developing policies and legislation to ensure the protection of abused foreign minors. The intervention will focus on the concrete experiences of Akto - Human Rights and Democracy, concerning human trafficking, highlighting the importance of collaborative work between organizations and implementation of protocols and procedures for the prevention, identification and protection of victims, particularly minors.

**13. Maria Assunta Rosa** is the Viceprefetto in the Central Directorate for Migration Policies at the Ministry of the Interior. Since 2009, she has been the Chief of Staff - Office I - Immigration and Asylum Policy Planning. She has also coordinated all activities related to the management of the European Fund for Integration. Since 2015, she has taken on the role of supporting the Managing Authority of the Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund in achieving the objectives set by the AMIF National Program.

**Chair Mariella De Santis** holds a degree in Social Service, she is specialized in methods of empowerment processes for policy makers. She has been teaching Social Service methods and Professional Writing at Milan in Bicocca University. Her areas of expertise include addiction, youth, mental health, and migration. Currently, she is the representative for the NCP EMN and EIN at the Ministry of the Interior. She is the author of numerous scientific publications related to professional culture and models of innovation.