



EMIN Italian Report (Year 2 - 2014)

**Follow Up of Road Map for the
progressive realisation of Minimum
Income Schemes**

January 2015

What is the EMIN Project?

Bringing together various experts, professionals, academics and diverse entities active in the fight against poverty and social exclusion, the EUROPEAN MINIMUM INCOME NETWORK aims at building consensus towards the progressive realisation of adequate and accessible minimum income schemes in EU Member States.

EMIN is a two-year project (2013-2014) funded by the European Commission, in line with the European Commission's Active Inclusion Recommendation of 2008, the Europe 2020 Strategy and, in the context of the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion.

The activities under EMIN can be followed through its blog: <http://emin-eu.net>

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Partners of EMIN in Italy



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Contents

Introduction to the Second Year of EMIN.....	4
Elements of comparison between the different regional measures taken to fight poverty... 6	6
Project of a Minimum Income Scheme: evidence to consider.....	9
Analysis of a possible MIS.....	11
Messages and conclusions emerging from the work.....	12
Appendix 1: Additional questions added to the EMIN Questionnaire to address the Italian reality	15
Appendix 2: Guidelines for interviewing MIS beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries	18
Appendix 3: Bibliography.....	19

Introduction to the Second Year of EMIN

This second year Report reflects the results of the research that took place in Italy between the end of 2013 and the first months of 2014 by the EMIN Project in Italy. While the first year of the project was mostly spent on desk work and the construction of the National Network “Rete Italiana per il Reddito Minimo”, the second year aimed at developing alliances and putting in place specific actions that could eventually lead to the approval of a Minimum Income Scheme (MIS) in the country.

As stated in our first Report, the debate on MIS was lagging behind even though various national and regional experimental regulations had been issued since 1998 and three bills had been submitted in Parliament. Adding to that, we underline that civil society organizations had organized two campaigns collecting signatures calling for the establishment of a National Minimum Income Scheme (one of the Campaigns being the one promoted by EAPN on Adequate Income). But, despite all these efforts, the media continue to avoid the issue and public opinion at large is not being properly informed.

As already stated in the first EMIN Report, Italy does not have an universal strategy that could be compared with other national MIS in Europe, the only two measures that may have a reference to them being the MIS that was experimented in 1998 but soon stopped and the Social Card. Table 1 illustrates the experimental proposals submitted at the national level, ie the experimentation that was carried out in 1998 but was cancelled in 2003 and, the 2013 Social Card for that is still operational and that is still missing an evaluation. In 2001, a Constitutional reform shifting powers from the central State to the Regions and to the Autonomous Provinces, made it possible for some of them to establish regional MIS. The lack of a national anti-poverty strategy both the national experimentations and/or the schemes put in place by some regions did not lower the poverty level in Italy. This is the reason why it was decided to add to the European questionnaire an extra section (Part IV – The Italian Case – see Appendix No. 1) aimed at understanding the causes of the persisting and critical absence of a MIS in Italy. Then, we developed another questionnaire to be filled in by people in poverty/potential beneficiaries (Appendix No. 2), the objective being that of understanding their needs and expectations vis-à-vis a MIS.

The following chapters are drawn from the results of the research carried out in 2014, completing the desk work described in the first Report.

The analysis of the answers given by the respondents (stakeholders, experts, beneficiaries) is the basis of the examination of the causes, expectations and recommendations for a national MIS that guarantees a dignified life to all. We have also added an updated table describing the main current measures put in place in Italy to fight poverty (See, Table No. 1).

The results of the two-year research are summarised in the section “Messages / Conclusions emerging from the Research”. These results were also discussed in depth during the National Conference that took place in Rome on October 8, 2014.

The questionnaires were first administered, between October 2013 and February 2014, to experts and stakeholders (7 academics and/or researchers, 1 trade union leader, 10 representatives of non-profit organizations). The potential respondents were selected based on their experience and with the intention of developing a constructive and privileged dialogue with them. The questionnaires for potential beneficiaries were administered between the months of January and March 2014.

In addition to the aforementioned activities, the project's second year was also devoted at building the support and consensus for achieving Minimum Income in Italy.

The Network built around EMIN is made up of organizations or networks already involved in the national and European public debate on the many interpretations and facets of the discussion on Minimum Income, i.e. "guaranteed income", "adequate income", "citizen's income", etc. The vision of poverty, from the point of view of labour and / or of assistance, reflects the orientation of each partner within the network as well.

The Report highlights the partners' shared positions allowing the Network to submit to the Parliament an agreed proposal for a measure of Minimum Income for a dignified life which we summarize briefly here: Minimum Income is a fundamental right safeguarding the individual from poverty and social exclusion; it must be a universal measure reaching all the people who live below the poverty line established at the European level; foreigners who have been residing in the country for at least two years or undocumented migrants who have started the process to regularize their status should be entitled to receive MI as well.

As noted in our first Report, consensus for establishing a national measure of Minimum Income has grown thanks to the involvement in the National Network for Minimum Income of national stakeholders that are committed to this issue and that of civil society organizations working on matters such as employment, poverty, social services and/or advocacy.

During the project's first year of activities two meetings to establish the National Network were organized while the questionnaires were pivotal for introducing the EMIN project to trade unions, experts, academics and people in poverty.

In order to disseminate information on our activities, we opened the face-book page "Italian Network for Minimum Income." The communication strategy was further developed during the second year of activities: press releases sent to Italian policy makers, MEPs, national associations and networks and, participation in public events. During this year the Network addressed many other national organizations and local institutions.

A key activity of the second year was the organisation of a National Conference on Minimum Income that took place in Rome on October 8th 2014. The Conference presented the results of two years of work and the accomplishment of the Italian

National Minimum Income Network to strengthen the social consensus on the topic. 80 people from public bodies, trade unions, partners belonging to the network, academics, people in poverty, and media representatives participated.

Elements of comparison between the different regional measures taken to fight poverty

A summary of the legislations (laws and conditionality) and their implementation (including reference on the number of beneficiaries) of the national and regional measures, may give the reader some more elements of reflection on the Italian experience on the implementation of a Minimum Income Scheme.

The synthesis in Table 1 includes some national policy measures (such as the 1998 MI experiment and the 2013 Social Card) and the main regional measures such as the *Reddito di Garanzia* (*trad.* Income Guarantee) of the Autonomous Province of Trento, and the Basic Income for Citizenship of Friuli Venezia Giulia. All these measures, but the 2013 Social Card, were briefly experimented with people in extreme poverty and not financed a second time.

To pinpoint some elements of comparison, some aspects of analysis must be highlighted, as also reported in the 2013 IRVAPP study (See, Table No. 1):

- Criteria for the determination of income:
- Each measure put in place by the Italian national or regional Authorities uses or used different criteria for determining the income
- Method of identification of beneficiaries and delivery: if centralized by Government or carried out by municipalities
- Timely payment to beneficiaries: consideration of the lapse of time between the establishment of the measure, the first payment and the periodicity of the following payments
- Activities to identify take-up and /or non-take-up
- Social support and/or employment programmes including those for the completion of compulsory education and employment through qualified training
- Role played by different relevant bodies : municipalities (the network of social services), employment agencies, schools, third sector, Governmental or Regional authorities for the control and correct delivery of the measure
- Monitoring the results systematically

- The degree of social integration achieved (back to education, integration into the labour market or / and social inclusion)
- Coverage(average annual number of beneficiaries, percentage of beneficiaries compared with the population, main features of beneficiaries, whether families and/or individuals)
- Governmental or Regional funds invested for each anti-poverty measure

Table 1 Main mode of delivering and implementation of some National and Regional measures to fight poverty

Measurements	Key Mode								
	Criteria for determining income	Modality for submission of application	Timely payment	Activities to detect a Non-Take-Up	Programs for Social Support and/or employment	Role of different Stakeholders	Monitoring and evaluation of effects	Beneficiaries Some numbers	Governmental or regional funds
Minimum Income of Insertion (RMI)	Taxable household income made equivalent with appropriate income brackets (ISEE income Indicator)	Municipal Announcement	Within 60 days of application submission and confirmation of eligibility	Planned at discretion of Town Hall e.g. Town Hall of Foggia	Planned upon responsibility of Municipalities	Central role of Municipalities	Planned, only monitoring and partial evaluation fulfilled	During first 2 years 35.000 families and 39 Municipalities	Over 220 million Euros spent on the first bi-annual experiment
Purchasing Cards or Social Card (SC)	Isee Income Indicator	Post Offices	Immediate, against verification of eligibility	Not planned	Not planned	Central Management Structure: Ministry of Economy, Social Security Agency and Post Offices	Annual report to Parliament planned but not submitted	535.412 of the 1.300.000 target	207 million Euros up to 2011
Experimental New Social Card (SCS)	Isee Income Indicator	Municipal Announcements	Within 120 days from Municipal Regulation enforcement	Planned	Responsibility of Municipalities	Planned payments on behalf of Municipalities, Employment Centers, Health Care System, non-profit agencies	Planned with evaluation of effect through random experiments	Forecast of 25% coverage of expected eligible	50 million Euros for 12 months
Friuli-Venezia Giulia: Basic Citizen Income (RdB)	Income ECC indicator of economic and personal assets	Post Offices	Within 1 month of provisional agreement and within 4 months of final agreement	Planned but not fulfilled	Responsibility of Municipalities	Active role expected of Municipalities, Employment Centers, Fiscal Assistance Agency, Health Care Agency	Mid and final term planned but not submitted	4.264 applications received in 6 months between 2007 and 2008	25,2 million Euros in the 6 months between 2007 and 2008
P.A. Trento: Guarantee Income (RG)	ICEF : Indicator of domestic situation + monitoring of expenses	Fiscal Assistance Agency	First payment on the 21st of the month after application is made	Carried out by the Province only for residents and acceptance of employment programs	Responsibility of Employment Centre and Social Services Agency	Central role of the Province and Fiscal Agency	Active since deliberation and still in progress	About 7.000 Beneficiaries of which half are foreigners	Average of 17 million Euros per year (0,1% of Provincial GDP)

Source: IRVAPP, 2013

Project of a Minimum Income Scheme: evidence to consider

The definition of a Minimum Income instrument involves policy choices and accurate planning of intervention in which the relevant variables do not only regard the beneficiaries, but also its use and paid amount. A MIS must also identify the beneficiaries and set the rules for admission into the programme. These two issues are relevant to the range of beneficiaries and how to improve the requirements for eligibility, having an effect on the conditionality and / or the commitment between the beneficiaries and the managing authorities.

The interviews take into consideration some key elements: the profiles of the beneficiaries and the benchmark of eligibility, take-up and no-take up (obstacles for eligibility and how to overcome them), the criteria of adequacy (rules and amount of MIS) and the effectiveness of the delivery. The answers to the questionnaire highlighted the opinions and the points of view of experts coming from public bodies, stakeholders and of people experiencing or at risk of poverty.

Besides identifying the rules for take-up, it is also necessary to implement specific policies that reduce the risk of depending on social assistance.

Minimum Income Schemes comprise two very meaningful aspects: how to identify the beneficiaries and, how to fight poverty and social exclusion effectively. Therefore, once the take-up is secured, the best solutions to support the beneficiary's social and economic situation must be chosen.

The people interviewed argue in favour of a universal concept of MIS with some thresholds, describing the profile of the individual who should access the MIS and the conditions he/she should comply with:

- Focus on the individual, living alone or within a family, who is in a particularly uncomfortable situation. If the person belongs to a larger household, we may most of the times refer to the woman or mother although the individuals living in the same household in need of a MI can be more than one as, for example, the children
- Universal selection: Shall be entitled to receive MI: 1) all persons living under the poverty threshold (60% of national median income), without differentiation of age or other factors; Foreigners and / or undocumented migrants that are going through a regularization process
- Limits can be age and residence: at least two years of residence in Italy should be necessary. These limitations should be conditioned by the national budget for MIS, the evaluation of the effective need and the coordination between MIS and employment policies
- Universal right to live in dignity is as important as that of safeguarding one's health, a right for everyone without social and/or economic conditions
- Conditionality is an integrated part of MIS and can include the binding request of entering employment or social inclusion programme
- Conditionality is necessary to avoid the risk of dependence or falling into the trap of poverty because the passive tools of assistance can create dependence on the system and discourage job search

Some of the people interviewed feel that it is meaningful to offer an adequate employment to the recipients while others feel that the MIS must not substitute economic allowances. Considering

conditionality, the most relevant point is to guarantee an economic threshold which ensures that the beneficiaries do not slip into poverty. It is evident how diverging the different opinions are.

The debate on possible “poverty traps” must not generate a “job insecurity trap” increasing low pay/poor quality employment. The shift between welfare and workfare has created more inequality, new forms of poverty and the number of working poor without increasing employment.

Having been part of the labour market must not be considered a prerequisite to be eligible for MIS but, on the contrary, the take-up of MI and access to the quality services should be the prerequisites toward inclusion into the labour market (Interview No. 2).

The activation of MIS must not commit the beneficiary to accept an inadequate employment at all costs: employment must meet the skills and knowledge of the person. In other words, conditionality must not be considered as a punishment but as a tool for social integration (Interview No. 7).

As a matter of fact, it often happens that people in social and cultural difficulty or with low skills/expertise are entrusted with responsibilities that they are not able to handle (Interview No.14).

From the same interview other important elements are:

- Do not oppose social integration and labour
- Empower the person in poverty so he/she may act and react

The beneficiaries have different needs: social, economic or psychological such as the need to feel useful and integrated in a social context. As a matter of fact, more the threshold is very low and more the poverty is extreme greater the need to be included in a social context.

Today impoverishment includes new people, such as the working poor. For this reason, a MIS should widen its criteria for selecting the beneficiaries and should implement different means of payment, considering the new and emerging needs. Unfortunately in Italy, the debate is mostly concentrated on how to best control the beneficiaries.

A MIS should contemplate:

- Forms of social guidance
- Integration of local social services
- Social minimum standards at the National level
- Adequate social resources
- Targeted solutions for different situations/needs of the beneficiaries
- Constant monitoring so to be able to rapidly adjust it to the changing needs of the beneficiaries and the territorial conditions
- Improve the expertise of the social workers and that of the managing authorities in charge of monitoring and evaluating the MIS
- Build a social consensus through information campaigns and encourage beneficiaries to apply for the MIS

The population interviewed identified the following criteria to define a MIS:

- Use of reference budgets

- Update/improve systems of access
- Use of the European poverty threshold
- Establishment of a minimum wage , that is lacking just as a National Minimum Income Scheme

A MIS helps to overcome the risk of economic poverty and the loss/reduction of social participation, while the minimum wage salary helps to prevent becoming a working poor (Interview no. 2).

A basic income should be established, below which no one should go (Interview No. 7).

Analysis of a possible MIS

Coverage

In Italy there are no databases on the social allowances paid by the Municipalities or the Regions, nor on social services or on specific targets such as minors, drop-outs, disabled. The implementation of a national database is one of the requests formalized by CILAP-EAPN Italy at the time of the hearing with Government during its financial programme 2014-2020.

The only available assessments are those very few published on line or academic studies (Biolcati Rinaldi F., *Povert , Teoria e Tempo*, ed. Franco Angeli, 2006; Lumino R., *Valutazione Teorie del Cambiamento. Le Politiche Locali di Contrasto alla Povert *, ed. Franco Angeli, 2013) mostly focusing on coverage, poverty threshold, means testing and the management of non-take-up. The evaluation of the changes and attitude of the beneficiaries show the need for different types of interpretation: timing and endurance of benefit, the ability to be self-dependent, the role of social networks, the modality of access to services and following distribution and last but not least the role of social workers.

Take-Up and Non-Take-Up

In Italy the debate has focused mainly on the management of the beneficiaries rather than on the access and activation of the benefit. This is due to the fact that resources are insufficient and the conditionality prevails over entitlement to admission (interview No.14).

Regarding the New Social Card, for example, it was highlighted that the most restrictive requisite for access to it was "inadequate employment" which totally excluded long term unemployed or those in other forms of poverty.

Adequacy

In Italy the controversy is on Basic Income, Minimum Income and Citizen Income. These matters are much discussed within minor political groups and civil society organizations which do not, however, have decisional power. Nonetheless, some minor political parties are more open to dialogue, as can be seen by the three bills presented in Parliament (See, Report 1st year).

From the interviews, the following criteria for adequacy have emerged:

- Use of reference budgets
- Equivalence scales
- Regular updating of tools used to set the monetary instalments

For example, for a family of 3 or 4 members the level of the MI must be lower than the average wages, lacking a minimum wage. The reasoning behind this is to motivate the beneficiary to search, find and be able to hold a paid job (Interviews no. 2 and no. 13). The monetary instalments must also be based on equivalence scales, evaluating whether the level is adequate according to the number of adults and children in the household (interview no. 14).

The interviews carried out within the EMIN project allowed us to pinpoint some key elements for establishing the criteria of adequacy, reference budgets and a correct relationship between minimum wage and MI, the former to be established at individual level and the latter at the family one. We highlight here that there is not a law establishing a minimum wage in Italy, partially explaining the hostility of the Trade Unions against the MI.

Furthermore, the MI for a family of 3 or 4 persons “must be linked to the poverty line, which, as a rule, should be lower of the minimum wage”, this depending from the national labour bargaining (interviews No. 2 and 13, a Trade Union representative and an academician, respectively). It is very important to distinguish the different types of potential beneficiaries: for some the goal is to go back to an active life and to economic self-sufficiency while for others the priority may be to access pensions or disability benefits.

Research¹ has identified four groups of beneficiaries:

- Beneficiaries that are able to improve their conditions
- Those that are a bit reluctant to the proposed changes but do not refuse them a priori
- Those that make a strategic use of the support offered by the services
- Those that are absent/missing because they avoid any kind of contact

The role of the professionals, social workers and those working in the employment centres is fundamental, since for the beneficiaries to believe that their situations can evolve and change for the better, it is essential that they trust these professionals. Frequently, instead, it is exactly in the relationship between the professionals and the beneficiaries that the first obstacles appear, inhibiting a constructive relationship. Of course, the conditionality inherent to the individual project can be seen both as an incentive or an obstacle, if not perceived in the right way.

For this reason the role of the professionals that come into contact with the beneficiaries is extremely relevant and the agreement signed up by both parties should be respected by both.

The beneficiary should not see in the conditionality a limit but as an opportunity providing the chance to use or develop skills to enter the labour market while receiving a financial support (Interview No. 5)

Messages and conclusions emerging from the work

There are several tools that can be put in place for assessing the effectiveness of a minimum income program in preventing and reducing the spread and depth of poverty. The discussions held

¹ Lumino R. 2013 Valutazione delle teorie del cambiamento. Le politiche locali di contrasto alla povertà. Milano Franco Angeli editore

with the people involved in the National Network have highlighted some features (or policy guidelines):

1. Identify the beneficiaries and the relevant actions for inclusion. In particular: identify some key categories relating to social reintegration measures and/or the promotion of employment
2. Establish different criteria for the identification of the beneficiary: an example may be to grant payment of allowances to women within a family household since they are considered to be more "responsible."
3. Consider the MIS and the access to social services as necessary preconditions for integration into the labour market (and not vice versa: minimum income programmes cannot be designed on the basis of labour integration only.)
4. Do not set social integration against work integration. The two rights, the one to minimum income and the one to work, are related but do not depend on each other since, integration into the labour market is a form of social integration if it takes into consideration the kind and quality of the work offered matching them with the skills of the person, otherwise, "there is the risk of an integration without quality, closer to control than enrichment and qualification"
5. Build a highly integrated system of social and labour policies, integrating the MIS with other welfare measures, with a strong coordination between the agencies responsible for their delivery. This integrated system should be built up around some important pillars such as: an inclusive labour market, the coordination between the different agencies including a common database of benefit recipients and, integrated social services providing holistic support to the recipient and his/her family.
6. Stimulating the freedom to choose one's work as a measure to fight social exclusion can prevent the risk of putting undue pressure on the recipient (the MIS, as a measure to fight social exclusion should ensure beneficiaries the necessary income to access basic needs, independence and awareness of their rights and their own autonomy)
7. Tie Minimum Income to an individual social integration project shared with the recipient
8. Enhance skills of the social workers and those in charge
9. Enhancing the role of coordination by entrusting it to a managing central body : give due attention to monitoring and evaluation of the measures and programmes implemented

In reflecting on minimum income and analysing how to reach a widespread consensus on this measure, consideration must be made regarding the fact that there is no mechanism or law establishing a minimum wage in Italy, a fact that at least partially explains the hostility of the trade unions to the mere concept of MI. In addition to this, the debate on income - minimum, basic or adequate - is confined within minority political groups or civil society organizations with no decision-making power. Some policy-makers (and the political parties they belong to) finally seem to be willing to enter into dialogue on the matter, as the three bills introduced in Parliament show. Organized civil society went one step further by reaching an agreement on a popular legislative initiative, gathering enough signatures to introduce a bill in Parliament. Another positive aspect is that some trade unions - the Italian Federation of Metalworkers (FIOM – CGIL) in particular - are no longer, as it was until a short time ago, totally against the introduction of a measure of minimum income.

Before closing this Report we would like to underline the CILAP EAPN Italia is probably the only National Network engaging people experiencing poverty in the discussion. Starting from the national preparation of the first European Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty, in 2001, CILAP activated a stable working group of people in poverty where they could express their opinions freely. The group first started discussing the need of a MI back in 2004. The results of these discussions have been at the core of CILAP EAPN Italia's position on MI and the people in poverty we interviewed for our research – all coming from this group – showed that empowerment is the best path towards inclusion, towards self-confidence and the acknowledgments of the fundamental rights, living a decent life included.

Appendix 1: Additional questions added to the EMIN Questionnaire to address the Italian reality

4. LIMITS AND POSSIBLE WAYS FORWARD

4.1. As you know, Italy is one of the few EU countries still lacking a nation-wide MIS. Can you tell us, in the light of your knowledge and your experience, which were the main factors that - in spite of the many proposals and efforts made over the years - have blocked its implementation at the national level?

In details:

4.1.1. *One of the most common arguments against the adoption of a universal MIS in Italy has been the amount of the **economic resources needed** to finance it. This argument was brought up even when the proposals took into careful consideration (in whole or in part) its financial sustainability with resources to be found using those coming from other supports and benefits already in place. How do you assess this kind of arguments?*

4.1.2. *Do you believe that the failure to establish a universal MIS depends also in the difficulty to identify the profile and the boundaries of a **universal measure** given the fragmentation of the Italian social protection system?*

Yes No

Remarks

4.1.3. *If you consider that the issue of resources has been a major obstacle to the establishment of a MIS in Italy, how do you think Italy can find a right balance between the **increasing difficulty in finding the necessary financial resources** and the growing need to establish a universal MIS, given the **increase in poverty**?*

4.1.4. *Do you think that the failure to implement a MIS is also influenced by the great Italian **territorial gap**, with a high concentration of poverty in the southern areas of the country?*

Yes No

Why?

4.1.5. *In order to relief or exit poverty, it is unanimously acknowledged that the Italian tradition is twofold: **charity and assistance** and **work**. What role do you think this tradition plays in the failure to establish a universal MIS?*

Yes No

Remarks

4.1.6. *If you believe that these traditional factors have played a significant role, how do you assess the EU trend to link MISs with those employment measures that may help to reduce the existing gaps?*

Yes No

Remarks

4.2. If in recent years you have promoted, or supported a MIS measure of MIS (as a scholar or an observer as well), what were its main characteristics and why did you think it had to be supported?

Looking to the future:

4.3. Do you believe that the measure you promoted/supported should/could **be taken into account** by the law-makers today?

Yes No

Notes

4.3.1. *If yes, why and how?*

4.3.2. Beside the eventual economic limitations we discussed before, do you think that further obstacles could come from the **Italian institutional design of our welfare system** that allocated to the Regions the programming and spending functions (see the reform of Title V of the Constitution)?

Yes No

Remarks

4.3.3. If you believe that the current Italian institutional design is an obstacle to a universal MIS, do you think that the issue could be overcome through the identification of possible measures to reform our Constitution (Title V) or through the identification of alternative strategies?

4.4. What do think could be the **potential role that the EU** to facilitate the implementation of a MIS in Italy?

4.5. And how do you assess the most recent **EU trend** aimed at correlating MIS with the **activation to work**?

4.6. On September 19, 2013 the Minister for Labor and Social Policies, Mr Giovannini, presented a working hypothesis for the development of a new national measure to combat absolute poverty and social exclusion called "Support to active inclusion" (SIA), which is the 'natural evolution' of the Purchase Card. How do you assess this initiative²?

4.7. Finally: what **steps should Italy take** in order to establish a MIS at national level, taking into account the European context and the current worsening conditions of poverty?

² http://www.lavoro.gov.it/PrimoPiano/Pages/20130916_presentazione-relazione-povert%C3%A0.aspx

Appendix 2: Guidelines for interviewing MIS beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries

These guidelines have been built to give the interviewer a framework for interviewing potential beneficiaries of income support measures / minimum income. The interview is mainly addressed to:

- A. Homeless (extreme poverty : economic poverty , lack of access to goods and services)
- B. Jobless persons unable to find a solution to their problems mainly due to the lack of social protection systems
- C. People that are “covered” and benefit from services offered by the different social services agencies
- D. Individuals who benefit of the services offered by the Employment Centers (work inclusion)
- E. People impoverished by the lack of work; the working poor

The answers to the questions should be, on the one hand, short and synthetic and, on the other hand, give way to short tales of every-day reality and expectations of people experiencing poverty.

1. Did you try to receive economic support by an institution before you economic condition plummeted?
2. Did the responsible Department(s) of your Municipality or any charitable association ever helped you with an economic support (specify) or material goods (specify)?
3. If yes, was that help useful? What for?
4. Right now, in order to live better, how much money you would need monthly?
5. What would an economic help allow you to do that you cannot do right now?
6. In order to benefit of monetary help, the administration and the public services often require that the beneficiary signs a “covenant” (explain) with them. What do you think about it?

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