



Comune
di Bologna

SPAD
Sportello
Antidiscriminazioni

Comune di Bologna
CENTRO INTERCULTURALE ZONARELLI

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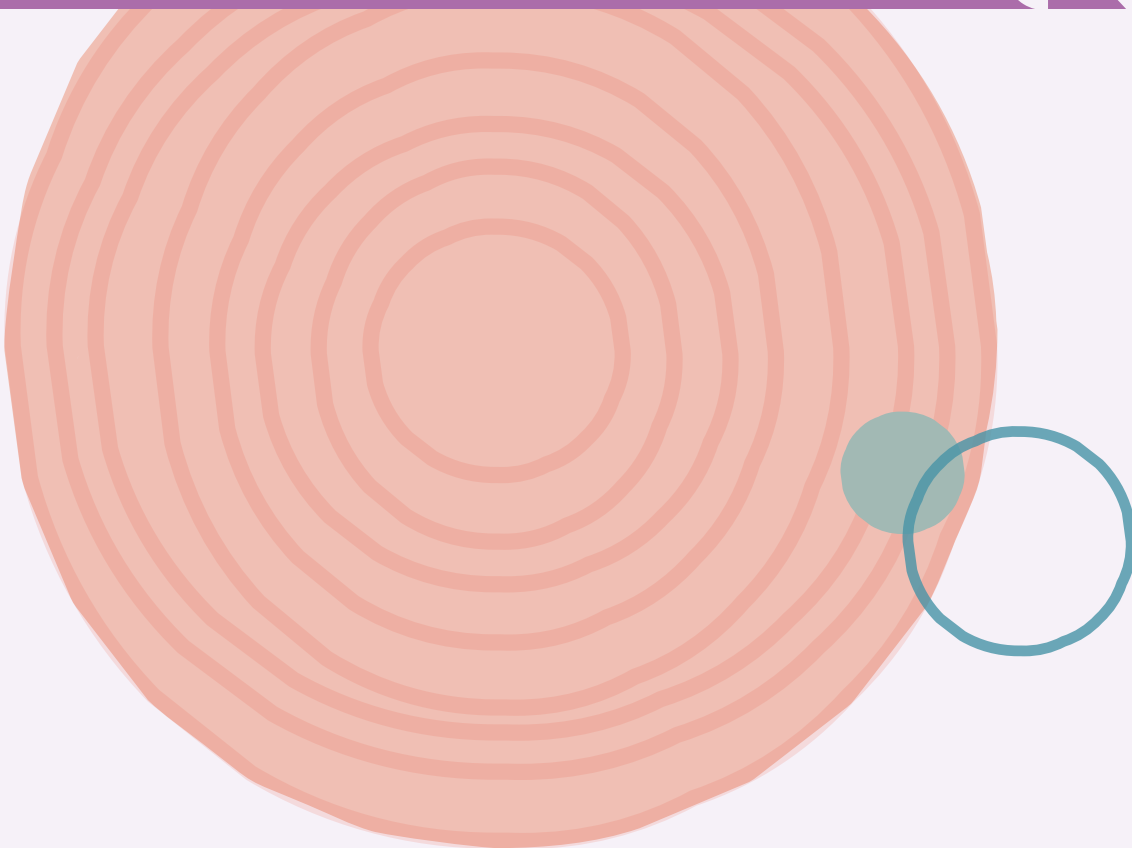
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SPAD

THIRD REPORT OF THE
OBSERVATORY OF THE
ANTI-DISCRIMINATION
HELP CENTER OF THE
MUNICIPALITY OF BOLOGNA

2024



In collaboration with



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This Report includes a number of contributions, within which statements, quotations and/or interviews are made, the content of which is the sole responsibility of the author(s) and does not represent SPAD's viewpoint in any way.

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SPAD

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PREFACE

This Report, now in its third edition, presents the quantitative and qualitative results of SPAD – Anti-discrimination Help Center of the Municipality of Bologna.

The project, launched at the end of 2021, shows that it is well established and invites us to look to the future. The greater recognisability and knowledge of the service, both among the citizens and within the administration, testified to by the increase in accesses, responds to the objective of intercepting underestimated needs and, I would like to say, of becoming aware of episodes of discrimination that can affect a not marginal part of our citizens.

Recognising and intercepting discrimination in its transversality is the first step to combating and overcoming it.

In order to do this, the network structure that is the basis of SPAD is fundamental – in fact, the Help Center was created through the collaboration between the municipal administration and 37 associations operating in our area – and its intersectional vocation, an approach that recognises the multiplicity of intersecting grounds that can lead to discrimination, from origin to ability, from gender to sexual orientation in synergy with the STAR Anti-discrimination Center (MIT) and Spazio Cassero, in a network both within SPAD, with the provision of the different skills of the operators, and between the various anti-discrimination centers and listening points that exist in the area.

To this we add the ever-increasing collaboration with the various sectors of the administration in the commitment to dialogue with SPAD operators, both when discriminatory episodes occur, and in working to remove potential sources of discrimination from administrative practices or acts, after having become aware of them and recognised them.

The work of SPAD is therefore also a work of the Administration on itself to increasingly integrate the anti-discrimination perspective in the various areas of administrative action: revision of municipal regulations, both from an anti-discrimination and inclusive language perspective, research on discrimination in housing conducted by the Housing Policies Sector and the University of Bologna, collaboration with the Civic Museums Sector on the issue of accessibility, collaboration, now structural, with the local police on training, a training course on the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities, which has involved municipal employees, SPAD operators and associations.

Lastly, again with a view to consolidation and dissemination, there are the projects for the dissemination of SPAD access points, with the experimentation of a new presidium in the Porto-Saragozza district already active, alongside the space at the Centro Interculturale M. Zonarelli in the San Donato-San Vitale district.

From being experimental and punctual, therefore, SPAD aspires to become structural and widespread, a good administrative practice of identifying, understanding and monitoring different forms of discrimination, of welcoming and listening to those discriminated against, of taking charge of reports and taking action to remove discrimination from our community and our administrative action.



Emily Marion Clancy
Deputy Mayor of the Municipality of Bologna

INTRODUCTION

The Third Report of the Anti-discrimination Help Center of the Municipality of Bologna (SPAD) combines a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the reports of discrimination registered by SPAD from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024. The Report is edited by COSPE and the New Citizenship, Cooperation and Human Rights Office of the Municipality of Bologna. It also includes reflections shared by the associations that are part of the SPAD Network and work on anti-discrimination in Bologna.

The Report is divided into four chapters:

- the **first chapter** describes in detail how the SPAD Help Center works, its mission and dissemination, the activities of the different Functions, the taking charge of cases of discrimination on “racial”, “ethnic” or religious grounds, and the handling of referrals to other services in cases of discrimination on the basis of other grounds or other specific needs.
- the **second chapter** provides an overview of the legislation on discrimination. Specifically, the European, national and local regulations that make up current anti-discrimination law are depicted, the (institutional) context of anti-discrimination in Bologna is presented, along with the policies implemented by the Emilia-Romagna Region, the Metropolitan City and the Municipal Administration for the promotion of rights and the prevention of and fight against discrimination.
- the **third chapter** contains the analysis of the data and information collected by the SPAD Help Center during the reporting period. Using graphs, tables, infographics and statistical analysis, the Report describes the situation of discrimination on the basis of “race” and/or religion in Bologna in 2024. The chapter also includes the results of the joint actions for data collection and monitoring of discrimination, in which the STAR and Spazio Cassero Anti-discrimination Centers took part – together with SPAD.
- finally, in the **concluding chapter**, a series of recommendations, reflections and observations are presented. These recommendations, besides being a challenge for the future of SPAD, are intended to inspire and generate changes in public programmes and policies.

The information contained in this Report does not include all the discriminatory situations that occurred in Bologna during 2024, because – as of today – the coverage of the data collection is partial, considering that not all the organisations and desks working to combat discrimination in the Bologna area are part of SPAD. The overall information can only be indicative, also considering the high number of cases not reported and/or not registered as “discrimination”.

METHODOLOGY AND GLOSSARY

A fundamental component of SPAD's anti-discrimination action, the collection, processing and dissemination of the Observatory's data are necessary not only to help emerge the phenomenon of discrimination, which is often under-reported and under-estimated, but also to be able to identify appropriate prevention and counteraction strategies. However, it is important to recognise that operations related to data collection and dissemination may have adverse effects on the people one would like to support and protect. In order to reduce this risk, SPAD has always adhered to and adopted the humanitarian principle "do no harm"¹, indicated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) as the guiding principle of a human rights-based approach to data. In this context, "do no harm" means that data collection, processing and dissemination activities should avoid creating opportunities for further discriminatory actions and, more importantly, should be used for the benefit of the communities affected by the analysis.

This methodological note recognises the value of this approach and the principles that guide it: participation, privacy, self-identification, disaggregation, transparency, and accountability².

Below, we describe how the development, implementation and elaboration of SPAD's data collection and processing methods reflects these principles:

NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

Terms such as "race", "ethnicity" and "victims" recur in the following text. It is acknowledged that the use of this terminology is contestable, but it was decided to opt for the use of these terms as alternative ones would lack associations or valuable meanings that would allow these topics to be treated with the same clarity. Indeed, these terms continue to exist not only in everyday discourse, but also in the national and European legal and regulatory framework. Although unacceptable in the sense of a scientifically founded distinction of human beings, the concepts of "race" and "racism" remain usable to describe the social and psychological existence of the realities attributed to "race". At the same time, those who suffer discrimination do not always recognise or identify with the role of "victim". Nevertheless, we decided to use these words because they are indispensable for identifying – and thus being able to talk about – discrimination in the operational context of the SPAD Network. Without their use, we would not have been able to name the problem. To emphasise that these terms – and the theories underlying them – do not belong to the point of view of SPAD, they will be mentioned in inverted commas.

Participation: created as a project of a participatory nature, SPAD guarantees forms of participation of the SPAD Network subjects – and of the communities affected by the analysis – both in the data collection phase, in the person of operators and case managers who follow the reporting process, and in the data processing and dissemination phase, through involvement – through interviews or written contributions – in the preparation of the Annual Report.

Privacy: the collection of personal data, such as those collected in connection with reports registered by SPAD, is protected by Italian and European legislation. In the case of SPAD, the main data protection practices have been defined with the General Secretariat of the Municipality of Bologna. Those accessing the SPAD Help Center are shown the contents of the privacy policy – outlining regulations, procedures and rights concerning the management of personal data – which is signed for acknowledgement by the person directly concerned. Finally, the analysis phase involves a process of anonymisation and pseudonymisation of the data collected, which precedes its sharing with the Observatory. The data processing and the specific measures to protect the fundamental rights and interests of the people concerned are contained in the resolution of the Bologna City Council PG no. 827306/2024³.

Self-identification: in order for those who contact SPAD to always be in control of the process of defining their identity⁴, an open-ended response mode is provided for each field of data collection, which always includes a non-response option. The data collection is therefore limited to all essential – but never compulsory – data for the provision of the service.

Disaggregation: the possibility of disaggregating data on the basis of the multiple axes of oppression and inequality makes it possible to identify those most affected by discrimination and the ways in which this discrimination is acted upon. In careful balance with the principles of privacy and self-identification, SPAD guarantees the possibility of disaggregating data by collecting, through the report form, the information necessary for disaggregation (gender identity, origin, citizenship, age, residence, etc.). This process also makes it possible to highlight the intersectionality of recorded discrimination cases.

Transparency: in order to provide clear and accessible information on the processing and management of data and on the methodology by which they are analysed, this Report is also intended to give an account, in a clear and transparent manner, of the practices and operating methods of SPAD and its Observatory.

Accountability: SPAD is responsible for the impact that the data collection, processing and dissemination actions may have on the people who contact the Help Center. This includes both the impact of the data collection processes, e.g. the responsibility that there is no retraumatisation in interviews, and the impact of the publication of this Report⁵.

In terms of data processing and analysis, this Report combines quantitative and qualitative analyses. Data is extracted from the Observatory's database, where information on the reports received is recorded and archived as described above. This process begins with the entry of cases through the filling in of a data entry form. Initially entered on the basis of the information that emerges from the report form, the cases are subsequently re-evaluated in their classification on the basis of a follow-up analysis. The qualitative analysis is the product of the reflections that emerge during the meetings – bilateral and/or collective – between case managers and representatives of Function 5. The quantitative analysis, on the other hand, is carried out on the data of the reports recorded by SPAD in the period from 1 January to 31 December 2024, a time horizon that from this year aligns the period of analysis to that of one calendar year.

As a first step, the reports received were classified on the basis of their pertinence. All the cases that, following a careful joint assessment by COSPE and the Municipality of Bologna, co-coordinators of the Observatory Function, with the fundamental involvement of the case managers, turned out to be actual cases of discrimination, including cases of perceived discrimination, were considered pertinent. On the contrary, all cases that concerned requests for other types of support, which did not have elements that could be attributed to discrimination, were considered not pertinent. Cases that presented incomplete information for assessment purposes were classified as doubtful. For the purposes of the analysis, discrimination was defined as follows:

Discrimination: “any conduct which, directly or indirectly, results in a distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on ‘race’, colour, descent or national or ‘ethnic’ origin, religious beliefs or practices, and which has the purpose or effect of destroying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social and cultural fields and in any other field of public life”⁶.

Relevant cases of discrimination were then classified on the basis of the mode of discrimination detected. With this in mind, the following categories were defined:

Direct discrimination: direct discrimination occurs “when, because of ‘race’ or ‘ethnic origin’, a person is treated less favourably than another is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation”⁷.

Indirect discrimination: indirect discrimination occurs “when an apparently neutral provision, criterion, practice, act, covenant or conduct is likely to place people of a particular ‘race’ or ‘ethnic origin’ at a disadvantage compared with other people”⁸. The same definition also applies to people professing a particular religion or ideology, people with disabilities, people of a particular age or of a particular sexual orientation⁹.

Perceived discrimination: an act or behaviour subjectively perceived as discrimination by the person subjected to it, which does not have at its basis elements that are unequivocally ascribable to discrimination or which does not correspond to what is recognised as discrimination at a normative and/or judicial level. The complexity of discrimination legislation, the difficulty of categorising facts as discrimination and the difficulty of detecting discrimination do not in fact guarantee that all cases of discrimination can find legislative coverage and judicial protection. To SPAD, cases of perceived discrimination remain pertinent cases of discrimination, taken in charge (or referred to others if not within SPAD's competence field) and considered on par with legally recognised cases of discrimination. The perception of discrimination by the offended person (or by witnesses) is a sufficient element to initiate the provision of assistance and support to the offended person.

Harassment: unwanted conduct with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of the person towards whom it is directed, creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Hate speech: any expression, communication or speech that has the purpose or effect of advocating, promoting or inciting, in any form, "the denigration, hatred or vilification of a person or group of persons, as well as any harassment, insult, negative stereotyping, stigmatisation or threat in respect of such a person or group of persons"¹⁰ on the basis of one or more aspects of their identity.

Hate crime: a common crime committed against a person, group and/or property associated with them with the aggravating factor of discriminatory motive and motivated by prejudice (*bias motivation*) towards the group identity of the affected people. Hence, a hate crime is any crime under the criminal code where the "victim is targeted because of her or his group identity"¹¹.

On the basis of the evidence regarding the discriminating agent, the following categories were also envisaged:

Institutional discrimination: discrimination put in place by institutional actors in the exercise of their functions, or institutional norms, practices or rules that are objectively discriminatory or apparently devoid of any discriminatory character, but which in their application produce different, i.e. less favourable, treatment than that received by other people, creating barriers that limit the possibilities and opportunities for a group of people sharing the same characteristic.

Systemic discrimination: "prevailing cultural norms, policies, practices or attitudes both in the public and private sectors that create relative disadvantages for some groups and privileges for other groups. Social manifestation of structural inequalities, based on deep-seated social hierarchies that are reflected in all social institutions. An 'invisible' hierarchy that creates structural privileges and disadvantages"¹².

Aware that in order to be able to fully analyse discrimination it is necessary to employ an adequate perspective to recognise its complexity, hence the multiple and, often, intersectional aspects that combine to create situations of unequal treatment, the cases recorded were also classified on the basis of the multiplicity or intersectionality of the grounds of discrimination:

Multiple discrimination (ordinary or additive): a form of discrimination that occurs on the basis of several discrimination grounds. The term **ordinary multiple discrimination** refers to multiple discrimination episodes that occur at different times and are based on different factors each time. On the other hand, the term **additive multiple discrimination** refers to discrimination that occurs on the basis of more than one protected characteristic, thus on multiple factors, that operate separately. In this case, discrimination is the result of the cumulative effect of two or more discriminatory behaviours implemented on the basis of several grounds.

Intersectional discrimination: a form of discrimination that occurs on the basis of "two or more grounds of discrimination, which operate simultaneously and interact inseparably, producing distinct and specific forms of discrimination"¹³. In this case, discrimination is based on two or more factors that interact with each other in such a way that they can no longer be distinguished and

separated. It is therefore not the result of a cumulative effect of the combination of several discriminations (as in the case of multiple discrimination), but rather a specific configuration created by the intersection between the different grounds (e.g. gender, origin, religion, etc.).

Going into the type of discriminatory actions, these were classified according to the following categories:

Discriminatory treatment: unfair and discriminatory treatment on the basis of any of the protected characteristics, in a wide range of contexts. This category includes both *differential* treatment, i.e. unjustifiably different treatment in similar situations, and *non-differential* treatment, i.e. similar and apparently neutral treatment, which places one or more groups of people in a situation of inequality with respect to the rest of the people, not compensating for – but reproducing – the disadvantages resulting from substantial discrimination.

Verbal aggression: verbal and non-verbal abuse on the basis of any of the protected characteristics, including comments or gestures directed at a person or collective, as well as direct and indirect threats of physical violence or consequences of any kind to the person.

Physical aggression: a physical attack based on any of the protected characteristics, ranging from touching, spitting or throwing objects to a violent attack against an individual or group.

Vandalism: misappropriation or defacement of property.

Hate speech: see above.

Hate crime: see above.

Racial profiling: the use or influence of racialising stereotypes by law enforcement agencies in the course of their activities.

Mobbing: a set of aggressive and persecutory actions and behaviour and/or social exclusion and psychological violence, which create a hostile climate of continuous intimidation, harassment and pressure (not exclusively in the work environment).

Other: residual category.

The analysis conducted within this Report aims to classify the cases of discrimination recorded by SPAD in the period between January and December 2024 and to analyse them by answering the following questions: Who accesses the SPAD Help Center? What types of discrimination are reported? Who is discriminated against? Who discriminates and where? What response actions have been taken by SPAD? Are SPAD users satisfied with the support they received?

CHAPTER 1

SPAD: ANTI-DISCRIMINATION HELP CENTER OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF BOLOGNA

1.1 SPAD's mission and dissemination

The SPAD Anti-discrimination Help Center is a service of the Municipality of Bologna currently co-managed with 37 civic subjects, 4 of whom have co-coordination functions. Its purpose is to orient people who are "victims" or witnesses of discrimination and to take charge of reports containing potentially discriminatory elements, in order to find an appropriate solution. The service is an addition to the activities that the Territorial Anti-discrimination Network already carries out in the area.

SPAD's work, based on the promotion and protection of people's fundamental rights from an anti-discrimination perspective, is currently aimed at combating and preventing discrimination on the grounds of "race", "ethnic origin" and religion, whether "direct" or "indirect", with a specific focus on multiple and intersectional discrimination, without prejudice to its function of providing guidance to other services in the area dedicated to other grounds of discrimination or other specific needs.

By virtue of municipal resolution PG no. 697834/2022¹⁴ concerning the "Establishment of the Rights and Plural City Office, launch of the project to expand and disseminate the Anti-discrimination Help Center (SPAD) and the establishment of the Diversity Managers", the expansion and broader dissemination of SPAD was ordered.

In order to implement the provisions contained in the aforementioned resolution, and in particular to implement the territorial dissemination of SPAD, a second desk was activated in October 2024 at the headquarters of the Porto-Saragozza district in Via Pier de' Crescenzi no. 14, in addition to the one already active since December 2021 at the Centro Interculturale M. Zonarelli. The desk is open at that location every Friday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and can be contacted through the channels (telephone number, Whatsapp, email and google form) that were already active. Employees of the district are also involved in SPAD's activities as operators.

As for the extension of SPAD's action to all forms of possible discrimination, also envisaged in the above-mentioned resolution, in 2024 a process of joint actions for data collection and monitoring of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression was started with the Anti-discrimination Centers of APS Arcigay Il Cassero (Spazio Cassero) and MIT - Movimento Identità Trans APS (STAR), with the support of COSPE in its role of co-coordination of Function 5. Starting from a comparison work aimed at standardising data collection and classification methodologies, an initial more complete and comparable picture of discrimination covered by the three anti-discrimination desks (SPAD, Spazio Cassero and STAR) was obtained. It was therefore possible to include a joint, intersectional analysis of the data in this edition of the Report.

In addition, in order to disseminate anti-discrimination skills not only within SPAD, but also in other areas of the municipal administration, a training course on "Rights and inclusion of people with

disabilities” was activated to provide useful tools to know and understand the legislation and legal guidelines on the rights of people with disabilities and to promote a culture of inclusion.

The activities of SPAD are divided into five functions:

Function 1 – Listening and guidance, co-coordinated by the Municipality of Bologna and Associazione Interculturale Universo;

Function 2 – Victims support, co-coordinated by the Municipality of Bologna and Diversa/mente;

Function 3 – Information and awareness-raising, co-coordinated by the Municipality of Bologna and Africa e Mediterraneo;

Function 4 – Training, coordinated by the Municipality of Bologna;

Function 5 – Observatory on discrimination based on origin, race and religion, co-coordinated by the Municipality of Bologna and COSPE.

1.2 The Functions of SPAD and what is new in 2024

For the coordination of the individual Functions, SPAD relies on the collaboration between the Municipality of Bologna – New Citizenship, Cooperation and Human Rights Office and the following associations: Associazione Interculturale Universo, Diversa/mente, Africa e Mediterraneo and COSPE. The collaboration between the Municipality of Bologna and the above-mentioned third sector organisations is based on a co-coordination model within the specific Functions of SPAD – a shared and hybrid form of management that represents an added value of the SPAD experience.

1.2.1 Function 1: Listening and guidance by Associazione Interculturale Universo

Function 1 “Listening and guidance” is co-coordinated by the Municipality of Bologna and Associazione Interculturale Universo. This Function includes:

- the collection and recording of reports of discrimination from “victims” or witnesses;
- the information addressed to users on the functions of the Help Center and the processing of personal data (in compliance with EU regulation 2016/679, the privacy code, as amended and supplemented by legislative decree 101/2018 and subsequent modifications and supplements);
- the follow-up interview to ascertain the discriminating ground (in person, online or by telephone);
- orientation, referral towards other services in the area and taking charge of “victims” support activities.

Among the novelties of 2024 are:

- Improved exchange of communication and information between case managers, desk operators and staff of the Municipality of Bologna, thanks to the creation of an instant messaging chat;
- Each association belonging to Function 1 guaranteed its participation in the activities through the presence of at least one trained SPAD operator. In carrying out the front office activities, the constant co-presence of a representative of the Municipality of Bologna and the figure of the case manager was important in order to take care of the archive and the follow-up of the bureaucratic steps related to the reports;
- Associazione Interculturale Universo continued to guarantee the possibility of indirectly reaching SPAD through its desk in Piazza XX Settembre (Bologna) for those who already attend the association’s activities;
- New meetings with operators were organised no longer on a monthly basis, but in the presence of updates and/or the need for exchanges on the resolution of problems encountered by operators. The meetings were useful to identify solutions, ideas and proposals to enhance user attendance at the Help Center and improve communication about SPAD’s presence in the area.

1.2.2 Function 2: Victims support by Diversa/mente APS

Function 2 “Victim Support” is co-coordinated by the Municipality of Bologna and Diversa/mente. This Function includes:

- taking charge of and managing the case, including the relationship and communication with the discriminating agent;
- the identification of the skills and resources needed to take charge of the case and, in agreement with the reporter(s), of the most appropriate solutions, among the following: legal advice or assistance (civil or criminal), linguistic-intercultural mediation, social or conflict mediation, psychological and emotional support;
- the link between professionals and operators involved in the process.

The Function consists in taking charge of delicate and complex situations, which require a more in-depth listening and a composite and articulated response: for example, situations in which the discrimination ground(s) are not immediately identifiable and the solution proposals, regarding objective and/or perceived, multiple or intersectional discrimination, require careful discussion in a multidisciplinary team.

The SPAD Network associations collaborating with Function 2 are 18 in total. These provide counselling or information and awareness-raising (e.g. in the school or company context) related to the case followed, by virtue of their specific experience and expertise. Most of them have their own desk and already do important work in intercepting discrimination. SPAD case managers can turn to Function 2 for support in complex cases.

During 2024, there were 9 reports that required legal counselling, in addition to the constant support provided to case managers and operators by legal experts via email advice, useful for case management. With regard to linguistic-cultural mediation, the service was formally activated in 1 case. However, the valuable contribution of mediators also extended to the translation of information material in different languages, including the dissemination of information on the network of centers dedicated to combating gender-based violence. Finally, psychological support was activated in 2 cases (for further details, read the Insight “Discrimination as a determinant of mental health”). Some cases required several multidisciplinary team meetings, in order to settle the concreteness of the reported discrimination and to identify solutions that take into account the perception of unprovable “racial” micro-aggressions.

1.2.3 Function 3: Information and awareness-raising by Africa e Mediterraneo

Function 3 “Information and awareness-raising” is co-coordinated by the Municipality of Bologna and Africa e Mediterraneo. This Function includes:

- the development and implementation of information campaigns on the services provided, translated into several languages;
- information and awareness-raising actions on related topics, aimed at prevention;
- information actions aimed at networks of stakeholder groups to initiate forms of collaboration;
- the collection and dissemination of toolkits and resources for anti-discrimination training and education.

In the year 2024, activities were implemented mainly aimed at increasing the visibility of the Help Center and improving the involvement of civic actors in the Network with the main objective of reaching the people most at risk of discrimination and counteracting the phenomenon of *under-reporting*. To enhance the communication impact of the Help Center, additional information materials were developed in different languages, in particular leaflets in Urdu and Bengali, which were added to those in Arabic and to the multilingual leaflet in Italian, English and French. Infographics were also produced to make information on how to access the service more readily understandable. The distribution of information material was extended to several public access locations and an information campaign was carried out in cooperation with TPER through the display of SPAD leaflets inside public transport.

A meeting in June 2024 was convened to enhance the role of the SPAD Network and to promote collaboration and exchange among its members. This resulted in initiatives to promote and present the SPAD Help Center at association events addressed to associates and recipients. In the months from September to December 2024, SPAD was presented at festivals (Festival Homeless More Rights; Festival dei Diritti Umani), celebrations at community associations (Incontro di Mondì), books and film presentations (presentation of the Statistical Immigration Dossier, screening of the film “Io Capitano”) and *ad hoc* meetings with the beneficiaries of the associations’ ordinary activities (support desks and Italian language schools). In addition to reaching a significant number of people potentially affected by discrimination – who had the opportunity to meet with the team of the Help Center to ask for information and to clarify doubts –, the involvement of the Network’s associations in the organisation of meetings and events enabled a strengthening of cooperation and awareness of the importance of working in synergy.

An important moment of involvement and awareness-raising among citizens to which Africa e Mediterraneo contributed was the presentation event of the SPAD Observatory’s Second Report, on 21 March, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which was enriched by an interesting debate and a moment of reflection and music aimed at younger people. SPAD was also present with an information stall at the Festa delle Nuove Cittadinanze held in Piazza Maggiore on 15 July.

The online awareness-raising campaign continued through the creation of posts on the Facebook and Instagram pages of the Centro Interculturale M. Zonarelli on specific issues and on analyses also featured in the Observatory Report.

1.2.4 Function 4: Training by Municipality of Bologna

Function 4 “Training” is coordinated by the Municipality of Bologna. This Function includes:

- basic and further training of the Help Center staff;
- training of, and self-training with, other stakeholders in the area.

Among the functions of SPAD, training plays a fundamental role both for the staff working at the Help Center and as a contribution to the development of knowledge and consequent anti-discriminatory behaviour.

The year 2024 saw the Municipality engaged in the training of new operators to be included in the desk activity. After the end of the basic anti-discrimination training course developed in 2023, a number of associations belonging to the SPAD Network expressed their willingness to train others. Accepting this interest, the 2023 training course was partly repeated in February–April 2024, using both the recordings and the material provided by the trainers for a total duration of 27.5 hours. The course, which took place entirely online, included training on:

- the presentation of SPAD and its operation;
- “anti-discrimination law, with particular reference to discrimination on racial, ethnic and religious grounds”, dealing both with Italian, European and international legal sources and related case law, and with specific topics such as discrimination in access to education and recognition of qualifications, work, access to housing, the right to health, access to social benefits, civil registration and religion. In addition, an in-depth study was made of the regulations on residence permits;
- the management of reporting;
- introduction to the system of services, both of the Municipality of Bologna and of other bodies such as ASP – Città di Bologna, trade unions and associations in the area;
- communication respectful of differences and non-discriminatory.

The course ended with the presentation of the SPAD privacy policy and the kit for operators. In addition to those trained in 2021 and 2023, four additional desk operators were qualified.

Furthermore, in line with the Municipal Administration’s plans to extend SPAD throughout the territory, a second desk was activated on 11 October 2024 at the headquarters of the Porto-Saragozza

district. Since this desk also includes municipal employees working in the district, an *ad hoc* training course was activated. The training carried out concerned the modules “anti-discrimination law, with particular reference to discrimination on racial, ethnic and religious grounds” and “management of reporting”. In addition, two in-person meetings were held to illustrate, in the first meeting, the functioning of SPAD, the privacy policy and the kit for operators and, in the second meeting, the SPAD tools related to the detection and management of reports and the relationship with users.

1.2.5 Function 5: Observatory on discrimination based on origin, race and religion by COSPE

Function 5 “Observatory on discrimination based on origin, race and religion” is co-coordinated by the Municipality of Bologna and COSPE. This Function includes:

- data collection, analysis and processing;
- the drafting of the Annual Report on the cases registered by the Help Center, containing data disaggregated by age, gender, district, public or private place, type of discriminating agent, area of discrimination, grounds of discrimination, solutions undertaken;
- the promotion of specific projects on identified needs.

The SPAD Observatory ensures systematic, periodic and transparent monitoring of the discrimination reports received. The gradual activation – or updating – of the data collection and analysis tools developed within Function 5, their strengthening and recognition have contributed to a qualitative improvement in the data collected.

The Observatory takes care of and coordinates the entire process of data collection and analysis, starting from the information entered into the database – following a process of anonymisation and pseudonymisation – through a data entry form, which provides for a classification of the reports, first of all, on the basis of their pertinence – a classification that makes it possible to distinguish between reports concerning cases of discrimination, therefore pertinent, and reports concerning requests for other types of support, therefore not pertinent. Secondly, the relevant cases are analysed not only on the basis of the characteristics of the discriminatory event itself (among these, the ground of discrimination, the mode of discrimination, the type of discriminatory action, etc.), but also on the basis of the characteristics of the target and of the perpetrator of the discrimination.

Analysing cases of discrimination is complex work, requiring time and expertise. This analysis only partly covers the extent of the dynamics and the discriminatory phenomenon present in some contexts. It is therefore increasingly necessary to implement and supplement the analysis of the data collected with communication activities and operational practices that give citizenship confidence, so that the true extent of discrimination can emerge.

The complexity of the phenomenon requires progressive steps of analysis: from the first approach at the case registration stage to the complicated process of categorising the discrimination case. In continuity with the previous year, this process was shared in *ad hoc* meetings with the case managers, which facilitated exchanges and comparisons that are essential for the correct processing of data. In addition, cases were identified – among the 2024 reports – that were deemed suitable to be briefly reported within this Report in the form of small boxes, with the aim of recounting some concrete situations and thus raising awareness of what constitutes discrimination and the different ways in which it can manifest itself (see chapter 3).

Among the new features adopted since last year is the modification of the satisfaction survey – a tool aimed at SPAD users and necessary to receive feedback on their experience with SPAD. The survey now also includes a section on the desks and/or services to which the users were accompanied in the case of referrals. As a result of this important integration, it becomes possible to collect information also about reports that are not directly handled by SPAD, in order to assess their satisfaction as well.

Finally, during 2024, a path of joint actions to collect data and monitor discrimination was initiated,

in collaboration with the Anti-discrimination Centers of the association MIT – Movimento Identità Trans (STAR) and of the association Arcigay Il Cassero (Spazio Cassero), supported by UNAR and active in the General Pact of Collaboration for the promotion and protection of the rights of LGBTQIA+ people and community in the city of Bologna. This path allowed for the sharing and exchange of good practices between desks dealing with anti-discrimination, albeit on different grounds. The third chapter includes an in-depth and comparative analysis of the data that emerged from this comparison, which is very important and useful in order to have a broader overview of discrimination Bologna.

DISCRIMINATION AS A DETERMINANT OF MENTAL HEALTH

by Alessandra Inglese, psychotherapist, and Frederico Ronconi, psychologist – Diversa/mente APS

Discrimination, based on stereotypes and prejudices, is present in every contemporary society, at structural, institutional and interpersonal levels. It is a tangible reality, which, with reference to racial discrimination, in its most extreme form, underpinned by hatred, racism and xenophobia, affects families, groups and entire populations (colonisation, apartheid, crimes against humanity, genocide), causing deep traumas, which affect generations to come. In ordinary life, it manifests itself in multiple ways: from blatant forms, such as unequal treatment, marginalisation and exclusion, to pervasive everyday micro-aggressions.

Greater attention should be paid by politicians, institutions, professionals, practitioners, citizens, to the negative consequences of discrimination for the mental health of people of all ages, whether they are migrants or members of minority groups, with particular characteristics: ethnic, linguistic, religious, gender identity and sexual orientation, physical, psychic or sensory disabilities; or people who have more than one of these. Indeed, intersectionality, i.e. the overlapping of multiple aspects of social identity, susceptible to discrimination, exposes one to a greater risk of mental illness and psycho-social distress¹.

Being discriminated against or stigmatised is a condition that is antithetical to the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health: "a state of well-being in which every individual can realise their potential, cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and fruitfully, and make a contribution to their community"². In this sense, mental health is the faculty to be and do what one considers important and is nourished by the same faculty. It does not correspond to the absence of illness: one can have a satisfying life within the limits of one's condition.

Discrimination restricts people in expressing themselves and their abilities. For example, a woman with non-EU citizenship may find it difficult to find stable employment, due to

prejudices regarding language proficiency and suitability for jobs in contact with the public. She may have to adapt to precarious and under-qualified jobs in relation to her level of education and prove to be able to support her children; therefore, she may feel sad, guilty, demoralised, lose her appetite, sleep, and concentration. Her mood may worsen to the point of depression.

Discrimination always arouses suffering in those who perceive or suffer it. Symptoms may be concealed, belittled or denied. Many people underestimate the emotional impact of the discriminatory incident, especially when it affects children and young people, because of the presumption that they will quickly forget. On the contrary, they may be deeply hurt, internalise stereotypes, and identify with the aggressor. Moreover, psychological care may be beyond their economic reach and not accessible in the public service. Individual and/or family suffering, kept at bay for years, may erupt after a marginal event.

The psychological support provided by SPAD is an opportunity for listening and for emotional support, which can rekindle the energy needed to respond to injustice. However, contacting the suffering of discriminated people and proposing psychological help is not so easy, both because of the fear of over-involvement and because of the encounter with unfamiliar, unknown or unshared representations and practices of health and illness. Operators should be better trained on these issues, offering them spaces for sharing and supervision.

People taken in for psychological support reported more previous experiences of discrimination in addition to the recent incident. Refugees, for example, may carry on their shoulders a heavy burden of discrimination suffered in their own country, be it because of political or religious affiliation or sexual orientation. The expectation of arriving in a place where rights will be respected may be disappointed, generating

frustration and indignation. When this malaise is not recognised and understood by the operators, it may increase the sense of frustration and helplessness with possible oppositional and destructive behaviour.

Discrimination can strike with the impetus of trauma, especially when it results in violence, revealing its xenophobic or racist nature. Following the traumatic experience, specific symptoms may appear: recurrent flashbacks, nightmares and intrusive thoughts about the incident, social withdrawal, emotional detachment.

Coping with frequent and repeated discrimination over time can lead to a psycho-physical condition of chronic stress, predisposing to illness, physical (e.g. heart disease, diabetes or other chronic illness.) and/or psychic (e.g. mood disorders and psychotic decompensation), which are often associated with poor diet, physical inactivity, substance use and alcohol consumption. Chronic stress due to discrimination can be aggravated by internal stress, caused by the internalisation of stigma and prejudice and the continuous effort to conceal one's social identity, as described by Meyer's (2003) "Minority Stress Model", referring in particular to LGBTQIA+ people.

Among the most accredited international medical journals, The Lancet, in 2022, devoted a special issue³ to an in-depth examination of the impact of discrimination on health. According to the authors of the articles contained therein (doctors, psychiatrists, researchers, sociologists, jurists, anthropologists), racism, xenophobia and discrimination constitute "a public health emergency of global concern", which is underestimated, goes beyond the individual and transcends the perspectives, interests and possibilities of individual nations. The approach to health as a state of bio-psycho-social well-being, resulting from the combination of biological, economic, social, political, cultural and environmental processes, and as a human right, must be multidisciplinary, transnational, and intersectional. Through studies, research and scientific evidence, the authors document how historical processes, ideologies and structures of power and oppression have shaped and continue to shape politics and practices and are the cause of systemic inequalities throughout the world. One of the reported studies finds that out of more than 2 million pregnancies in 20 high- and middle-income countries, neonatal death, in

utero death and premature birth are more likely to occur among children born to black, Hispanic and South Asian women. Another study shows how land theft and the destruction of traditional practices of Brazil's indigenous people are associated with adverse cardiometabolic outcomes. Yet another study reports that in the United States, among people diagnosed with brain tumours, black patients are more likely to receive recommendations against surgical resection, regardless of clinical, demographic and socioeconomic factors, suggesting a bias in clinical decision-making. Furthermore, the researchers draw attention to epigenetic alterations associated with chronic stress, which are responsible for damaging the health of the next generation. Prolonged maternal exposure to stress can, for example, unfavourably influence the development of the foetus and the child through biological, emotional and behavioural pathways (maternal care and parenting).

Scholars from The Lancet indicate six key points to overcome discrimination:

- **decolonising thinking**, starting at the institutional level;
- **use an intersectional lens** to weigh the overlapping systems of oppression and related forms of discrimination;
- **improve social cohesion** by enhancing diversity-inclusive processes;
- **promoting restorative and transformative justice**, based on listening to and acknowledging past trauma and on creating environments of collective trust and care;
- **actively support equity** between people of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds;
- **adopt and support human rights-based approaches** to health.

If promoting mental wellbeing requires a collective commitment to reduce discrimination and stigmatisation through inclusive environments of support and protection, we might ask ourselves how this can be achieved and by which means of persuasion, given what is happening at home, in Europe, and in the US, where the legitimisation of inequalities and the use of force and violence are supplanting the reasons of law. Today, more than ever, energy and resources must be invested in a cohesive, competent and resolute response, without compromising on human rights.

1.3 Functioning modalities of the desk and management of reports

Function 1 “Listening and guidance” and Function 2 “Victims support”, which are strictly related to the desk operations, have as their main objective to receive, listen to and take charge of (or redirect) the reports collected by SPAD. The methods for collecting and handling reports are discussed below.

1.3.1 Access modalities

The “victim” or witness can contact SPAD to report discrimination through different channels:

- In person at the Centro Interculturale M. Zonarelli and at the headquarters of the Porto-Saragozza district;
- By telephone;
- By e-mail;
- By instant and voice messaging on Whatsapp, also in another language;
- By an online reporting form, accessible through the Centro Interculturale M. Zonarelli website.

1.3.2 The interview and reporting

On first access to SPAD, the basic information necessary for a preliminary assessment of the case and the needs expressed by the reporting person is collected. Once the report is received, the person is invited to an initial interview, either in person or via telephone, during which the SPAD team (generally composed of a case manager and an operator) collects additional elements. The information collected is entered into the report form, which is organised into the following areas:

1. Who is discriminated against?: the first data recorded are those relating to the person making the report, among them: gender, age, occupation, nationality and reference territory. The collection of this information makes it possible to disaggregate the information on several axes and thus detect the complexity of local communities’ needs, highlighting the – often multiple and intersectional – nature of discrimination. This also makes it possible to ascertain which communities have been reached by information on the presence of SPAD and which ones need more targeted communication actions.

2. Where does the discrimination take place?: the second set of data collected concerns the context in which the reported discriminatory act took place, i.e. whether the discrimination took place in a public place (public offices, hospitals and public health facilities, streets, parks or squares, schools, etc.), in a private space (homes, establishments, companies and organisations, etc.), in reception centers (CPSA, CDA, CARA, CIE, etc.), in stations or public transport (buses, trains, planes, etc.) or in non-physical places, such as social and digital or analogue media (paper or online newspapers, social networks, advertisements, etc.).

3. Who discriminates?: the third essential data category concerns the discriminating agent. The five main categories of discriminating agents identified are: private citizens (individuals or groups), private entities (companies, employers, employees, etc.), public services or administration (offices, managers, employees, etc.), law enforcement agencies (offices, groups or individuals). In cases where discriminatory processes are not attributable to specific entities or individuals, but are the result of processes intrinsic to the social structure, we speak of systemic discrimination.

4. What is the discrimination ground?: in the section of the form dedicated to the assessment of the discrimination case, the first data recorded is that relating to the discrimination ground detected/reported: origin/nationality, “ethnic origin”, religion, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, age, socio-economic status, health status, etc. Currently, SPAD has the competence to intervene and take charge of discrimination on “racial”, “ethnic” and religious grounds. In cases where the discrimination factor does not fall within SPAD’s remit, the person is redirected to other services.

5. What type of discrimination?: the form contains a brief narrative summary of the case and puts an indication of the type of discrimination suffered/reported: direct, indirect, perceived, harassment, hate speech, hate crime. The card also records the area in which the discrimination was experienced.

6. What response can SPAD activate?: the last section of the report form collects information on SPAD's proposed operational response. The response actions to the reports received are always *ad hoc* and strongly depend on each case. The possibility of offering different forms of support that always correspond to the needs of those who contact SPAD is also due to the heterogeneity of the realities that are part of the SPAD Network.

1.3.3 Case management

Once the report is received and the report form is filled in, the type of intervention that can be activated by SPAD depends on the nature of the reported case:

- In cases where the absence of a discrimination ground is detected, but other needs emerge, the reporting person receives support from the SPAD team through referral and accompaniment to other services. In cases that are easier and quicker to resolve, such as requests for information or technical support in accessing specific services, reports are collected and resolved during the interview itself, without the need for referral or accompaniment to other services.
- When the discrimination ground(s) is ascertained, but this does not fall within the SPAD's sphere of competence, the possibility of referral to other services in the area that can offer specific expertise is identified; where necessary, SPAD can accompany the user to the referred services.
- When the discrimination falls within the SPAD's sphere of competence (i.e. discrimination on "racial", "ethnic" and/or religious grounds), the report is taken in charge by Function 2, whose support may take the form – on the basis of the needs expressed and the possibilities of intervention – of legal advice/assistance, relations with other subjects for resolution, conflict mediation, linguistic-cultural mediation, psycho-emotional support, etc. If deemed necessary, the "victim" has the opportunity to have a follow-up interview with the association taking charge of the case on the basis of the skills and availability offered. Moreover, if the reported case is particularly complex, and therefore difficult to assess, a multidisciplinary team is activated, a consultation group that can be activated at the request of the case manager(s). The multidisciplinary team is composed of: case managers, Function 1 and Function 2 referrers, professionals belonging to Function 2 who work in the legal field, possibly psychologists and mediators/cultural mediators. Depending on the case and the skills needed, experts who can be most supportive in the activation of a taking charge are called in.

When cases are taken charge of, data are collected through a second tool, the management form, where the actions taken to support the "victim" are described in a narrative manner, up to the time the case is closed.

Chapter 3, "Analysis of collected data", elaborates in detail on the reports of discrimination collected and addressed in 2024 by SPAD.

SPAD ANTI-DISCRIMINATION HELP CENTER

HAVE YOU
SUFFERED
OR WITNESSED
DISCRIMINATION?



Do you need
urgent help?

CALL THE EMERGENCY
NUMBERS:

112 (single European
emergency number)

118 (medical emergencies)

or go to a healthcare facility
for medical assistance.

NO

YES

A REPORT THE CASE
OF DISCRIMINATION TO SPAD

HOW

1

Come to our offices
in Bologna



Centro Interculturale Zonarelli
via Giovanni Antonio Sacco 14
Tue 09:00-13:00
Thu 14:30-18:30

Quartiere Porto Saragozza
via Pier de' Crescenzi 14
Fri 09:00-13:00

2

Call
+39 051 2196329



Mon-Fri: 9:00-13:00
Thu 14:30-18:30

3

Send
a message on
Whatsapp
+39 331 7567412
(also a voice message)



4

Write an
e-mail
spad@comune.bologna.it



5

Fill in the
Google Form



B THE SPAD TEAM WILL LISTEN TO YOUR STORY WITH CARE AND ATTENTION
AND MAY OFFER YOU ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING FORMS OF SUPPORT:



Free legal assistance or advice



Psychological support



Conflict mediation and/or relations
with other parties for resolution



Referral to other desks or services

INFOGRAPHIC 1. REPORTING DISCRIMINATION TO SPAD

CHAPTER 2

LEGAL, INSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

2.1 European and national anti-discrimination law

In its most recent Report on the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (the so-called New York Convention), the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) highlighted how the Italian legislative framework lacks a clear and complete definition of “racial discrimination”, covering all the forms indicated in the Convention¹⁵. Although the principle of non-discrimination is given legal foundation in the Constitution, Italian anti-discrimination law is still incomplete.

This observation was also confirmed by the new Report of the independent human rights monitoring body ECRI, published in October 2024, in which ECRI recommends that the Italian authorities “finalise and adopt, without undue delay, a National Action Plan Against Racism”¹⁶ and “introduce in parliament a hate speech and hate crime legislation that includes all the key elements of national legislation against racism and intolerance”¹⁷.

Articles 2 and 3 of the Italian Constitution recognise and guarantee, respectively, fundamental and “inviolable” human rights and the principle of equality, whereby

*all citizens have equal social dignity and are equal before the law, without distinction of sex, race, language, religion, political opinion, personal and social conditions*¹⁸.

Although it did not provide an explicit definition of non-discrimination, the entry into force of the Constitution did in fact lay the foundations for the construction of Italian anti-discrimination law, which has progressively expanded following various interventions by the Italian legislature – autonomous or transposing international or European Union standards.

In the criminal law field, an initial definition of “racial discrimination” was incorporated into the Italian legal system with the approval of law 654/1975, through which the above-mentioned New York Convention, open for signature since March 1966, was ratified. Although fundamental in giving an initial shape to Italian anti-discrimination law, law 654/1975 was not sufficiently effective in curbing the racist phenomenon in Italy. In 1993, the Italian legislature thus intervened again, as a matter of urgency, by enacting law 205/93 (the so-called Mancino Law), containing “Urgent measures on the subject of racial, ethnic and religious discrimination”, with the objective expressed in the preamble of “providing more effective instruments for the prevention and repression of phenomena of intolerance and violence of xenophobic or anti-semitic matrix” and, specifically, to counter the manifestations of racist behaviour widely spread among the so-called Naziskin groups and in sports competitions¹⁹. The Mancino Law had as its object a set of criminal provisions enunciating the aggravating circumstances applicable to crimes – defined for the first time in the same text of the law – of spreading, inciting or committing “acts of discrimination on racial, ethnic, national or religious grounds”²⁰. The promulgation of the Mancino Law thus helped to define more clearly the scope of protection of anti-discrimination law, although it was not exempt from difficulties in its application due to the subordination of the demonstration of the crime to

proof of the will – expressed publicly and explicitly – to commit or incite a discriminatory act. In 2006, the penalties provided for by the Mancino Law were mitigated by an intervention of the legislator (law 85/2006²¹), which narrowed the scope of application of the legislation. As of today, the Mancino Law, as transfused by legislative decree 21/2018 into the new articles 604bis and 604ter of the Criminal Code, makes discrimination punishable as a crime not insofar as it offends the victims, but if it is considered an act of propaganda, thus aimed at “publicly manifesting personal convictions in order to influence public opinion and change the ideas and behaviour of the addressees”²².

In the civil law field, the principle of non-discrimination was first introduced with the approval of the Consolidated Act of Provisions concerning Immigration and the condition of third country nationals (legislative decree 286/1998), which defined specific protection measures for those who suffer discrimination. With the introduction of the Consolidated Act of Provisions concerning Immigration, a broader definition of discrimination was outlined, including – for the first time – indirect and institutional discrimination. In fact, article 43 identifies discrimination as

*any conduct which, directly or indirectly, involves a distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin, religious beliefs and practices*²³.

Corollary to this new element, the second part of the definition provided in art. 43 also specifies that any conduct is discriminatory

*which has the purpose or effect of destroying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social and cultural fields and in any other field of public life*²⁴.

In doing so, the definition of discrimination was broadened to include not only explicitly discriminatory conduct, but also conduct whose nature may be considered objectively discriminatory by virtue of the effect it produces, regardless of the presence or absence – at a purely objective level – of an explicit discriminatory component. The introduction of the element of objectivity of the effects was fundamental, since it is the latter that permits the recognition (and consequent protection) of discriminatory actions in the multiplicity of situations in which they may take place, regardless of whether the conduct in question consists of a legally unlawful act. This concerns not only conduct by private individuals, but also institutional agents and public officials in the exercise of their functions, especially in the fields of education, social services and employment²⁵.

The concept of indirect discrimination was crystallised in the Italian legal system with the expansion of the legislative framework on discrimination, which followed the approval of legislative decrees 215/2003 and 216/2003, which transposed European directives 2000/43/EC and 2000/78/EC, on the subject of treatment between people and in the workplace regardless of “race” and “ethnic origin”. It was in legislative decree 215/2003 that the Italian legislator provided for the first time a precise definition of direct and indirect discrimination. The former occurs when

*because of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, a person is treated less favourably than another is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation*²⁶.

Conversely, indirect discrimination occurs in cases where

*an apparently neutral provision, criterion, practice, act, covenant or conduct may place people professing a particular religion or other ideology, people with disabilities people of a particular age or sexual orientation at a particular disadvantage compared to other people*²⁷.

Thus, the notion of actions with an objectively discriminatory effect returns: modes of action that are not intrinsically or explicitly discriminatory and that, while remaining in their apparent neutrality, may nonetheless produce discrimination to the extent that they place a certain person or category of people in a less favourable and objectively disadvantageous position compared to others. In this way, the concept of discrimination has been further broadened to also include situations of structural or systemic discrimination, i.e. all situations in which practices or rules apparently devoid of any discriminatory character, in their application, produce a different treatment, i.e. less favourable, than the one received by other people, as if there were invisible barriers limiting their opportunities.

A further innovation introduced by legislative decree 215/2003 was the definition of harassment as a possible form of discrimination, which was defined as

*undesirable conduct, carried out for one of the reasons set out in Article 1, with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person and of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment*²⁸.

The integration of Italian norms with European legislation has therefore consistently strengthened the regulatory coverage and legal protection towards people at risk of discrimination, even more so after the entry into force of the Treaties of Amsterdam (1999) and Lisbon (2009), which have further expanded the system of guarantee and protection of the principle of non-discrimination, giving the European Union itself a greater power to intervene to combat discrimination on EU territory. Furthermore, the European Parliament's recent resolution on "Combating discrimination in the EU"²⁹ once again drew attention to the need to proceed with the adoption of the horizontal anti-discrimination directive, which was presented by the European Commission in 2008 and has been blocked in the Council ever since. The Parliament not only emphasised again the urgent need "a horizontal approach to combating discrimination in order to remove the current artificial hierarchy of protected grounds, thus granting protection for everyone", but also urged "the Member States to ensure the full and correct implementation of the current EU anti-discrimination framework", expressing concern about this having a "negative impact on individuals and on society as a whole" if not adapted³⁰.

In the case of Italy, despite having fully and correctly transposed the European legislation on the subject, significant gaps remain in its concrete implementation. In fact, the implementation of anti-discrimination legislation must necessarily pass through a jurisprudential elaboration, especially on the subject of "racial" discrimination – to date not yet codified as a crime in the Italian legal system³¹.

2.2 Institutional policies and projects of the Emilia-Romagna Region

At a regional level, as established by the Consolidated Act of Provisions concerning Immigration in article 44 and implemented by regional law 5/2004 in article 9³², Emilia-Romagna began a process in 2007 to create a Regional Anti-discrimination Center that would provide advice and guidance, prevent potential situations of inequality, monitor and support projects and actions aimed at eliminating situations of disadvantage, particularly to the detriment of people with foreign nationality³³. The Center has developed through access points distributed throughout the Emilia-Romagna territory, with the aim of making the most of the many public and private resources that were already active, known and with strong local roots³⁴.

Subsequently, with article 48 of regional law 24/2009, the Region also recognised "to all citizens of States belonging to the European Union the right to access to the use of public and private services under conditions of equal treatment and without direct or indirect discrimination of race, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political opinions, personal and social conditions", reaffirming the administration's commitment, "in concert with the local authorities and with the involvement of the social partners and third sector subjects, to promote positive actions to overcome any conditions of disadvantage arising from discriminatory practices".

Moreover, since 2014, the Center's action has been extended to all discrimination grounds indicated in article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which includes – among others – "race", skin colour, "ethnic" or social origin, genetic characteristics, language and membership of a national minority. There are currently 157 anti-discrimination access points in the regional network, divided into territorial coordination nodes and help desks. The Region annually supports the nodes for the organisation of territorial anti-discrimination awareness and prevention initiatives. By resolution of the Emilia-Romagna Legislative Assembly no. 104 of 26 October 2022, the "2022-2024 Programme for the social integration of foreign citizens – plural, equitable, inclusive Emilia-Romagna 2022-2024" was also approved, written and constructed with an intersectional perspective, whose objective is to promote interventions to empower people in conditions of autonomy, overcoming material, social, and linguistic gaps, skills and/or understanding of a new territory, at the same time combating discriminatory policies and practices, racist and/or sexist actions, exploitative and severe labour practices and enslavement. In particular, the plan's priority is the fight against discrimination

through the support and promotion of the Regional Anti-discrimination Center. Similarly, the Plan aims at preventing and combating forms of labour market distortions (irregular work, undeclared work, caporalato, labour exploitation) through social protection interventions and interventions that can be activated within the Labour Services, promoting decent and safe work and legality. The latter objective is also achieved through the interregional project “Common Ground – Interregional actions to combat labour exploitation and support victims”³⁵, which includes the following actions

- strengthening and qualifying the knowledge and capacity for action of the public and private partners and actors that make up the regional networks;
- implementation in each region of the multi-agency intervention system described in the “National Guidelines”;
- promotion of forms of cooperation with those in charge of control and supervision activities in the labour field, also with the involvement of ITL N-West and N-East;
- activation of integrated and customised guidance, training, job mentoring and inclusion interventions;
- promotion of increasing levels of awareness among public administrators, civil society actors, businesses and citizens on the issue.

2.3 Anti-discrimination projects and initiatives of the Metropolitan City of Bologna

Since 2017, the Metropolitan City of Bologna, in collaboration with the Metropolitan Anti-discrimination Network of the Bologna area, has been implementing a pathway for anti-discrimination activism in some classes of secondary schools in the area, with the aim of promoting an anti-discrimination culture that has the students as active subjects. The project includes a training course on norms, activities in places of memory and an experiential art course. As part of this pathway, a manual “For a pedagogy against discrimination” was produced in 2022 with a view to disseminating this approach. In 2024, the artistic product created during the pathway in the 2023/2024 school year was used as a tool to present the project in 7 libraries in the metropolitan area, as part of the Festival della Cultura Tecnica.

Further initiatives promote awareness-raising and the valorisation of diversity, such as intercultural parenting support paths that saw the involvement of four social and health districts and the participation of 450 people including parents, educators and pedagogues; the “Ogni lingua vale” (Every language counts) project to enhance linguistic diversity in educational institutions, which involved more than five municipalities, two infant schools, five primary schools, two secondary schools, two VET schools, the Metropolitan CPIA and the CPIA della Montagna, intercultural film forums and thematic meetings with activists involving 11 schools including secondary schools, VET schools and first-grade secondary schools located in nine different municipalities in the area.

As part of SPAD’s activities, in 2024, with a view to synergy and collaboration with the Municipality of Bologna, the City implemented activities under Function 3 “Information and awareness-raising” and Function 4 “Training”. In particular, the Metropolitan City Council planned a training dedicated to all the municipalities in the metropolitan territory and addressed to the operators of the social desks, the URPs, registry offices, third sector entities and others. The training, for a total of 11 hours, was organised in 4 modules dealing with: legislation, inclusive languages, experiential paths and access to SPAD. Of these 4 modules, the first one, on regulatory aspects, took place in 5 districts in the metropolitan area, and was attended by 69 people. Specifically: 41 social desks operators, 16 URP operators, 1 registry office operator, 6 administrative instructors, 2 ETS operators, 1 health registry office operator, 2 employees in the administrative sector of the municipalities. The second module was launched in December and concluded in January 2025, and the scheduling of the third module has already been started. The Metropolitan City of Bologna also had 16,000 multilingual information leaflets on access to SPAD printed and distributed to the 55 municipalities in the metropolitan area.

2.4 The Municipality of Bologna's anti-discrimination policies and actions

The fight against discrimination is a priority issue for the municipal administration. The programme lines for the 2021-2026 mandate "La Grande Bologna per non lasciare indietro nessuno" (The Great Bologna to leave no one behind) envisage Bologna being a welcoming city and developing policies aimed at recognising full citizenship for people with a migratory history, through the recognition of social and civil rights for those who have chosen Bologna to live in and bring up their children, regardless of origin or nationality. Since June 2022, the Administration has included *ius soli* in the Statute of the Municipality of Bologna, in a symbolic way, while waiting for a hoped-for amendment of the national law, and has been working on facilitating the administrative pathways for exercising rights, in close synergy with the relevant institutional bodies and with the police headquarters in particular. In addition, the Anti-discrimination Help Center (SPAD), launched at the beginning of the mandate, has become a point of reference with the function of liaison with registry offices, AUSL, police headquarters, the prefecture, managing bodies and associations in the area.

It is also envisaged that the Coordination Node and the Metropolitan Anti-Discrimination Network will be strengthened with the involvement of the territorial service system, continuing the collaboration with the Metropolitan City, so that it becomes a more structured central and proximity service; that the capacities of people with disabilities are enhanced, so that they take a leading role in their path to work and social integration and, more generally, in their life project; that the figure of the disability manager is enhanced within a team of diversity managers; that Metropolitan Bologna is at the forefront for the civil rights of the LGBTQIA+ community and against any discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation. To this end, a Metropolitan Equality Plan has been adopted with concrete actions to achieve gender equality and combat all types of discrimination; to implement training and information paths on differences in schools of all levels, for public administration professionals on the theme of gender-based violence and diversity of gender identities, and gender-positive awareness-raising and sex and gender education paths disseminated in the city's social spaces; to strengthen the General Pact of Cooperation for the promotion and protection of the rights of LGBTQIA+ people and community and to collaborate with the cities of the RE.A.DY network; acquire and correctly process data related to LGBTQIA+ people in order to favour more inclusive policies and services, also identifying a "multiple discrimination" indicator in the development of services.

Finally, the programme lines envisage Bologna as the capital of dialogue between religions and cultures, with the aim of promoting respect for the dignity of the person, religious freedom, social dialogue and peace, a framework within which to develop the experiences of intercultural and religious dialogue undertaken in recent years by the Centro Interculturale M. Zonarelli.

Anti-discrimination is one of the main areas of intervention of the New Citizenship, Cooperation and Human Rights Office of the Municipality of Bologna, which aims to coordinate actions for the promotion and protection of citizenship rights and to combat discrimination, promoting and managing international cooperation projects and participating in the European Coalition of Cities Against Racism (ECCAR). The Office also acts as the Coordination Node of the Metropolitan Anti-discrimination Network, to which SPAD also belongs. As part of the Coordination Node function, the Office cooperates with the Metropolitan City Council, with which it carried out communication and awareness-raising actions on SPAD in the metropolitan area in 2024 and training courses on anti-discrimination for operators in the services of the Metropolitan City Council's municipalities.

By council resolution PG no. 697834/2022³⁶, a cross-sectoral functional articulation was also established, called the "Rights and Plural City Office" and coordinated by the unit in charge of anti-discrimination actions at the General Directorate - Administrative Innovation and Simplification Sector and Citizenship Relations Care. In 2024, the Rights and Plural City Office carried on the work of coordinating the Intersectoral Working Group, established by the determination of the Directorate General PG no. 445746/2022³⁷ and composed of internal referents of the various departments: the objective is to ensure integrated action within the Administration on the protection of rights, the enhancement of differences and the prevention of all forms of discrimination, informing all the activities of the Entity, activating a structured dialogue with the outside and supporting the implementation of specific projects in the subjects in question.

Finally, during the year, first steps were taken towards the dissemination of SPAD in order to make it a widespread and capillary service in the territory. In October 2024, a second physical desk was opened at a location in the Porto-Saragozza district of Bologna and the training course “Rights and inclusion of people with disabilities” was launched, aimed at both municipal employees and SPAD case managers and operators.

● *The work of the Diversity Team of the Municipality of Bologna*

In 2024, the work of the Diversity Team, appointed by the Mayor in February 2023, was strengthened. The Diversity Team consists of Fulvia Casagrande, Michelle Rivera, Daro Sakho, Maximiliano Olivieri and Nunzia Vannuccini.

During the year, the Diversity Team supported the Rights and Plural City Office in developing good management of all dimensions of diversity. The work of the Diversity Team consisted of numerous and diverse activities, including:

- involvement in specific moments of discussion and exchange with the various sectors of the Administration to address specific issues: Plan for the elimination of architectural barriers (PEBA) with Public Works, “Design For All” project with the Civic Museums Sector; procedures for issuing residence permits with the Welfare Department and ASP; participatory processes/ shared Administration with Fondazione IU Rusconi Ghigi; accessibility to schools with the Education, Training and New Generations Area and the Public Works, Green and Mobility Department; increasing and managing employee diversity; gender certification; alias identity;
- participation in inspections to assess architectural barriers (e.g. at the Cinema Modernissimo);
- participation in operational meetings in the framework of projects oriented towards inclusion or combating discrimination (e.g. the project on access and spaces for the Museo delle bambine e dei bambini and the Audit Panel of the European Project UNITES);
- involvement in the Mayor’s Weeks in the city districts;
- participation, as trainers, in the Course “Rights and inclusion of people with disabilities” addressed to employees of the Municipality of Bologna, as well as to case managers and SPAD operators;
- participation in presentations and discussions with associations and groups of associations (Diaspora Associations, General LGBTQIA+ Collaboration Pact Associations);
- participation in the activities of international city networks (ECCAR General Conference in Heidelberg, September 2024).

The Diversity Team’s constant and operational work on Bologna City Council procedures and projects is a real strength in consolidating the focus not only on preventing and combating discrimination, but also on building a diversity management strategy in the city administration from an intersectional perspective.

● *The Local Action Plan for an anti-racist and intercultural city*

In 2024, the implementation of the Local Action Plan for an anti-racist and intercultural city (2022–2026)³⁸ continued, approved on 7 February 2023 by council resolution 76563/2023, a strategic document for combating “racism” and hate crimes. The Local Action Plan (PAL) fits into the broader strategic horizon of the EU Action Plan against Racism 2020–2025 and is inspired by the model of intercultural integration policy approved by the Council of Europe in 2015. The Plan is the result of a participatory process that involved 34 associations, religious communities, informal subjects, officers and functionaries of police services (state police, carabinieri, local police) and referents of municipal services (Libraries and Cultural Welfare, Housing Policies, Sports Sector, Welfare and Promotion of Community Wellbeing Department, Education, Training and New Generations Area and Demographic Services).

The vision of the Plan is of a city capable of building shared understanding and common actions to combat structural and institutional racism, involving the entire city community and producing significant and measurable changes in the daily lives of people belonging to racialised groups. The Local Action Plan was drafted with the following guiding principles in mind:

1. The promotion of equality as a positive duty of the administration and not only as protection against discrimination;
2. Priority focus on institutional or systemic racism;
3. The transversality of policies to combat racism (mainstreaming) with the assumption of clear, strong political direction and responsibility;
4. The intersectional approach, understood as awareness of the interactions between different forms and causes of discrimination and the multiplicity of personal identities;
5. The call for the “best available science and knowledge” as the basis for policy choices;
6. The involvement of people from racialised groups, their organisations and civil society organisations committed to promoting equality.

Priority action areas have been identified within the Plan: i. Training and awareness-raising; ii. Data collection, with the aim of reducing *under-recording* and *under-reporting* of discrimination in the territory, problems known at every institutional level; iii. Services to citizenship, understood as mapping of needs, definition of persistent critical issues and development of appropriate tools and methods to overcome them. The planned actions pursue improvement objectives for each area of intervention or service to citizenship identified: Housing, Education, Culture, Employment, Demographic Services, Health, Sport, Victim support, Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue.

In the second year of the Plan’s implementation, the Rights and Plural City Office, thanks to its coordinating role, is collaborating with the various Departments, Areas and Sectors of the Administration to monitor the actions planned, through a plan of indicators developed in coherence with the Plan’s objectives and actions. The Plan thus constitutes the reference framework for the entire organisation in the area of promoting interculturalism and combating racism and discrimination.

An example is the project “Traiettorie di sguardi”, entitled “Seeing with the eyes of the mind” in the 2024 edition, through which every year artists with diasporic experience “adopt” one or more civic museums of the Municipality of Bologna to act as guides for a free workshop path within the museum spaces and the Amilcar Cabral Library, specialised in the history, culture, arts and knowledge of African, Latin American, Asian and Oceanian countries. The objective is to propose paths that involve the participants in a process of reworking, enrichment, co-creation and transformation of the narratives of the artistic and documentary heritage kept in the city’s museums and libraries, generating new, broader and more inclusive narratives. The path is accompanied by a process of collective co-production of a *fanzine* with suggestions for reading, listening, viewing and further study. The project reflects the transversal work between the different sectors of the Administration, which specifically sees the involvement of the Amilcar Cabral Library, the Civic Museums Sector and the New Citizenship Office.

Another area of special attention for the City of Bologna is housing. In this regard, the Housing Policies Sector has launched, thanks to an agreement with the Department of Sociology and Business Law of the University of Bologna, a research project aimed at investigating shared and supportive housing as a tool for individual and collective empowerment in the fight against discrimination in access to housing on the basis of migration background, sexual orientation and gender identity. The survey, entitled “Evidence of innovation in local housing welfare. Housing communities as a tool for individual and collective empowerment in the fight against gender discrimination”, stems from the need to analyse the phenomenon of housing discrimination, which is often difficult to define, with the aim of defining policies to combat it. The analysis stems from the observation that the coexistence of various factors of disadvantage contributes to the invisibility of certain subjectivities and to forms of oppression or subjugation, discrimination and social exclusion. The study therefore explores the possibility that housing welfare can contribute to the redefinition of more inclusive policies by placing the role of housing at the center of people’s and communities’ life paths, favouring empowerment processes. The research thus responds to the objectives expressed in the 2021-2026 Mandate Programmatic Guidelines, with particular attention to the experimentation of intergenerational and intersectional collaborative living spaces, falling within the five strategies of the Bologna Municipality’s Housing Plan, approved in July 2023.

Another example is the networking of the Bologna local police “unit for the protection of vulnerable people”, set up in February 2023, with the associations of the Centro Interculturale M. Zonarelli and with SPAD in order to refer, in case of alleged crimes, “victims” to the local police contact people for the reception and treatment of vulnerable people who wish to receive assistance and

file a complaint. This proposal aims to replicate the good practice already initiated by the SPAD association Polis Aperta in the framework of the LGBTQIA+ Pact for the training of local police on LGBTQIA+ issues and the designation of internal contact people for related hate crimes. The unit currently consists of approximately 40 volunteer operators, including several officers.

● *ECCAR – European Coalition of Cities against Racism*

The Municipality of Bologna is a member of ECCAR – European Coalition of Cities against Racism, a network of more than 180 cities interested in the exchange of good practices and experiences to implement policies against racism, discrimination and xenophobia. The Municipality of Bologna is a member of the Steering Committee, made up of 21 cities, and has held the presidency since 2015, in the person of the then city councillor Benedetto Zacchioli. The four-year mandate was then reconfirmed in 2019. The municipality actively participates in the three working groups of the ECCAR Network for Countering Anti-Semitism, Anti-Black Racism and Countering Islamophobia.

In 2024, an updated version of the “Toolkit for Equality” was published thanks to the support of several Network cities, including Bologna. The Toolkit is also available in English³⁹. The objective of this tool is to provide a guide for local authorities, with examples and operational indications, to work on equality and anti-discrimination issues, through planning, implementation and evaluation of actions to be taken. The Toolkit is divided into several chapters, each with a specific focus, including: ECCAR’s 10-points action plan, countering hate speech, experiences of anti-discrimination offices, campaign monitoring, housing policies, shelter services, etc. It also provides useful working documents, lists of indicators, examples of policies and methodologies.

The Toolkit complements other tools created within ECCAR, often the result of the work of the thematic Working Groups of the Network cities, such as the first Guidelines for Local Actions against Anti-Muslim Racism, to which the City of Bologna also actively contributed, published in 2023 with the aim of strengthening local actions to combat this specific form of racism⁴⁰.

Bologna’s involvement in the Anti-Black Racism Working Group’s meetings and in the protected space called “BIPoC (Black Indigenous People of Colour) in ECCAR” for employees and people working with local authorities who belong to racialised groups continued throughout the year. Both employees of the municipality and contacts of associations were willing to take part in the meetings promoted in this context. This group was formed in coherence with the United Nations Decade for People of African Descent, established by General Assembly Resolution 68/237 of 2013, entitled “Recognition, justice and development”. This is because people of African descent around the world are among the most marginalised groups in society and can be “victims” of multiple forms of discrimination based on age, gender, language, religion, political opinion, social origin, economic status, birth status and others.

The City of Bologna also took part in the ECCAR Reporting System, which gives Network cities the opportunity to share good practices implemented locally in the fight against racism, receiving evaluative feedback from the Scientific Advisory Committee. Specifically, Bologna presented the Local Action Plan for an anti-racist and intercultural city and the SPAD Anti-discrimination Help Center, both of which received recognition as “best practices”. The Local Action Plan was also nominated for the first edition of the ECCAR Award, launched on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Network, being among the four finalist best practices presented to cities during the General Conference held in Heidelberg from 23 to 25 September 2024.

Also in 2024, the Municipality of Bologna and ECCAR offered young people from Bologna the opportunity to participate in the third edition of the ICCAR Youth Boot Camp for Inclusive and Sustainable Cities, which was held from 4 to 7 September in Cagliari, Italy. The year 2024 also saw the first European edition of the ICCAR Youth Boot Camp, organised from 11 to 17 August in Chisinau, Moldova, which welcomed 18 young people from various countries with the aim, through a rich programme of meetings, exchanges and in-depth studies, of promoting knowledge and skills to make young people active agents in their local contexts on the fight against racism and discrimination (for further details, read the Insight “*Thinking Global, Acting Local! An Experience from the ICCAR Youth Boot Camp for Inclusive and Sustainable Cities*”).

● *The UNITES Project – Urban InTEgration Strategies through co-design*

The European Project *UNITES – Urban InTEgration Strategies through co-design*, coordinated by Eurocities, saw Bologna in partnership with 7 other European cities (Oulu, Prague, Zaragoza, Athens, Düsseldorf, Grenoble and Zagreb) with the aim of training and accompanying local government workers in the co-design and co-revision of programmes and administrative strategies from a participatory and inclusive perspective, with a specific focus on services for migrants and people with a migrant background, and the involvement of different stakeholders and migrants themselves.

Within the framework of the UNITES project, a participatory review of the educational services of the Municipality of Bologna took place, specifically involving people from migrant communities and with a migrant background, who are often more difficult to reach in participatory processes. The participatory review process, developed and coordinated by the Office for New Citizenships, Cooperation and Human Rights, was constructed by structuring an innovative meeting modality and direct confrontation between representatives of foreign families, people with a migratory background involved in various ways in the city's educational world and referents of the relevant services of the Municipality.

For the launch of the pilot action, first of all, it was strategically assessed with which area of the Administration to collaborate in order to develop the participatory review. The definition was also made possible thanks to the coordinating role of the Intersectoral Working Group: this not only made it possible to introduce the themes of co-design across the Administration, but also to be able to preliminarily discuss them with the contact people of the offices concerned, finally considering focusing on the revision of the following educational services of the Municipality: crèche, kindergarten, canteen, pre/post-hours, summer centers.

At the beginning of 2024, the constitution of an Audit Panel was set up, through the formation of a "mixed" working group involving, in addition to the contact people of the New Citizenships Office, a contact person for the Education, Training and New Generations Area, six colleagues from the territorial school education services (SEST, one contact person per district), 3 diversity managers and 6 people with migrant background with different and complementary profiles, but all with direct experience in the world of education services and selected through a public call for expressions of interest. From the outset, the number of meetings and objectives were established, providing the working group already at the first meeting with a draft device, i.e. a questionnaire prepared for a preliminary needs analysis, in order to make the process immediately operational. The questionnaire was revised by the working group through a comparison exercise between municipal staff and civil society to make it a tool, on the one hand, capable of safeguarding the technical correctness of the requests and, on the other hand, to make the questions as accessible as possible to users.

The second phase involved the field dissemination of the questionnaire, which took place both through the municipal offices and thanks to the direct involvement of the Audit Panel participants and their reference associations, as well as the support of Associazione Interculturale Universo. Fundamental to this was the mapping of events in the various communities, as well as initiatives dedicated specifically to the educational sphere (such as the Open Day of summer centers) during which stalls were set up to accompany and support parents and families from foreign and migrant backgrounds in filling in the forms. Some of those participating in the Audit Panel also took steps to set up focus groups with parents from specific communities to support them in completing the questionnaire: the focus groups proved particularly valuable in terms of the emergence of not only quantitative but also qualitative data, which provided important material for the work of the Audit Panel.

The data collected (corresponding to approximately one hundred completed questionnaires) were analysed by an expert and reported to the Audit Panel, which discussed them and defined proposals for improvement. The work resulted in an operational document addressed to the political and technical levels of the relevant areas and sectors within the Administration. The importance of this pilot action lies both in the definition of the specific contents that emerged in the sphere of the Municipality's educational services and in having outlined a replicable and adaptable reference model to develop participatory reviews of other services provided by the Administration also thanks to the role of the transversal function of the Rights and Plural City Office.

As part of the project, in May 2024, Bologna hosted a City Visit welcoming a delegation composed of the cities of Oulu and Zaragoza, Eurocities, New Women Connectors, UNITEE and MigrationWork, partners supporting the work of the cities. During the City Visit it was possible to show the group the work of the Audit Panel, receiving important feedback for the continuation of the pilot action, and the projects and services of the Municipality of Bologna, such as the activities of the Centro Interculturale M. Zonarelli and SPAD, the Centro RiESco - Centro Documentazione e Intercultura, and Salus Space, with a focus on participatory processes. At the end of the pilot action, a video was made with the protagonists of the Audit Panel which gives an account of the path undertaken⁴¹.



On the occasion of the 11th edition of the *Integrating Cities Conference of Eurocities*, hosted by the City of Bologna in November 2024 and which also marked the end of the UNITEE Project, the side event “Advocacy in action for equality” was held, an important moment of discussion on the actions implemented at European and local level with the participation of Benedetto Zacchioli, President of ECCAR, and the contact people of the associations Avvocato di Strada, Polis Aperta, Diversa/mente, Universo and COSPE.

On the same occasion, the Collaboration Pact for the realisation of initiatives to enhance international cooperation and global citizenship education was signed by the Municipality of Bologna and 14 Diaspora Associations (Associazione Interculturale Universo APS, Sconfinamenti APS, Italia-Ucraina, Coucou Bafou ODV , Agency for Peacebuilding, Raggi di Sole APS, A.B.A.D. ODV, Madrelingua, BelarusBO APS, Donne Eritree, Associazione Dominicana Hermanas Mirabal, Status Equo APS, A.I.P.I.L.V. e Kyrgyz Demi Bologna). The Pact envisages the involvement of the IOM (International Organisation for Migration) and of the Emilia-Romagna Region and represents an important step towards the recognition and support of the role of diaspora associations, enhancing their commitment both in local contexts and in the countries of origin. On the one hand, it aims at valorising and supporting the associations by making their activities and their contribution to sustainable development visible in the host cities and in the territories of origin, and on the other hand at promoting joint initiatives.

THINKING GLOBAL, ACTING LOCAL! AN EXPERIENCE FROM THE ICCAR YOUTH BOOT CAMP FOR INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE CITIES

by Deepika Salhan – Dalla parte giusta della storia

Last August 2024, I had the honour of representing the Municipality of Bologna at the *ICCAR Youth Boot Camp for Inclusive and Sustainable Cities – European edition* in Chisinau – Moldova, as a trainee at the New Citizenships, Cooperation and Human Rights Office and the Demographic Services Sector. The term “ICCAR” refers to the “International Coalition for Inclusive and Sustainable Cities”, promoted by UNESCO, which has been supporting local governments in the fight against racism and discrimination of various kinds since 2004. This Coalition brings together more than 500 cities worldwide, promoting among them the exchange of good practices and local policies to fight discrimination, and is in turn composed of 7 national and regional coalitions, including the European ECCAR coalition.

This first European Boot Camp brought together 18 young people from various countries: Italy, Turkey, Ukraine, Moldova, Romania, Germany, Uruguay and Brazil in the green Codru forest, with the aim of providing them with the knowledge and skills necessary to become active agents in the fight against racism and discrimination.

During those five intense days, we had the opportunity to discuss with experts, Chisinau policy makers and mentors through interactive workshops and practical exercises on how we can promote more inclusive communities. One of the most valuable aspects of this experience was being able to share ideas and perspectives with people from different backgrounds, united by the same passion for human rights and social inclusion.

Among the most significant activities, I remember with particular interest the lecture by ECCAR President Benedetto Zacchioli on “The state of human rights globally and an historical approach”. This lecture provided a historical and current overview of human rights globally, making us reflect on how crucial it is to continue to fight for their protection and promotion as individuals and citizens.

The founder of the Future Food Institute, Sara Roversi, during the panel “Gastrodiplomacy & Biodiversity. How food is fundamental in our everyday lives”, illustrated the concept of “gastrodiplomacy”, i.e. how food is a vehicle for values, culture and identity, but also a key tool for change and social well-being.

Personally, the most exciting moment was the workshop “Developing intercultural competence through Story Circles” led by Garance Sarlat (UNESCO), an experience of sharing personal stories through the creation of a safe and welcoming environment. The story circles were conceived as a tool for developing intercultural competences such as respect, listening, curiosity, awareness of self and others, reflection, sharing, but above all empathy and relationship building. This exercise reinforced in me the awareness of my own privileges and the importance of empathy, as I believe that sharing one’s own experience is a courageous act to be a bearer of change.

Among the most engaging activities was a beautiful football match organised together with the players of The Sunshine Project of Dacia Buiucami Football Academy. A match that demonstrated how sport can be an effective means of breaking down social barriers and promoting the inclusion of people with down syndrome, without prejudice. Imagine two mixed teams with different nationalities, languages and backgrounds, connecting and collaborating through the universal language of the game.

Another significant moment, inspiring for me, was the speech by Evein Obulor, who, starting with the concepts of privilege and intersectionality, illustrated the work of ECCAR, what it means to be a member of this coalition and how the individual cities in this network fight racism and discrimination at the local level. He described some concrete strategies and good practices that have been adopted and shared, e.g. the Anti-discrimination Help Center of the Municipality of Bologna (SPAD), the establishment of Round Tables for Muslim women in

Graz, the Action Plan against Islamophobia in Barcelona and the Safe and Secure Digital City campaign in Malmö.

Equally interesting were the meetings with representatives of the institutions of Chisinau and Moldova, including Chiril Gaburici (former Prime Minister) and Ian Feldman (President of the Equality Council): discussions with them highlighted the crucial role of both national and local policies and how crucial co-participation and dialogue within communities has become today.

The week ended with a guided tour of the city of Chisinau, where we stopped at the monuments for the victims of the wars and massacres that took place in the country, which are deeply connected to the history of Europe and the struggle for human rights and freedom.

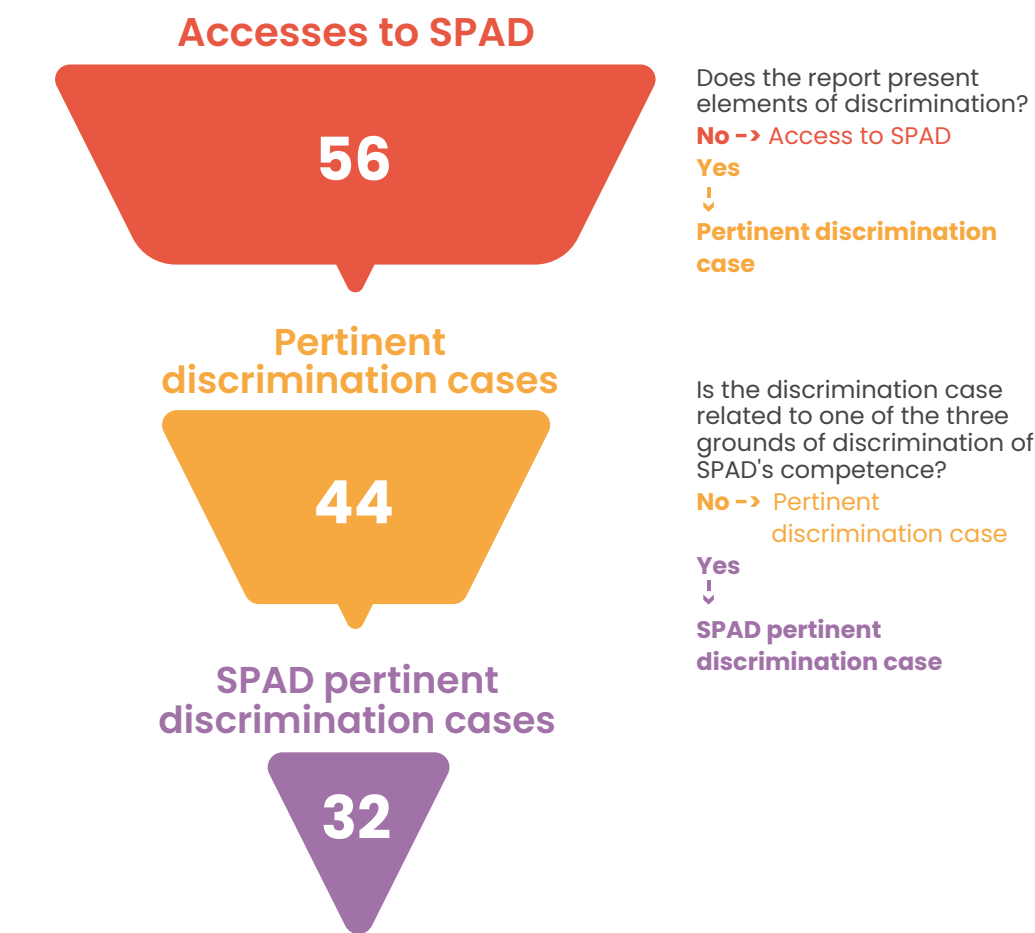
Last but not least, an essential aspect of the experience was the time devoted to reflection, intercultural exchange, dialogues and debates among the participants. Each break turned into a concrete opportunity to put into practice the motto "Thinking global, acting local", thinking about global change starting from the local level and thus from the Boot Camp itself.

Personally, I returned to Bologna with a renewed determination in my activism and truly grateful for the opportunity and the friendships I built. Those who will have the opportunity to participate in the upcoming Boot Camps will find a unique opportunity to consolidate skills and build international networks, contributing to the creation of more inclusive and sustainable communities.

CHAPTER 3

ANALYSIS OF COLLECTED DATA

This chapter presents the data on the reports received by SPAD in the period between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2024. In the first paragraph, the overall number of accesses is examined, including both cases classified as pertinent discrimination (perceived discrimination included) and those with a doubtful or non pertinent assessment. From the following paragraph onwards, however, the analysis will focus exclusively on cases of pertinent discrimination. For further details on the method of classification of reports, see infographic 2.

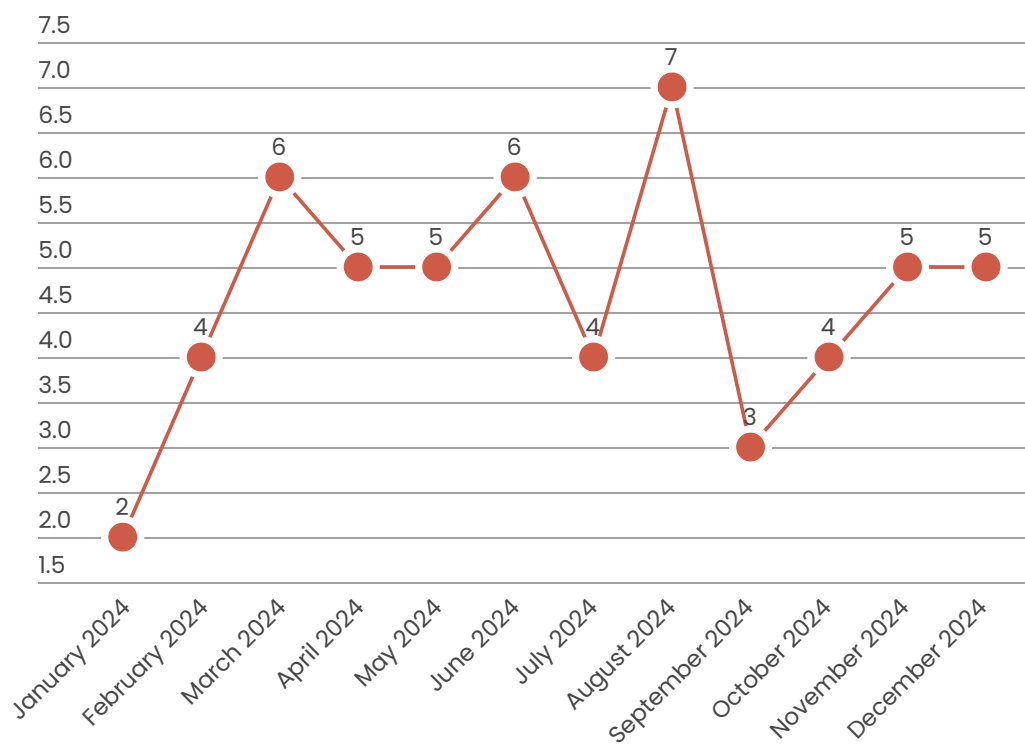


INFOGRAPHIC 2. THE METHOD OF CLASSIFICATION OF REPORTS

3.1 Accesses to SPAD

A total of 56 reports were registered during the reporting period. It is important to emphasise that the total number of accesses does not coincide with the total number of reports classified as pertinent discrimination. This is because not all instances that are reported to SPAD concern facts or situations that can be traced back to discrimination; in fact, it happens that SPAD receives requests for support or assistance of a different kind – for example, in preparing a curriculum vitae or in finding housing to rent. In these cases, the SPAD team works to carefully identify the needs expressed and to orient and refer the person contacting the Help Center towards the most suitable service or subject to provide the required answers or solutions. The total number of accesses, although not corresponding exclusively to reports of discrimination, is nevertheless significant and represents an indicator of the increase in the trust and attention that people place in SPAD. In fact, there is an upward trend compared to the previous period, a sign that more and more people are choosing to turn to SPAD for support and guidance.

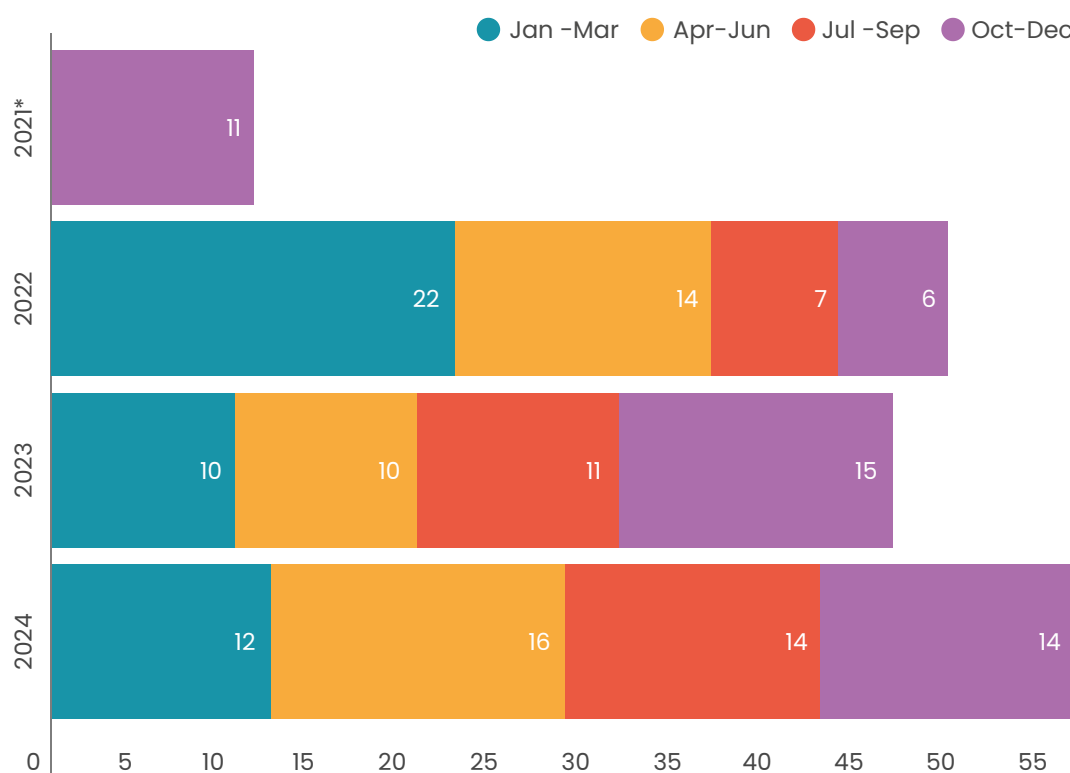
GRAPH 1. MONTHLY ACCESSES TO SPAD
January 2024 – December 2024



Looking in detail at the trend of accesses over the months, one notices not only the upward trend in the number of reports per month, already noted in the Second Report, but also a greater stability in the distribution of reports, evidenced by a lower variability between the different months of the year, with an average of around 4-5 reports per month (graph 1) – a figure that confirms the consolidation of the service.

GRAPH 2. ACCESSES TO SPAD BY CALENDAR YEAR

2021 - 2024



*The period covering the year 2021 relates exclusively to December 2021, the month during which SPAD was launched

Furthermore, analysing the data on accesses to SPAD by calendar year - instead of by the periodicities of the three Reports⁴² - shows an important growth: 2024 was the year with the highest number of accesses ever recorded by SPAD (56 in total), with an increase over the previous year of +22% (+10 accesses over 2023, +7 accesses over 2022), as shown in graph 2.

While recognising the importance of these data and the growth that is taking place, it is important to reiterate the persistent level of *under-reporting* and *under-recording* of discrimination phenomena: the results presented here are significant, but cannot make any claim to exhaustiveness or complete territorial representativeness. In the field of anti-discrimination, the greatest challenge is indeed to bring to light the totality of discrimination. This is because a significant component of discriminatory acts often remains undetected and unknown, as they are not reported, denounced and/or registered as such.

The term *under-reporting* refers to the tendency whereby those who suffer or witness discrimination decide not to file a complaint with the competent bodies and/or not to report the fact to the relevant networks and/or associations. This contributes to the underestimation of cases of discrimination compared to their actual extent. The phenomenon of *under-reporting*, in turn, is often closely linked to that of *under-recording*, a term used to refer to the failure to recognise the discriminatory nature of an act by those responsible for taking charge of the report or complaint. Thus, these actions are not registered as discrimination - and therefore do not feature in the monitoring of the phenomenon - and are consequently not handled appropriately.

With regard to the causes underlying the decision not to denounce or report discrimination suffered or witnessed, we reproduce in images 1 and 2 - already presented in the Second Report - those identified by the SPAD Network. Although these represent common and widespread elements, it is important to emphasise that this list should not be considered exhaustive or liable to generalisation to the totality of cases of discrimination, as each situation is unique.

IMAGE 1.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE MAIN REASONS WHY PEOPLE DO NOT REPORT THE DISCRIMINATION THEY SUFFER (UNDER-REPORTING)?

A word cloud where the size of each word corresponds to its frequency in responses. The words are arranged in a roughly circular shape. The most prominent words are 'Perception of uselessness of the complaint', 'Distrust of institutions', and 'Lack of knowledge of one's rights'. Other visible words include 'Complexity and cost of bureaucratic procedures', 'Ineffectiveness/absence of answers', 'Fear of not being understood/heard', 'Fear of secondary victimisation', 'Minimisation of the discrimination suffered', 'Perception of being considered inferior', 'Lack of awareness', 'Poor and inaccessible information', 'Fear of revealing aspects of one's identity', 'Need to focus on basic needs', 'Feeling of deserving of the discrimination suffered', 'Lack of media representation', and 'Fear'.

Perception of being considered inferior
Minimisation of the discrimination suffered
Fear of secondary victimisation
Fear of not being understood/heard
Ineffectiveness/absence of answers
Perception of uselessness of the complaint
Distrust of institutions
Lack of knowledge of one's rights
Complexity and cost of bureaucratic procedures
Lack of media representation Lack of awareness Fear
Poor and inaccessible information
Fear of revealing aspects of one's identity
Need to focus on basic needs
Feeling of deserving of the discrimination suffered

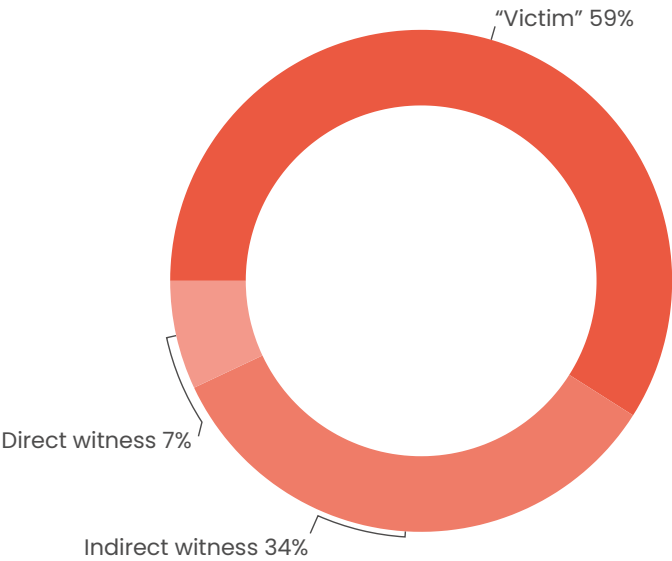
IMAGE 2

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE MAIN REASONS WHY THOSE WHO RECEIVE REPORTS OF DISCRIMINATION DO NOT RECORD THEM AND HANDLE THEM AS DISCRIMINATION (UNDER-RECORDING)?

A word cloud where the size of each word corresponds to its frequency in responses. The words are arranged in a roughly circular shape. The most prominent words are 'Lack of training', 'Denial of discriminatory motive', and 'Lack of political attention on the issue'. Other visible words include 'Widespread culture of stereotypes and prejudices', 'Inadequacy of relevant legislation', 'Lack of listening skills', 'Lack of expertise on the subject', 'Internalised discrimination', 'Lack of support from superiors/political forces', 'Lack of adequate reporting tools', 'Lack of resources', 'Disinterest', 'Victims not believed', 'Personal attitudes', 'Normalisation of discrimination', 'Lack of linguistic/cultural mediation', 'Abuse of power', 'Complexity of bureaucratic procedures', 'Lack of a referral system', and 'Lack of reception/facilitation of complaints by the police'.

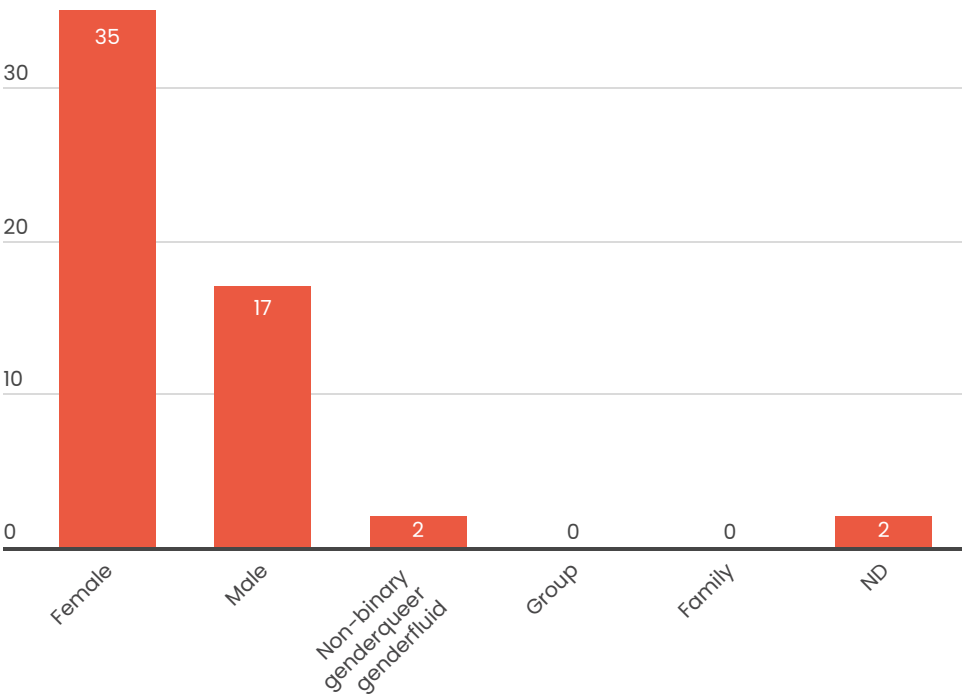
Lack of support from superiors/political forces
Lack of adequate reporting tools
Lack of resources
Internalised discrimination
Lack of listening skills
Lack of expertise on the subject
Inadequacy of relevant legislation
Widespread culture of stereotypes and prejudices
Lack of training
Denial of discriminatory motive
Lack of political attention on the issue
Disinterest Victims not believed Personal attitudes
Normalisation of discrimination
Lack of linguistic/cultural mediation
Abuse of power Complexity of bureaucratic procedures
Lack of a referral system
Lack of reception/facilitation of complaints by the police

GRAPH 3. ACCESSES BY USER TYPE
January 2024 – December 2024



As mentioned above, 56 accesses to SPAD were registered in 2024. Of these, in the majority of cases (59%), reports were made by people directly involved in the reported events. In the remaining cases, the report was made by a direct witness (7%) or an indirect witness (34%), i.e. a person who was neither directly involved nor who directly witnessed the discriminatory event, but who learned of the facts from the “victim” and/or direct witness (graph 3).

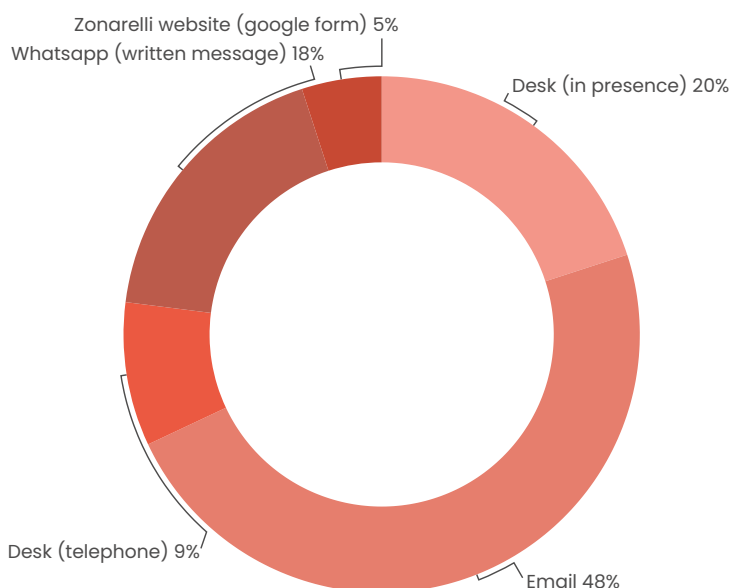
GRAPH 4. ACCESSES BY GENDER
January 2024 – December 2024



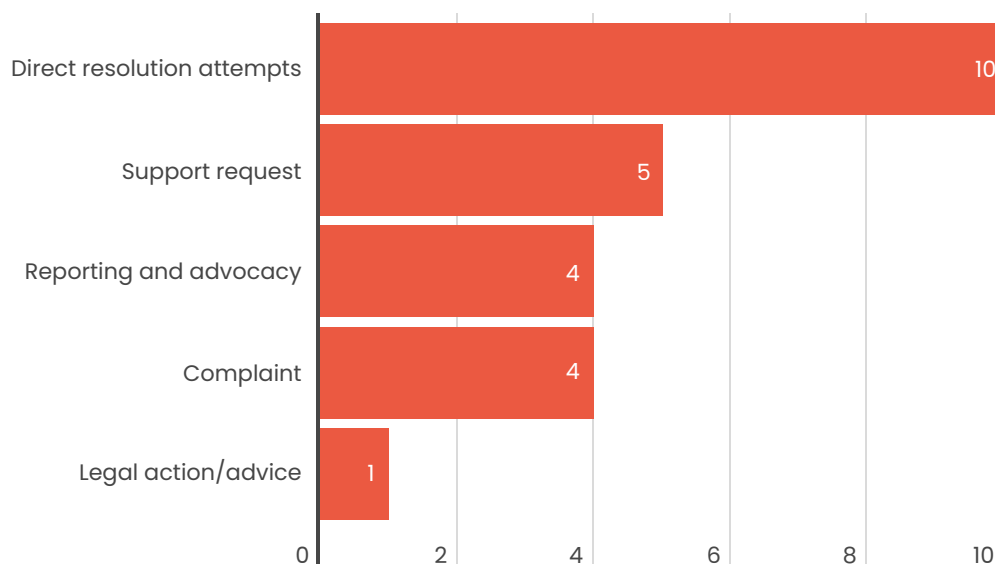
The data collected show that, of those who reported to SPAD, the majority identify as female, accounting for 62% of the total. This is followed by 30% who identify with the male gender and 4% who identify as non-binary, genderqueer or genderfluid (graph 4).

GRAPH 5. ACCESSES BY ACCESS MODE

January 2024 - December 2024



In the reference period, for almost half of the reports, the first access to SPAD was made through the email channel (48%), which – in continuity with the previous year – is confirmed as the preferred channel of contact by the users of the Help Center. The second most used access method is represented by the physical desk at the Centro Interculturale M. Zonarelli, chosen by 20% of users – a figure that underlines the importance of maintaining a fixed and stable presence in the area. Lastly, the number of accesses via WhatsApp messaging increased, reaching 18%.

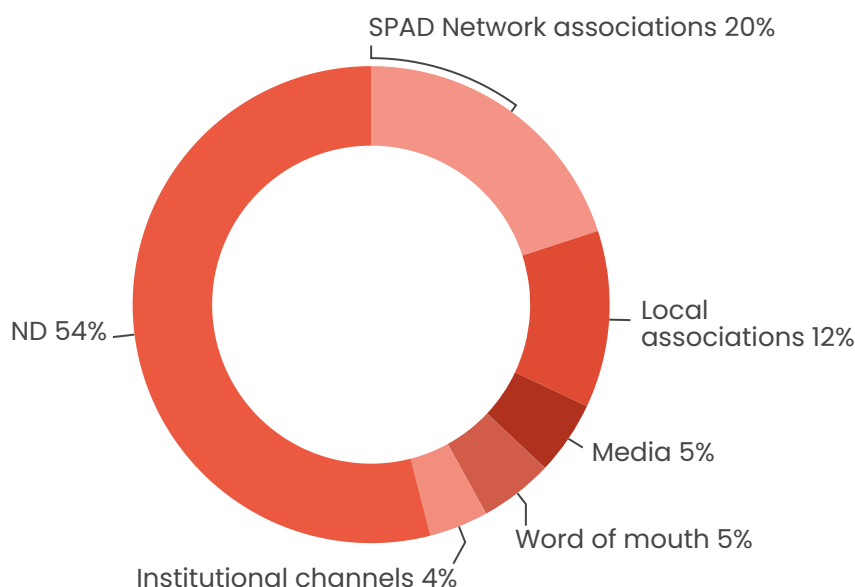
GRAPH 6. TYPE OF ACTIONS TAKEN BEFORE CONTACTING SPAD

An analysis of the data shows that 20.5% of people who reported a case of discrimination chose to turn to SPAD as their first option, while 48% had already tried other types of action, including attempts at direct resolution (42%), requests for support from other associations or services (21%), reporting and advocacy actions (16.5%) or filing complaints (16.5%). Discrimination situations that, prior to contacting SPAD, had already been denounced (4 cases in total), were often complex and multifactorial. In these cases, people turned to SPAD not only to report the incident, but also to

obtain support and guidance in a process that may also include reporting it to the police. These were, for example, cases of physical aggression or conflicts with neighbours, also characterised by racist insults, sometimes referring to the past. In only one case was legal action/advice submitted before contacting SPAD (graph 6).

GRAPH 7. HOW DID YOU LEARN ABOUT SPAD?

January 2024 - December 2024



By asking SPAD users how they came to know about the service (graph 7), the fundamental role of the SPAD Network and of the broader network of third sector actors in the Bologna area in the dissemination of the Help Center clearly emerges: in fact, 20% of people came to know about SPAD through Network associations, while 12% through other associations in the area. These data highlight the importance of building a network of cooperation between the various associations, creating a synergy that allows the visibility of the service to be amplified: the activation and participatory involvement of the realities that animate the SPAD Network are once again confirmed as fundamental to its effectiveness. With significantly lower percentages, the rest of the users got to know SPAD through its communication channels (5%), by word of mouth (5%) or through institutional channels (4%). It is interesting to note that, despite the fact that distrust in institutions appears among the main causes of *under-reporting*, in the perception of the associations, most of the reports to SPAD are nonetheless elicited by the third sector.



Tuition fee inequality for enrolment in a postgraduate course

A non-EU student, interested in enrolling in a joint European degree course, reported to SPAD a disparity between the amount of fees charged to EU citizens (€2,225) and the amount charged to non-EU citizens (€7,370).

In the absence of adequate justification, such a practice would constitute direct discrimination against non-EU students in breach of European principles on equal access to education, while at the national level, it would be in breach of article 39 of legislative decree 286/1998, which enshrines the principle of non-discrimination in education for non-EU citizens resident in Italy.

SPAD asked the universities involved in the joint degree course to clarify the fee policies applied and suggested identifying possible opportunities for harmonisation of costs, so as to ensure fair treatment for all students, regardless of their nationality.

3.2 Analysis of discrimination cases

The analysis carried out so far has covered all accesses to SPAD, which – as already mentioned – does not correspond to all cases of discrimination. In fact, the process of recording, managing and analysing reports includes a phase of assessing their pertinence. During this phase, a distinction is made between the reports received, separating those actually relating to situations of discrimination from those received by the Help Center for reasons in no way connected, either explicitly or implicitly, to discriminatory phenomena. It is important to emphasise that a classification of this kind is fundamental in order to guarantee the quality of the data analysis presented here, so that it is truly significant and contributes to outlining an accurate picture of discrimination in the Bolognese territory. However, it is important to point out that this classification has no implication on the operations of SPAD and in no way constitutes a criterion for the “selection” of accesses to SPAD. Even in the case of not pertinent reports, in fact, the SPAD team’s objective is to direct the user towards possible solutions or to refer them towards other bodies or subjects who can take charge of the request.

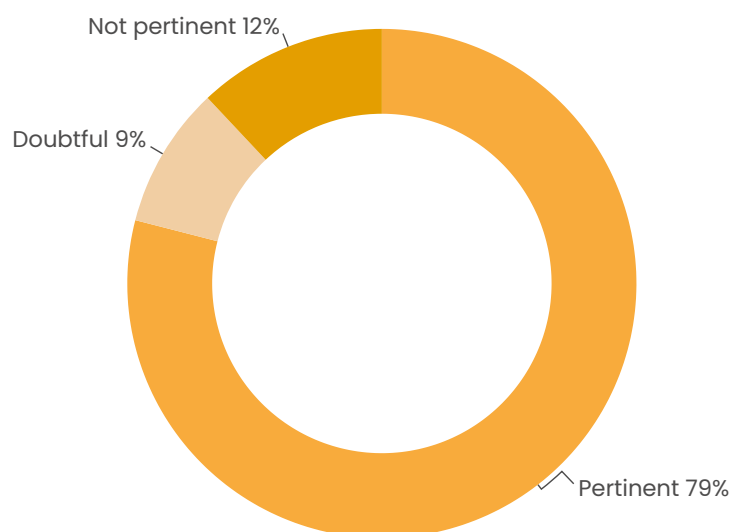
For the purposes of the analysis in this Third Report, all cases that turned out to be actual cases of discrimination (so-called “perceived” discrimination included) were considered pertinent, following a careful joint assessment by COSPE and the Municipality of Bologna, as co-coordinators of the Observatory Function, with the involvement of the case managers. Perceived discrimination was included in the pertinent cases because, for SPAD, the perception of discrimination by the offended person, or by witnesses, is a sufficient element to initiate intervention and support. If SPAD’s intervention were in fact limited only to those cases that are expressly covered by legal regulations, this would exclude an important number of cases of discriminatory situations from being taken charge of, first, and then from being analysed. It is important to emphasise, in fact, that discrimination can manifest itself in many forms, from the most unequivocal to the most subtle, which have the same effect and impact on the people towards whom they are directed. In fact, discrimination phenomena are not exclusively characterised by blatant and easily recognisable actions, but can take on the guise of a plurality of acts that arise from a complex web of prejudices, cultural stereotypes and social power structures that are perhaps less “visible”, but not necessarily less impactful on people’s lives. All forms of discrimination must therefore be placed on the same level, both in terms of case management and in terms of analysis.

On the other hand, all reports that could not in any way be attributed to discrimination, i.e. requests for support or assistance of a different kind – for example, requests for support in preparing a curriculum vitae or in finding a rental – were not included in the pertinent cases. Cases that presented incomplete information for assessment purposes were classified as doubtful.

As specified in the previous section, a total of 56 reports were registered by SPAD during the analysis period. Of these, 44 were classified as pertinent discrimination cases (graph 8). In continuity with last year, the high percentage of reports actually attributable to situations of discrimination was confirmed (79% of the total) – a figure that confirms the strong awareness on the part of the citizens of Bologna of SPAD’s effective scope of intervention.

GRAPH 8. PERTINENCE OF THE REPORTS

January 2024 – December 2024



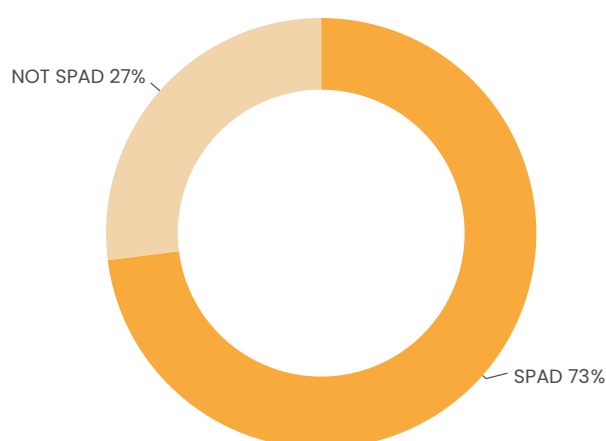
During the analysis period, SPAD received reports of discrimination concerning several discrimination grounds. The ground of discrimination (infographic 3) indicates the personal trait in respect of which the discrimination takes place, i.e. the motive behind the discriminatory actions. The identification of the different discrimination grounds is a consequence of mere convention, which does not imply – on the part of SPAD – an adherence to a specific theory. The discrimination grounds reflect the protected categories against discrimination mentioned in numerous international, European, national and local human rights instruments.

INFOGRAPHIC 3. GROUNDS OF DISCRIMINATION

In 2024, the vast majority of recorded pertinent cases (73%) involved discrimination based on the three SPAD factors (origin/nationality, “ethnic origin” and religion). Although still high, the percentage of discrimination relating to SPAD factors out of the total amount of pertinent discrimination decreased from the previous year (-18%). From a careful reading of the data, a clear correlation emerges between this decrease and the increase in reports of discrimination based on disability: in fact, the number of reports on incidents of ableism grew by +125% compared to the previous year – a figure that testifies to how the citizens of Bologna already recognise SPAD as a point of reference on disability-related issues.

GRAPH 9. DISCRIMINATION BY TYPE OF DISCRIMINATION FACTOR

January 2024 - December 2024

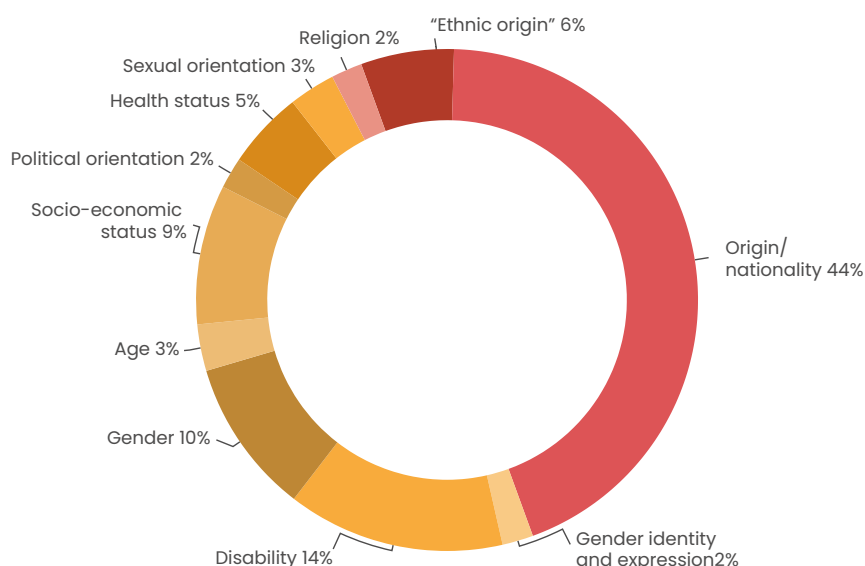


Out of the total number of pertinent cases, “racial” discrimination based on the origin/nationality (44%) or the “ethnic origin” (6%) of the “victim” prevails significantly. About half of the pertinent cases (50%) fall into this category. This is followed by discrimination on the grounds of disability (14%), in second place in terms of frequency right after “racial” discrimination. The percentage of discrimination on the grounds of gender (10%) and socio-economic status (9%) is also significant, and these too are quite frequent, especially since – in numerous cases – they intersect with “racial” discrimination. This shows how the combination of several discrimination factors – for example, not only being a racialised person, but being a racialised woman or a racialised person in economic difficulty or both – makes certain people more vulnerable to discrimination than others, even within the same population group. Albeit with lower percentages, cases of discrimination were also recorded based on health status (5%), age (3%), sexual orientation (3%), gender identity and expression (2%) and political orientation (2%). The figure for the third SPAD discrimination factor, religion, was very low at 2%.

Clearly, it is important to remember that SPAD’s area of competence is currently limited to the three grounds of origin/nationality, “ethnic origin” and religion. The higher number of discrimination reports linked to these factors does not necessarily reflect a lower prevalence of other types of discrimination in the Bologna area. For a broader picture of data on discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, see section 3.4, which contains the joint analysis of discrimination, which includes – in addition to the data on reports recorded by SPAD – also those received by the STAR Anti-discrimination Center of MIT – Movimento Identità Trans and the Spazio Cassero Anti-discrimination Center of Arcigay Il Cassero.

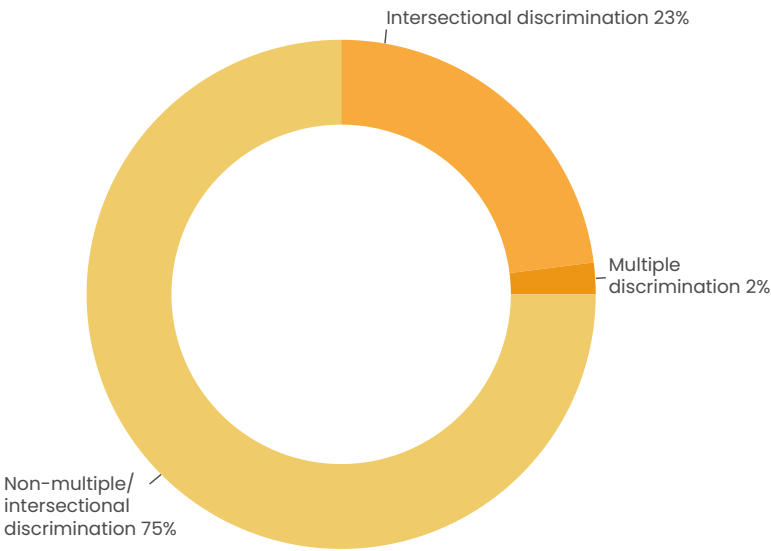
GRAPH 10. DISCRIMINATION BY GROUNDS OF DISCRIMINATION

January 2024 - December 2024



In 23% of the 44 cases analysed, an intersection between two or more discrimination factors was observed. These cases were classified as “intersectional discrimination”, i.e. discrimination based on several interacting grounds that can no longer be distinguished and separated, producing distinct and specific forms of discrimination. 2% of cases, on the other hand, were recognised as “multiple discrimination” – a form of discrimination that takes place on the basis of several factors operating separately and is therefore the result of the cumulative effect of two or more discriminatory behaviours implemented on the basis of several grounds.

GRAPH 11. PERCENTAGE OF MULTIPLE OR INTERSECTIONAL DISCRIMINATION
January 2024 – December 2024



For a comprehensive overview of the intersections between the factors underlying these cases of discrimination, see table 1. The origin/nationality factor mainly intersects with factors relating to socio-economic status (40%), gender (30%) and disability (20%). Furthermore, more than two discrimination factors were identified in five of the cases analysed.

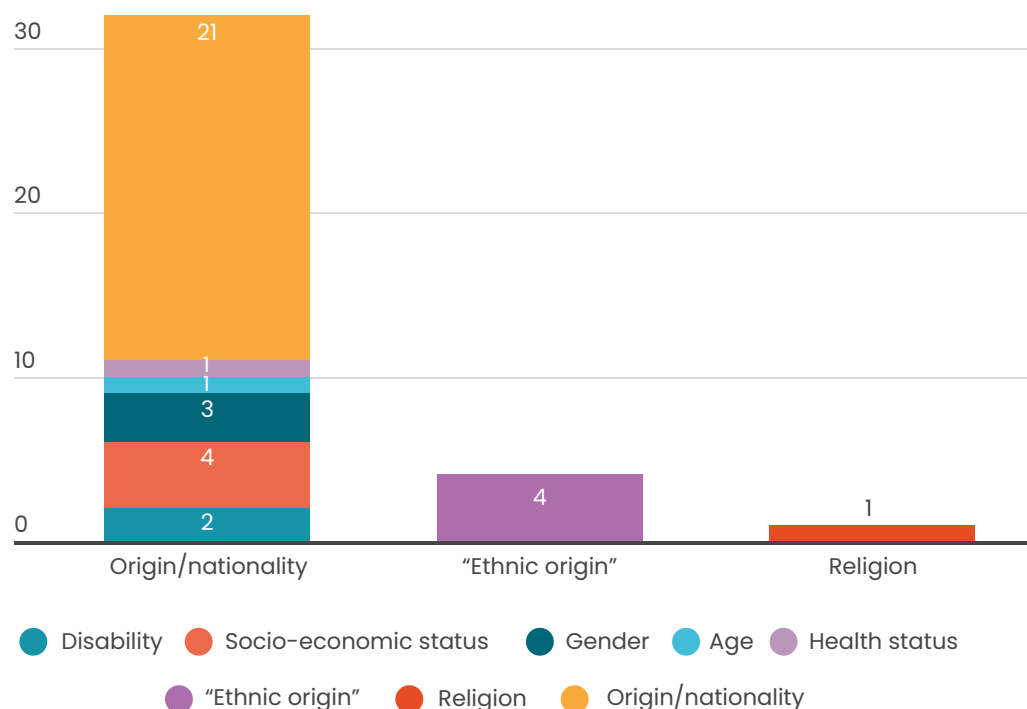
TABLE 1. INTERSECTIONAL DISCRIMINATION BY GROUNDS OF DISCRIMINATION

Grounds of discrimination	N.of cases	%of cases
Origin/nationality + disability	1	10%
Origin/nationality + socio-economic status	1	10%
Origin/nationality + gender	2	20%
Origin/nationality + health status	1	10%
Origin/nationality + socio-economic status + gender	1	10%
Origin/nationality + socio-economic status + disability	1	10%
Origin/nationality + socio-economic status + age	1	10%
Disability + health status + socio-economic status + age	1	10%
Gender + socio-economic status	1	10%
Total	10	100%

Graph 12 illustrates in detail how intersectional discrimination works, i.e. how – in a single case of discrimination – several factors can be at the root of it, affecting one person or one group at the same time. For SPAD, it is essential to pay close attention to the intersectionality of discrimination when processing and analysing data: intersectionality highlights the specific characteristics of people affected by discrimination, highlights the different type of impact discrimination can have and helps to identify the specific needs of “victims”, thus enabling the type of support and assistance to be more precisely defined.

GRAPH 12. INTERSECTIONAL DISCRIMINATION BY GROUNDS OF DISCRIMINATION

January 2024 – December 2024



Hate symbols

A woman reports that a pick-up truck, often parked in front of her house, bears an American Southern flag at the top. This symbol, historically associated with the defence of slavery and now widely regarded as an emblem of white supremacy, aroused anxiety and fear in her. That the application of this symbol was derived from the car in the television series “The Dukes of Hazzard” cannot be a mitigating factor, given that this symbol is in any case recognised as a symbol of hate in various documents and contexts, including a New York State law prohibiting the sale and display of symbols of hate in public buildings and on public land, except for historical or educational purpose. The law states that among these are “[...] symbols of white supremacy, neo-Nazi ideology, or the Battle Flag of the Confederacy”.

SPAD, following the report, promptly intervened and reported the case to the police for investigation.

The case highlights how certain symbols can evoke deeply negative and threatening meanings, even when the intention of the person displaying them might be different. Hate symbols, such as the swastika or the southern flag, convey messages of discrimination and violence, affect specific social groups and can constitute crimes.

As highlighted in the Ministry of the Interior’s document “When hate becomes a crime”, while some symbols are easily recognisable, others hide behind apparent harmlessness, exploiting irony or popular culture to spread hate ideologies. It is crucial to know how to identify them in order to effectively counter the spread of such messages.

*Available at: <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2019/S8298>

3.2.1 Analysis of discrimination cases on SPAD factors

After this general overview of pertinent discrimination cases, the following analysis focuses only on those cases within the competence of SPAD, thus pertaining to discrimination based on the three factors it deals with. Out of 44 relevant cases, 32 cases fell within the remit of SPAD. Of these 32 cases, a large percentage (85%) concerned discrimination based on origin/nationality, followed by discrimination on the basis of “ethnic origin” (12%) and religion (3%).

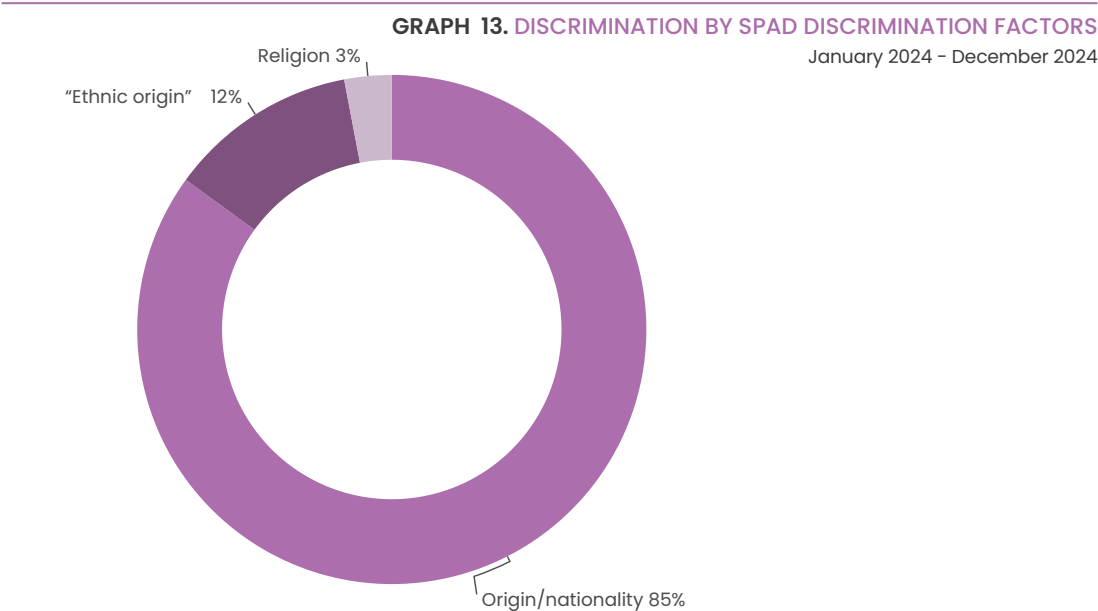


TABLE 2. DISCRIMINATION BY GROUNDS OF DISCRIMINATION

Grounds of discrimination	N.of cases	% of cases
Origin/nationality	28	85%
"Ethnic origin"	4	12%
Religion	1	3%
Total	33*	100%

**The total takes into account cases of multiple/intersectional discrimination, where the discrimination grounds are more than one*

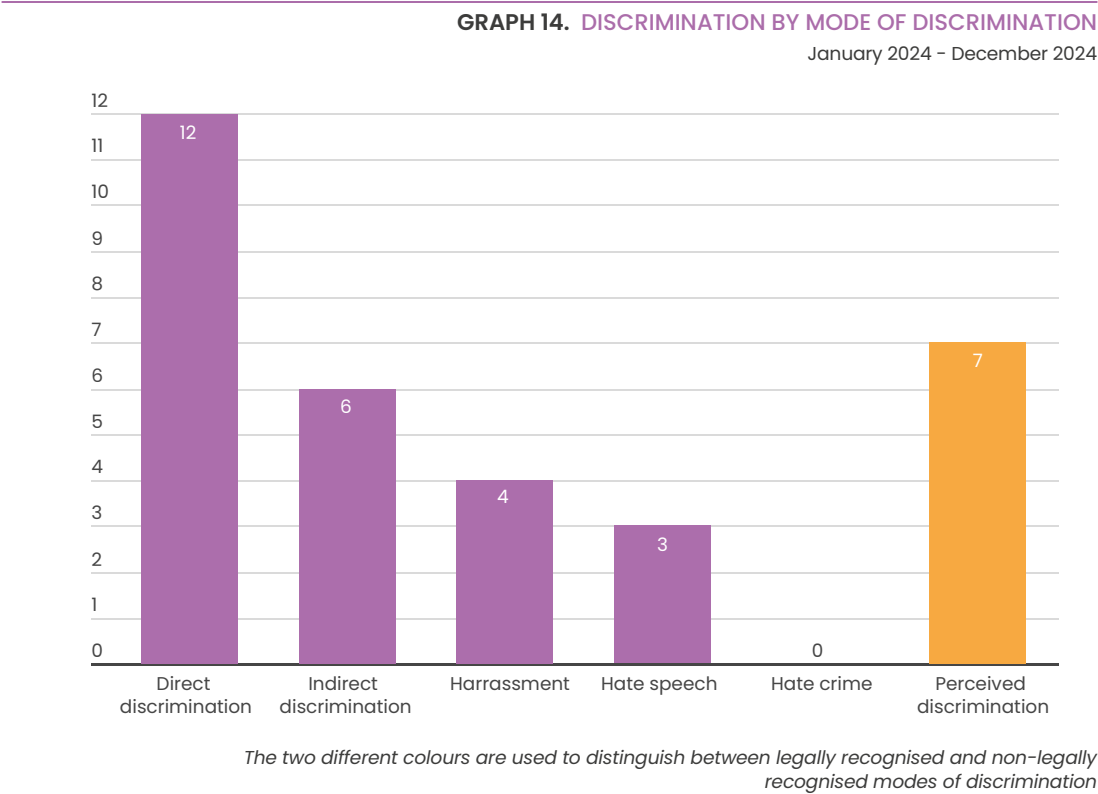
Looking at the mode in which discrimination reported to SPAD manifested itself (graph 14), direct discrimination was found to be the most widespread (37.5%). This category included all situations in which one person or more were treated differently and less favourably than others in a similar situation, without objective and reasonable justification, but on the basis of one or more aspects of their identity.

In second place in terms of frequency are so-called “perceived” discriminations (22%) – a figure that attests, in continuity with the previous year, to the extent to which the current anti-discrimination legislative framework fails to intercept and cover all the ways in which they manifest themselves. “Perceived discrimination” in fact means all those acts or behaviours subjectively perceived as discriminatory by those who suffer them, which, however, do not have elements unequivocally ascribable to discrimination or do not find normative-legal coverage. This classification is in no way intended to imply a hierarchy between discrimination that is considered “real” or “effective” and non-discrimination: as already emphasised, this type of discrimination is handled by SPAD in the same way as other forms of discrimination, since the perception of discrimination by the offended person (or by witnesses) is considered sufficient to initiate the process of assistance

and support to the latter. Nonetheless, it is also important to emphasise that these cases are often handled differently: the scope of possible response actions is more limited – it is not possible, for example, to initiate legal action, lacking a legal basis – and often involves empowerment and/or psychological support.

Slightly lower is the percentage of indirect discrimination (19%), i.e. of provisions, criteria, behaviour and practices that are only apparently neutral, but which in their effects have created discrimination, and of harassment (12.5%), i.e. of undesirable behaviour with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of the person towards whom it is directed, creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive climate.

In last place in terms of frequency, but still with a significant percentage (9%) is hate speech, a category that includes any form of expression, communication or discourse that has the purpose or effect of advocating, promoting or inciting, in any form, “the denigration, hatred or vilification of a person or group of persons, as well as any harassment, insult, negative stereotyping, stigmatisation or threat in respect of such a person or group of persons”⁴³ on the basis of one or more aspects of their identity. For a more in-depth look at the topic, read the Insight “Preventing and counteracting hate phenomena: the challenge we want”.



Racially motivated aggression

SPAD received a report of a serious incident of racially motivated aggression against a family of foreign origin. While the family, consisting of a mother, father and two children, one of whom was a minor, was on their way to a birthday party, they were verbally and physically assaulted by a group of people. The aggression stemmed from a request made by the family to keep their dogs on a leash, degenerating into racist insults, pushing and punching. The family turned to the authorities.

The episode aroused great public indignation and led to the mobilisation of the institutions and the community in Bologna. SPAD intervened by forwarding the complaint to OSCAD. Psychological support was also offered to help them overcome the trauma they suffered.

This episode highlights the persistence of racism in our society and therefore the need for preventive actions, through collaborations between all the actors involved, awareness-raising actions and training for all citizens. SPAD will follow any developments in the investigation.

PREVENTING AND COUNTERACTING HATE PHENOMENA: THE CHALLENGE WE WANT

by Federico Faloppa – Professor of Language and Discrimination,
University of Reading (UK); Coordinator of the National Network for
Countering Hate Speech and Hate Phenomena; COSPE Board Member

The first fact that this Report highlights is that the SPAD Help Center is increasingly being used, referred, relied upon by citizens. The number of cases reported and collected, the refinement and strengthening of the service, and the continuous internal training of those involved in their operation all bear witness to this. And this is really very good news. Indeed, a very good result. And it is certainly a (common) good thing in a city – such as Bologna – with institutions not only always committed to preventing and combating discrimination, but also equipped with specific and capillary territorial plans (I am thinking of the Local anti-racist action plan) thanks to a multi-level approach, long-term planning, and significant human and economic resources.

The consolidation of the SPAD experience, which from a *pilot* project aspires to become a system and good practice for the entire national territory, at the same time however imposes (and it is healthy that it should) some reflections, and presents some challenges, both in terms of data collection and increased analysis, and in terms of staff training and feedback to users: in the direction of a broadening of the user base, and an ever greater understanding of the phenomena, also for the purposes of prevention.

First of all, helping people recognise hate speech and hate crimes is neither trivial nor obvious. And it must be recognised. In fact, it is by no means certain that anyone who comes to a help center in search of support, or to report an incident of discrimination, knows how to define the object of their request. It has to be said that the current definitions of hate speech do not help in this regard: while they are quite clear on the reasons why a person or a group of people may be discriminated against or have a real or presumed characteristic stigmatised and vilified, they are more nebulous or vague on the expressions that convey these actions. Also because the range of cases can be very vast (and not always categorisable), ranging from explicit incitements to hatred, racialising epithets, dehumanising metaphors, to more implicit forms such as presuppositions, hyperbole, preteritions or concessions (frequent in the subtle acts of exclusion commonly known as micro-aggressions: “although you are X, you speak Italian well”) or multimodal forms such as memes, or with a pragmatic function such

as shushing or taking away the word because of the characteristics that are object of the offence. This confirms not only the need for continuous and constant training of the staff present at the help center, who are not necessarily aware of all the modalities detected in the most up-to-date analyses, but also the need to collect as much data as possible – including linguistic data, between verbal and non-verbal language – from listening to, dialoguing with, and confronting the person or group targeted by hate speech.

Not even then, on the other hand, would we be certain to have a detailed snapshot of the phenomenon, in all its forms, its perception (and the level of awareness of it), and its consequences. In fact, as Raffaella Scarpa's innovative as much as indispensable study “Lo stile dell'abuso. Violenza domestica e linguaggio” (Treccani, 2024¹) splendidly taught us, the “grammar of abuse” in interpersonal human relations rather than to definitions of hate speech corresponds to patterns that have more to do with the practice of torture, i.e. with the slow, progressive erasure not only of the other person, but also of their own representation of reality and their own view of what they have experienced and suffered: not only therefore through direct attacks or denigrating expressions, but by means of the devious manipulation of reality carried out by the abuser against the abused subject. The latter in fact tends to disregard or underestimate their own capacity to act and react (their *agency*) and at the same time to consider normal or even legitimate within a given social context the disproportion of power within the relationship, the overwhelming and inhibiting presence of the one who exercises violence. In fact, if asked to verbalise the experience, at first they may be instinctively inclined to omit (out of shame, in order not to admit having passively suffered verbal and physical violence for so long, in order to reduce the abuser's responsibility and guilt) part of the experience, or to reformulate it in a way that makes it acceptable to themselves and to the listener. Thus introducing not only a system that relies on abuse or has institutionalised it, but also failing to grasp the modalities and discursive mechanisms that made that abuse so pernicious, effective, traumatic. And which should probably also be elicited in many of the

cases of hate speech and discrimination that need to be confronted.

One wonders whether and how much – in order to bring out the less explicit levels of hate speech (but just as damaging: indeed, more damaging precisely because they are more hidden even to those who are the subject of it) – one would therefore need to approach listening and collecting the experiences of the target subjects with the tools of the ethnography of language (in order to grasp not only lexical cues, but also syntactic and pragmatic ones, such as the use of certain pronouns, or certain verbal modalities, as well as suprasegmental elements such as pauses, hesitations, or pragmatic ones such as omissions rephrasing, unspoken words) or with those of oral history, for which testimony is all the more revealing, and relevant, the more contextual elements emerge in the elicitation of the personal narrative, which should then be returned later to accompany and validate the actual scope of the experience, while avoiding rekindling the trauma, hindering the interlocution, and thwarting the relationship of trust that has been painstakingly established.

However, there is a need to fully understand how much the help center activity can help (us) decipher the hate speech suffered primarily *online* and thus assist the target audience beyond mere reporting. For example: more and more research tells us that a lot of racialising and discriminatory hate speech is nowadays exercised and experienced – by younger people but not only, and by women more than men – in online gaming platforms. We thus begin to realise that some very frequented online (indeed, *onlife*) places have been little or not at all manned, and therefore rarely monitored and investigated: that those who there, in those places, suffer discrimination have so far had few tools not only to protect themselves, but also to tell what happened. And in fact, active listening to these experiences needs to be almost entirely thought out and structured (perhaps through peer-to-peer approaches, gamer to gamer) if it is true that those who suffer prefer to remain silent rather than report to people who would probably not understand either the dynamics or the nature of the discriminating event, besides being ignorant of the channel in which it occurred. Here too, on the subject of ethnography, we should probably equip ourselves with tools that allow us to read the complex reality of those who literally live (with their own very personal avatar, from their console in simultaneous communication with the rest of the world) in those spaces. Among other things, they risk not only being the target of hate speech, but also of being contacted – for recruitment purposes – by racist, supremacist, and extreme right-wing movements, which are increasingly present in playful but emotionally and sensorially porous

environments such as gaming platforms (also because they are almost completely lacking in content moderation). Because if it is true that a help center can do little to stem the spread of hate speech in online platforms, whatever they may be, much instead could be done to counter radicalisation, which is structured digitally, but also feeds on marginalisation, exclusion, and social and institutional deafness in the territory.

In the territory, there is also the question of how much continuity can and must be guaranteed, both in the support service and in the analysis of phenomena. Hate speech is all the more effective – on the part of those who exercise it – the more, *gutta cavat lapidem*, it is repeated and reified in hitting its target. The isolated episode of hate speech hurts, and only those who suffer it can really say how much, and how it hurts; but if it is iterated against the same person or group, either through the use of the same form of expression (e.g. a dehumanising metaphor), or through a “creative” mixture of forms, it makes the aggression become systematic and widespread, humiliates and blames the *target*, makes those who passively witness it complicit, and anaesthetises society, which minimises what has happened.

For this, it would be useful not only to add up – as is already the case – but to *hybridise* multidisciplinary competences, analyses, answers also by means of the *digital humanities*. They oppose the captious and arid separation between *data science* and, indeed, the *humanities*, with an approach that interrogates quantitative data to compile not only statistics, but also to locate and read individual experiences, traumas and expectations within *trends* and in relation to places, to the actors acting there and their formal and informal (*onlife*) *networks*, to institutional practices and community dynamics, and to the evolution or discontinuity of phenomena in space and time.

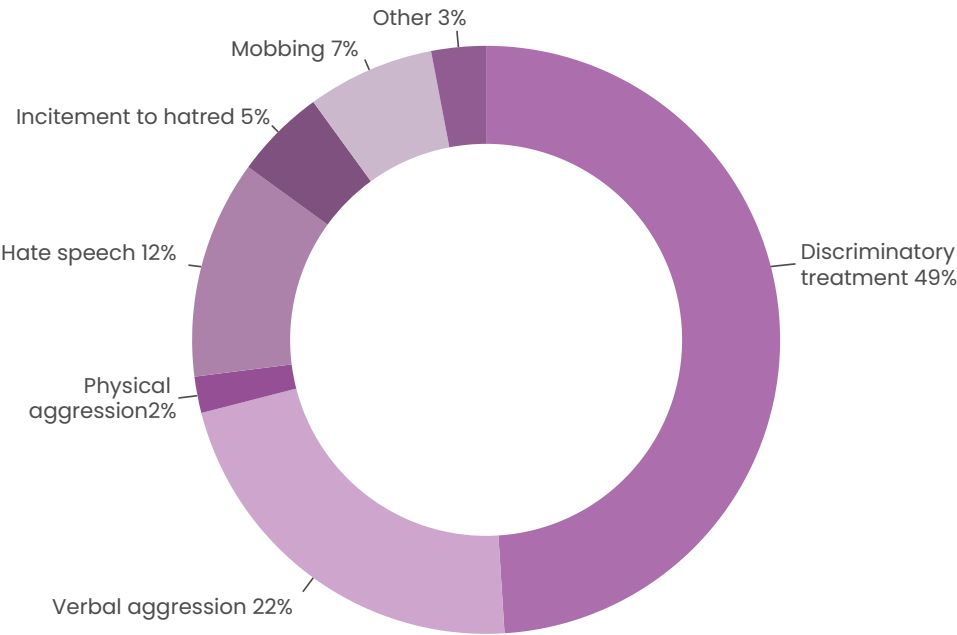
This should be accompanied by a measurement of the impact of the help center in the medium term, integrated with the development of participatory and social cohesion policies. Because if it is true that the disintermediation of platforms will increase the amount of discriminating and hateful content in many digital environments, the quality of prevention and contrast will be measured also and above all with interventions capable of combining listening (and thus an increasingly in-depth knowledge of the cases and awareness of their real consequences) with the effective communication of a service that is not only structured around and for some “victims”, but is also conceived as a tool of substantial citizenship (for all), and as an indispensable tile to complete the mosaic of territorial welfare. Or at least this could be the challenge, the ambition, the commitment.

In addition to the discrimination mode, a further interesting indicator for understanding the different forms in which discrimination can manifest itself is the type of discriminatory action. Out of a total of 32 cases, in 49% of the situations discrimination manifested itself in the form of discriminatory treatment. This year, the category was renamed from “*differential treatment*” to “*discriminatory treatment*” to include not only *differential treatment*, but also *non-differential treatment*. Within the category “*differential treatment*” are all situations in which one person or more are treated differently in similar situations, without reasonable and objective justification, but because of one or more aspects of their identity. Conversely, within the category of “*non-differential treatment*” fall all situations in which one person or more are treated similarly to the rest of the people, although there are reasons – linked to one or more aspects of their identity – for which they are in an initially unequal situation. Although these treatments are apparently neutral, since they do not compensate – but, on the contrary, reproduce – the disadvantages arising from substantive discrimination, they have the effect of producing discrimination.

These are followed by cases of discrimination through verbal aggression (22%), within which were considered all types of verbal abuse, threats, intimidating comments or gestures directed at the “victim”, and hate speech (12%). Fewer cases were reported on mobbing situations (7%), which for the purposes of this Report was defined as a set of aggressive and persecutory actions and behaviour and/or social marginalisation and psychological violence, which create a hostile climate of continuous intimidation, harassment and pressure (not exclusively in the workplace). Significantly lower were the figures on incitement to hatred (5%) and physical aggression (2%), the latter category including all cases of physical attack, based on any of the protected characteristics, ranging from touching, spitting or throwing objects to a violent attack against a person or group.

GRAPH 15. DISCRIMINATION BY TYPE OF DISCRIMINATORY ACTION

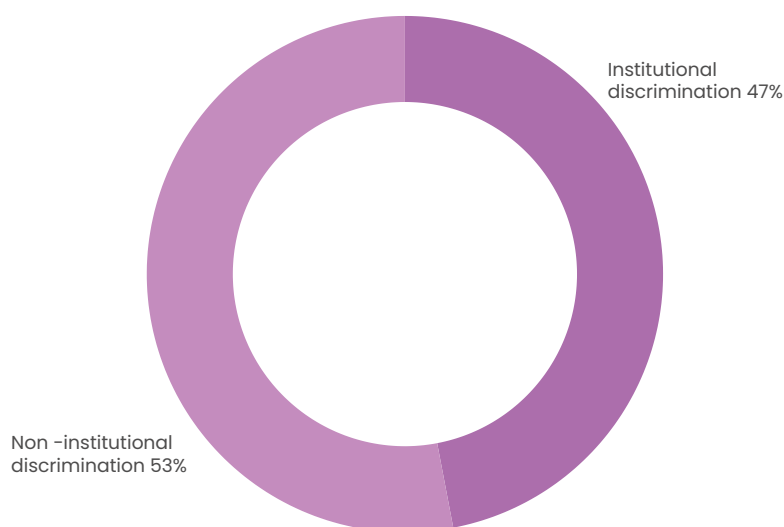
January 2024 – December 2024



A further interesting fact, out of the total of 32 discrimination cases , 15 (47%) were identified as “institutional discrimination”. This means that in these incidents the discriminating agent was recognised in one or more institutions, in institutional actors in the exercise of their functions or in institutional norms, practices and/or rules, having the purpose or effect of producing discrimination for a group of people sharing a certain characteristic.

GRAPH 16. PERCENTAGE OF INSTITUTIONAL DISCRIMINATION

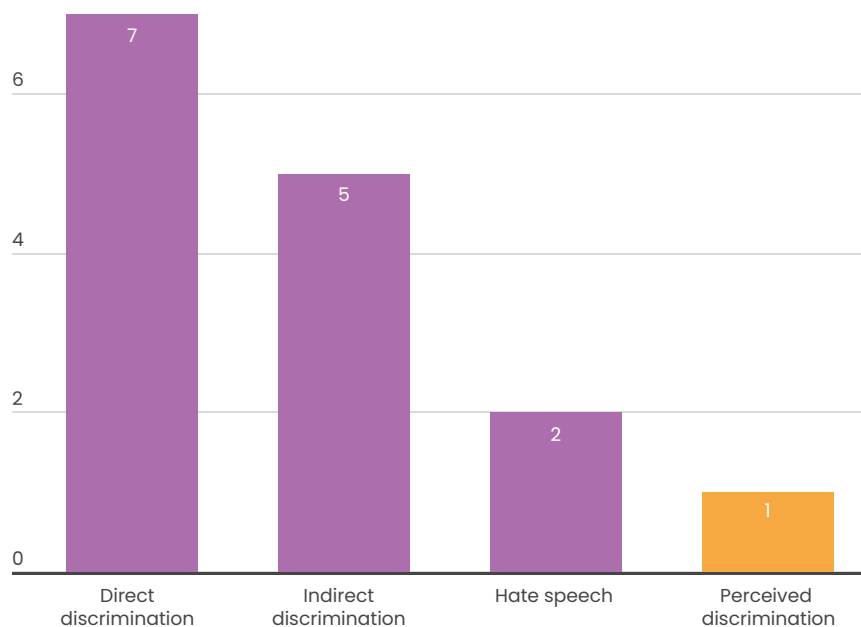
January 2024 – December 2024



Out of these 15 cases of institutional discrimination, most took the form of direct discrimination (47%) or indirect discrimination (33%). A smaller percentage (13%) was classified as hate speech. Significantly, some of this speech was uttered by individuals with public visibility, which amplifies its potential impact. Finally, only 1 case was classified as perceived discrimination.

GRAPH 17. INSTITUTIONAL DISCRIMINATION BY MODE OF DISCRIMINATION

January 2024 – December 2024



The two different colours are used to distinguish between legally recognised and non-legally recognised modes of discrimination

In terms of discrimination grounds, the totality of institutional discrimination cases concerned “racial” discrimination, all on the basis of the origin/nationality factor. Among these, cases of intersectional discrimination also emerged, specifically between the origin/nationality factor and aspects such as socio-economic status, gender, health status and age (table 3).

TABLE 3. INSTITUTIONAL DISCRIMINATION BY GROUNDS OF DISCRIMINATION

Grounds of discrimination for institutional discrimination cases	N. of cases	% of cases
Origin/nationality	11	73,2%
Origin/nationality + health status	1	6,7%
Origin/nationality + socio-economic status + gender	1	6,7%
Origin/nationality + socio-economic status + age	1	6,7%
Origin/nationality + religion + gender identity and expression + sexual orientation + political orientation (multiple discrimination)	1	6,7%
Total	15	100%

3.2.2 Who is discriminated against?

Understanding the profile of people affected by discrimination is fundamental in order to give a concrete account of who is being discriminated against and, consequently, to more effectively target measures to prevent discrimination, provide information on rights and raise public awareness on the population groups most exposed to discrimination. This section provides a profile of people affected by discrimination in Bologna, disaggregated by gender identity, age, occupation and country of origin.

In contrast to the data collected in the Second Report, in the majority of cases, discrimination affected people identifying themselves as female (47%, +19.5% compared to the previous reporting period), while the percentage of male “victims” was lower (25%, -30%). There was also an increase in the number of cases in which those who reported discrimination preferred not to define their gender identity (9%, +6.5%) and those in which discrimination involved a group of people (16%, +6%). There was also a slight decrease in the percentage of discrimination that affected families (3%, -2%). In the report form, the options for expressing one’s gender identity also included the categories “non-binary/genderqueer/genderfluid” and “other” with an open-ended response option. However, these categories are not visible in graph 18 as no response was received on these options.



Refusal of service in an establishment open to the public

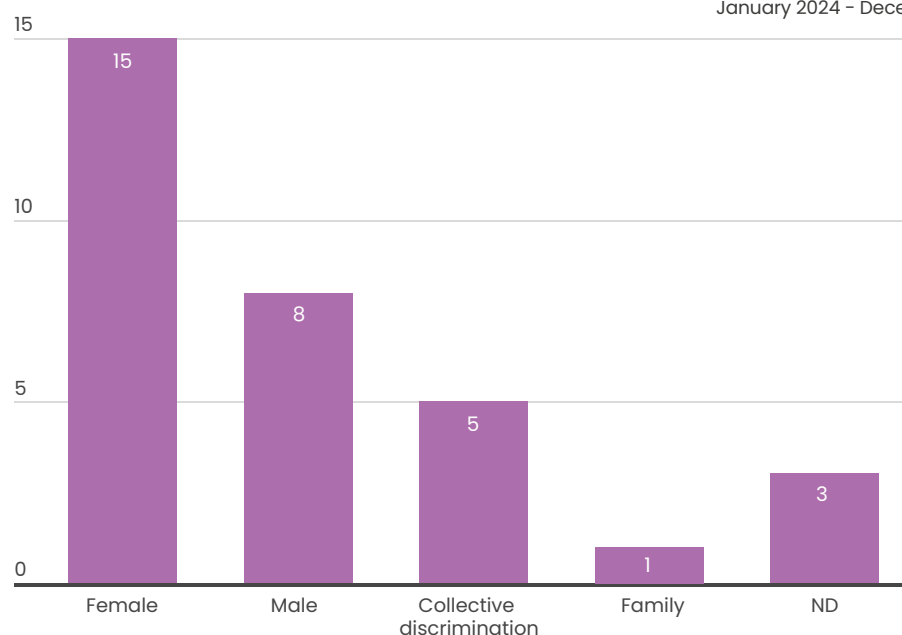
A customer went to a café to buy two take-away coffees for two acquaintances of African descent who were waiting outside. The owner of the café, upon seeing the two people, refused to serve them, inviting them to eat elsewhere. The owner justified his behaviour with alleged past offences committed by one of the two.

Article 187 of royal decree 635/1940 and amendments thereafter provides that access to premises open to the public must be guaranteed without discrimination of any kind, under penalty of administrative sanctions and, in the most serious cases, criminal liability. Moreover, discrimination based on “racial”, “ethnic” or national grounds may constitute a violation of article 43 of the legislative decree 286/1998.

This episode highlights the importance of sensitising managers and staff of public establishments to respect the principles of equality and inclusion, avoiding discriminatory behaviour.

GRAPH 18. DISCRIMINATION BY GENDER OF "VICTIMS"

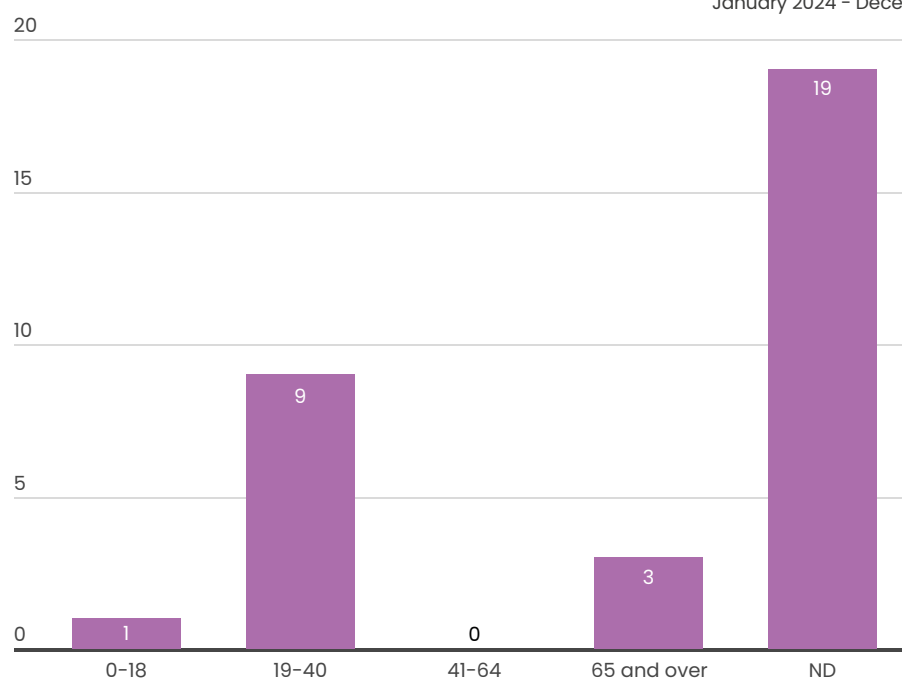
January 2024 - December 2024



In relation to the age of those affected by discrimination, the age groups with the most reports were 19-40 (28%) and 65 and over (9.5%). Only one case involved minors. In continuity with previous years, there was a very high number of non-responses on the "age" datum (19 cases equal to 59.5% of the total), this mainly because - in line with the *"do no harm"* methodological approach - where the reported instance is in no way linked to a specific aspect of the person's identity, unless directly declared by the person concerned, the data is not collected because it is not relevant.

GRAPH 19. DISCRIMINATION BY AGE OF "VICTIMS"

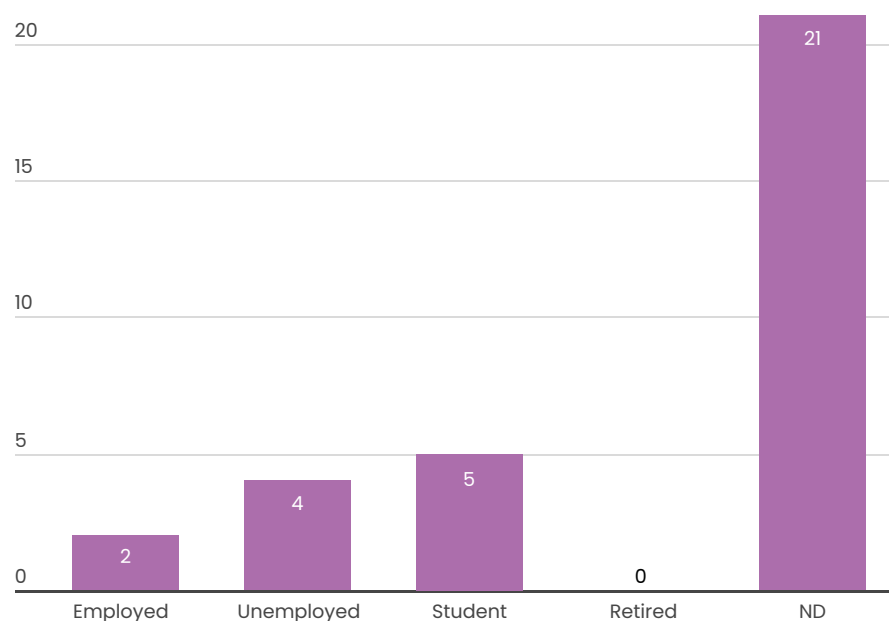
January 2024 - December 2024



A further aspect noted in the analysis of the cases of discrimination recorded by SPAD is the employment status of the persons affected by discrimination, which - as with the "age" data - turns out to be one of the categories with a high percentage of non-responses (65.5%). Looking at the answers received, it can be observed that students were affected most frequently (15.5%). This is followed by the unemployed (12.5%) and the employed (6.5%).

GRAPH 20. DISCRIMINATION BY OCCUPATION OF "VICTIMS"

January 2024 – December 2024



With regard to the origin of the people affected by discrimination, what emerges most clearly is the variety of countries of origin (for a detailed picture, see infographic 4). In contrast to the data of the Second Report, in 2024 more cases were reported from people from Asia (13 cases in total, +4) than from people from Africa (8 cases in total, -6). In almost all the cases received, the person's citizenship coincides with their country of origin; there were three cases of people with Italian citizenship and another country of origin, including Morocco (2 cases) and Tunisia (1 case). In absolute terms, people from China (4 cases) and the Philippines (4 cases) were the most affected by discrimination. This was followed by people from Iran (3 cases), Nigeria (2 cases) and Morocco (2 cases).

INFOGRAPHIC 4. DISCRIMINATION BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN OF "VICTIMS"



3.2.3 Who discriminates and where?

In the analysis of the 32 cases of discrimination, 37 discriminating agents were found, which is a higher number than the number of cases taken into account, because in more than one situation more than one perpetrator was identified.

In most reports, the perpetrators of discrimination were identified as private citizens (27%), a category that includes both individuals (11%) and groups of people (16%). This is followed by cases of discrimination acted upon by public services or administration (24.5%) – a category that includes both public offices (8%), laws, regulations or notices (11%) and political representatives (5.5%). Compared to last year's analysis, there was a significant increase in the number of cases in which law enforcement were identified as discriminating agents, reaching 18.5% (+10.5%). In particular, most of these episodes occurred at police stations, where people complained of significant delays and discriminatory treatment in the handling of paperwork related to residence permits (16%).

Cases of discrimination attributed to private entities, i.e. companies, associations, organisations and other non-public entities, made up 16% of the total. Out of a total of 6 incidents, 3 were acted out by employees of companies, 2 directly by organisations/associations, and 1 by the manager of a company. Furthermore, in comparison with the previous period of analysis, systemic discrimination decreased slightly (14%, -4.5%). In these cases, there were no individual perpetrators, but a system of customs, norms, practices, attitudes, and/or rules was identified as the primary discriminating agent. In essence, these are structurally widespread situations that place certain groups of people at a disadvantage compared to others, thus creating discrimination.

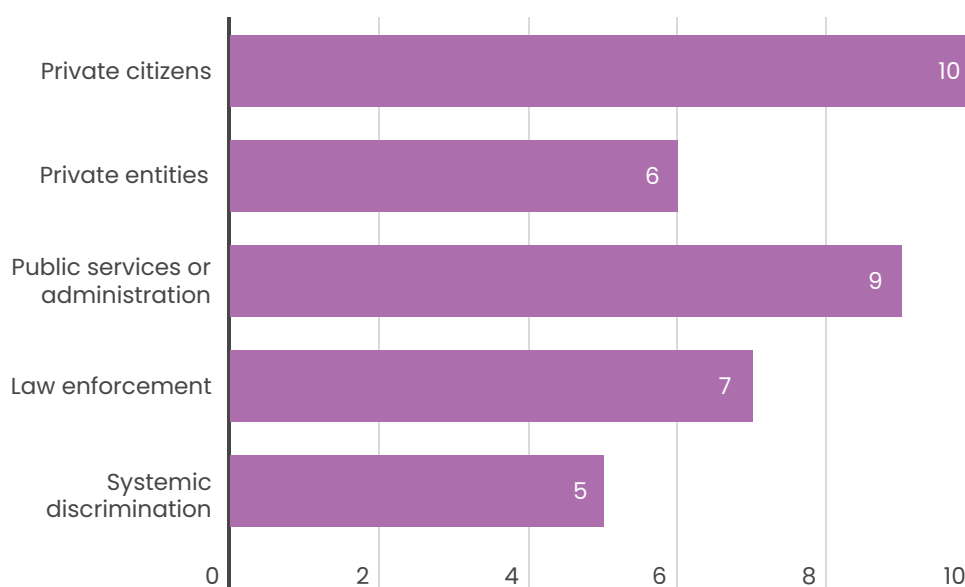
TABLE 4. DISCRIMINATION BY DISCRIMINATING AGENT

Discriminating agent	N. of cases	% of cases
Private citizens	10	27%
Private citizens (individual)	4	11%
Private citizens (group)	6	16%
Private entities	6	16%
Private entities	0	-
Private entities (employer)	0	-
Private entities (manager)	1	2,5%
Private entities (employee)	3	8%
Private entities (organised group)	0	-
Private entities (organisation/association)	2	5,5%
Public services or administration	9	24,5%
Public services or administration (manager)	0	-
Public services or administration (employee)	0	-
Public services or administration (public office or service)	3	8%
Public services or administration (law, regulation or notice)	4	11%
Public services or administration (political representative)	2	5,5%
Law enforcement	7	18,5%
Law enforcement (individual)	0	-
Law enforcement (group)	1	2,5%
Law enforcement (office, police station, etc.)	6	16%
Systemic discrimination	5	14%
No responsible person/subject identified	0	-
Total	37*	100%

*The total takes into account cases of discrimination for which more than one discriminating agent has been identified

GRAPH 21. DISCRIMINATION BY DISCRIMINATING AGENTS

January 2024 – December 2024



Of the total of 32 cases of discrimination, the number of places of reported discriminatory incidents was slightly higher, because in more than one case more than one location was identified as the space where the discrimination took place. The majority of the incidents of discrimination occurred in public spaces, accounting for 72.5% of the reports, while 15% of the cases took place in private spaces. In the remaining 12.5% of cases, the place of the discriminatory event was not defined or made explicit by the person reporting the discrimination.



A database containing country names dating back to the colonial period

A user reported a potential case of direct discrimination within the online enrolment system for some Italian L2 training courses. The user pointed out that the list of countries available for enrolment included some names referring to the colonial period (e.g. Burkina Faso (ex Upper Volta), Democratic Republic of Congo (ex Zaire)). This language choice was perceived as an offence to the history and identity of many populations who suffered under colonialism, as the use of colonial designations can be offensive and evoke a painful past for many.

SPAD assessed the report and, while acknowledging the probable non-intentionality of the error, recommended that the training organisation update the list of nations. To ensure the accuracy of the designations, SPAD suggested consulting reliable and up-to-date sources that take into account geopolitical developments and the emergence of cultural identities of post-colonial countries. The organisation has then updated the list using the official names currently in use in the respective countries.

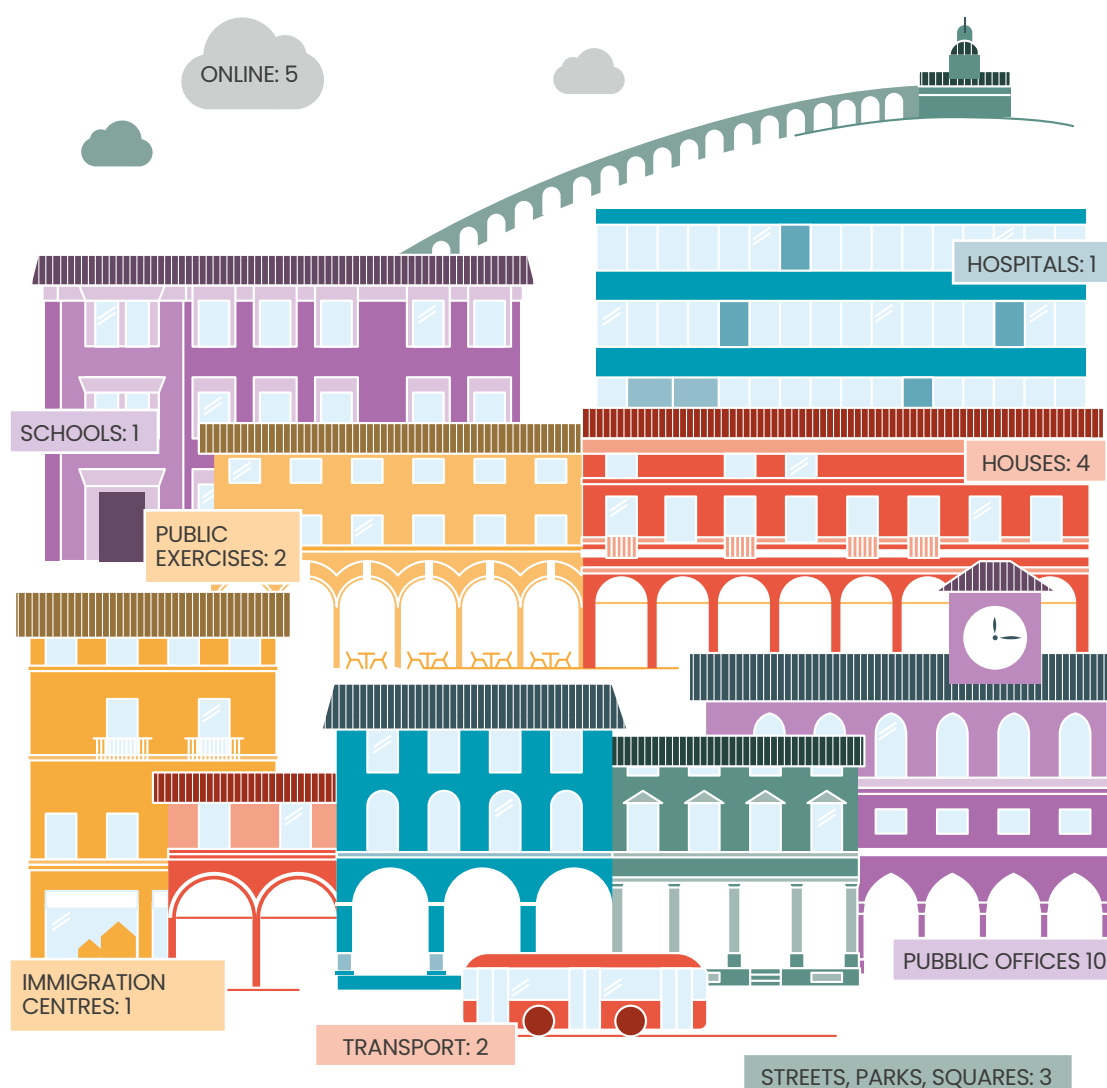
TABLE 5. DISCRIMINATION BY PLACE OF THE DISCRIMINATORY EVENT

Place of the discriminatory event		N. of cases	% of cases
Public		24	72,5%
	Immigration centers	1	3%
	Hospitals and public health facilities	1	3%
	Public schools and universities	1	3%
	Stations or public transport	2	6%
	Public streets, parks or squares	3	9%
	Public offices (Municipalities, provinces or regions)	1	3%
	Public offices (police stations or prefectures)	7	21,5%
	Public offices (others)	2	6%
	Public housing	1	3%
	Online	5	15%
Private		5	15%
	Public exercises	2	6%
	Companies or organisations	0	–
	Private homes	3	9%
	Museums or galleries	0	–
	Private schools	0	–
	Private health facilities	0	–
	Private transport	0	–
ND		4	12,5%
Total		33*	100%

**The total takes into account cases of discrimination for which more than one place of the discriminatory event was identified*

With regard to public spaces, public offices have the highest number of reports of discrimination, recording 10 cases in total. Next in terms of frequency among public places of discrimination are online spaces (15%), registering a significant increase over the previous year's analysis (+10.2%), followed by public streets, parks or squares (9%) and stations or public transport (6%). With regard to the latter, all reported incidents occurred on buses.

As for private spaces, most of the discrimination took place in private homes (9%), thus confirming housing as one of the most discriminatory contexts. Finally, in two cases discrimination took place in public exercises (6%).



To complete the information on “who discriminates and where”, it is also necessary to look at the data on the area of the discrimination – which is different from the place, because it concerns not the physical space where it occurred, but its content and context. Of the total of 32 cases of discrimination, 37 areas were identified, as intersections between different areas were identified for some reports.

In continuity with previous years, the area in which the most cases of discrimination were recorded was in the provision of public services (32%). Specifically, these cases concerned:

- issuing/renewal of residence permits (7 cases) – once again confirmed as the most frequent occurrence this year;
- citizenship election procedure (1 case) – for an analysis of the discriminatory effects of the current citizenship legislation, read the Insight “De facto citizens, foreigners by law: the barriers of Italian citizenship”;
- procedure for granting refugee status (1 case);
- allocation of public housing (1 case);
- lack of income support through NASPI (1 case);
- issues related to the reception system (1 case).

Significantly lower was the figure for the provision of services by private establishments, a category in which only two cases were recorded.

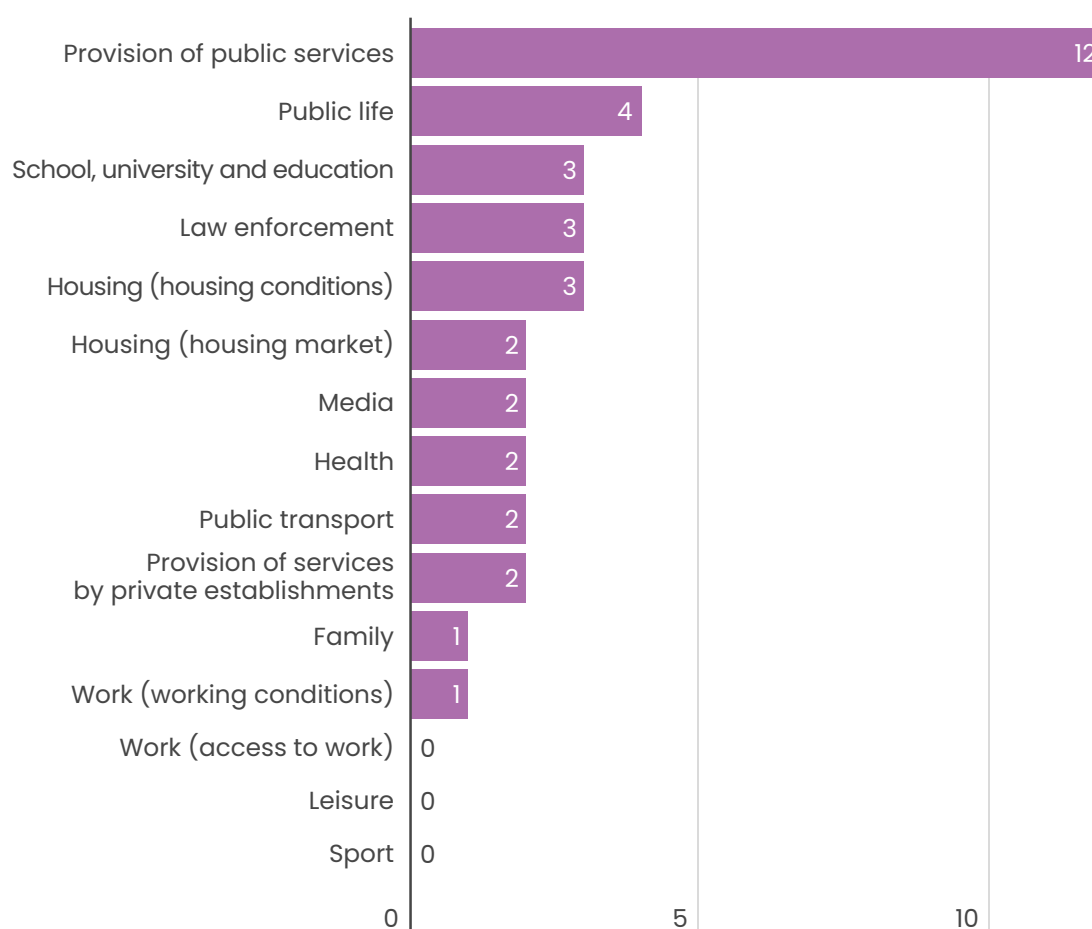
The “housing” category was confirmed as one of those in which most cases were reported (13.5%). Specifically, 8% of these cases concerned housing and living conditions (relations with landlords, roommates, neighbours, etc.), while the remaining 5.5% related to situations of discrimination or difficulties in accessing the housing market. People who turned to SPAD reported, for example, being refused to rent or being sold a property because of their origin, religion or other personal characteristics.

In third place among the areas in which the most reports of discrimination were recorded were cases relating to “public life” (11%), an area within which situations relating to public spaces and places are included, purely related to the personal sphere of the person involved in the discrimination incident.

This was followed by the categories “school, university and education” (3 cases in total, 2 of which related to universities, 1 to CPIA schools), “law enforcement” (3 cases), “media” (2 cases), “health” (2 cases) and “public transport” (2 cases). Lastly, there was only one case in both the areas “work (working conditions)” and “family” – a category that was introduced for the first time in this Third Report to include all situations of discrimination closely linked to family dynamics.

GRAPH 22. DISCRIMINATION BY AREA OF DISCRIMINATION

January 2024 – December 2024



DE FACTO CITIZENS, FOREIGNERS BY LAW: THE BARRIERS OF ITALIAN CITIZENSHIP

by Deepika Salhan – Dalla parte giusta della storia

A young man, born and raised in Italy, was denied the possibility of becoming an Italian citizen once he had reached the age of majority, because of an interruption of residence due to a period spent abroad. This case, which was reported to SPAD, is not an isolated one: it represents a reality that many young second-generation people experience. To better understand the reasons for these inequalities and possible solutions, we asked Deepika Salhan, an activist in the citizenship reform debate, to share her analysis with us. As a representative of Dalla parte giusta della storia (On the right side of history), Deepika has been working for years to expose the criticalities of the current legislation and to promote a more inclusive citizenship law.

“Citizenship’ means the formal status of belonging to a political and legal community. As membership, citizenship confers the status of equality among all citizens with regard to the rights and duties that this status entails”¹.

In Italy, obtaining citizenship status is neither a fair nor an inclusive process. For many people, especially those born, raised and living permanently in this country without Italian blood descent, access to citizenship is a complex and tortuous path, marked by regulatory and bureaucratic barriers that make it difficult, if not impossible. In this way, citizenship is transformed from a legal status into an instrument of social differentiation and stratification.

Law no. 91 of 5 February 1992, which regulates the acquisition, loss and re-acquisition of Italian citizenship, was introduced in a historical and social context different from the current one and, therefore, it is now anachronistic and inadequate to meet the needs of the multicultural Italian society, resulting in a lack of political and social representation of the population with a migrant background, which accounts for about 9% of the resident population in Italy².

Law 91/1992 establishes the acquisition of nationality through three main ways: by blood descent, by naturalisation, and by marriage. The main criterion for the attribution of Italian nationality is the blood tie with an Italian person, known as *ius sanguinis*, which recognises the automatic transmission of Italian nationality at birth to the children of at least one Italian parent, regardless of their place of birth. However, the legislation does not provide for automatic recognition of citizenship to those

born on Italian territory to non-Italian parents. This means that approximately 600,000 minors³ born and raised in Italy, to date, do not have Italian citizenship. The latter represent about 65% of the almost one million students with a migrant background present in Italian classrooms.

Italy only recognises citizenship by birth (*ius soli*) in exceptional cases: when the parents are unknown or stateless or when the parents’ state does not allow citizenship to be passed on to their children. In all other cases, the principle of *ius sanguinis*, i.e. the acquisition of citizenship by descent, prevails.

Automatic transmission of nationality is also provided for in cases of adoption by an Italian citizen of a minor and recognition of paternity or maternity by an Italian citizen or following a judicial declaration of filiation of a minor.

The law allows the acquisition of citizenship for the benefit of the law for those who are born in Italy to parents without Italian citizenship, but only at the age of 18, on condition that they certify a legal (registered) residence, uninterrupted from birth until the age of 18, and present the declaration of their will by the time they turn 19 to their municipality of residence, paying a contribution of €250. If the newly eighteen-year-old has not expressed the will to become an Italian citizen by the age of 19, or if there has been an interruption in the continuous history of residence due to a move, for reasons often not directly attributable to the young person, but effect of bureaucratic procedures or parental non-compliances, they lose the opportunity to acquire citizenship in a simplified manner. In this case, they will have to follow the ordinary naturalisation procedure,

which involves more stringent requirements and longer waiting times, generally exceeding three years. Article 9 of the aforementioned law allows the acquisition of citizenship by residency for the applicant who meets all the requirements and maintains them until the conclusion of the procedure with the oath:

- demonstrate the minimum years of legal and continuous residence: 10 for non-EU people, 4 for EU people, 5 for stateless people or refugees;
- demonstrate the availability of adequate economic means of subsistence in the 3 years preceding the application. The minimum amount required is set annually by the Ministry of the Interior;
- demonstrate an adequate knowledge of the Italian language, not less than level B1;
- absence of criminal convictions and absence of social dangerousness of both the applicant and family members living with them for the security of the Republic;
- birth certificate and criminal record certificate from the country of origin, translated and legalised;
- 250 euro fee, plus additional indirect costs of the procedure.

Italian citizenship may also be granted, by marriage/civil union, to the spouse of an Italian citizen if they demonstrate: legal residency in Italy for at least 2 years (3 if abroad) from the date of the marriage/civil union, knowledge of the Italian language at a minimum B1 level, and the absence of criminal convictions and impediments linked to national security. Also in this case, the bond of marriage/civil union must remain in place until the measure is adopted.

In exceptional cases, citizenship may be granted to people who have distinguished themselves by heroic actions or by rendering important service to the state.

As it stands, law 91/1992 institutionalises an exclusionary and privileged citizenship system, which daily generates both direct discrimination, through the legislative text, by not recognising the new generations, and indirect discrimination, through restrictive administrative practices and applications. This regulatory framework amplifies social inequalities, as these discriminations are not limited to the institutional-systemic level, but extend to social, economic and interpersonal dimensions, generating cumulative effects that limit the full development and inclusion of many people, citizens *de facto*, but not *de jure*.

One of the main discriminatory aspects is the

principle of *ius sanguinis*, which automatically excludes from Italian citizenship those who, although born and raised in Italy, do not have Italian parents. This approach completely ignores the cultural and social roots of the new generations by treating them as “foreigners” in the country they consider their home or as “second-class” citizens. This has important repercussions on their identity at a stage, that of personal development, when they are subject to greater vulnerability and marginality. In fact, it is the new generations who pay the greatest price, especially in terms of missed opportunities: they have to miss hours of lessons to renew their residence permit, very often they cannot go on school trips, they cannot leave for study and work experiences abroad because of the costs and time constraints of visas.

Another problem concerns minors, not born in Italy, of foreign parents applying for citizenship by residence. If they become of age before their parents obtain citizenship, they lose the possibility of obtaining it together, and thus subsequently have to make a new citizenship application following the more complex and costly procedure. This delay, which is very often due to bureaucratic timings, leaves them in a condition of uncertainty that can have significant repercussions on their future, especially since it is not easy for very young people to meet all the requirements, especially income requirements. Discrimination related to citizenship does not only concern the new generations, but also extends to more vulnerable categories, the law does not provide – for example – exemptions from the requirement of knowledge of the Italian language for elderly or people with disabilities, creating a further barrier for those in situations of physical or cognitive fragility.

Another serious disparity concerns the revocation of citizenship. Those who have acquired it by naturalisation or marriage may have it revoked, whereas those who have obtained it by birth (*ius sanguinis*) are exempt from this possibility. This creates a “series A” and a “series B” citizenship, where the latter is subject to continuous verification of “good conduct”.

Finally, a further obstacle is represented by administrative discretion, since the granting of citizenship is an act of high administration, where not only the fulfilment of legal requirements is assessed, but also the public interest of the request, the level of social integration of the applicant and family members and the willingness to become part of the Italian community⁴. Decisions on citizenship applications, in fact, often reflect arbitrary interpretations, influenced by criteria that are not always

transparent. This mechanism amplifies inequalities, as access routes become unpredictable and, in some cases, steeped in systemic racism.

The Italian law on citizenship is one of the most restrictive in Europe. It has remained unchanged for over thirty years, despite the requests for reform made by the new generations, who daily denounce how indispensable it is to recognise the right to citizenship for those who are born, grow up and live permanently in this country. Recalling respect for article 3 of the Italian Constitution:

All citizens have equal social dignity and are equal before the law, without distinction of sex, race, language, religion, political opinion, personal and social conditions. It is the duty of the Republic to remove obstacles of an economic and social nature, which, by limiting the freedom and equality of citizens, prevent the full development of the human person and the effective participation of all workers in the political, economic and social organisation of the country.

Nowadays, the citizenship debate is more heated than ever. The recent approval of the constitutional referendum proposing to reduce the

period of residence required to obtain Italian citizenship has further focused attention on this issue. In this context, Bologna has stood out for its innovative and inclusive approach. In 2022, the Municipality introduced into the municipal statute the *ius soli Bolognese*, i.e. a recognition of honorary (symbolic) citizenship to people born and raised in Bologna, but without Italian citizenship. This led to the launch of the “Bolognesi dal primo giorno” (Bolognesi from day one) campaign, which intends to embrace as Bolognese anyone who chooses this city as their own from day one, hence also people without Italian citizenship who were born, grew up or live in Bologna. At the same time, the “QuiVivoQuiVoto” initiative organised a symbolic vote for non-EU residents in 2024, on the occasion of the regional and European elections, allowing them to express their political opinion and claim the right to an active vote. This initiative, supported by a large network of associations, was carried out in several districts of the city and online, involving thousands of people.

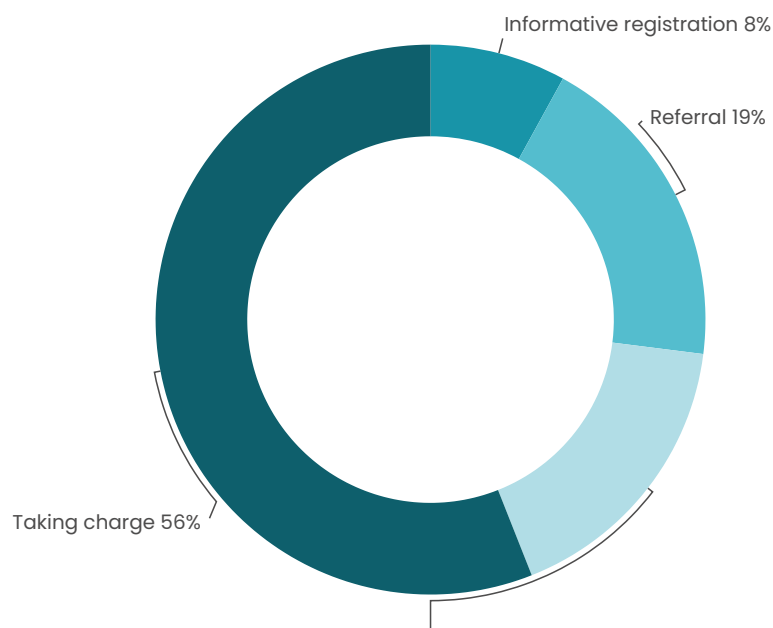
With a foreign population exceeding 15% (around 58,000 in 2023), Bologna confirms its cosmopolitan vocation and is at the forefront in promoting an increasingly inclusive and participatory citizenship.

3.3 Analysis of response actions

After receiving and registering a report, SPAD's possibilities for response differ not only according to the content of the report, but also – and more importantly – to the needs expressed by who reports the episode.

GRAPH 23. TYPE OF RESPONSE ACTION TAKEN

January 2024 – December 2024

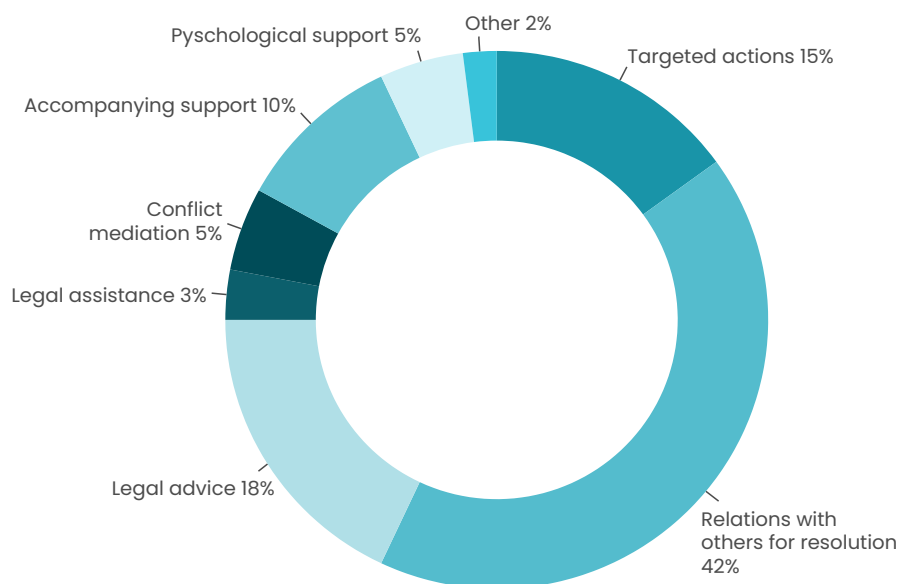


In most cases, the reports were taken charge of directly by SPAD (73%), either through second-level taking charge (56%) or – when cases were more straightforward to handle – through first-level taking charge, i.e. finding a solution through the first counselling and support at the desk (17%). The act of taking charge can take the form of various types of specific actions, among them: relations with other subjects to find a solution (42%), legal advice (18%), legal assistance (3%), psychological support (5%), conflict mediation (5%) or accompanying support to other services (10%). In 15% of the reports, the cases taking charge also included the promotion of targeted actions, i.e. actions that vary according to the specific situation and may include systemic interventions, such as the formulation of recommendations addressed to specific actors, advocacy actions (promotion and protection of people's rights), awareness-raising or information campaigns.

On the other hand, 19% of the reports were partially or totally referred to other services or other entities, whether internal or external to the SPAD Network. Finally, in 8% of cases, at the request of the person who made the report, SPAD proceeded with a simple informative registration, therefore without taking any real action in response, but recording the facts with the aim of contributing to the emergence of the discriminatory phenomena in the Bolognese territory.

GRAPH 24. SPECIFIC TAKING CHARGE ACTIONS

January 2024 – December 2024



Since, as mentioned above, SPAD's choice on the type of response action is also significantly influenced by the way in which the discrimination manifested itself, it is interesting to compare SPAD's response actions for cases of perceived discrimination (7 cases) and for those, on the other hand, which are covered by the actual legal/regulatory framework, which include direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and hate speech (25 cases in total). In graphs 25 and 26, the number of responses is higher than the number of cases (32), since in more than one situation SPAD implemented multiple response actions.

For both legally recognised and perceived discrimination, in the majority of cases the report was followed either by a taking charge (74% of cases for legally recognised discrimination, 37.5% of cases for perceived discrimination) or by counselling and support at the desk (11% of cases for the legally recognised, 25% of cases for the perceived). The most substantial difference found concerns the number of informative registrations (7.5% of cases for the legally recognised, none for the perceived) and referrals (7.5% of cases for the legally recognised, 37.5% for the perceived), however it is important to emphasise that these percentage values are influenced by the disparity in the total number of cases; in absolute values, the difference appears minimal (graph 25).



Publication of a discriminatory real estate listing

SPAD was notified of the publication by a real estate agency in Bologna of an online advertisement (offer of a flat for rent) containing the explicit clause "NO FOREIGNERS".

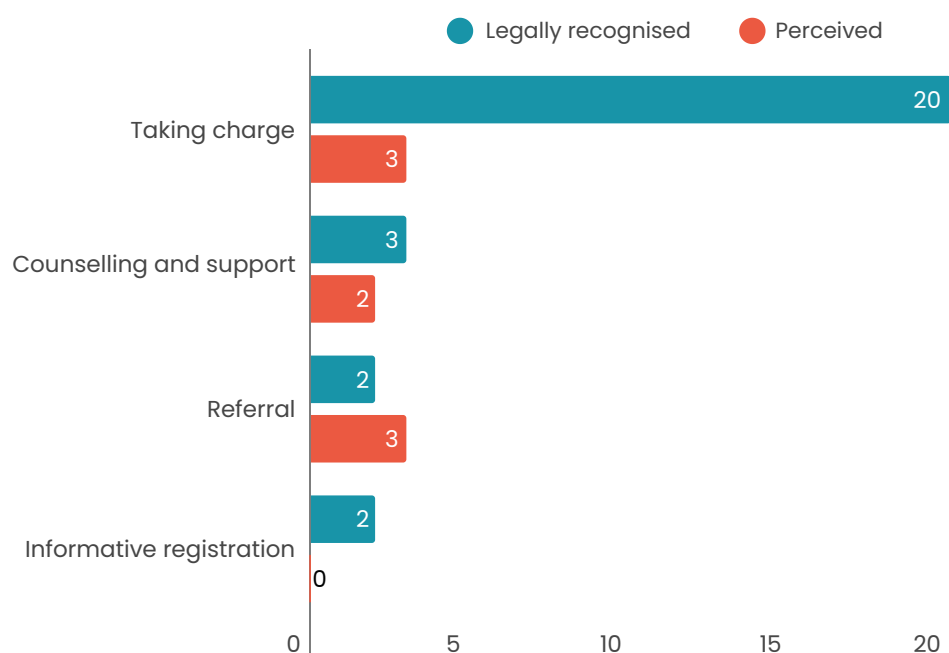
The real estate agency's conduct constitutes a clear violation of article 43 of legislative decree 286/98, which prohibits any form of discrimination based on "race", colour, ancestry or national or "ethnic origin". In particular, it is unlawful to refuse to provide goods or services to a person solely because of their nationality.

SPAD sent a communication to the real estate agency, pointing out the violation of the law, asking them to promptly remove the advertisement, to take measures to prevent similar incidents from recurring, and to inform property owners about the illegality of such conduct. SPAD also offered to provide anti-discrimination training to the agency staff.

Given the nature of the incident, the report was extended to the relevant trade association and to UNAR (National Office Against Racial Discrimination). The real estate portal, following the report, promptly removed the ad.

GRAPH 25. TYPE OF RESPONSE ACTION TAKEN BY MODE OF DISCRIMINATION

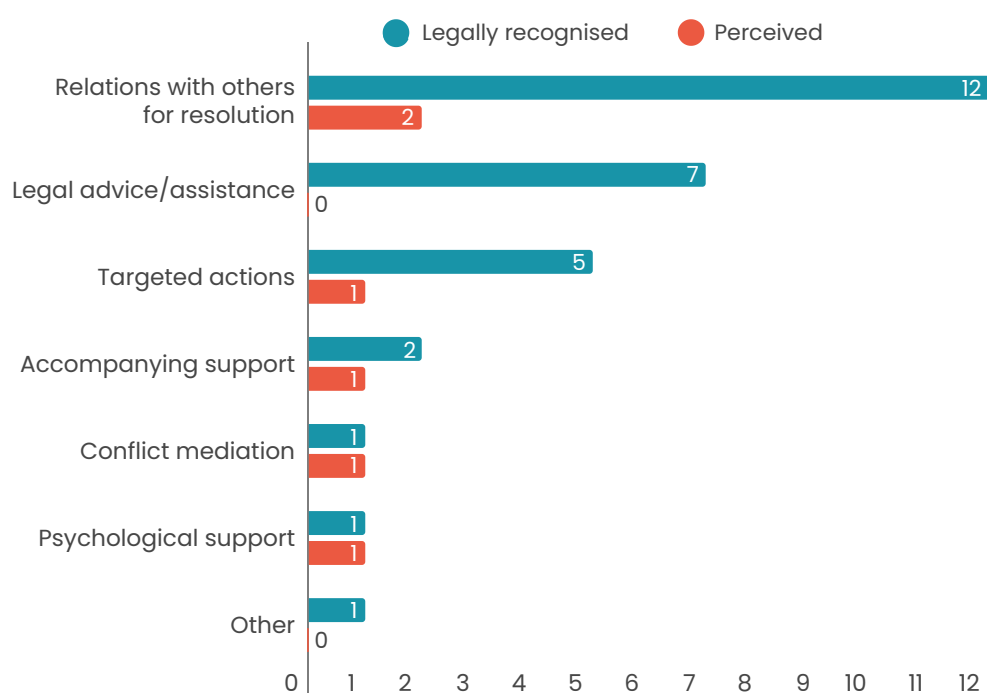
January 2024 – December 2024



Analysing the specific taking charge actions, a significant difference emerges between cases of legally recognised and perceived discrimination in the number of reports for which legal advice and/or assistance was activated. Not surprisingly, in cases of perceived discrimination it was never possible to activate this type of support, whereas for legally recognised discrimination, legal assistance was activated in 24% of cases. There is also a wide gap in the number of cases where SPAD facilitated relations with other subjects to find a solution (12 cases for legally recognised discrimination, 2 cases for perceived discrimination). Less significant, finally, are the differences concerning the other specific taking charge actions (graph 26).

GRAPH 26. SPECIFIC TAKING CHARGE ACTIONS BY MODE OF DISCRIMINATION

January 2024 – December 2024



For a better management and resolution of reports, SPAD often availed itself of the collaboration of numerous other actors. In a large percentage of cases, it was a matter of activating collaborations within the SPAD Network (27%), with more residual recourse to other associations, outside the Network (4.7%). The Municipality of Bologna was involved in 9.5% of cases. The complete list of subjects involved in taking charge or referrals can be found in table 6.

TABLE 6. ACTORS INVOLVED IN SPAD RESPONSE ACTIONS

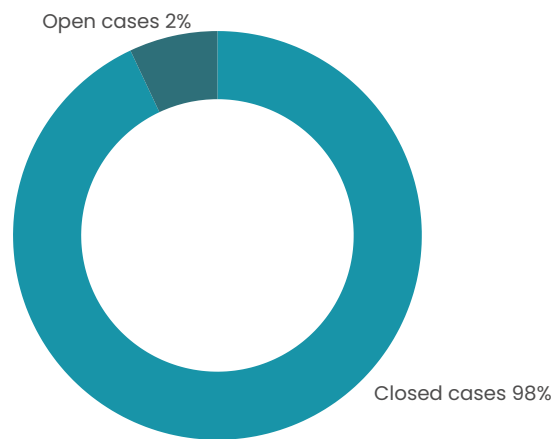
Actors who collaborated with SPAD in case management and/or resolution

Involved actors	Number	Percentage
SPAD associations	17	27%
Other associations	3	4,7%
Municipality of Bologna	6	9,5%
Other municipalities	1	1,6%
Emilia-Romagna Region	2	3,2%
UNAR	3	4,7%
OSCAD	1	1,6%
Police Headquarters of Bologna	3	4,7%
Prefecture of Bologna	1	1,6%
Law enforcement	1	1,6%
Local police	2	3,2%
Social services	1	1,6%
ASP City of Bologna	2	3,2%
University of Bologna	2	3,2%
Other Universities	1	1,6%
Private individuals	2	3,2%
Real estate agencies	1	1,6%
TPER	1	1,6%
CPIA	1	1,6%
No other actors involved	12	19%
Total	63	100%

By 31 December 2024, 98% of cases had been completed, with 2% still pending.

GRAPH 27. PERCENTAGE OF CLOSED CASES

January 2024 – December 2024

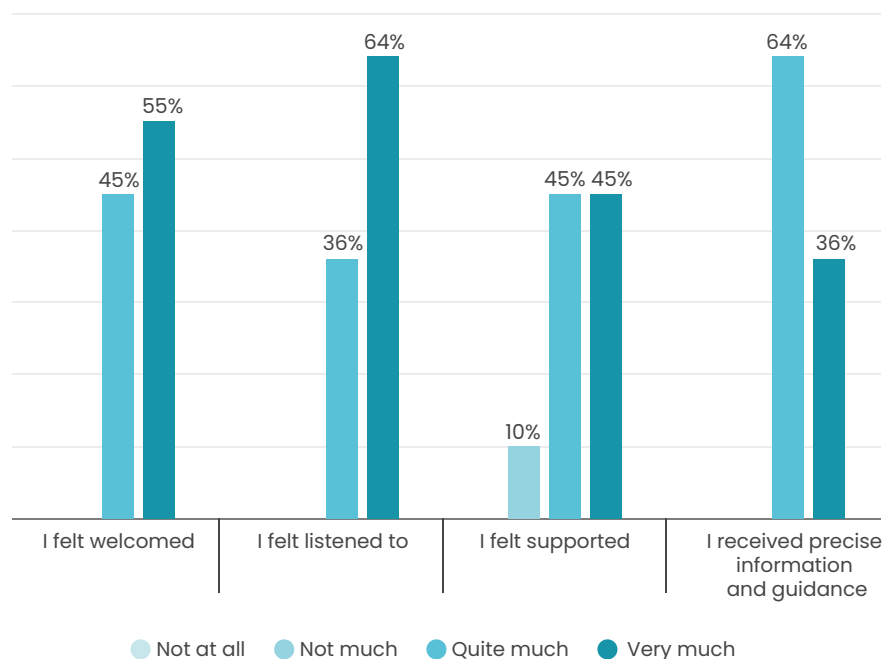


As with the Second Report, a survey was conducted this year to collect feedback from SPAD users on the support received and the responses obtained after reporting. The survey was conducted on cases assessed as “pertinent” during data analysis and brought to closure by 31 December 2024. People were first contacted via email and then via telephone. This year, the questionnaire was modified to include a series of questions for people who were referred to other desks or services, so that feedback could also be obtained on reports that were not handled directly or exclusively by SPAD. Unfortunately, with regard to the latter, the number of responses collected during the reporting period was low and was therefore not considered to be statistically significant.

On the basis of the answers received, a very positive assessment of the experience at SPAD emerged (graph 28). In particular, the aspects assessed most favourably were the feeling of being welcomed (55% of responses on “very much”, the rest on “quite much”) and of being listened (64% of responses on “very much”, the rest on “quite much”): for both of these, all the respondents expressed a high degree of satisfaction. Slightly lower than for the first two aspects, the assessment of the accuracy of the information received (64% of responses on “quite much”, the rest on “very much”) and of the support received (90% of responses on “very much”, of which 45% on “quite much”) was also positive.

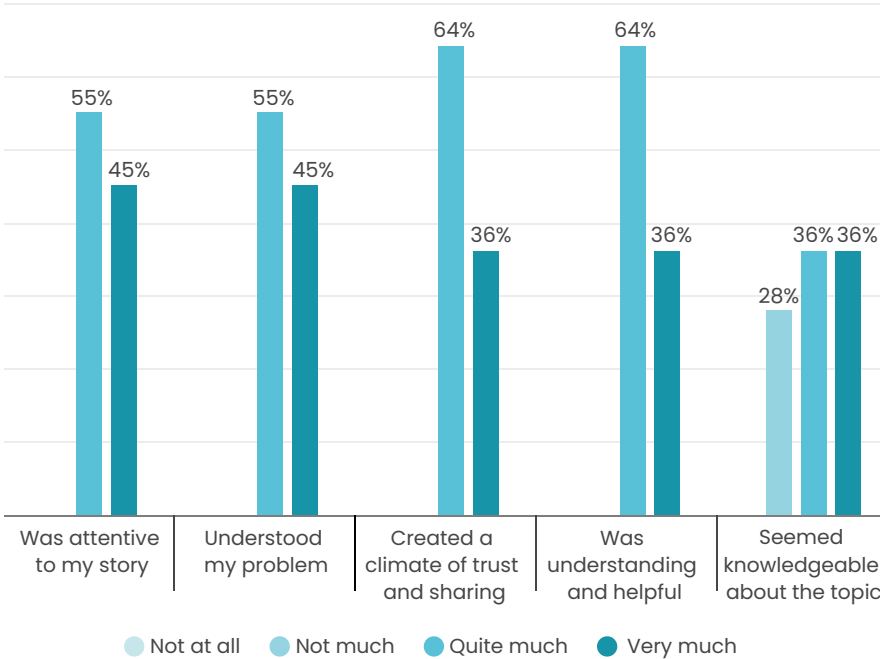
GRAPH 28. EVALUATION OF THE EXPERIENCE WITH SPAD

Year 2024 surveys



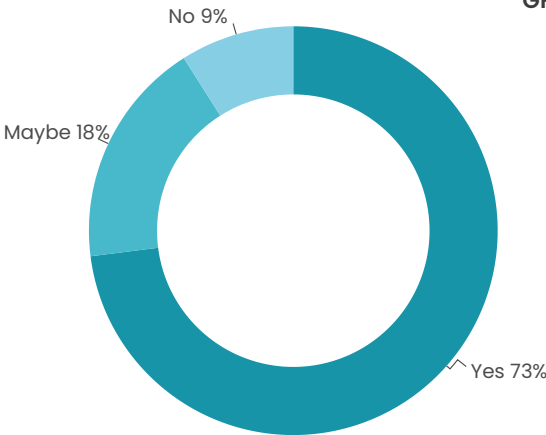
On the other hand, with regard to the experience with case managers and operators, the judgement expressed was positive, on all aspects, in almost all the responses. SPAD users therefore appreciated the ability to listen, as well as the capacity to understand the problem and the ability to establish a climate of trust and sharing (graph 29). Slightly lower was the evaluation of the staff's level of preparation on the topics dealt with. However, on this it is important to emphasise that the totality of negative responses refers to reports of discrimination on factors not within SPAD's competence, which were subsequently adequately redirected.

GRAPH 29. EVALUATION OF THE EXPERIENCE WITH THE SPAD TEAM
Year 2024 surveys



Finally, based on their previous experience, 9% of the respondents would not turn to SPAD again, while 73% would contact it again, should the need arise. The remaining 18% stated that they would probably contact SPAD again, even though their problem had only been partially resolved.

GRAPH 30. WOULD YOU RETURN TO SPAD?
Year 2024 surveys



In general, these data reflect a very positive assessment of the SPAD's intervention methods after receiving a report, and – at the same time – offer interesting insights into possible areas for improvement in the near future, formulated in more detail in the following chapter.

3.4 Joint actions for data collection and monitoring of discrimination

in collaboration with APS Arcigay Il Cassero and MIT – Movimento Identità Trans APS

The Bologna City Council, with its own resolution (PG no. 697834/2022⁴⁴), provided for both the territorial diffusion and the extension of SPAD to other discrimination factors. With regard to discrimination related to gender identity and sexual orientation, the two Anti-discrimination Centers of the associations MIT – Movimento Identità Trans APS and APS Arcigay Il Cassero already exist in the territory. Within the framework of the General LGBTQIA+ 2022 – 2026 Collaboration Pact – Rights Cluster, at whose table the above-mentioned associations and Gay Lex APS, also active with a legal desk, took part, it was agreed to create synergies on data collection between the desks of these associations and SPAD, with the aim of building a more integrated city system of data collection and monitoring of discrimination in the territory of Bologna.

In 2024, SPAD consolidated the collaboration initiated the previous year, strengthening the joint monitoring of discrimination. Following the positive experience of 2023, when Cassero and MIT had provided insights on their data, which were then included in SPAD's Annual Report, it was decided to extend this collaboration and to work towards greater integration of data collection and analysis methods, right from the reception and management of reports. In a medium- to long-term perspective, the collaboration path initiated represents an opportunity to share experiences and good practices, with the aim of enhancing the activities of each and, over time, encouraging the implementation of joint projects.

Below is a brief description of the desks involved in this joint action, namely the STAR Anti-violence/ Anti-discrimination Center and the Spazio LGBTQIA+ Cassero Anti-discrimination Center:

STAR Anti-violence/Anti-discrimination Center

Born from the synergy between MIT – Movimento Identità Trans, the social cooperative CSAPSA and Centro Donna Giustizia, the STAR desk envisages the establishment of a center against discrimination and violence, based in Bologna and with contact and desk activities also located in the Ferrara area. The desk is open to the public at the following times: in Bologna, from Monday to Friday, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; in Ferrara, on Mondays, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The STAR project aims to achieve the following specific objectives:

- Promoting the emergence of discrimination and violence against LGBTQIA+ people and early identification of “victims” through the enhancement of low-threshold activities and care and of support services for trans people who are “victims” of violence or discrimination;
- Make the services offered recognisable and easily identifiable;
- Promoting and facilitating the reporting of violence suffered, also through cooperation with institutions, in order to create a protected environment thanks to the constant presence of peer educators;
- Actively support pathways of empowerment, self-determination and exit from violence through the activation of a work desk managed in cooperation with the social cooperative CSAPSA to enhance the autonomy and foster the job placement of trans people;
- Favouring pathways to housing autonomy, ensuring support in the search for housing and shared housing solutions through the activation of a housing & social desk;
- Ensuring the availability of an emergency facility that can accommodate up to two people for the accommodation of “victims” of violence on grounds of gender identity or sexual orientation, for a period of 10 days up to 6 months, depending on the case;
- Develop an awareness-raising campaign in favour of employment and housing of trans people;
- Organise and promote events that raise awareness of these issues for the trans population.

During 2024, the desk received numerous people in direct access, through telephone support requests to the 24-hour number and through referrals from other associations/personal services. For “victims” of trafficking, dedicated channels were activated to ensure timely exit; for “victims” of discrimination and violence, support interviews, taking in by the desk psychologist and hospitality in the house in cases of severe marginality and danger were activated.

The desk was accessed by: trans women (48.9%), trans men (22.1%), non-binary people (16%), cis lesbian women (7.4%) and cis gay men (5.6%). Of these people, 30% were unemployed, another 30% were sex workers, 15% were inactive, 11.5% were employed part-time, 8.5% were employed full-time and 5% were in detention. Of the total number of accesses, 48% of people had Italian citizenship, while 52% were people with a migration background. The age groups with the most reports were 18-35 (47%) and 36-55 (37%), followed by people over 55 (16%). Finally, in terms of level of education, out of the total number of reports, 38.2% of people had a high school diploma, 24.3% had a middle school diploma, 19.1% had a university degree, 9.8% had a professional qualification and 8.5% had a primary school diploma.

Anti-discrimination Center Spazio LGBTQIA+ Cassero

The Anti-discrimination Center (CAD) Spazio LGBTQIA+ Cassero was established, in ATS with Piazza Grande, in July 2022 thanks to UNAR funding that set up numerous centers, managed by LGBTQIA+ associations, throughout the national territory. This opportunity has enabled Cassero to invest significantly in listening, orienting, and supporting LGBTQIA+ people who have suffered discrimination and violence, expanding the offer already present in the association for some time, developing a method of structured and comprehensive care: offering pathways out of situations of discrimination and violence that include psychological support, legal counselling, employment and housing guidance. In 2024, the center took on 106 people, 93 of whom were in the territory of the Metropolitan City of Bologna. People are taken in by a multidisciplinary team composed of a social worker, a project manager, seven psychologists, a psychiatrist, four lawyers, fifteen helpline volunteers and a trainee. The professionals and volunteers adopt the peer method, which valorises common experience in the pathways of emerging and escaping discrimination and violence. This method breaks down minority stress barriers and brings people closer to Spazio Cassero, which becomes a point of access and/or reference for services with which there is constant collaboration.

Those who turn to Spazio Cassero bring with them alarming and surprising stories of discrimination and violence, considering that most are domiciled or resident in Bologna, a city that is universally considered a welcoming place with respect to these identities. It is also necessary to emphasise that racialised and LGBTQIA+ people, who suffer intersectional discrimination, are the same ones who have experienced the cruellest forms of violence, such as physical, domestic and sexual violence (see graph 34), and are the same ones who find themselves in complex conditions of social hardship with high hurdles for access to housing and employment. We also note the increasing number of minors accessing the center, seeking a safe space to live out their gender identity and/or sexual orientation freely, free of prejudice and risk of bullying. In these cases, care is extended to the family, so that it can represent a point of reference and a serene environment for the child's growth in a healthy and aware manner.

When a person suffers discrimination and/or violence, they can find themselves in a state of loneliness and isolation. Combating loneliness is therefore a central goal of Spazio Cassero, thanks to the Cassero community, the team becomes a bridge to the social, recreational and cultural groups of the association acting as an important factor of change.

Since Spazio Cassero's inception, 286 people have accessed it; each person has accessed it on average three times. Of these people, 44% were cis men, 31% cis women, and 24% trans and non-binary people. With regard to employment status, 30% of the reports were made by employed people, 34% by unemployed people, 28% by students and only 5% by retired people. Of the total number of accesses, 74% of people were from Italy, while the remaining 26% were from outside the European Union. The age groups with the most reports were 18-35 (19%) and 36-55 (19%), followed by people under 18 (6%) and over 55 (6%). Finally, in terms of level of education, out of the total number of reports, 30% of people had a primary or middle school diploma, 33% had attended up to high school, while 36% had a bachelor's degree, master's degree or an active post-graduate course.

The CAD's activities are not limited to taking care of people who have suffered discrimination and violence, but also act from the outset with a view to prevention. To achieve this goal, in 2024, numerous trainings for social workers were carried out with the CAD, involving ASP and university students. Another important action was to support the development of the national network of anti-discrimination centers, Cassero promoted the first in-person event in Bologna on 8 and 9 December, an essential moment to share methods, think about the current situation and start a common advocacy process.

3.4.1 Towards an integrated analysis of discrimination

The process of joint monitoring and data collection actions included a series of meetings through which those involved shared their methodologies for data collection and analysis. In a first phase, a common set of indicators was identified and defined to make the data comparable. Some of the indicators were transposed from the data collection method used in the Research on discrimination and violence determined by sexual orientation and gender identity in Emilia-Romagna, conducted by the Emilia-Romagna Region with the University of Padua as part of the observatory programme established by regional law 15/2019⁴⁵. Subsequently, the data from the three desks were processed on the basis of the shared analysis categories through the use of a single monitoring tool. All the desks agreed on the need to adopt a broad and multidimensional concept of discrimination, understood not only in legal terms, but as a complex experience involving social, psychological and cultural dimensions. This choice is based on the awareness that the experiences of discrimination are often subtle and nuanced, and that they do not always manifest themselves in explicit violations of legal norms, especially with regard to homophobia and transphobic actions, for which – let us recall – there is still no legislation, in Italy, recognising this aggravating factor. Therefore, the definition adopted also takes into account aspects such as perceived discrimination, micro-aggressions and fear of coming out, which, although not always legally recognised, have a significant impact on people's lives.

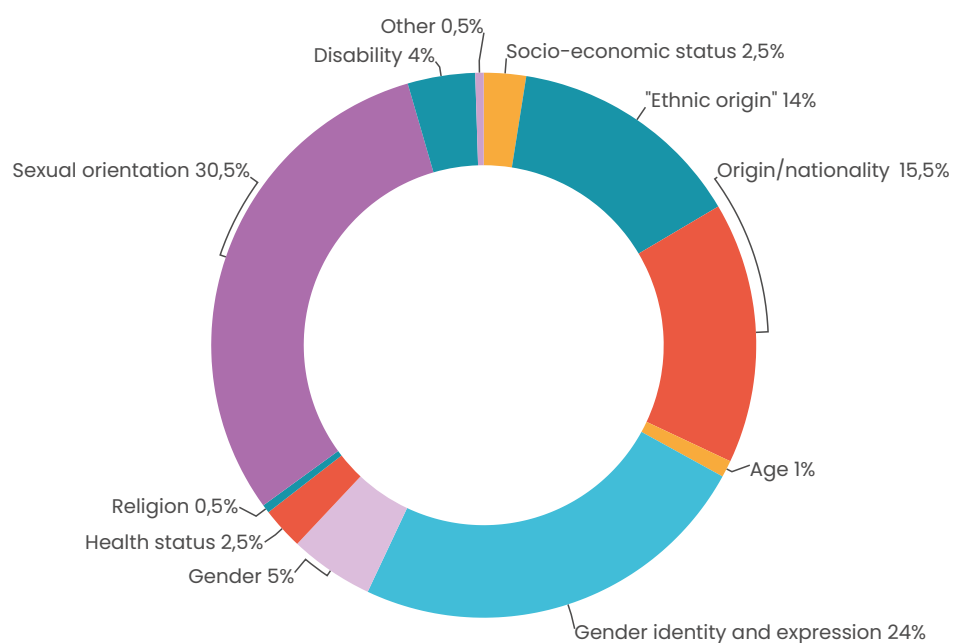
The joint analysis presented in this paragraph collects all the reports received by the desks in the period between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2024 with the metropolitan area of Bologna as the reference territory. This analysis provides an overview of the episodes of discrimination experienced by people living in the Bologna area during 2024. In total, 176 reports were analysed (44 SPAD, 39 STAR, 93 Spazio Cassero) on the following dimensions of analysis:

- Grounds of discrimination, with a focus on intersectionality;
- Type of discriminatory action;
- Discriminating agent;
- Area of discrimination.

In the first instance, the reports were classified on the basis of the grounds of discrimination, i.e. the personal characteristics at the origin of the discriminatory treatment detected. Unsurprisingly, the majority of cases concerned the discrimination grounds for which the three desks are competent (graph 31): reports of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation were the most numerous (30,5%), followed by "racial" discrimination (29,5%) – whether on the grounds of origin/nationality (15,5%) or "ethnic origin" (14%) – and by discrimination on the grounds of gender identity and expression (24%). The percentages of discrimination on the basis of gender (5%), disability (4%), health status (2.5%), socio-economic status (2.5%), age (1%) and religion (0.5%) were lower. For further details, see table 7.

GRAPH 31. JOINT ANALYSIS: DISCRIMINATION BY GROUNDS OF DISCRIMINATION

SPAD – STAR – Spazio Cassero

**TABLE 7. JOINT ANALYSIS: DISCRIMINATION BY GROUNDS OF DISCRIMINATION**

SPAD – STAR – Spazio Cassero

Grounds of discrimination	Total	SPAD	STAR	Spazio Cassero
Origin/nationality	39	28	11	0
"Ethnic origin"	35	4	1	30
Sexual orientation	77	2	10	65
Gender identity and expression	60	1	31	28
Gender	12	6	3	3
Religion	1	1	0	0
Disability	10	9	0	1
Health status	7	3	0	4
Socio-economic status	7	6	1	0
Age	2	2	0	0
Other	1	1	0	0
Total*	251	63	57	131

* The total takes into account cases of multiple/intersectional discrimination, where the discrimination grounds are multiple

Of the total number of cases analysed, 36% concerned situations of intersectional discrimination (graph 32), i.e. discrimination based on two or more grounds which, acting simultaneously, interact in such a way that they can no longer be distinguished and separated, producing distinct and specific forms of discrimination. Further analysis shows that the majority of intersectional discrimination cases (65%) can be traced back to the intersection of the discrimination factors within the competence of the three desks (highlighted in purple in table 8).

GRAPH 32. JOINT ANALYSIS: PERCENTAGE OF INTERSECTIONAL DISCRIMINATION

SPAD – STAR – Spazio Cassero

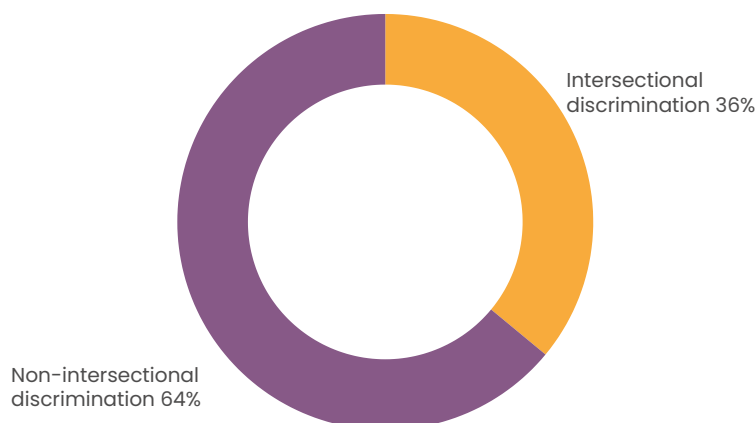


TABLE 8. INTERSECTIONAL DISCRIMINATION BY GROUNDS OF DISCRIMINATION

SPAD – STAR – Spazio Cassero

Grounds of discrimination	Total	SPAD	STAR	Spazio Cassero
"Ethnic origin" + sexual orientation	22			22
"Ethnic origin" + gender identity and expression	8		1	7
Origin/nationality + gender identity and expression	8		8	
Sexual orientation + gender identity and expression	4		4	
Sexual orientation + "ethnic origin" + health status	1			1
Gender identity and expression + gender	1		1	
Sexual orientation + gender	3			3
Origin/nationality + socio-economic status	2	1	1	
Origin/nationality + gender	4	2	2	
Origin/nationality + disability	1	1		
Gender identity and expression + disability	1			1
Origin/nationality + health status	1	1		
Gender identity and expression + health status	1			1
Gender + socio-economic status	1	1		
Origin/nationality + socio-economic status + gender	1	1		
Origin/nationality + socio-economic status + disability	1	1		
Origin/nationality + socio-economic status + age	1	1		
Disability + health status + socio-economic status + age	1	1		
Total	62	10	17	35

Going into the content of the reports recorded by the three desks, it is interesting to observe the data concerning the type of discriminatory action. Graph 33 – and all the graphs that follow – presents the data in the form of a percentage number instead of an absolute value. This methodological choice was adopted in order to make the comparison of the data clearer and more immediate – an operation that would otherwise have been more complex, due to the different number of total cases collected by the three desks in 2024. In fact, the use of the percentage makes it possible to standardise the data, thus facilitating the comparison and interpretation of similarities and/or differences.

Out of the total number of cases analysed, the type of discriminatory action detected, on average, as most frequent is verbal aggression, understood in the broadest sense to include all types of verbal abuse, mockery, threats, slander, comments or intimidating gestures directed at the “victim”. For both STAR (21%) and Spazio Cassero (32%), verbal aggression emerged as the most recurrent type of discriminatory action; for SPAD, on the other hand, the latter is the second most numerous category (22%), which follows cases in which discrimination took the form of discriminatory treatment (49%) – a category that was thus found to be considerably more frequent for “racial” discrimination than for discrimination on the grounds of gender identity and expression and/or sexual orientation. Slightly lower, but still significant, was the figure on physical aggression for Spazio Cassero (29.5%), while it stood at 5.5% for STAR and 2.5% for SPAD. Also significant is the figure for reports classified as hate speech by SPAD (12%) and STAR (7%), while no such cases were recorded by Spazio Cassero.

Some of the discriminatory actions included in this analysis are mainly related to dynamics of oppression, exclusion and prejudice that directly affect people belonging to the LGBTQIA+ community, and for this reason – out of a series of response categories related to this variable – a disparity can be observed in the data collected by the three desks: SPAD did not record any cases related to these forms of discrimination, while both STAR and Spazio Cassero recorded reports of this type with a high incidence. In fact, there were many cases in which the discrimination recorded by the latter took the form of disclosing sexual orientation and/or gender identity or fear of coming out (14% for STAR, 13.5% for Spazio Cassero), restriction of freedom (9.5% for STAR, 3% for Spazio Cassero), domestic violence (7% for STAR, 9% for Spazio Cassero), sexual violence and/or assault (1.5% for STAR, 6% for Spazio Cassero), economic exploitation (4% for STAR) or reparative therapy (1.5% for STAR).



A clear example of ableism

A young woman reported that while accompanying her brother, a person with a disability, to a medical office, they were confronted with insulting remarks by health care personnel, such as the phrase “today is not handicapped people’s day”. Furthermore, questions regarding her brother’s health status were directly addressed to her, despite the fact that he was the person of interest in the consultation.

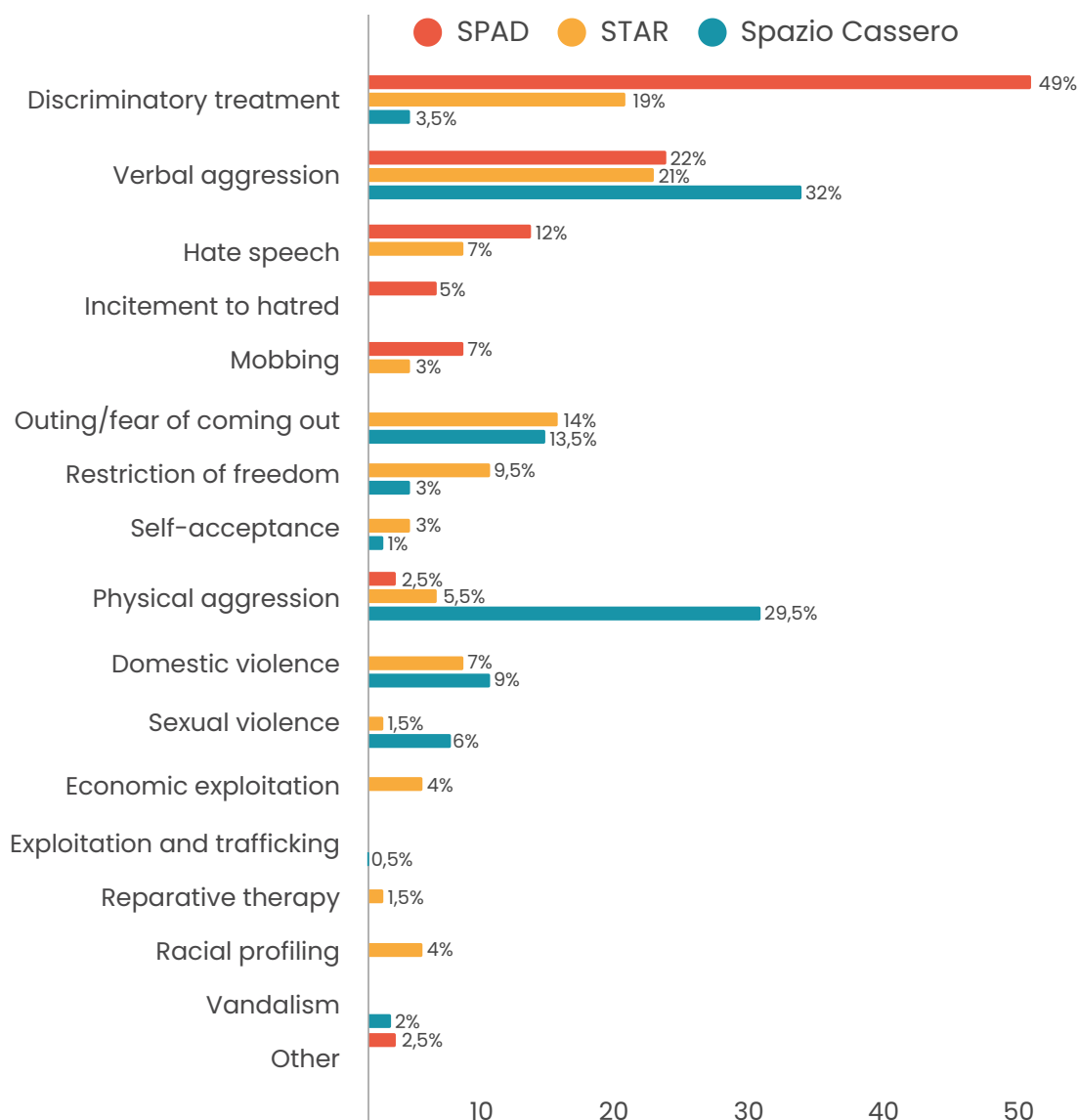
This episode is an example of ableism, that form of discrimination that devalues and marginalises people with disabilities. Ableism manifests itself through a series of attitudes and behaviours that contribute to creating a society in which people with disabilities are considered “different” and “less capable”.

In the present case, ableism manifests itself in different forms:

- **Offensive language:** the expression “today is not handicapped people’s day” is a clear example of discriminatory and stigmatising language;
- **Lack of respect:** the health personnel treated a person with disabilities ignoring his autonomy and ability to communicate;
- **Focus on disability:** the focus was exclusively on the disability of the reporter’s brother, without considering the whole person;
- **Lack of professionalism:** the health personnel did not demonstrate the professionalism and empathy required to welcome and assist a patient with disabilities.

GRAPH 33. JOINT ANALYSIS: DISCRIMINATION BY TYPE OF DISCRIMINATORY ACTION

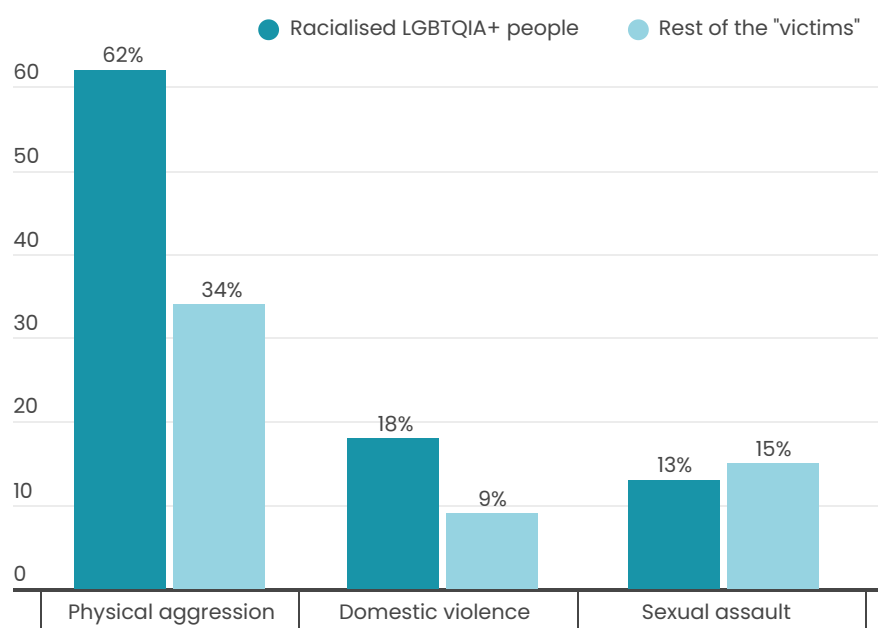
SPAD – STAR – Spazio Cassero



Analysing the discriminating agents, i.e. the people or subjects identified as being responsible for the reported discrimination, particularly interesting differences emerge in the data collected by SPAD, on the one hand, and by STAR and Spazio Cassero, on the other. For the latter, whose almost all received reports concern discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, the category with the highest incidence is that of private citizens: in the case of STAR, these make up 69% of the total number of cases recorded; in the case of Spazio Cassero, the percentage rises to 100%. It is therefore clear that discrimination against LGBTQIA+ people, at least those reported to the two desks analysed here, is almost always perpetrated by private individuals, especially by individuals who already know the person discriminated against, whether they are acquaintances (17% for STAR, 27% for Spazio Cassero), family members (8% for STAR, 28% for Spazio Cassero) or parents (21% for STAR, 8.5% for Spazio Cassero) or partners (6.5% for STAR, 14% for Spazio Cassero). This phenomenon is explained by the fact that homophobia and transphobia is a manifestation of patriarchal violence, which can make the family an unsafe place

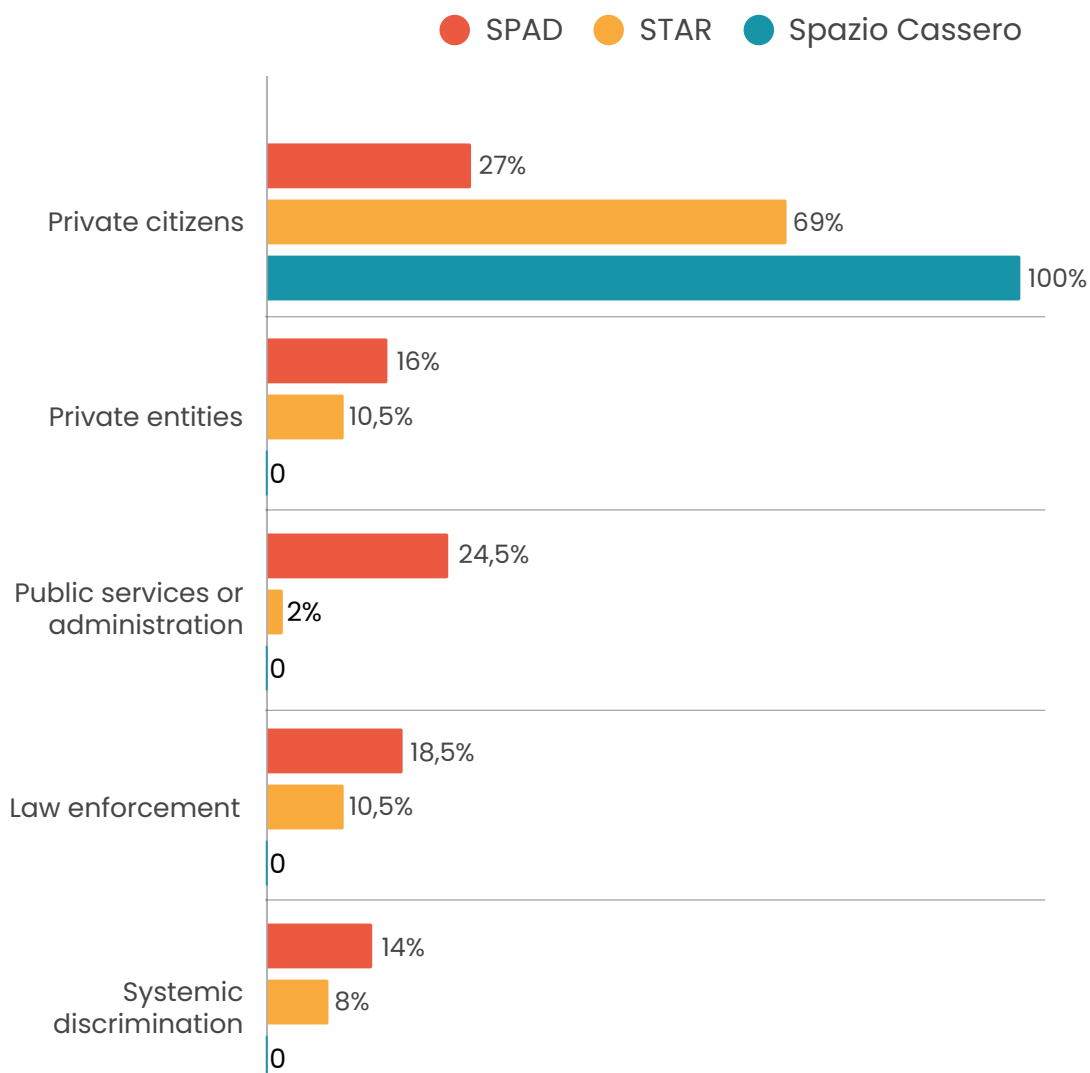
for LGBTQIA+ people. In situations of intersectional discrimination and violence, where sexual orientation and identity are intertwined with “ethnic origin” or origin/nationality, the risk can be exacerbated. The domestic and community space, which should offer support and protection in contexts of violence and discrimination, may not be available and may even become an unsafe space due to the above. This observation is also confirmed by the data collected by the desks (graph 34): violent discriminatory actions towards LGBTQIA+ racialised people are much more frequent than for the rest of the “victims”: while 62% of LGBTQIA+ racialised people have suffered a physical aggression, this percentage is almost halved for the cases of discrimination that do not include this intersection; the same thing is observed for situations of domestic violence, recorded in 18% of the reports from LGBTQIA+ racialised people and “only” in 9% of the rest of the reports. The data confirm, therefore, that for racialised LGBTQIA+ people the risk of discrimination manifesting itself through more violent discriminatory actions is much higher. For racialised LGBTQIA+ people, the danger of isolation is therefore greater, increasing levels of social distress (greater difficulty in finding housing and a stable job) and making even more crucial the necessity to build solid relational bonds.

GRAPH 34.
JOINT ANALYSIS: VIOLENT DISCRIMINATORY ACTIONS FOR RACIALISED LGBTQIA+ PEOPLE
 STAR – Spazio Cassero



GRAPH 35. JOINT ANALYSIS: DISCRIMINATION BY DISCRIMINATING AGENT

SPAD – STAR – Spazio Cassero



For SPAD too, private citizens are the most frequently identified as the perpetrators of discrimination, although the percentage of cases recorded is significantly lower than for the other two desks, at 27%. In the case of SPAD, discrimination acted upon by public services or administration (24.5%) and by law enforcement (18.5%) also has a particularly significant weight – a fact that confirms the persistence of forms – more or less explicit – of racism even at an institutional level. Although with lower percentages, STAR also recorded discrimination exercised by public services or administration (2%) and law enforcement (10.5%). Finally, there were fewer cases of discrimination perpetrated by private entities (16% for SPAD, 10.5% for STAR) and those identified as situations of systemic discrimination (14% for SPAD, 8% for STAR).

TABLE 9. JOINT ANALYSIS: DISCRIMINATION BY DISCRIMINATING AGENT

SPAD – STAR – Spazio Cassero

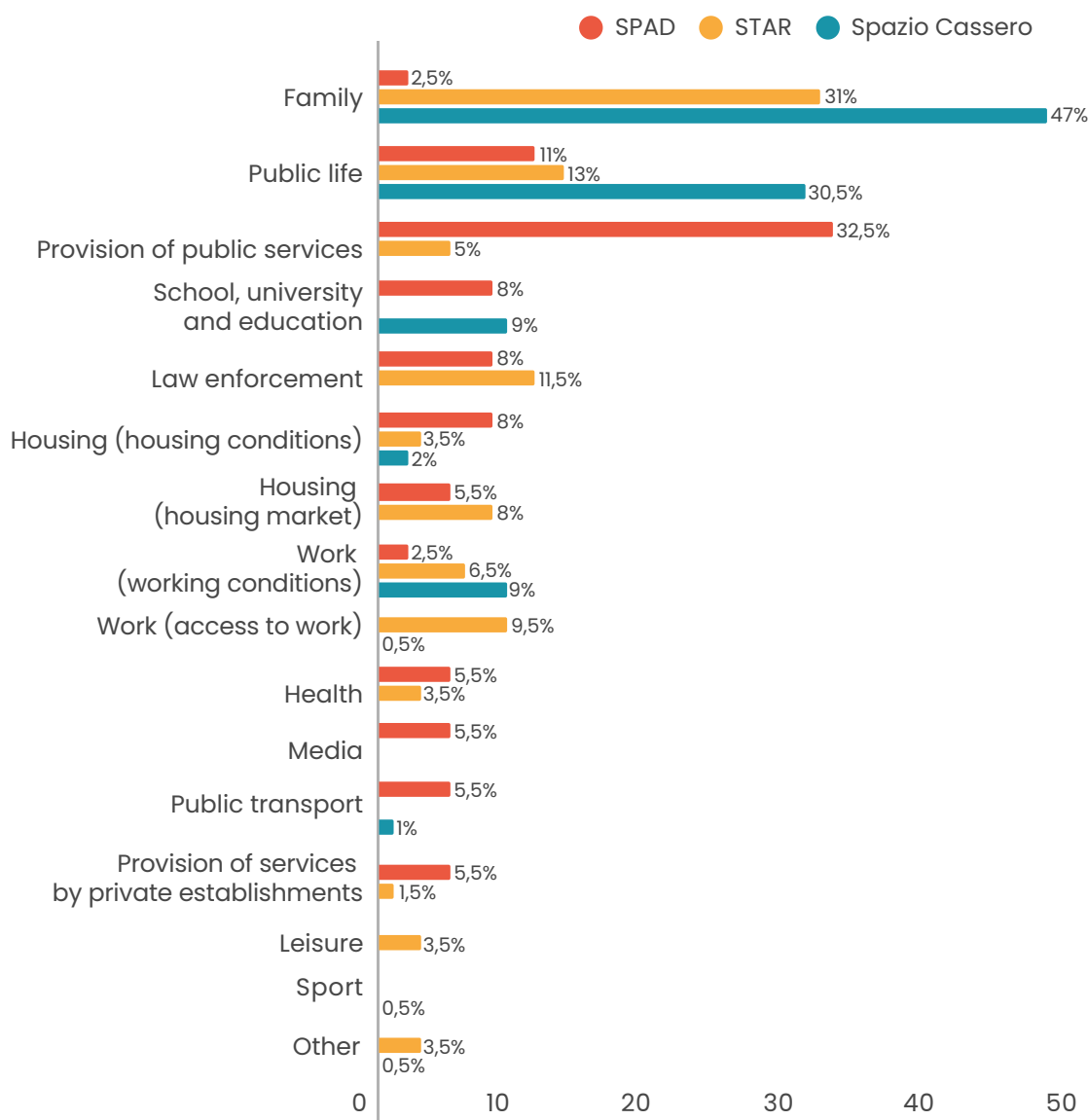
Discriminating agent	SPAD	STAR	Spazio Cassero
Private citizens	27%	69%	100%
Private citizens (individual)	11%	19%	74,5%
Stranger	11%	4%	7,5%
Acquaintance		6,5%	19%
Colleague		2%	2,5%
Family member			24%
Parent			8%
Partner		6,5%	13,5%
Private citizens (group)	16%	50%	25,5%
Strangers	5,5%	10,5%	11%
Acquaintances	5,5%	10,5%	8%
Colleagues	2,5%		1,5%
Family members	2,5%	8%	4%
Parents		21%	0,5%
Partners			0,5%
Private entities	16%	10,5%	0%
Private entities		6,5%	
Private entities (employer)		2%	
Private entities (manager)	2,5%		
Private entities (employee)	8%		
Private entities (organised group)			
Private entities (organisation/association)	5,5%	2%	
Public services or administration	24,5%	2%	0%
Public services or administration (manager)			
Public services or administration (employee)			
Public services or administration (public office or service)	8%		
Public services or administration (law, regulation or notice)	11%	2%	
Public services or administration (political representative)	5,5%		
Law enforcement	18,5%	10,5%	0%
Law enforcement (individual)		2%	
Law enforcement (group)	2,5%	6,5%	
Law enforcement (office, police station, etc.)	16%	2%	
Systemic discrimination	14%	8%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Further interesting observations emerge from an analysis of the area of discrimination, which refers not so much to the physical space in which it occurred, but to its content and the context in which it occurred. Again, a reading of the data reveals a marked difference between the three desks: if for STAR and Spazio Cassero most of the reports concern the “family” sphere (47% for Spazio Cassero, 31% for STAR, 2.5% for SPAD) and “public life” (30.5% for Spazio Cassero, 13% for STAR, 11% for SPAD), in the case of SPAD it is the “provision of public services” the sphere on which the highest percentage of cases was recorded (32.5% for SPAD, 5% for STAR, 0% for Spazio Cassero). These data therefore appear to be closely correlated and particularly consistent with what emerged from the analysis of the discriminating agents. It is interesting to note how the differences that emerged reflect the specific nature of the communities and situations that each desk faces: in the case of “racial” discrimination recorded by SPAD, a significant proportion of the reports concern, as already mentioned, an institutional context; on the contrary, in the case of discrimination against LGBTQIA+ people recorded by STAR and Spazio Cassero, the incidence of this form of discrimination is significantly lower (in the case of STAR), if not completely null (in the case of Spazio Cassero), while there are more reports strictly linked to the personal sphere of the “victims”, mainly occurring in family contexts or in public life situations. With regard to the data of Spazio Cassero, it is necessary to point out that among the elements collected in the report forms, the area “provision of public services” was not explicitly present. The comparison between the desks also has the positive side of refining the data collection, which makes it possible to observe the phenomenon of discrimination in greater depth.

Lastly, lower, but nevertheless significant, figures were recorded by the three desks on the categories “housing” (13.5% for SPAD, 11.5% for STAR, 2% for Spazio Cassero) and “work” (16% for STAR, 9.5% for Spazio Cassero, 2.5% for SPAD) – see graph 35 for details of the subcategories of the two areas. Additionally, SPAD (8%) and STAR (11.5%) have similar statistics in the “law enforcement” category, while SPAD (8%) and Spazio Cassero (9%) have similar statistics in the “school, university, and education” category.

GRAPH 36. JOINT ANALYSIS: DISCRIMINATION BY AREA OF DISCRIMINATION

SPAD – STAR – Spazio Cassero



The analysis presented here is the result of joint data collection and monitoring actions on discrimination, in which the SPAD, STAR and Spazio Cassero desks took part. For the first time, the three desks met to discuss data collection tools and methodologies – a fundamental operation to gather more information on phenomena that are often underestimated, so as to facilitate their emergence. Thinking about data on different grounds of discrimination allowed the parties involved to jointly reflect on discrimination, so that it is not only observed as a legal category, but also as a social and political issue. In this first joint study, the analysis focused on the variables on which all three desks collect and have collected data. This represents, however, only the first step of a broader path, which we intend to enrich and deepen in the future, with the aim of improving the joint monitoring of discrimination in Bologna, producing an increasingly complete reading of the phenomenon and consequently identifying appropriate forms of response.

CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS FOR DEVELOPMENT

This section outlines the challenges and prospects for the development of SPAD, which is the result of the experience of the first three years of activity and the listening to the SPAD Network, which remains active.

1. INTERSECTIONAL APPROACH TO DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Strengthening an intersectional approach to the collection and analysis of data on discrimination is crucial to a comprehensive understanding of social inequalities and to more accurately identify areas where people are at risk of multiple and overlapping forms of discrimination. Intersectionality, as a concept, refers to the analysis of the different grounds that are intertwined and how these may affect the effects of the experience of discrimination. Adopting this approach means recognising that experiences of discrimination cannot be fully understood unless multiple interacting aspects are taken into account. For example, the joint analysis of discrimination of the SPAD, STAR and Spazio Cassero desks identified a worrying trend in discrimination acted out against LGBTQIA+ and racialised people: in these cases, acts of violence were found to be much more frequent than in the rest of the cases that did not present this intersection.

The implementation of this intersectional approach not only concerns the collection and analysis of data, but also the identification of response interventions and their implementation. The intersectional approach must consequently influence public policies and social actions. It is through a full understanding of intersectional inequalities that more inclusive interventions can be developed that address the needs of all people, without neglecting any aspect of their identities and subjectivities.

The prospects for development involve continuing with the use of structured methodologies capable of collecting data in an efficient and

representative manner. The intersectional approach is in fact capable of working on the fringes of the classical existing categories and bringing to light experiences of previously ignored groups.

In addition, the regular training of the staff of territorial desks should be enhanced to ensure that operators are able to collect and understand data accurately, taking into account local specificities and different forms of discrimination.

In the training field, such an approach enables awareness of the complexity of individual trajectories, highlights the specifics of each individual discriminatory situation (bringing the invisible to light), enhances the experience of people belonging to minority groups and, in essence, creates greater social justice.

2. LOCAL SURVEY TO IDENTIFY “NORMALISED” DISCRIMINATION

As mentioned above, incidents of discrimination in the territory cannot be detected by SPAD accesses alone, because many situations are not reported or denounced. It is therefore important to develop integrated actions and research to bring to light what remains unreported on a daily basis. Among these actions, SPAD can conduct a survey on the territory to identify certain “areas” where discrimination has been “normalised”, i.e. has become such an integral part of everyday social, work and cultural life that it is perceived as inevitable or even acceptable. Discrimination that has become entrenched in the normality of behaviour and practices may be difficult to identify, but its existence profoundly affects individuals and communities, creating structural inequalities.

The identification of “normalised” discrimination presents several challenges. One of the main difficulties is the resistance to recognising discriminatory phenomena that are rooted

in local culture or institutional practices. People are often not aware that they are involved in discriminatory dynamics because these have become embedded in social patterns as part of tradition or daily routine. Furthermore, there is a risk that respondents or questionnaire participants do not feel comfortable admitting or acknowledging experiences of discrimination, out of fear of retaliation or stigmatisation. Despite the difficulties, the survey represents a unique opportunity to bring to light the silent discriminatory dynamics that influence people's everyday lives and to raise awareness of issues that are often ignored or downplayed.

With a detailed mapping of the areas in which discrimination is normalised, it will be possible to provide concrete and relevant data to raise the awareness of the community, institutions and local organisations on these crucial issues and to identify strategies for the empowerment of the people and groups most exposed to them. The question we ask ourselves is: what are the areas in which discrimination is most normalised in Bologna?

3. STRENGTHENING THE DATA MONITORING AND ANALYSIS SYSTEM BETWEEN THE ANTI-DISCRIMINATION CENTERS IN THE AREA

In order to strengthen the system of joint monitoring and data analysis between territorial desks dealing with anti-discrimination, it is crucial to develop an interconnected network of tools and resources that enable efficient collection, management and analysis of data on discrimination cases. This system should include not only the sharing of information between the various desks, but also the adoption of common methodologies to ensure comparability and consistency of the data collected. An important step would be the creation of a secure digital platform that would enable a rapid and transparent exchange of information between the various actors involved. This

is an ambitious goal that, although not feasible in the short term, would represent a significant development.

The path, begun in 2024, of joint data analysis and monitoring of SPAD, STAR and Spazio Cassero must be able to produce periodic reports and recommendations for public policies, based on data that can guide decisions at local, regional and national level. This was one of the objectives set for 2024, on which it is crucial to ensure continuity in the future. This approach not only increases the effectiveness of territorial desks in dealing with anti-discrimination issues, but also allows for a more functional management of existing activities, such as the improvement of data collection tools and methodology. For example, in 2024, the comparison of the report forms of the three centers involved revealed possible areas for improvement.

4. CREATING AN ONLINE DASHBOARD FOR DATA COMMUNICATION

The creation of an online dashboard to share data in a public way is a useful tool to give greater visibility to the number and type of discrimination in the area. The idea of this platform is to provide an interactive and transparent tool to monitor in real time cases of discrimination reported by users, citizens and organisations. This dashboard should be designed to collect and display summary information on reported cases, including discrimination grounds, reports' details (anonymous or not) and other relevant variables. Using graphs, interactive maps and dynamic tables, the platform would provide an easily understandable visual overview, accessible to all, from relevant authorities down to individuals. An important aspect of the dashboard would be the possibility to filter data according to certain parameters, such as discrimination grounds or access over a period of time, making it possible to quickly identify certain issues that could be used to

improve awareness-raising and intervention strategies. An online dashboard would serve not only as a monitoring and analysis tool, but also as a means to raise awareness in an on-going and direct way.

5. CONSOLIDATION AND EXTENSION OF REACH AT METROPOLITAN LEVEL

SPAD, on the basis of the collaborations already started in 2024, intends to consolidate and further expand its presence and activities beyond the municipal borders. This territorial extension will be realised, thanks to the collaboration with the Metropolitan City of Bologna, through the dissemination of SPAD throughout the metropolitan area and the promotion of information, awareness-raising and training initiatives on anti-discrimination issues, aimed at both operators and other key actors.

Collaboration with the Metropolitan City of Bologna, which is in turn networking with other Italian Metropolitan Cities for capacity-building initiatives of territorial anti-discrimination networks, promoted by UNAR, will make it possible to intercept and address discrimination in a broader context, involving a greater number of territories and communities.

6. STRENGTHENING DIALOGUE WITH ANTI-DISCRIMINATION NODES

SPAD intends to promote collaboration with the Emilia-Romagna Region and other networks and organisations operating in the region to fight discrimination. This synergic approach will make it possible to share experiences, good practices and resources, creating a more qualified, well-known and effective network on the regional territory.

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ARE YOU A VICTIM OR (DIRECT OR INDIRECT) WITNESS OF DISCRIMINATION? REPORT THE CASE TO SPAD:

IN PRESENCE at the Desk at the Centro Interculturale M. Zonarelli, Via Giovanni Antonio Sacco 14 (Tue 09:00-13:00, Thu 14:30-18:30) and at the Porto-Saragozza District office, Via Pier de' Crescenzi 14 (Fri 09:00-13:00)

BY PHONE at 0512196329 (Mon-Fri 9:00-13:00, Thu 14:30-18:30)
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