

Long Abstract – Monographic Section

Rethinking Welfare to prevent and combat gender-based violence: challenges and opportunities for an integrated system

edited by Pietro Demurtas and Emiliana Mangone

Regional Heterogeneity and Minimum Standards: A Challenge for the Italian Anti-Violence System.

Alice Marta Mauri and Francesca Cubeddu

In Italy, a wide array of regional measures and policies have been developed to prevent and combat violence against women, accompanied by diverse processes of territorial implementation and locally embedded collaborative frameworks.

Since the late 1980s, regional governments, being closer to local needs and to the demands expressed by associations, have taken action, each regulating in its own way the organisation, development and support of services and activities for the protection and support of women experiencing violence and their children, as well as for violence prevention.

The gradual spread of anti-violence centers and shelters across Italy has therefore been accompanied by a process of recognition of their role. This is evidenced both by regional laws addressing the issue and by regional administrative acts which, at various times and through different mechanisms, have allocated resources to support their operation. This process, which began in the absence of specific national regulations, has resulted in marked territorial heterogeneity in the structuring of regional anti-violence systems and, consequently, in the organization and management of anti-violence centers and shelters.

Within this context, the Agreements between the Central Government, the Regions, the Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano and local authorities, approved in 2014 and 2022 respectively, introduced minimum standards for anti-violence centers and shelters applicable across the entire national territory as a condition for access to public funding. These Agreements initiated a complex process of adaptation of the requirements previously defined at the regional level.

Based on an analysis of regional acts available on the LARA portal (Regional Anti-Violence Laws and Acts) and on the results of a survey involving interviews with regional representatives and associations, this contribution aims to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the implementation process of the minimum standards set out in the Agreements at the regional level.

In particular, it examines whether this process has contributed to the development of a more effective system capable of responding to the needs of women experiencing (and leaving) violence, and whether the Agreements have actually improved access to services throughout the country.

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