



Project ALFa “Accogliere le Fragilità”

Results - Operational Guidelines - Proposals



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The ALFa Project

“ALFa- Accogliere le Fragilità” is a project aiming at providing potential victims of trafficking with immediate protection and assistance through combined actions concerning safe reception measures in qualified facilities, the establishment of coordination mechanisms among the actors involved in the phenomenon and capacity building activities.

The project is co-funded by the European Commission and the Italian Ministry of the Interior. The Prefecture of Turin acts as the lead of ALFa and the partners are the Prefectures of the Piedmont Region, the Piedmont Region, IRES Piemonte and the anti-trafficked qualified organizations Associazione Piam Onlus, Associazione Liberazione e Speranza Onlus, Cooperativa Progetto Tenda, Associazione Centro Come Noi S. Pertini organizzazione Sermig di Volontariato, Associazione Comunità San Benedetto al Porto, Associazione Ideadonna Onlus, Associazione Tampep Onlus and Associazione Gruppo Abele Onlus.

ALFa was conceived during the peak of sea arrivals of migrants in Italy and it was designed to address challenges and barriers to effective protection of victims of trafficking within mixed migration movements and with a specific focus on the early identification of potential victims of trafficking in the asylum context.

The project has the following main areas of action:

1. **creation of specialized reception facilities.** An innovative methodology -that includes facilities with low-threshold access and residential centres- enables a gradual assessment of the specific needs of the potential victims. In this context, potential victims are guided towards the more appropriate protection measures (e.g.the request for the permit of stay for victims of trafficking, the application for asylum or other). The accommodation in the ALFa facilities also avoid further risks of exploitation or of re-victimization, in particular in case of asylum-seekers who are usually hosted in reception centres that don't include ad hoc measures for the protection of victims of trafficking. In addition, the ALFa facilities represent a viewpoint of the phenomenon and, at the same time, a safe space for potential victims to take their steps forward. A relationship of mutual trust between the staff of the anti-trafficking organization and the person is established, and the reception measures are shaped according to the person's needs. For this reason,

the project is able to promptly and flexibly adapt to emerging challenges and recent transformation of the phenomenon and of mixed migration movements.

2. **early identification of potential victims of trafficking.** It occurs by promptly placing potential victims referred by the local actors into emergency reception facilities with low-threshold access. The reception facilities of the ALFa project are designed to facilitate the detection of trafficking indicators and to ensure qualified and safe assistance to potential victims. The ALFa hosting facility becomes the place where the identification takes place: victims are daily observed and supported by qualified staff, and it is in this context that the process can lead to their formal identification.
3. **the strengthening of Regional coordination mechanisms among the different actors involved in the trafficking response** through both the enhancement of the referral procedure with the asylum system, the law enforcement and the public social services, and the organization of multi-agency capacity building activities.

To grasp the value of the project it is essential to refer to the context in which it has been designed and then implemented.

ALFa was originally conceived to provide a response to the so-called “refugees crisis” in 2015 and 2016 and then since 2020 addressed the challenges of the pandemic crisis. In the last years the project was also called to adapt to the transformation and emerging trends characterising persons on the move and at risk of trafficking in terms of gender, nationalities, specific needs, family composition (the majority of the persons hosted in the project are single mother of minor children) and forms exploitation (e.g. labour exploitation).

Furthermore, the project was built and developed in the context of the Piedmont Region with its specific features and experience in the protection of asylum seekers, refugees and victims of trafficking. ALFa is part of a system of Regional joint actions on trafficking that are the framework within which the project operates and, at same time, that benefit from the innovations elaborated by the project.

Potential victim of trafficking

Within the context of the project and for the purpose of this tool, the term “potential victims of trafficking” includes:

- persons already exploited and at risk of further processes of re-victimization;
- persons at risk of trafficking and of exploitation due to personal or environmental factors;
- and persons who are possible victims of trafficking and with a process of identification underway.

These persons have been the beneficiaries of the ALFA project.



photo by Claudia Corrent - Sheldon.studio

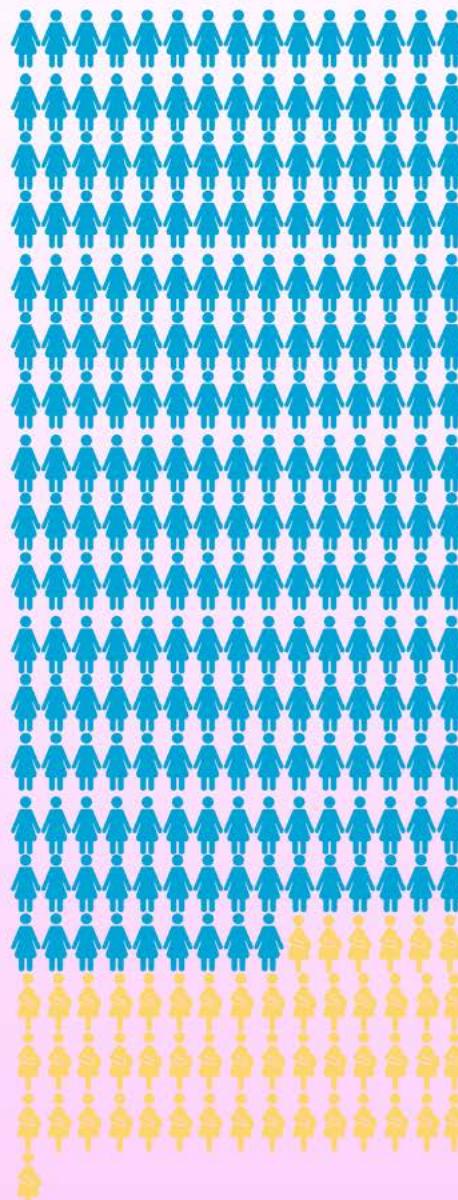
Results - Infographics

-Beneficiaries-

low-threshold and residential reception centers

309 Women

56 pregnant women



6 Men

3 family unit

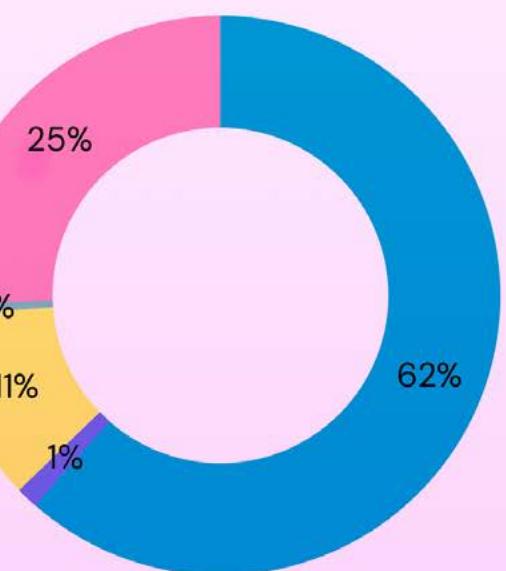
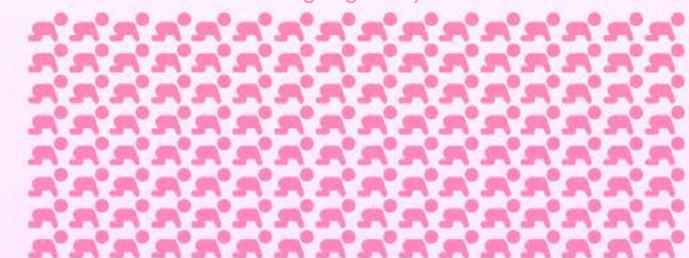


3 Trans



128 Children

average age 2.4 years



● Women ● Men ● Pregnant women ● Trans
● Children

-Nationalities-

Albania

1-0.2%



Bangladesh

1-0.2%



Brazil

6-1.2%



Cameroon

7-1.4%



China

1-0.2%



Ivory Coast

8-1.6%



Cuba

1-0.2%



Gambia

1-0.2%



Ghana

1-0.2%



Guinea

3-0.6%



Liberia

1-0.2%



Morocco

3-0.6%



Nigeria

456-90.8%



Peru

1-0.2%



Senegal

2-0.4%



Sierra Leone

2-0.4%



Venezuela

5-1%



Nigeria

91%

Rest of the world



● Albania

● China

● Ghan

● Peru

● Bangladesh

● Ivory Coast

● Senegal

● Gambia

● Brazil

● Liberia

● Morocco

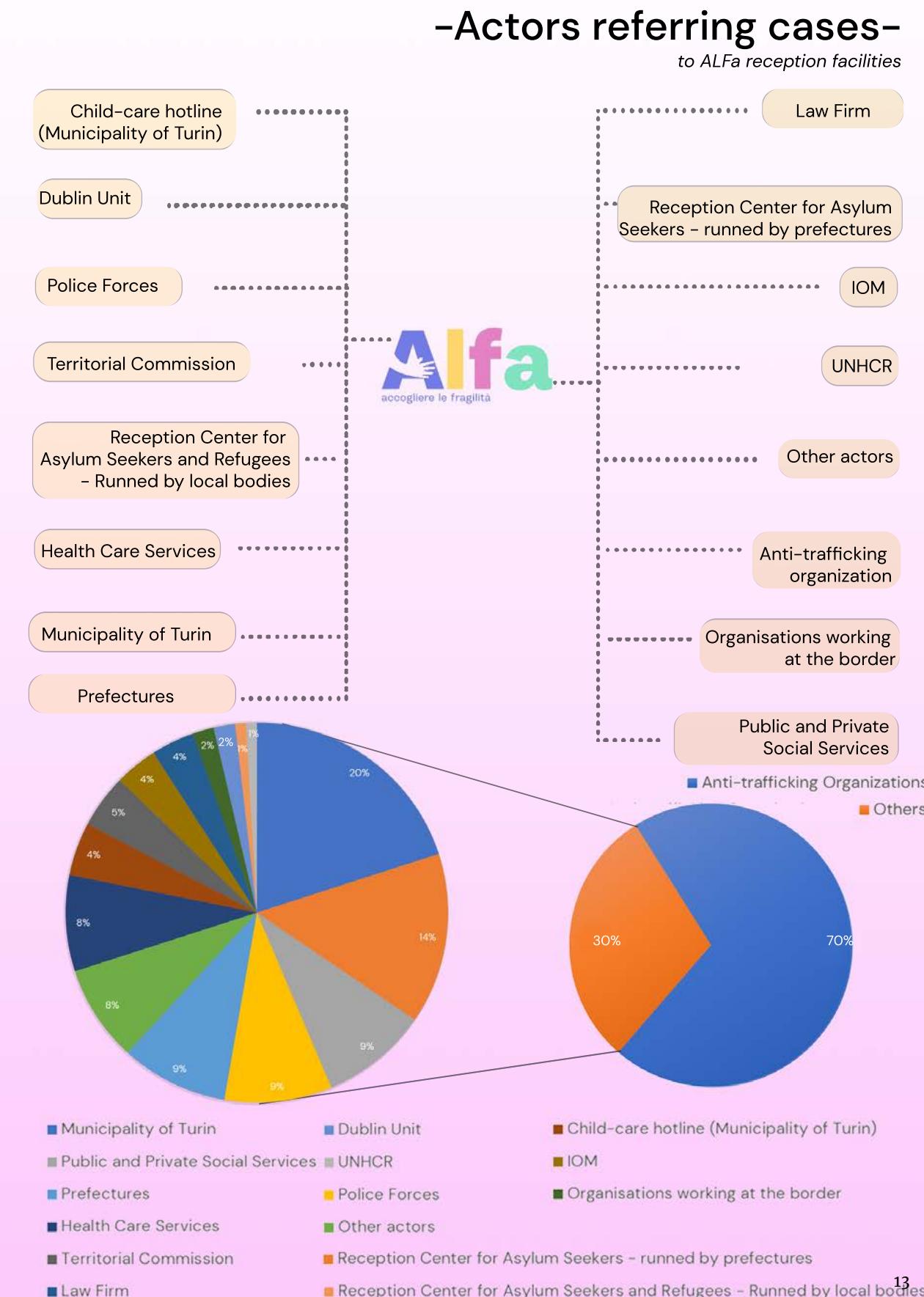
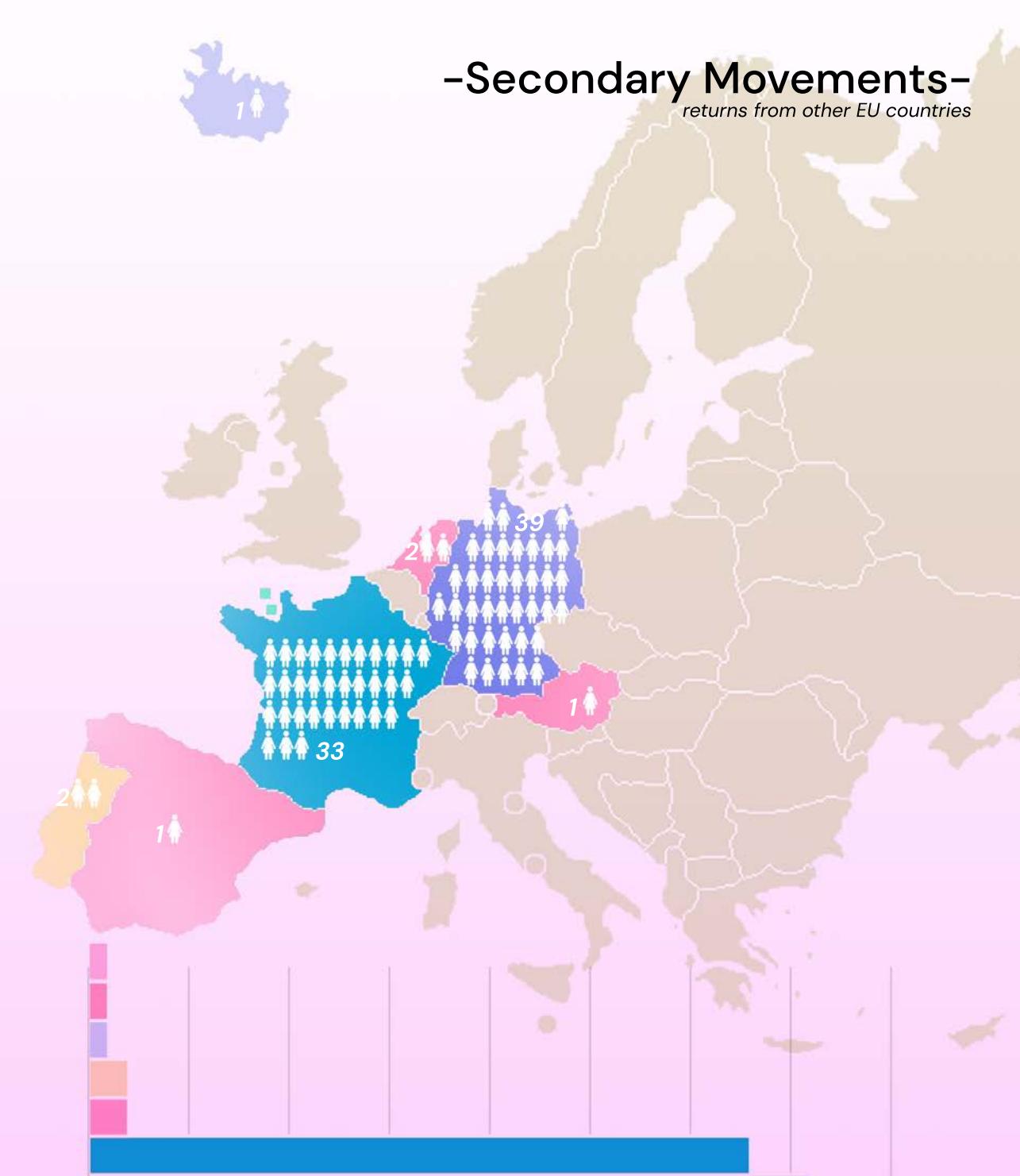
● Venezuela

● Camero

● Gambia

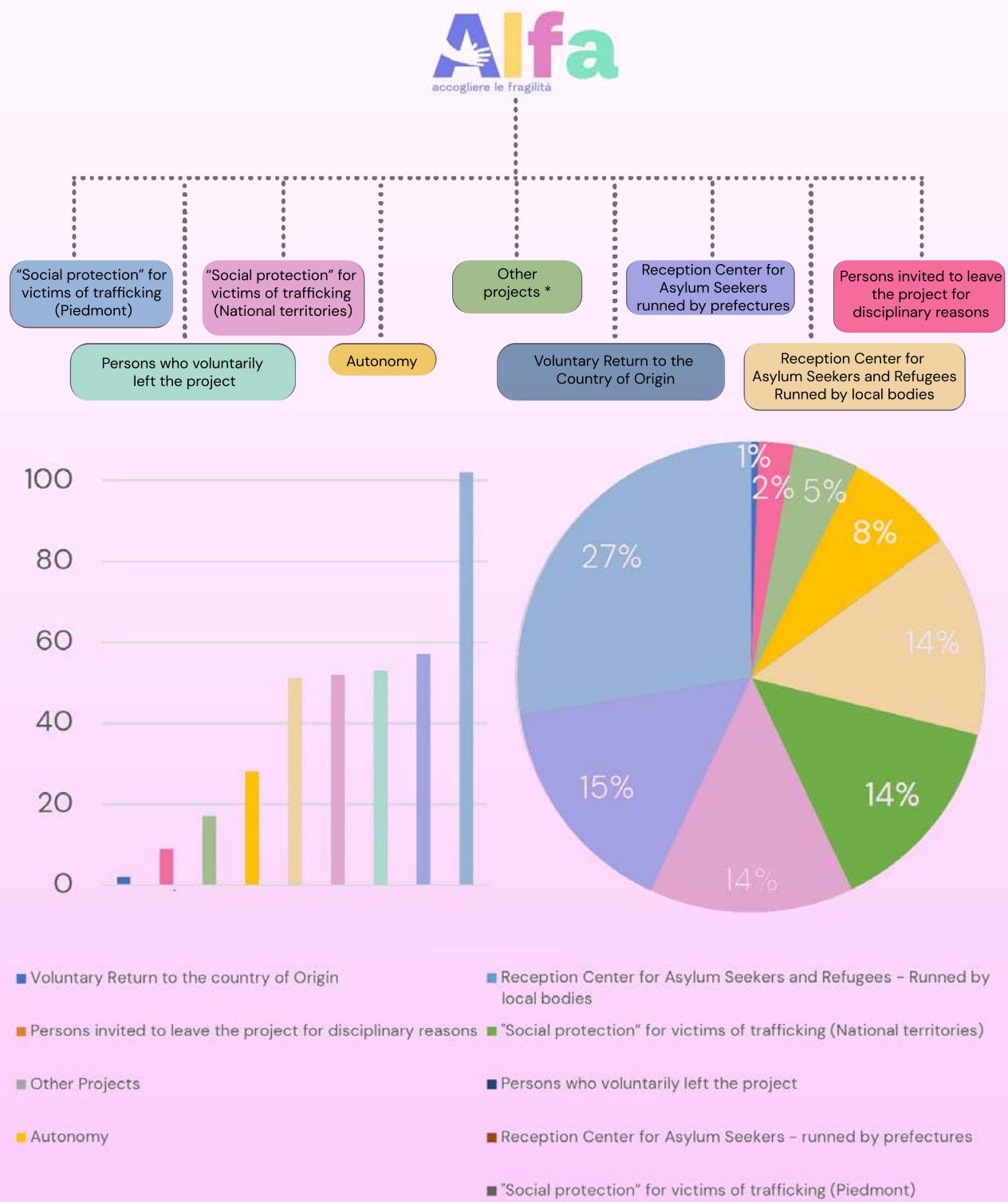
● Guine

● Sierr



-Final protection pathways-

Post-ALFa destinations



*by other project we mean territorial projects such as mother-child communities or social service takeovers.

Operational Guidelines for the early identification of potential victims of trafficking and of serious exploitation

These Operational Guidelines were developed within the context of the ALFa project and aim at providing a framework for the operating procedures for the identification of potential victims of trafficking implemented at the Regional level.

This document summarises practices consolidated not only during the project but also through the establishment of joint actions for the protection of potential victims of trafficking carried out for more than twenty years in the Piedmont Region.

This text is to be read in conjunction with the operational tools for the identification of potential victims also in the context of mixed migration movements elaborated at the national level (The National Anti-Trafficking Plan, the Guidelines for the identification of victims among asylum seekers, the Guidelines on labour exploitation).

The purposes of this document are to combine, through a practical approach, the tools developed at the national level and to describe the practices implemented at the regional level for tackling the phenomenon of trafficking and of serious exploitation.

These Operational Guidelines amount to a set of practical measures designed to provide a common framework for all the actors involved in the preliminary and formal identification of victims also to promote at the national level the debate on the tools for enabling early identification.

Trafficking is a serious violation of human rights

and it means: “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs”

What is the Identification of Victims of Trafficking?

A combined reading of the operational tools implemented at the national level

In the Italian context, there are different operational tools to enhance the identification of potential victims of trafficking.

The National Anti-trafficking Plan (NPA) includes the “Guidelines for the definition of a mechanism for the early identification of victims of trafficking and serious exploitation (attachment no.2)”.

The Guidelines foresee important provisions concerning: the approach to be adopted in case of contact with potential victims; the interview techniques for victims of trafficking; the process of identification and the set of indicators to detect a possible situation of trafficking.

Italy is a destination country of mixed migration movement, and given the interconnection amongst trafficking and international protection, the National Commission for the Right of Asylum (NC) and UNHCR adopted specific “Guidelines for the identification of victims of trafficking among asylum seekers and referral procedures”. Such Guidelines are addressed to the staff of the Territorial Commissions for the Recognition of International Protection (the Italian Asylum Authority of first instance). Following their publication, they have been recognized as a best practice at the international level and are applied also in other parts of the procedure for the recognition of international protection such as throughout the judicial one.

The NC-UNHCR Guidelines include a set of trafficking indicators specific to the asylum context and foresee standard operating procedures for the referral of potential victims from the Territorial Commissions to the anti-trafficking organizations.

In the specific context of labour exploitation, in 2021 the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies published the “National Guidelines for the identification, protection and assistance of victims of labour exploitation in the agricultural sector”.

The current document summarizes measures described in the above-mentioned tools

with the aim of combining the different practices applied for the identification of victims employed throughout the Italian context.

In line with the provisions of the Italian operational tools, these Operational Guidelines promote a **person-centred and rights-based approach**.

What is the identification of victims of trafficking?

The identification is often a gradual **process** during which different parties are involved.

The process aims at understanding if a person is a victim of trafficking or at risk of trafficking in order to ensure access to the rights foreseen for victims of trafficking.

Which are the parties involved in the identification?

States have positive obligations to identify potential victims of trafficking.

This entails that **all the parties, with or without specific mandate on trafficking**, are required to implement the measures that are necessary to ensure the identification of potential victims and their prompt access to services dedicated to their protection and assistance.

In performing their functions, different actors operating in the field can get in contact with potential victims. These include for example: Police Forces, Prefectures of the Ministry of Interior, Asylum Authorities, Public Social Services Providers (including social-health care services), Employment Centers, Services dedicated to asylum-seekers and refugees. These actors are mainly involved in the pre-identification phase (preliminary identification).

Parties with a specific mandate for protecting victims (anti-trafficking organizations) or tackling the phenomenon (Law Enforcement) have a role in the formal identification phase (See the next paragraph on “How does the identification take place?”).

How does the identification take place? Different steps and related measures

During a first contact with potential victims the different actors, specialized or not in trafficking related issues, can receive a request for help and assistance by the person who self-identifies as a victim of trafficking or of serious exploitation.

¹ Article 10 para. 2, Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking; Article 11 par. 4 Directive 2011/36/EU; Article 4, ECHR.

In other situations, the staff of the different parties can detect elements that may raise doubts about the condition of trafficking and exploitation of a person. These elements are the so-called **trafficking indicators**: aspects -often recurring in the stories of victims- leading, on reasonable grounds, to believe that a person has been trafficked or is at risk of trafficking. Trafficking indicators are developed and collected in lists included in different tools at the national and international level.²

Trafficking is an ever-changing phenomenon and, consequently, indicators need to be constantly updated. Furthermore, they are not an exhaustive list but “warning signs” to be interpreted according to the profile and the specific needs of the person.

Taking into consideration the complexity of the experiences of potential victims and the difficulties to narrate their stories, identification is often a process composed of different phases:

- **Preliminary identification.** It starts from the initial screening of possible trafficking indicators carried out by specialized and non-specialized actors once they get in contact with a potential victim; during this phase victims receive a first response to their **basic and urgent needs** such as the ones related to their security, emergency accommodation or health care. The staff of the different parties also provides potential victims with **basic information**. This latter includes the possibility to receive information and help through the **National Anti-trafficking Hotline**; the possibility to have access to the pathway of “Social Protection” foreseen by the Article 18 of the Italian Immigration Act, that also includes safe accommodations; the issuance of a permit of stay also without their cooperation in a criminal proceeding; the **right to seek asylum and to voluntarily return to their country of origin**. During the process of identification, states are called to not apply any expulsion order against persons with regard to whom there are reasonable grounds to believe that they are victims of trafficking. This preliminary phase is also the first step to refer persons, with their informed consent, to the anti-trafficking organizations in charge to continue the process and to provide potential victims with adequate protection and assistance.

In Italy, the **National Anti-trafficking Helpline**³ plays a crucial role in putting in contact with the anti-trafficking system both the actors involved in the preliminary identification and the victims seeking help.

The National Anti-trafficking Helpline is a free, anonymous and 24/7 service, and it gives information on the legal framework and on the services available to the potential victims through a qualified and multilingual staff. It can be contacted by potential victims directly or by whoever gets in contact with them, including private citizens.

The service puts in communication the different anti-trafficking projects operating all over the country⁴ also with the aim of promptly transferring a person at risk from a territory to another. It has a central office in Venice and 21 decentralized branches spread all over the national territory.

- **Formal identification.** It often occurs after the referral of the person by the parties involved in the preliminary identification. The purpose of this phase is to determine whether the potential victim has been trafficked or is at risk of trafficking or of serious exploitation. It is carried out by dedicated/qualified actors with a specific expertise and mandate: certified **anti-trafficking organizations** (public bodies and NGOs) that run the programme of “Social Protection” and the **Judicial Authorities**.

From the previously described steps, it is clear that the identification process is often composed of interactions amongst potential victims and the different parties involved, and it entails different phases and actions.

Trafficking is a multifaceted phenomenon that involves the complex area of the investigations and, simultaneously, the need to ensure the protection of victims. Persons have different needs, for example, concerning access to justice, to safe accommodations and to health-related support. To provide a response to such needs and to effectively counter trafficking both a multi-agency approach – that is the coordinated involvement of all the parties – and a multi-sectoral approach – fostering the interaction between services with different mandates in a multidisciplinary and culturally sensitive way – are needed.

Victims of trafficking are entitled to specific rights:

- the **right to a recovery and reflection period** to receive assistance, to recover from their experiences and to take an informed decision also on whether to assist and cooperate in criminal proceedings.
- the **right to receive appropriate legal assistance** through the possibility of free legal aid also during criminal proceedings
- the **right to be informed in the presence of an interpreter**
- the **right to have access to specific measures of the “Social Protection” programme** for the assistance and integration of victims of trafficking
- the **right to be issued a specific permit of stay** for victims of trafficking
- the **right to apply for international protection**.

² For the Italian context please see the set of indicators foreseen by the National Anti-trafficking Plan and by the “Guidelines for the identification of victims of trafficking among asylum seeker and referral procedures”. At the international level reference is made to the indicators elaborated by ILO and UNODC.

³ The anti-trafficking toll-free number has been set up by the Department for Equal Opportunities in 2000. The service has been jointly managed with the Municipality of Venice until June 2021 and now is run by the Veneto Region.

⁴ At the present in Italy there are 21 anti-trafficking projects funded by the Italian Department for Equal Opportunities.

What is the aim of the identification?

Identification is the necessary step to ensure that victims may effectively enjoy their rights. The purpose of the identification process is to enable the access of the person to the services dedicated to their protection and assistance.

During the identification process other specific needs that entail specific protection could emerge. For example, the person of concern could be a minor or a single parent with minor children or a person with psychological vulnerabilities. The prompt identification of these other needs is a crucial moment in order to plan, together with potential victims, the following steps to facilitate their recovery. To this end, it is important to put the person in contact with the Service provider in charge of responding to their specific condition.

When does the identification take place?

Identification is a complex process, it could take time and it has to be adapted to the needs of each person and properly timed within their path.

However, identification should start as soon as possible in order to prevent exploitation or the risk of re-victimization, and to effectively ensure access to protection measures and trigger investigations.

For these reasons, it is important to implement all the necessary measures for the **early identification of potential victims**. In the context of mixed migration movements, actions for the prompt identification should be taken starting from the arrival of the person in the territory of the state, and therefore also at the borders. In many cases, potential victims are also asylum seekers and the identification pathway can take place in the reception centres for asylum seekers and refugees or within the context of the procedure for the recognition of international protection.

The identification of victims of trafficking in Piedmont and the operational tools in the Regional context

The experience of the Piedmont Region: joint actions for the protection of victims

Over the past twenty years the Piedmont Region has been a territory of innovative and multi-agency actions on trafficking and at the same time an inclusive space for asylum seekers and refugees.

Through the synergic activities carried out by different actors a **Regional system was built that resulted in the definition of common procedures for the identification of potential victims of trafficking**.

Since 1999 specific projects on the protection of victims of trafficking have been implemented at the local level. Qualified anti-trafficking organizations have been set up and have contributed to raise awareness on the phenomenon at an institutional level. Interactions with the Office of the Public Prosecutor and with Police Forces have been strengthened over the years.

The Regional anti-trafficking network consolidated and formalized its structure initially under the Regional initiative “Piemonte in rete contra la tratta” and then, after the adoption of the NAP 2016-2018, under the project “l’Anello Forte- Rete anti-tratta del

Piemonte e della Valle d’Aosta” funded by the Italian Department for Equal Opportunities (Presidency of the Council of Ministers). The Piedmont Region is the leader partner of the project and the implementing partners are the qualified anti-trafficking organizations running the “Protezione Sociale” programme in the regional territory.⁵

The **current edition** of the project has the following objectives: fostering the identification of those victims of trafficking which are sexually exploited (with specific regards to asylum seekers, refugees and minors) and exploited in the labour market, particularly within the agricultural field; increasing the capacity of the network to provide victims with protection, safe shelter and a pathway towards their integration; strengthening the Regional system to prevent trafficking and serious exploitation.

The above-mentioned system, through which 1.367 potential victims were assisted and 256 were provided with safe accommodations during the period 2018-2020⁶, is the operational framework of the ALFa project and the background context for these Operational Guidelines.

According to the data collected by IRES Piemonte, in 2020, 80% of the persons identified as victims of trafficking in Piedmont have applied for international protection.⁷

Given the evident interconnection amongst trafficking and asylum, the coordination with both reception centres for asylum seekers and refugees and with the Territorial Commissions has been crucial. Therefore, services dedicated to asylum seekers and refugees have gradually acquired capacity to detect trafficking indicators and to effectively communicate with the anti-trafficking network. This represents an added value for the construction and the development of **operating procedures for the early identification of potential victims also in the asylum context**.

The roadmap for the identification of potential victims of trafficking in Piedmont

These Operational Guidelines reflect in the Regional context the process for the identification already described at the national level in the paragraph “What is the identification of victims of trafficking?”.

Considering the existing practices implemented at the local level, the identification procedures in Piedmont have some peculiarities linked to the specific expertise of the actors involved at the local level and the coordination mechanisms in place (for example the Protocol among the Territorial Commission and the Regional Anti-trafficking network) and to the specific needs of the potential victims identified in the territory (mainly asylum seekers and often persons with psychological vulnerabilities or single parents with minor children). In addition, these Operational Guidelines also gather and summarize the best practices for the early identification of potential victims developed within the ALFa project.

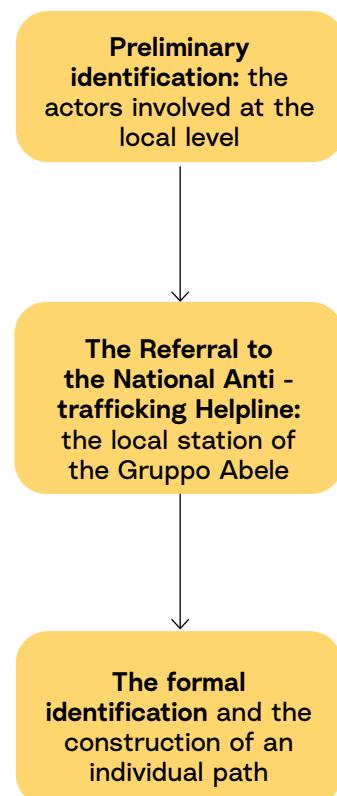
Finally, this tool promotes the adoption of a gender, age-sensitive and person-centred approach by all the actors involved in the identification process. The personal circumstances and needs are the grounds to build the measures of protection by applying an intersectional approach.

⁵At the present the partners of the project are the Piedmont Region with the technical support of IRES Piemonte and in cooperation with the Aosta Valley Region. The implementing partners are the Municipality of Turin, Cooperativa Progetto Tenda, Ufficio Pastorale Migranti, Associazione Idea Donna, Associazione Tampe, Associazione Gruppo Abele, Associazione Almaterra; Associazione Papa Giovanni XXIII, Associazione Granello di Senape, Consorzio Monviso Solidale, Cooperativa Insieme a Voi, Cooperativa Alice; Associazione Piam Onlus; Associazione San Benedetto al Porto, Consorzio CISSACA; Associazione Liberazione e Speranza; Biella- Associazione Papa Giovanni XXIII. The Project description is available at: https://www.piemonteimmigrazione.it/images/progetti/_SCHEMA_PROGETTO_Anello_forte3_Regione_Piemonte.pdf.

⁶IRES Piemonte, 10 Numeri sulla tratta in Piemonte, 2021, available at https://www.ires.piemonte.it/images/pubblicazioni/note-brevi/2021/2021-05_Nota_VittimeTratta.pdf.

⁷IRES Piemonte, 10 Numeri sulla tratta in Piemonte, 2021, available at https://www.ires.piemonte.it/images/pubblicazioni/note-brevi/2021/2021-05_Nota_VittimeTratta.pdf.

The roadmap for identification



The preliminary identification

While performing their duties, the actors operating at the local level can get in contact with potential victims and undertake an initial screening through the detection of trafficking indicators or by receiving the request for help from the person.

At this stage the staff of the following actors is involved:

- **Police Forces** in their different organizations, in particular the Immigration Offices, the Criminal Investigation Units, the Border Police, the Local Police, the Judicial Police Forces also of the Juvenile Court, the anti-trafficking unit of the Office of the Public Prosecutor of Turin, the Finance Police and the Arma dei Carabinieri
- **reception** centres for asylum seekers managed by the Prefectures (C.A.S.) and the reception centres for asylum seekers and refugees managed by the Sistema di Accoglienza e Integrazione (S.A.I)
- **Territorial Commission for the recognition of international protection of Turin** and the section of **Novara**
- **Judicial Authorities** and in particular the Public Prosecutors responsible for trafficking related crimes
- **Juvenile Court of Turin and Office of the Public Prosecutor of the Juvenile Court of Turin**
- **Justices of the Peace** and the pre-removal detention facility of "Centro di Permanenza per il Rimpatrio Brunelleschi" of Turin
- **detention facilities** of the Piedmont Region
- **Specialized Section in migration, protection and freedom of movement in EU countries of the Tribunal of Turin**
- **Public Social Services**
- **Social-health Care Services**, including First Aid Services
- **Services and NGOs working with foreign persons, asylum seekers and refugees**
- **Services for persons survived or at risk of gender-based violence**
- **public and private Employment Centres and the Trade Unions**
- **Inter-Regional Labour Inspectorate of Milan**, Section of Turin
- **qualified anti-trafficking organizations** and in particular those who carry out outreach activities
- **international organizations or NGOs involved in the identification of potential victims at the borders**
- **lawyers and legal advisors** with specific expertise on Migration Law, Human Rights and protection of victims of trafficking

After a first response to the **basic and urgent needs** of the potential victims, the staff of the different parties provide them with **basic information** in a language that they are able to

understand and, with her informed consent, refer the case to the **National Anti-trafficking Hotline**.

In more practical terms, the involved staff calls the National Anti-trafficking Hotline (800-290 290) that in turns refers the case to the Piedmont branch office managed by Gruppo Abele.

The Piedmont branch office of the Anti-trafficking Hotline

The Piedmont branch office of the Anti-trafficking Hotline is run by Gruppo Abele, a qualified anti-trafficking organization. It acts as an interface between the actors involved in the preliminary identification and the qualified anti-trafficking organizations working in the Region.

Gruppo Abele has the following tasks:

- to inform the potential victims about the available solutions for their protection and assistance provided for by the Italian legal framework;
- to facilitate the detection of the trafficking phenomenon in its different forms of exploitation;
- to establish a network of the different actors working in the field.

Gruppo Abele collects the calls received by the Anti-trafficking Hotline and the referrals by the different actors. It gives preliminary information and puts the potential victim in contact with a qualified anti-trafficking organization identified on the basis of an internal turnover system and of territorial competences (based on the double criteria of the area of the Region where the person is located and where the organization operates).

The list of the **qualified anti-trafficking organizations in Piedmont**⁸ is available at: <https://www.piemonteimmigrazione.it/progetti/item/1830-l-anello-forte-3-rete-anti-tratta-del-piemonte-e-della-valle-d-aosta>.

⁸ In 2022 these organizations were inscribed in the specific Register foreseen by the Law for anti-trafficking bodies (According to Article 52 of the D.P.R. No. 394/1999) and they implement the "Social Protection" programme foreseen by Article 18 of the Italian Immigration Act.

The formal identification

In the Piedmont Region the formal identification of victims of trafficking or of serious exploitation is mainly conducted by qualified anti-trafficking organizations and, during investigations and criminal proceedings, by Police Forces and Judicial Authorities.

- **formal identification in the context of the pathway carried out by the qualified anti-trafficking organizations.** After the preliminary identification and the referral of the local station of the Anti-trafficking Hotline, potential victims are put in contact with the anti-trafficking organization and it starts a process aimed at understanding their past and current condition, possible risks of exploitation, their profiles of vulnerabilities and needs.

In many cases risk assessment is a step-by-step process which takes place through the establishment of a relationship of mutual trust between the staff of the organization and the person. Several meetings in appropriate settings and with qualified staff and cultural mediators are organized.

The anti-trafficking pathway is built on an individual basis and it also has the purpose to assess the access of the victims to the measures of assistance and protection foreseen by the programme of "Social Protection". These measures can either or not entail residential accommodation in safe shelter, and are aimed at supporting the process of social and labor inclusion of the victims.

The residential accommodation of victims is organized in three levels: emergency measures, first reception measures, and second reception measures.

The Regional Anti-trafficking network, while taking into account the peculiarities of each territory and of each organization, promotes the adoption of a common methodology and standards. These are summarized into the "Guidelines for the reception measures dedicated to victims of trafficking or of serious exploitation of the project "Anello Forte"- anti-trafficking network of Piedmont and Aosta Valley". These Operational Guidelines systematize practices developed and shared by the partners implementing the anti-trafficking project with the scope of providing practical considerations and to ensure harmonized and qualitative standards across the all territory.

- **formal identification in the context of investigations, criminal proceedings and activities conducted by the Police Forces and the Office of the Public Prosecutor.** During the investigation phase or in criminal proceedings concerning trafficking related crimes, evidences to determine the criminal responsibility of traffickers are acquired. Therefore, Police

Forces, Public Prosecutors and Judges can also determine the condition of victim of the person against whom acts have been committed.

In the Judicial context, it is important to establish a relationship of trust with the victims. The use of appropriate interview techniques by qualified and trained staff facilitate the process of disclosure and allow the acquisition of credible declarations to substantiate the charges during the process. Given the purpose of the identification process, also when formal identification takes place during investigation or criminal proceedings it is crucial that the victim is put in contact with anti-trafficking organizations to receive adequate protection and assistance and enjoy her rights.

On the other hand, potential victims identified by anti-trafficking organizations who express the needs of access to Justice have to receive proper legal assistance and have to be put into the condition to fill a report against their traffickers.

Permit of stay and protection pathways for victims of trafficking or of serious exploitation

During the identification pathway, the potential victim with an **irregular migration status** in Italy should receive information on the different possibilities foreseen by the law and support for obtaining a permit of stay.

According to the Italian Immigration Legislation, a **specific permit of stay can be released to victims of trafficking or of serious exploitation** (Article 18 of the Italian Immigration Act⁹). The permit of stay is issued by the "Questore" (Local Police Commissioner) upon request or with the favorable opinion of the Public Prosecutor in the context of the **Judiciary pathway**: when victims want or are in the condition of reporting their cases and they are formally identified in the context of a criminal proceeding. The permit of stay is also issued by the "Questore" in the context of the **Social pathway**. also without cooperation in a criminal proceeding the request in this case is submitted by local social services or anti-trafficking organizations when the person enters the "Social Protection" programme.

The Italian Law also provides a **specific permit of stay** for victims of severe labour exploitation who cooperate in a criminal proceeding and submit a report against their employer (Article 22 para. 12quater of the Italian Immigration Act).

Furthermore, victims of trafficking should **access to the asylum procedure at any time** and receive early legal counselling and specialised assistance also taking into consideration that they are included among vulnerable asylum seekers.¹⁰

⁹ The permit of stay for victims of trafficking and of serious exploitation is valid for six months, can be renewed and converted into a permit of stay for work. The following requirements have to be met: 1) the access of the persons to the "Social Protection" programme 2) the person is in a situation of a concrete, serious and present dangerous 3) the person is in a situation of violence and exploitation noticed during investigations or in the context of social protection interventions.

¹⁰ Article 17 D.lgs. 142/2015.

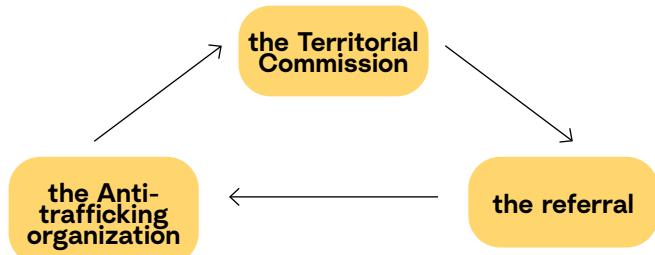
The identification of asylum seekers and of beneficiaries of international or national protection

In the context of mixed migration flows reaching Europe, the majority of identified victims of trafficking or of persons at risk of trafficking in Piedmont are asylum seekers or beneficiaries of international or of national forms of protection.

Over the years, the parties involved in the asylum system and those involved in the anti-trafficking network have become aware of the interconnection between the two systems of protection and created and strengthened referral mechanisms for the early identification of potential victims of trafficking within the asylum procedure.

For this purpose, since 2014, the Territorial Commission for the recognition of international protection of Turin and the Regional anti-trafficking network developed practices and tools for cooperation. Following the publication at the national level of the "Guidelines for the identification of victims of trafficking among asylum seeker and referral procedures", in 2019 the Territorial Commission of Turin and the Piedmont Region, leader of the project "Anello Forte", signed a specific **Protocol of mutual cooperation**. The protocol has the purpose of establishing operational procedures for the identification of potential trafficking victims in the asylum procedure and their referral to the anti-trafficking organizations.

The procedures set out by the Protocol follow those promoted by the National Guidelines and are in line with the identification pathway previously described. The tool also includes specific features and good practices implemented at the local level.



The Territorial Commission:

- carries out the preliminary identification during the asylum interviews by detecting specific indicators elaborated by the National Guidelines or by collecting the help request of asylum seekers
- provides the potential victims with basic information and with their informed consent activates the referral procedure to the anti-trafficking project "Anello Forte 3".

The referral

- a **focus group of case-workers with specific expertise on trafficking and exploitation** has been created in the Territorial Commission. The focus group organizes the referrals and acts as a liaison with the anti-trafficking network.
- the **anti-trafficking network** receives the activated referrals and, also with the support of IRES Piemonte, elaborates a timetable of the availability of the different anti-trafficking organizations in order to schedule meetings with asylum seekers preliminarily identified as potential victims.

The anti-trafficking organization:

- carries out meetings with asylum seekers preliminarily identified as potential victims. These meetings are aimed at continuing the identification process and at providing the potential victims with protection and assistance. The first meeting usually takes place within the premises of the Territorial Commission.
- at the end of the process, gives feedback to the Territorial Commission, including information concerning the condition of the persons, their past experiences related to trafficking or to the risks of trafficking and other specific needs.

As specified by the Protocol, the scope of the referral procedure is to put in contact the potential victims with the service dedicated to their protection and assistance. During the informative session, the staff of the Territorial Commission clarifies to the persons that their will to undertake an anti-trafficking process does not affect their asylum application. Although interconnected, the two protection systems have different objectives and purposes.

The process of specialisation of the staff of the Territorial Commission combined with the efficient coordination mechanism with the anti-trafficking network contribute to the prompt identification of victims in the asylum procedure. Furthermore, **training and meetings** addressed to the staff of both systems are constantly organized. These are foreseen within the Protocol and represent an added value for building a common language and methodology for the process of identification.

In addition to the formalized cooperation with the Territorial Commission, identification can also take place in **reception centres for asylum seekers managed by the Prefectures** ("Centri di Accoglienza Straordinari" -C.A.S.). The staff of the reception centres, if trained and qualified, detects trafficking indicators by observing the asylum seekers, by meeting with them and by collecting their help requests. In these cases, identification takes place early and prior to the asylum interview with the Territorial Commission.

This first screening allows a prompt referral to the anti-trafficking network for formal identification by contacting the National anti-trafficking helpline. It also enables asylum seekers to receive adequate support during the asylum procedure. As already outlined, victims of trafficking are included amongst the vulnerable asylum seekers and this entails specific guarantees during the asylum procedure. Among these safeguards, their asylum application can be prioritized and they have the right to be assisted by qualified personnel during the asylum interview also to avoid processes of re-victimization.

These Operational Guidelines also promote the identification of beneficiaries of international protection or of other forms of national protection also after the procedure of recognition of international protection conducted by the Territorial Commissions.

The specific condition of the person, their need of time to elaborate and recover from past experiences, or, for example, the threats of criminal networks, could result in a late disclosure of trafficking related issues, which could even occur after the rejection of an asylum claim by the Territorial Commission. Furthermore, the risk of trafficking or of exploitation could also arise after the procedure of recognition of international protection.

For all these reasons the following actors should be involved in the preliminary identification of asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international or national protection:

- **the Specialized Section in migration, protection and freedom of movement in EU countries of the Tribunal of Turin.** Asylum seekers have the right to appeal before the Specialized Section in case of rejected or partially granted asylum decisions by the Territorial Commission. During the proceedings, Judges could detect trafficking indicators or collect requests for help. Therefore, the Tribunal should take part in the preliminary identification and, to facilitate the victims' enjoyment of their rights, coordination mechanisms with the anti-trafficking network should be developed.
- **Parties that can get in contact with the persons after the asylum procedure.** Among these there are, for example, the **reception centres for asylum seekers and refugees managed by the Sistema di Accoglienza e Integrazione (S.A.I)**, the Employment

Centres and the Public Social Services. In addition, actions are required to prevent the risk of trafficking and of exploitation through informative sessions and outreach activities in the areas, such as informal settlements, where foreign persons, also with an irregular migration status, are more exposed to the risk of exploitation.

The identification of persons with specific needs and vulnerabilities

During the identification of potential victims, particular attention should be given to the individual circumstances and the specific needs of the person also as factors that could hinder the process. The experience of trafficking or of serious exploitation often result in psychological or health-related vulnerabilities. At the same time, some persons are more exposed to the risk of trafficking or of exploitation due to their personal conditions. This is the case, for example, of minors and in particular of unaccompanied minors.

For these reasons, the identification process has to be adapted to the individual circumstances through specific procedural adjustments and safeguards. A multi-agency and multi-sectoral approach should be implemented. This entails the involvement of Service providers with specific mandate for example on:

- **Minors or potential victims with minor children.** In these cases, Public Social Services, Juvenile Court of Turin and Office of the Public Prosecutor of the Juvenile Court of Turin should be informed of the identification process. Every step should be undertaken in the **respect of the principle of the best interest of the child** and, wherever possible according to their evolving capacity, the minors should be consulted.
- **Potential victims with psychological, psychiatric, health-related vulnerabilities or addictions.** In these cases, social-health care services should be informed and involved in the process. Every step should be undertaken applying a multi-sectoral approach and in a culturally sensitive way. To this end, referrals of potential victims to services specialized on ethnopsychiatry (e.g. Franz Fanon and Mamre centres in Turin) is promoted.

Often trafficking intersects with other forms of gender-based violence occurring in the countries of origin, transit countries and in Italy such as, for example, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, sexual violence and domestic violence. For this reason, if the person is a survivor or at risk of gender-based violence, collaboration with Anti-violence centres operating in the Regional territory has to be established. The list of the Anti-violence centres of Piedmont is available at the following link: <https://www.regione.piemonte.it/web/temi/diritti-politiche-sociali/diritti/antiviolenza/centri-antiviolenza-mappe-attivita-per-donne-vittime-violenza>. To ensure effective protection of LGBTIQ+ persons and to respond to their specific needs, cooperation with NGOs specialized on the topic should be promoted (the contact of these NGOs are available at: <http://www.comune.torino.it/torinogiovani/salute-e-vita-affettiva/associazioni-lgbt>.)

The early identification within the context of the ALFa project

The ALFa project consolidated existing practices in the Regional context and at the same time promoted the adoption of innovative measures for the early identification of potential victims.

Within the framework of the project, prompt identification occurs by placing potential victims referred by the local actors into safe reception facilities with low-threshold access. The reception facilities of the ALFa project are designed to facilitate the detection of trafficking indicators and to ensure qualified and safe assistance to potential victims.

The referral of potential victims can be activated by the different parties operating in the Regional context as, for example, social-health care services, Police Forces, Territorial Commissions, reception centres runned by Prefectures, organizations working into disembarkation procedures or at the borders, clients of sex workers and anti-trafficking organizations.

With the informed consent of the potential victims, the different actors refer the cases to the Prefecture of Turin and to IRES Piemonte who identify the suitable reception facility in collaboration with the Piedmont branch office of the Anti-trafficking Hotline. Communication is then given to the Prefecture of Turin and to the Prefecture where the hosting centre is located.

The ALFa reception facilities are managed by the implementing partners of the project that are qualified anti-trafficking organizations: Associazione Piam Onlus (in partnership with Associazione Comunità San Benedetto al Porto), Associazione Liberazione e Speranza Onlus, Cooperativa Progetto Tenda (in partnership with Ideadonna and Tamppe), Associazione Centro Come Noi S. Pertini, organizzazione Sermig di Volontariato (in partnership with Gruppo Abele).

In the reception facilities potential victims have access to specific measures for their protection and assistance. The hosting centre becomes the place where the identification takes place: it is in this context that the process continues and it can lead to the formal identification of the victim. An assessment of other specific needs is also carried out and the person is accompanied towards the more appropriate protection measures (for example the request for the permit of stay for victims of trafficking, the application for asylum or other).

The methodology developed by the project has improved the capacity of the system to early identify victims through the combination of different features:

- **the prevention of exploitation or of the risk of further instances of victimization.** This happens through the immediate location of the person in qualified reception centres avoiding their exposure to (further) trafficking experiences.
- **the referral from strategic actors with a comprehensive view-point** on the phenomenon and operating in key services for the identification such as Hospitals, Immigration Offices, Territorial Commissions. The project contributed to raise awareness amongst these stakeholders and strengthened the skills of their staff in detecting trafficking related situations.
- **the enhancement of anti-trafficking actions at the borders** through coordination mechanisms with actors working at sea, land arrivals and in transit areas also thanks to connections with international and cross-border networks. Potential victims preliminarily identified at the borders can be referred and immediately located in the

ALFa reception facilities.

- **the anti-trafficking pathway carried out by qualified organizations** into the reception facilities of the project. The staff of the project has specific expertise in building a trust relationship with potential victims and in detecting trafficking indicators. The experience of the anti-trafficking organizations and of the Regional joint actions contribute to address the single case and to find long-term perspectives for the person.

Early identification

- prevention of exploitation or of re-victimization
- referral from strategic actors across the territory
- anti-trafficking actions at the borders
- anti-trafficking pathway carried out by qualified organizations

The described methodology has produced results beyond ALFa: multi-agency trainings organized during the project contributed to the specialization of the different actors in the identification process. Furthermore, common standard operating procedures have been incorporated into the Regional multi-agency Protocol for the protection of victims and for countering trafficking and serious exploitation.

The Regional multi-agency Protocol for the protection of victims and for countering trafficking and serious exploitation

As the outcome of joint efforts and experiences, the Regional multi-agency "Protocol for the protection of victims and for countering trafficking and serious exploitation" was signed at the Prefecture of Turin on March 3, 2022-

The following institutions proposed the adoption of the tool: the Prefecture of Turin, the Territorial Commission for the recognition of international protection of Turin, the Office of the Public Prosecutor of Turin, the Office of the Public Prosecutor of the Juvenile Court of Turin, the Questura of Turin and the Piedmont Region (also on behalf of the Regional anti-trafficking project "Anello Forte III".) The other signatories of the Protocol are: the "Comando della Legione Piemonte e Valle d'Aosta dell'Arma dei Carabinieri", the "Comando Regionale della Guardia di Finanza del Piemonte-Valle d'Aosta", the Inter-Regional Labor Inspectorate of Milan (Section of Turin), ANCI Piemonte and IRES Piemonte.

The Protocol aims at fostering a common methodology in the identification and assistance of potential victims and at strengthening interaction and cooperation amongst the signatories also through information sharing and multi-agency training.

In order to achieve these goals and to put into practise the shared methodology, according to the Protocol, each signatory has to appoint a **Representative with specific expertise and knowledge on trafficking**.

Representatives are in charge of:

- presenting the Protocol and its content within their organizations
- collecting information on the subject
- coordinating with the Representatives of other organizations
- informing the staff of their organization about the operating procedures and the referral of potential victims to the Anti-trafficking Hotline
- assuring constant information sharing amongst organizations

The Protocol includes **operating procedures** to be implemented for the protection and assistance of victims and to counter the phenomenon of trafficking.

In line with the identification process in place at the Regional level, these procedures describe different steps to be undertaken in case of contact with a potential victim. These are the measures that occur during the preliminary identification: detection of trafficking indicators (attachment No. 1 of the Protocol), response to the basic needs and informative session (attachment No. 2). The potential victim, with their informed consent, is referred to the Anti-trafficking Helpline (attachment No. 3). A relevant aspect is also the promotion of information sharing with the other actors, in the respect of confidentiality obligations.

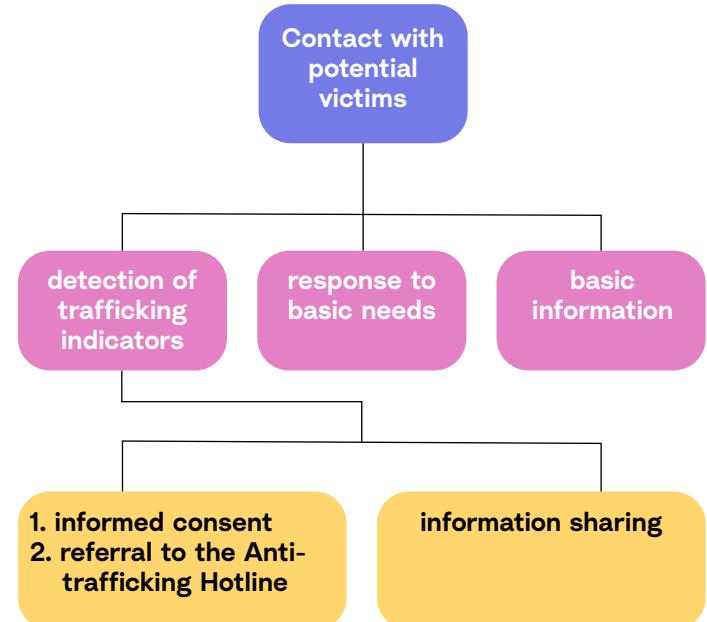


photo by Claudia Corrent - Sheldon.studio

Recommendations

In the light of the experience acquired throughout “ALFA-Accogliere le Fragilità”, the following recommendations on the protection and assistance of potential victims of trafficking, beneficiaries of the project, are made.

Depending on the scope of the different actions, the following recommendations are addressed to local, national and European authorities.

In general, it is recommended.

1. to bring qualified measures of assistance of potential victims aimed at guiding them toward the most appropriate protection pathway and at identifying their needs to an earlier stage of what is provided for by the systems currently in place.

In particular, concerning reception measures and protection and assistance services, it is recommended.

2. at the national level, to establish reception centers -runned by specialized anti-trafficking organizations- diversified, gradual and shaped around the needs and the time of the potential victims. These centers should aim at facilitating the identification process and at preventing exploitation (including in illicit activities) and re-victimizations.

More in details:

2.1 to introduce a first-step and emergency reception center. Reception in these facilities should last 45/60 days and access should be ensured regardless of the migration status of the person. A first response to basic needs (accommodation, healthcare and protection) should be given. The person should enjoy a time to recover and reflect and to receive information and psychological and legal support.

2.2 to introduce a residential **reception center** that, after the emergency reception measure, should last 9 months. During this period potential victims should have access to social services, vocational training and to the labor market. Persons should also be guided toward a process of regularization of their migration status and toward the protection pathway (anti-trafficking, asylum or other) more appropriate for their needs.

2.3 to activate a process of assistance and protection for **potential victims with minor children**, that takes into account the three specific needs of the mother, of the minor, and of the family itself. Assistance of victims should be provided in conjunction by anti-trafficking organizations and local social services and in a multi-disciplinary way.

Concerning early identification, it is recommended.

3. at the national level, to **strengthen measures** for the early identification of potential victims through:

3.1 **the enhancement of anti-trafficking actions at the borders** through coordination mechanisms with actors working at sea, land arrivals and in connections with international and cross-border networks.

3.2 **the prompt location of the persons in an emergency reception center** in order to prevent exploitation and to avoid (further) processes of re-victimization.

3.3. the activation of the identification process that should take place in the qualified emergency reception centers and should be **carried out by staff qualified and trained for the detection of trafficking indicators** and of other specific needs.

3.4. the adoption of a **comprehensive approach and of a methodology based on both the observation of the person** on the establishment of a relationship of mutual trust with the staff of the anti-trafficking organization. The aims of this method are to support potential victims in the path of self-awareness of their past experiences and of possible future risks and to facilitate the identification of their specific needs. To provide a long-term response to these specific needs the person has to be referred to the local actors involved in the social inclusion pathway (e.g. Prefectures and Public Social Services)

Concerning referral mechanisms, is recommended to.

4. at the European level, **to develop Standard Operating Procedures** for the identification, assistance and protection of victims of trafficking to be adopted by all EU Member States, at the borders and in the context of second migration movement within EU countries, also with the purpose of establishing a Transnational Referral Mechanism (TRM).

5. at the national level, to strengthen **the National Referral Mechanism (NRM)** through the adoption of Standard Operating Procedures for the identification, assistance and protection of victims of trafficking with a multi-sectoral and multi-agency approach. The NRM should involve those actors operating in the field that can get in contact with potential victims (e.g. Police Forces, Asylum Authorities, Reception centers for asylum seekers and refugees, organizations working at the borders). The NRM should be flexible and able to include different actors considering the ever changing needs of potential victims (e.g. social services, child-care services, services qualified in the assistance of victims of labor exploitation).

6. at the local level, **to promote the adoption of multi-agency Protocols** involving the actors operating in encountering the phenomenon and those providing protection and assistance to potential victims. Protocols should include specific tasks for each actor and technical and operational coordination measures.

7. with specific reference to the **interconnection among trafficking and international protection, to strengthen coordination mechanisms among the anti-trafficking system and the asylum system** at all stages of the procedure for the recognition of international protection and with involvement of all the actors (for example Reception Centers for asylum Seekers and refugees, Specialized Sections in migration, protection and freedom of movement in EU countries of the Tribunals, Dublin Unit).

Concerning a cross-cutting response to the phenomenon in its current dimension, it is recommended.

8. **to improve** - also through gender-sensitive and multi-agency trainings - **the capacity of the system to protect and assist victims involved in forms of exploitation other than sexual exploitation** (e.g. labor exploitation, begging, illicit activities) and **with heterogeneous profiles and nationalities** (single mothers with children, minors, trans persons).

9. **to increase financial resources** for projects **addressed to potential victims** able to flexibly and timely adapt to emerging needs and trends (e.g. the increasing number of mothers with children who moved across different EU countries) and to different challenges such as the pandemic context and the ongoing conflicts. Funding should be allocated also to projects **addressed to anti-trafficking staff** for the empowerment of the network at the local level and for the creation of community of practices.

10. **to create data collection, mapping and monitoring systems** -runned by organizations with specific mandate and financial resources- for enabling the collection of homogeneous information to be shared also at the international level.

The ALFa team wrote these recommendations envisioning them as constantly evolving, depending on the actual needs encountered. We would love your opinion on them! For additions, comments and thoughts, please frame the following QR Code

