



# INTRODUCTION TO ELDER ABUSE IN ITALY

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# Anziani e Non Solo – About us

- ANS is a no profit organization located in Northern Italy but active at national level
- Our main domains of activities are community projects, social research, consultancy and training in the social domain
- Our main targets are older people and their formal and informal caregivers – we also work with migrants, women and disadvantaged groups. Elder abuse has been a topic for us since 2004
- We are a staff of 10 with different backgrounds: social researchers, psychologists, community workers... We also have a wide network of professionals that we recruit for special projects such as trainers, gender policies experts, lawyers etc...
- We have extensive experience in EU funded projects and in networking with European organizations
- We are members of INPEA , AGE, Coface and Eurocarers



# Elder abuse in Italy

# Elder abuse – state of art in Italy

- So far no national study on prevalence of elder abuse has ever been carried out in Italy
- Findings of available researches:
  - Silvernet Study on recipients of home care services (2007 on 4.600 respondents 65+): 10% reported abuse
  - inspections carried out by a special units of the Italian police (NAS) devoted to safeguard the citizens' health on residential care facilities: 21% of them have shown irregular situations, almost 10% of cases having a penal relevance and 3% leading to a closure of the facilities.
  - ABUEL project – study carried out in Ancona on 627 older persons: around 15% reported abuse (mainly psychological)



# Elder abuse – state of art in Italy

- While GBV and abuse of children are well-known and there are consolidated practices, the topic of EAN is not on the political agenda, in spite of frequent news report on abuses perpetrated in residential care facilities or by homecare workers
- Most regions (but not all!) have quality standards and regular inspections in care facilities and this **might** reduce the risk of abuse
- The main lacks concern domestic settings as social /community health care workers as well as volunteers are **not trained** to recognize abuse and have **no standardized intervention protocols**

# Elder abuse – state of art in Italy

- The Italian legislation does not consider older people as a subject *per se* deserving specific norms to safeguard their rights, unless they find themselves in a peculiar status of need which is itself protected by the law, such as for instance in case of disability or mental incapacity etc.

# Legal framework – The penal code

- There are several articles in the penal code that include older people among other “disadvantaged groups”:
- art. 570: violation of obligations to family care
- art. 571: abuse of means of correction or discipline
- art. 572: mistreatment of family members or children
- art. 591: neglect of minors or incapacitated persons
- art. 640: fraud
- art. 643: circumvention of incapacitated persons

# Legal framework – The civil code

The Italian civil code doesn't have direct reference to older people, but there are relevant articles in the context of protection of disadvantaged people:

- Art. 428: acts done by incapables to understand and will
- Art. 591 cases of incapability
- art. 120 incapability to understand and will
- Art. 775 Donation done by incapables to understand and will



# Legal framework – the support administrator

- Act No 6 of 2004 introduced in civil code the concept of a **support administrator** which the judge can appoint (without the need for legal defense), indicating what they may and may not do on behalf of any interested party who is partly or entirely unable to provide for daily life (e.g. disabled people, **elderly people -but not *per se***, alcoholics, drug-users, prisoners).
- thus allowing to establish a much quicker and safer way compared to guardianship to grant protection to the interests of, among others, dependent older persons, without having to resort to the juridically much more complicated tools of incapacity or interdiction
- SA actions are submitted to judge control (at least an annual report), in order to prevent abuses.

# Pilot experiences on elder abuse

- **Support service for older people victims of violence**, started in Turin in 1998. Devised by the local municipality, it's a help-line supported by the public social services and operated through a network of associations and NGOs.
- **Service of support to older victims of violence and crimes (SAVER)** managed by AUSER Latium and the municipality of Rome, offers free legal assistance and psychological support.
- **TAM (Helpline for abused elderly)**, is a helpline available in some Italian cities since 2000, managed by trained volunteers supported by a back office of professionals.
- **Turin's tribunal** has set up a multi-disciplinary team to provide support services dedicated to vulnerable victims (women, older persons, children)

## W.E.A.A.D.

- W.E.A.A.D. is basically not celebrated in Italy
- 01<sup>st</sup> of October (International day of Older Persons) and especially 02<sup>nd</sup> of October (Grandparents Day) are much more well-known and celebrated, for example by mass media
- As ANS we normally remember the WEEAD through press-releases, communications on our website and use of the purple ribbon on all our communication tools (social networks, website etc.)
- We have never had the chance (and funding) for a large scale public event



# ANS projects on elder abuse



# ANS project on elder abuse – EU level

- **EURO.P.E.A.N. (2009-2011)** – developed in partnership with 9 EU countries, the project developed an European online reference framework for elder abuse prevention, with a special focus on cultural issues. Unfortunately, the website is currently un-accessible.
- **WE DO (2010-2012)** – aim of the project was the creation of an European Quality framework for long-term care services and elder abuse was one of the main issue. The website also contains a collection of best practices. <http://wedo.ttp.eu/>



# ANS project on elder abuse – research

- **DIADE (2009-2010)** was an action-research activity funded by the Ministry of Equal Opportunities and focused on violence in care relationships (carers towards older persons as well as older persons towards their carers). In the framework of the project a training course was offered to a multi-stakeholder group, exploring the issue from a medical, legal and social point of view.

<http://www.informanziani.it/modulo.php?id=2123> – Italian only



## ANS project on elder abuse – support services

- **LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOR OLDER PERSONS (2005)** was a pilot project funded by Emilia R. Region aimed to set up a counselling services for abused older persons in the district of Carpi. The team included social workers, a lawyer and two older volunteers (retired local police agents). After the piloting the service was closed due to lack of users.
- **FILO DIRETTO (2006 – 2011)** was a counselling services for support administrators. The project included a training course for volunteers interested to become S.A.s and included EAN related issues. The funding is now over but we keep on offering the service on a private-base.



## ANS project on elder abuse – training

- **CASA (2012-2013)** was a project promoted in the Municipality of Ferrara offering a variety of services for dependent older persons assisted at home by informal carers. Among these services, we offered 4 editions of a course on legal protection and elder abuse prevention.
- In the framework of **TRAINING FOR DOMESTIC CARE WORKERS** that we provide in the District of Carpi we have included a module on prevention of elder abuse

