



INSIGHT Action Policy Brief 2: Begging by Nigerians in Italy and the connection with exploitation and trafficking

Introduction

This policy brief has been prepared by the SSIIM Unesco Chair of the University Iuav of Venice, as part of the INSIGHT Action and of a series of 4 policy briefs aimed at promoting and improving transnational cooperation in the fight against trafficking in human beings and in the protection of people who have been trafficked for the scope of exploitation. This brief draws from Semprebbon et al. (2021) which is in turn based on research and the elaboration of qualitative (ethnographic observation and semi-structured interviews) and quantitative data carried out in the period June 2019 to September 2020¹. It focuses on the specific theme of begging by Nigerian men and women and the hints we have collected that point to forms of trafficking and/or exploitation.

Begging: an under-reported phenomenon

According to European Commission data, with reference to the EU-28 (2020)², in the period 2017-2018, trafficking in human beings is associated with different forms of exploitation including not only sexual exploitation but also exploitation in criminal activities (11%),

domestic servitude (5 %) and begging (1 %) (Chart 1).

Most of the people suspected of (77%), charged of (58%) and convicted for (54%) the trafficking of human beings were associated with sexual exploitation, while just under 2% with begging (Chart 2).

Between 2017 and 2019, a fluctuating trend was recorded in the number of people exploited in begging, but the absolute number was relatively low: from 270, in 2017, to 121, in 2018, to 149, in 2019. The majority of people, in 2017-2018, were of Romanian nationality (about 100), followed by people from Slovakia (43), Albania (35) and, to a much lesser extent, Nigeria (15). To date, exploitation for begging purposes has been understood as playing a residual role, compared to other forms of exploitation, particularly exploitation for the scope of prostitution. However, it is worth asking to what extent this figure is actually representative of the phenomenon or whether it is rather indicative of a phenomenon that has been and remains to date under-observed and under-reported, as will be discussed in the next sections.

Regarding the specific context of Italy, the most recent reference to begging draws from a research, carried out in 2013, which looked

¹ Semprebbon M., Scarabello S., Bonesso G. (2021) "The practice of begging between freedom of choice, exploitation, trafficking and the connections with organised crime. Focus on Nigerian people", Venice: SSIIM UNESCO Chair, University Iuav of Venice. ISBN: 978-88-31241-39-7. Available at:

<https://www.insightproject.net/project/publications/>
Last access: 27.09.2021.

² European Commission (2020) Data Collection on Human Trafficking in the EU. Link: <https://bit.ly/3oiCtUO>. Last access: 04/12/ 2020.

at the activity of anti-trafficking outreach units. It emerges that the units contacted 23,878 people in 2012, most of whom were exploited sexually (Castelli, 2014)³. No estimates were provided for people exploited in begging, but the report states that this group is made up mainly by Nigerians, followed by Romanians. The phenomenon of begging is described as a widespread phenomenon in both medium and large cities. Most importantly it argues it is still understudied.

Some quantitative data, although fragmented, was collected in the framework of two projects, *Third sector against pushed begging*⁴

and *Stop For Beg*⁵, with focus on specific Italian regional territories. The latter, focused on the Veneto Region – on which the INSigHT Action also concentrated – reported that, for the period 2012-2013, an average of 20 to 30 contacts were made by outreach units each day in three different cities, amounting to a maximum of 80 beggars in each territory. During our fieldwork, in the period 2019-2021 we recorded an average of 10 people in Venice, with a considerable decrease during the pandemic (until a virtual halt) and a slow return of some beggars from September 2020, but in limited numbers (see note 1).

Chart 1: Breakdown of trafficked persons in member states by type of exploitation (EC, 2020)

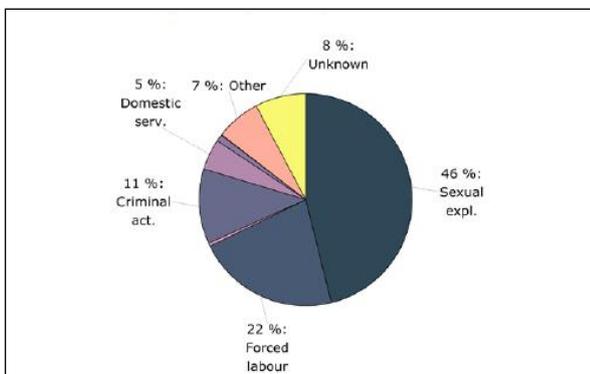
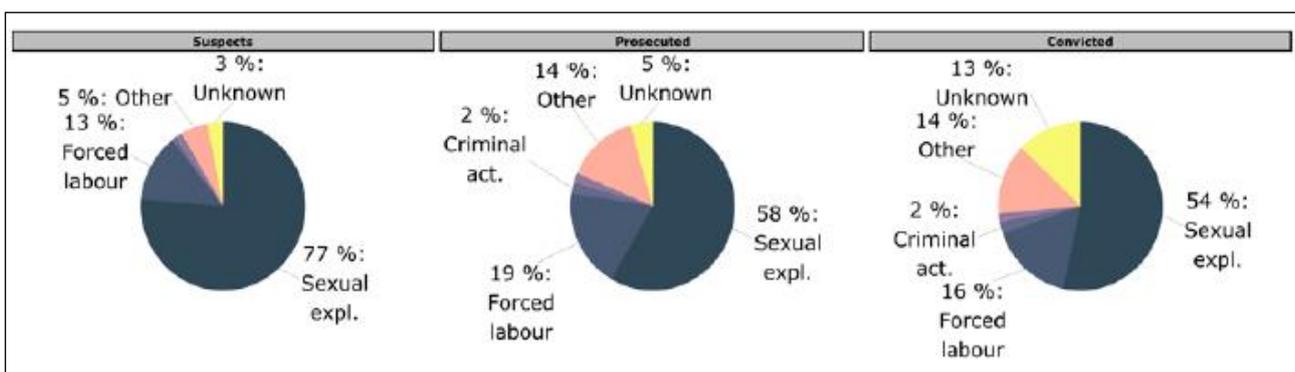


Chart 2: Types of exploitation (by percentage) of persons suspected of, accused of or convicted for the trafficking of human beings, in member countries, 2017-2018 (EC, 2020)



³ Castelli V. (2014). *Punto e a capo sulla tratta. Uno studio sulle forme di sfruttamento di esseri umani in Italia e sul sistema di interventi a tutela delle vittime*, Milano: Franco Angeli.

⁴ CNCA (2015) *Third sector against pushed begging. Prevention and fight against crime. Final manual*. Roma: Comunità Edizioni. Link: [https://www.cnca.it/wpfd_file/the-third-sector-](https://www.cnca.it/wpfd_file/the-third-sector-against-pushed-beggings-prevention-of-and-fight-against-crime-final-manual/)

[against-pushed-beggings-prevention-of-and-fight-against-crime-final-manual/](https://www.cnca.it/wpfd_file/the-third-sector-against-pushed-beggings-prevention-of-and-fight-against-crime-final-manual/). Last access: 30.11.2020.

⁵ Degani P., Donadel C. (ed.) (2013) *Progetto Stop for Beg: report finale*, Venezia: Regione Veneto. Link: https://www.regione.veneto.it/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=36c4fd99-cced-4751-b2f2-189bec0a69ae&groupId=61739. Last access: 30.11.2020.

Normative Framework

International Framework on Human Trafficking and reference to begging

- UN Palermo Protocol (2000)
- EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (2000)
- Council of Europe Convention Against the Trafficking in Human Beings (2008)
- Forced begging was first specifically referred to in the European legislation in 2011, specifically in **EU Directive 2011/36 on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Protecting its Victims**.

Italian Normative framework on Human Trafficking and forced begging

Art. 18 of Legislative Decree 286/1998 Testo Unico sull' Immigrazione (Unique Text on Immigration)

Law 228/2003 Measures against the trafficking of human beings

Begging is specifically referred to in the Italian legislation in **Legislative Decree 24/2014** (which transposed EU Directive 2011/36/EU) and in the **2016 National Anti-trafficking Plan** (currently under revision).

Decree Law 13/2017 (later converted into Law 46/2017) revised the list of deviant behaviours (in public space) to be sanctioned, including amongst others begging involving harassing modalities (ie. simulation of deformities, diseases or with fraudulent means)⁶.

Decree Law 113/2018 took Decree Law 13/2017 to extreme consequences by expanding the types of deviant behaviours (in public space) to be sanctioned. Most importantly it introduced the so-called DASPO measure for begging involving harassing modalities. The measure requires people to whom it is targeted not to return to the place where they were stopped and sanctioned for having a behaviour considered as deviant.

⁶ For a legal-historical analysis of the offence of begging in Italy - when involving harassment - see Telesca M. (2019) La "riesumazione" dell'accattonaggio (art 669-bis dopo la l.n.132/2018). Ovvero il continuum tra legislazione fascista e "pacchetti sicurezza".

Costituzionalismo, 1 (only in Italian). Available: https://www.costituzionalismo.it/costituzionalismo/download/Costituzionalismo_201901_697.pdf. Last access: 30.11.2020.

Main policy issues

Begging as a multifaceted complex understudied phenomenon

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2004) defines begging as “a range of activities whereby an individual asks a stranger for money on the basis of being poor or needing charitable donations for health or religious reasons. Beggars may also sell small items, such as dusters or flowers, in return for money that may have little to do with the value of the item for sale”. Begging is still understudied, although it is widespread all over the world. Over time, beggars have been often represented as "poor", "undeserving poor" and often "dangerous poor". Local government policies have implemented repressing initiatives justified by public order and decorum rationales (Hopkins Burke, 1999⁷). The European sociological and anthropological has described begging as a practice of informal economies and rural-urban migration pathways (Portes and Haller, 2005⁸), often linked to conditions of social marginality (i.e. on the UK: Kennedy and Fitzpatrick, 2001⁹) and homelessness, hence as part of a wider process of social exclusion. Research, conducted in different social contexts shows that migration background, low levels of schooling and poor access to

employment opportunities are strong predictor variables of begging (i.e. Jelili, 2013¹⁰) and the INSigHT research confirms this view. The common distinction between "work" and "begging" is challenged by some studies, suggesting that begging is experienced by beggars as an actual job, which implies the acquisition of specific skills, strategies and planning abilities (Tesăr, 2015¹¹). More generally, our research, with specific focus on begging by Nigerians, shows that begging is a multifaceted and multi-dimensional phenomenon. We collected evidence of beggars paying a “joint”, hence suggesting forms of exploitation. It is also evident that different forms of begging coexist within the practice itself, including 'free' (voluntary) or 'semi-free' (associated with partial exploitation) or forced forms of begging (linked to trafficking). Kirchofer (2010)¹² points out that the conditions of begging tend to be blurred and the forms it assumes may overlap and not be easily distinguishable – nor can begging be always clearly distinguished from other forms of exploitation or trafficking. Over the last decade, a significant number of European reports have documented the evolution of trafficking for begging purposes, with the following focuses: (a) comparison between European and non-European contexts in the exploitation of children (Delap, 2009¹³); (b) correlation with illegal economies (RACE

⁷ Burke R. (1999) Tolerance or intolerance? The policing of begging in the urban context. In Hopkins Dean H. (Ed.) *Begging Questions: Street-level Economic Activity and Social Policy Failure*, Bristol: The Policy Press.

⁸ Portes A., Haller W. (2005) The informal economy. In Smelser N.J., Swedberg R. (eds) *The Handbook of Economic Sociology*, 403–425. Princeton University Press.

⁹ Kennedy C., Fitzpatrick S. (2001) Begging, Rough Sleeping and Social Exclusion: Implications for Social Policy. *Urban Studies*, 38(11), 2001–2016.

¹⁰ Jelili M.O. (2013) Street Begging in Cities: Cultural, Political and Socio-Economic Questions. *Global*

Journal of Human Social Science (Sociology and Culture), 13(5).

¹¹ Tesăr C. (2015) Begging: Between charity and profession. Reflections on Romanian Roma’s begging activities in Italy. *The public value of anthropology: Engaging critical social issues through ethnography*, 83-110.

¹² Kirchofer C.P. (2010) *Organized Begging in Vienna: Austria, Right-Wing Propaganda, Benevolent Necessity, Illicit Business, Human Smuggling or Human Trafficking*. Vienna: Webster University.

¹³ Delap E. (2009) *Begging for change. Research findings and recommendations on forced child*

project, 2014¹⁴); (c) child exploitation and related intervention strategies (ICMPD, 2012¹⁵); (d) child exploitation in East-European contexts (ANITP, 2013¹⁶) and in specific social groups, such as Roma (MYRIA, 2016¹⁷). All these studies document the correlation between begging and several types of exploitation (i.e. drug trafficking, theft, pickpocketing). None provide insights on trafficking with the purpose of begging among people of

Nigerian origin – with the partial exception of the RACE project. As far as the Italian context is concerned, two action-research projects analysed forced begging: *Third sector against pushed begging* and *Stop For Beg* project. Both observed its evolution from a subsistence economic practice by marginal individuals, to an organised market activated by Eastern European and Sub-Saharan African people mostly.

begging in Albania/Greece, India and Senegal. London: Antislavery International. Available: <https://www.antislavery.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/beggingforchange09.pdf>. Last access: 30.11.2020.

¹⁴ RACE project (2014) *Trafficking for forced criminal activities and begging in Europe. Exploratory study and good practice examples. Race in Europe research project*. London: Antislavery International. Available: http://www.antislavery.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/trafficking_for_forced_criminal_activities_and_begging_in_europe.pdf. Last access: 30.11.2020.

¹⁵ ICMPD (2012) *Report for the Study on Typology and Policy Responses to Child Begging in the EU, JLS/2009/ISEC/PR/008-F2*. Vienna: ICMPD. Available: https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/sites/antitrafficking/files/report_for_the

[study_on_typology_and_policy_responses_to_child_begging_in_the_eu_0.pdf](#). Last access: 30.11.2020.

¹⁶ Anderson I., Kemp P., Quilgars D. (1993) *Single Homeless People*. London: HMSO.

ANITP (2013) *Trafficking in Persons for Begging, Romania Study*. Bucharest: ANITP. Available: https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/sites/antitrafficking/files/trafficking_in_persons_for_begging_-_romania_study_0.pdf. Last access: 30.11.2020.

¹⁷ MYRIA (2016) *Rapport annuel: traite et trafic des êtres humains. Des mendicants aux mains de trafiquants*. Bruxelles: Centre Fédéral Migrations. Available: <https://www.myria.be/en/publications/2016-annual-report-trafficking-and-smuggling-of-human-beings>. Last access: 30.11.2020.

Box: The phenomenon of begging in Nigeria and other African countries

Some quantitative studies on begging were conducted on the socio-economic conditions of beggars of Nigerian origin in Lagos and Ibadan, but also in smaller cities (Fawole et al., 2011¹⁸). Begging has also become evident in recent years among segments of the population who have migrated from the rural areas to the cities¹⁹, while in urban contexts, particularly among the underage, it was evident more than a decade ago (Obioha, 2009²⁰). Some contributions look at ‘transnational beggars’ (of foreign origins) associated with seasonal movements from neighbouring countries, such as Mali. None of the contributions mention any link with trafficking. The cause is traced to situations of severe socio-economic marginalisation and the exploitation of people with physical and mental disabilities (Onagun, 2016²¹; Etieyibo and Omiegbe, 2016²²), but also cultural and religious aspects (Jelili, 2013²³) and the religious practice of zakat (Ogunkan, 2011²⁴). Reflections on the phenomenon have concerned mainly Northern Nigeria - but also other African states (on Senegal: HRW, 2014²⁵; on Guinea Bissau: Einarsdóttir et al., 2010²⁶; on Mauritania: Ballet et al., 2012²⁷), but they do not show elements of continuity - in terms of forms, methods, strategies and socio-cultural profiles - with the forms observed in European cities.

¹⁸ Fawole O., Ogunkan D.V., Omoruan A. (2011) The menace of begging in Nigerian cities: a sociological analysis. *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 3(1), 9-14.

¹⁹ The same dynamic was also confirmed by Sebastiano Bartolotta (interview, Vice-Chief of National Police, currently at the Italian Embassy in Abuja, 11.12.2020. Organised with Equality ATI, in preparation for the INSigHT webinar with law enforcement on 27.01.2021.

²⁰ Obioha E.E. (2009) Becoming a Street Child in Poverty Ridden Society: A Descriptive Case of Kaduna Metropolis, Nigeria. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 19 (1), 41-49.

²¹ Onagun A.I. (2016) Relationship Between Street-Begging and Poverty in Ilorin Emirate, Kwara State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Health Economics and Policy*, 1 (1), 6-11.

²² Etieyibo E., Omiegbe O. (2016) Religion, culture, and discrimination against persons with disabilities. *Nigeria African Journal of Disability*, 5(1), 192.

²³ Jelili M.O. (2013) Street Begging in Cities: Cultural, Political and Socio-Economic Questions. *Global Journal of Human Social Science (Sociology and Culture)*, 13(5).

²⁴ Ogunkan D. V. (2011) Begging and almsgiving in Nigeria: The Islamic perspective, International. *Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 3(4), 127-131.

²⁵ HRW (2014) *Report on children forced begging in Senegal: exploitation in the name of education*, Human Right watch. Available: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/03/19/exploitation-name-education/uneven-progress-ending-forced-child-begging-senegal>. Last access: 30.11.2020.

²⁶ Einarsdóttir J., Hamadou B., Gunnlaugur G. (2010) *Child trafficking in Guinea - Bissau an Explorative Study*. UNICEF. Link: https://unicef.is/sites/unicef.is/files/atoms/files/child_trafficking_in_guinea-bissau.pdf. Ultimo accesso: 03.02.2021.

²⁷ Ballet J., Augendra B., Bilal H. (2012) Vulnerability to violence of Talibé children in Mauritania. *Child abuse & neglect*, 36(7), 602–607.

Features and dynamics of begging in Italy: the increase of vulnerable profiles

The INSigHT research (Sempredon et al., 2021)²⁸ shows that begging by Nigerians, in Italy, involves mainly young adults, aged 18-35. Most are men, but women are present too, including also sexually exploited women.

In some territories, processes of substitution have become evident, with Nigerians replacing beggars or sellers of small objects of African or East European nationality, rarely with conflictual dynamics. Since 2015, there has been an increase in beggars of sub-Saharan origins, but also of beggars from other countries (Bangladesh, India and Pakistan), mainly engaged in street vending and other informal economies.

Nigerian beggars generally hold a regular residence permit as asylum seekers or are appealing following the rejection of their application; some do not have a regular residence permit. They mostly come from Edo State, some from northern Nigerian states, Delta State or other eastern states with an Igbo majority.

While in the historic city centre of Venice, the number of beggars, recorded at the beginning of 2020, was around 15 to 20 people per day, in other Italian areas it was much higher and has been increasing in recent years. The number decreased sharply - until it disappeared - during the lockdown, in March-May 2020, to then gradually increase again.

Begging concerns primarily large cities and in particular supermarkets, car parks and places of transit and passage, but also shopping centres. Forms of "itinerant" begging in markets has been observed too. Furthermore, many beggars commute back and forth from peripheral locations outside

the cities. According to the outreach units we interviewed, the increase in begging by Nigerians may be related to the exclusion of an increasing number of people from the reception circuit or the difficult transition that follows the completion of reception projects. Some interviewees suggested it represents an alternative form of exploitation proposed to people who are not willing to get involved in drug dealing. Begging tends to be non-contractual, but it may involve an exchange of services (i.e. helping carry shopping trolleys or, in cities like Venice, transporting heavy objects across bridges). Generally speaking, it is not of particular concern to residents, especially with reference to Nigerian beggars, as they are not harassing in their attitude. Compared to individuals of other groups, they are generally well tolerated, as they are dressed well, they stand up and do not assume attitudes aimed at inducing pity. Lack of concern and complaints on the side of residents has resulted in begging being under the radar of law enforcement officers. So have related forms of exploitation. Yet, the evident punctual organisation of begging spots and rotation shifts point to the strong hypothesis that access to such spots is controlled.

Outreach work and the challenges of working with beggars

It was only in 2013 that (some) Italian outreach units started dealing with begging (see Castelli, 2014)²⁹, although attention to the phenomenon grew in 2016, with the increasing arrival of asylum seekers of Nigerian nationality in Italy and their increased involvement in begging. Outreach units have adopted different methodologies: some have used well-established harm reduction methodologies (i.e. contact in the street, offering of

²⁸ See note 1.

²⁹ See note 3.

services relating to health and legal protection) implemented in outreach work with people victims of sexual exploitation; some have adapted methodologies used to address labour exploitation; others have launched dedicated pilot projects aiming to explore the evolution of the phenomenon of begging. Initiatives have been built in different regional contexts to address the labour inclusion needs of beggars, but participation to these initiatives has been rather low.

Challenges in outreach work with beggars have included first and foremost the identification of their needs, that has

proven crucial to establish a first contact. The main needs regard the sphere of work and the regularisation of the legal status. Housing needs have also emerged on the side of people who left the reception circuit and did not have accommodation. A second challenge has regarded, more generally, the interpretation of the phenomenon. In this sense, many interviewees discussed the importance of collaborating with cultural-linguistic mediators, not only to facilitate (in some cases) the communication with beggars, but also to observe the actual phenomenon and improve the understanding of it.

Promising practice 1: dedicated outreach units and socio-legal support

Most outreach units in Italy involve social workers and practitioners and no socio-legal professionals or lawyers. In some cases, these professional figures are called to intervene in ad hoc circumstances. Ciac Onlus, in Parma, provides an example in this sense. This organisation has developed considerable experience in begging, when it started observing the phenomenon in 2014. It then developed a dedicated partnership with the municipality, following the expressed interest to monitor the phenomenon. To date it continues to undertake regular observation and contacts with beggars through its outreach units. An outreach team has been specifically organised to reach out to beggars and it comprises 3 outreach workers, including 2 professional workers, a mediator (when required) and 1 socio-legal professional. This choice derives from the observation that socio-legal professionals do facilitate contacts as they can respond to one of the main needs expressed by beggars: legal support. For more information on and contacts of CIAC Onlus see: <https://ciaconlus.org/>

Promising practice 2: low-threshold helpdesk

In Perugia (Umbria) and Termoli (Molise), a low-threshold helpdesk was set up to orient beggars and people more generally to local services and to gather information about their needs. In Perugia the helpdesk was specifically set up for beggars, whereas in Termoli it was set up for migrants, based on the assumption that situations of exploitation would be best intercepted with a more "generic" approach of migrants' support. Outreach units in Perugia and Termonli, but also Milan (Lombardy) suggest that helpdesks are the more appropriate spaces to meet potential beneficiaries, following a first outreach contact, and the only type of spaces that can help build relationships of trust. For more information on see Free life - Borgorete: <https://www.borgorete.it/servizi/tratta-emergenza-sociale/free-life>

Promising practice 3: outreach in places of exploitation but also gathering places

Some organisations, such as Lule Onlus, have adapted the methodology used in the field of labour exploitation to work with beggars. This has involved making contact in the actual places of exploitation, but also in gathering places, where contact is deliberately aimed at a wider target group (and less stigmatised). This specific methodology includes a preliminary observation of the territory and the identification of public places in which people gather (i.e. parks, shops and squares). In these places initial contacts are made, aimed at providing contacts of the outreach units and informing people on the available services (such as support to access medical services and legal advice). Whereby beneficiaries, following an initial contact, call the outreach unit, the professionals propose further meetings and undertake in-depth interviews. Lule outreach workers explained that some people were met both in gathering places and in front of supermarkets, when begging. This "double" contact has proved positive to engage with people and monitor their living conditions and to improve knowledge of the complex phenomenon of begging. For more information on Lule Onlus: <https://www.luleonlus.it/>

Begging, connection to exploitation, trafficking, “Cults” and multi-agency cooperation

Some of the anti-trafficking professionals that we interviewed hypothesise that begging may be managed by organised crime, in the form of exploitation, particularly as far as East-European and Bangladeshi people are involved. Insights that confirmed such hypothesis emerged in investigations targeting East-European criminal organisations but also Nigerian ones. There is little doubt that begging by Nigerian citizens is controlled in cities like Milan and Bologna, where collaborations have been built between anti-trafficking professionals and law enforcement officers. However, a chronic lack of coordination, at wider national level, to foster multi-agency collaborations and identify standard procedures of intervention is evident³⁰.

During the INSigHT research only one case of trafficking for the scope of begging was identified. It was a case reported in a criminal proceeding. The investigation had begun in connection with sexual exploitation and it eventually revealed contacts between a *madam* and a man who had been taken to Italy for begging purposes³¹. The Prosecutor we interviewed³² supported that, in 90% of the cases she investigated, begging was a subsistence economic activity that people choose to practice in the absence of job opportunities and other forms of income.

³⁰ Interview, Magistrate, 20.10.2020 and note in the second GRETA Report about Italy. Available: <https://rm.coe.int/greta-2018-28-fgr-ita/168091f627> Last access: 10.01.2021.

³¹ Arrest warrant (nr 1438/17 RGRN) in Catania.

³² Deputy Prosecutor of the Public Prosecutor Office of Catania 11.12.2020. Organised with Equality ATI, in preparation for the INSigHT webinar with law enforcement services on 27.01.2021.

³³ The original term referred to the sense of brotherhood and the charitable and religious

Some anti-trafficking professionals also think there are possible connections between begging and drug dealing. Some recall that Nigerian men in Milan reported they “had chosen” begging to avoid drug dealing, as initially proposed by a “cult” group³³ of which they were members (see Semprebon et al., 2021).

We did not find direct connections between begging and the so-called Nigerian mafia, but the Prosecutor explained that when a *cult* enters the begging market the (dedicated) “pitches” start being controlled, for example through the payment of a “joint”. “Cults” mainly deal in drugs, as it is more lucrative, although some links have been identified between “cult” groups and traffickers too (i.e. *cult* members sometimes recruit girls for prostitution for their meetings; some women and girls prostitute in *connection houses* run by *cult* members; *cult* members recruit girls as drugs mules).

Investigations clearly demonstrate the presence of mafia-like groups (i.e. Black Axe, Eiyé, Maphites, Vikings, Buccaneers) in Italy. Their nature is vividly described by the Italian Central Directorate of Criminal Police (2021)³⁴. Similarities with mafia-like organisations are both internal (hierarchical structures and the subjugation of members; rites of affiliation; the collection of large sums of money that go into a common pot; internal organisational language; reprisals against members who try to leave; mutual aid and support of prisoners in jail) and external (intimidation

purposes inherent in these groups. In the last twenty years, these fraternities have expanded considerably, often using violent methods, leading Nigerian institutions to prohibit their setting up. The “cults” are still active and well rooted in Nigeria, and have a clear transnational vocation.

³⁴ A dedicated report is specifically focused on Nigerian organised crime. Available: https://www.poliziadistato.it/statics/41/focus_la_mafia_nigeriana_in_italia_dicembre_2020.pdf Last access: 10.02.2021.

and silence of those who suffer the group's aggression; and members' belonging to a single and specific group). What must be underlined is that as "*cults*" were gradually associated with mafia organisations, two important changes took place in the fight against Nigerian organised crime: the competence for relevant investigations was passed to the Anti-mafia Investigation

Directorate; hence prosecutors can legitimately avail themselves of the instruments used in the fight against mafia-type crimes (i.e. telephone interceptions, collaboration with cooperating witnesses) which are normally considered as extremely useful tools to conduct investigations of this type.

Recommendations to the EU and EU Member States in terms of transnational cooperation

1. Re-consider the following issues with reference to the proposals made by the new Migration Pact: improving the system of identification, risk-assessment and referral in all areas of trafficking and serious exploitation, including begging, in full respect of human rights;
2. continue supporting, promoting and developing forms of transnational cooperation, with third countries but also between Member States, through initiatives such as the Migration Partnership Facility, in terms of investigation and prosecutions;
3. secure funding for research activities on: trafficking and its continuing evolution, including internal movements, different forms of exploitation (sexual, labour, begging, exploitation in illegal economies, etc.), connections with organised crime, the mapping of exploitation networks in Europe;
4. continue supporting the development of innovative methodologies to monitor begging and undertake outreach work with beggars, while also collecting data on the trajectories of the people contacted;
5. continue developing and strengthening forms of multi-agency cooperation, by building capacity at local but also regional and national level, to tackle labour exploitation, begging and other growing phenomena, in cooperation with law enforcement agencies, labour inspectorates and other relevant actors;
6. monitor the (often negative) impacts of public safety mayoral orders on potentially vulnerable individuals such as beggars, but also sex workers.

This policy brief was written by Michela Semprebon, SSIIM Unesco Chair, University Iuav of Venice (Italy), as part of the INSigHT Action (Building capacity to deal with human trafficking and transit routes in Nigeria, Italy, Sweden) that aims at increasing the capacity of key local stakeholders in the Veneto region (Italy), Edo and Lagos states (Nigeria) and Sweden to tackle human trafficking and to deal with its evolving dynamics. The Action will focus on the trafficking of young Nigerian women while promoting knowledge-based policymaking in the respective countries and reinforcing transnational cooperation on the topic.

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