HOPE in stations : HOmeless People in European train stations

Final evaluation report

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« HOPE in stations » partnership

ANSA – A New Agency for Active Inclusion

Social engineering devoted to the fight against poverty and social exclusion

The « Agence nouvelle des solidarités actives » was created in 2006, as a non-profit making organization, by the president of the famous French NGO Emmaüs, Martin Hirsch, and Benoît Genuini, former CEO of Accenture.

Our aim is to develop, on a local and experimental basis, innovative actions against poverty and social exclusion.

Since its creation, our NGO has designed and co-constructed experimental programs and has promoted the development of social innovation. For instance, ANSA has supported several dozens of French departments (French territorial division) in the experimentation then general implementation processes of the RSA (new minimum income) and the CUI (unique inclusion contract)…

ANSA also supports local authorities in the process of activating their inclusion policies and developing anti-poverty programs in various fields: professional inclusion, personal microcredit, access to various rights, preventing over-indebtedness, inclusion through ICT, health, housing, etc.

ANSA always tries to include those actually facing poverty in the building process of policies aimed at them. Their participation guarantees the relevance of our projects and gives a public voice to those who are rarely listened to.

Lastly, our NGO aims at pooling and spreading thoughts, experiences and methods by creating new opportunities of meeting and dialogue, and by publishing experience feedback and contributions to the general reflection.

Classified as being of public interest, ANSA relies on partnerships with the French State, local authorities, other NGOs as well as companies, who support our actions directly or through their corporate foundations.

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Table of contents

Figures

Tables

Introductory words from Luc JERABEK

Managing Director of the Agence nouvelle des solidarités actives

Convinced that the fight against poverty is at stake as much at a global as at a local level, the "Agence nouvelle des solidarités actives" (ANSA) widened its scope of action to the European policies since 2008.

From then on, ANSA developed its first initiatives of European scope, such as the partnership with a Portuguese NGO to enhance the users' participation on a social inclusion project in Porto, or the creation of a blog dedicated to social innovation in Europe, within the framework of the European year for combating poverty and social exclusion.

ANSA also took the opportunity of the first call for proposals of the European Commission on social experimentations (within the framework of the PROGRESS program) to elaborate a project aiming at experimenting a new social device to support homeless people in European train stations.

This project, « HOPE in stations » (HOmeless People in European train stations), brought together the stakeholders of the train stations of Paris Nord and Paris Est, Brussels Central, Roma Termini, Berlin Zoo, Madrid Antocha, Warsaw Central and Luxembourg Central. The project, in each country, gathered local authorities, social organizations which support homeless people and railway companies into a reinforced collaboration. The core of this experimented new social device was the setting up of a reference authority, in three train stations, Paris Nord and Paris Est, Brussels Central, Roma Termini, in charge of the coordination of all the interventions of the different stakeholders in and around the stations.

The whole project (as a social experimentation) was the subject of a complete and rigorous ex-ante/ex-post evaluation of the experimental device, carried through by the Austrian laboratory ZSI.

This second report aims at presenting the results of the project and of the scientific evaluation that was implemented during the whole social experimentation. This evaluation concerned three major topics, focusing on the impact of the implementation of the reference authority in the three stations:

- The evaluation of homeless people's situation in stations
- The evaluation of the training sessions provided to stations' employees
- The evaluation of interactions between social stakeholders

These results were presented during the final restitution event, that took place in Paris on the 16th of December 2011. Following this project and in order to continue this collaboration between the different stakeholders, another project grew up : WORK in stations ("Working On Reinclusion Know-how in European train stations"), which aims at building a common approach among all partners and creating efficient partnerships in the field of inclusion through work for disadvantaged people.

ANSA (as pilot of the project) is very proud to publish this report written by the Austrian laboratory ZSI. In order to improve the exchange of knowledge for the stakeholders as for the concerned people, this is published in French, English, Italian and Dutch.

On behalf of all the partners of the HOPE in stations project, I thank ZSI for this evaluation and I wish you a good reading.

Luc Jerabek, Managing Director of the Agence nouvelle des solidarités actives

1. Introduction

The EU PROGRESS project HOPE in stations was developed as a response to a call on social experimentation. Social experimentation is a specific approach to the implementation and evaluation of interventions, aiming at the development of new social practices and/or the re-organisation of existing ones. These practices often refer to the broad issue of social inclusion, and in this project specifically to the issue of homelessness. The phenomenon of homelessness is present in many large cities throughout Europe and seems to be tightly linked not only to the general social support system and the availability of affordable accommodation, but also to the arrangement of public space. The project is particularly interested in the phenomenon according to which persons in precarious situations, and in particular homeless persons, are for different reasons drawn to train stations where they spend their time. The train station not only offers basic infrastructure (shops, sanitary facilities, social services), but also qualifies as a meeting place and a place where it is (still) possible to stay without allowance, and to become invisible in the masses of passers-by. It is also a way of participating in social life, albeit a precarious one.

Homelessness thus becomes visible at train stations and is observed by different stakeholders: from railway employees through to shop keepers, social workers, NGOs, security personnel, police, and travellers. Different groups with different interests, practices and attitudes towards homeless persons. When observing this constellation of actors it immediately becomes evident that some sort of "coordination" would probably lead to better support for homeless persons in clarifying the different functions, interests and attitudes and establishing a common approach and practice towards homeless persons. HOPE in stations was mainly concerned with improving the communication and cooperation of social services and stakeholders in three local contexts: Brussels Central (Brussels), Gare du Nord et Est (Paris), and Roma Termini (Rome).

The project introduced two main interventions. It created the professional function of the "reference authority", a person or organisation responsible for connecting the railway station to social service organisations; and it implemented a training programme for railway employees and employees from associated companies, where professional trainers (often with a background in social work) presented the issue of homelessness as well as tools that would help employees in handling situations related to homeless persons. Both interventions had to be developed in the course of the project.

The demand for an impact evaluation of the interventions was already articulated in the call for proposals and has to be seen as a key element of the social experimentation that HOPE in stations implemented. To fulfil this demand and, at the same time, to adapt the evaluation design to the interventions was the most challenging task for us, the evaluation team, and made several important decisions and changes in the original design necessary. These adaptations are also documented in this evaluation report.

The evaluation was designed and coordinated by three researchers working at the Centre for Social Innovation (ZSI)[1], a non-profit research institute based in Vienna: Alexander Kesselring (project leader), Stefanie Smoliner and Andreas Bohonnek. For implementing the evaluation the project appointed three national researchers: Patrick Italiano (Brussels), Christophe Blanchard (Paris), and Franca Iannaccio (Rome).

This evaluation was preceded by a preliminary research consisting of a general statistical overview on homelessness in the cities under study conducted by Julien Damon as well as a so called "social mapping", an initial attempt to describe the local NGOs and stakeholders as well as their cooperation. The "social mapping" was conducted by the Italian research institute ISFORT and coordinated by Carlo Carminucci. Both studies have been combined and published by the project[2]. The preliminary research helped us in many ways to design the evaluation and we would like to thank both researchers for their friendly support and advice at the initial stages of evaluation design.

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1 ZSI webpage: www.zsi.at

2 ANSA (Agence nouvelle des Solidarités actives (Ed.): 2011: Homeless people in European train stations. Preliminary scientific analysis.

This final report presents the results of the HOPE in stations evaluation that was implemented in 2010 and 2011. It comprises results from a questionnaire survey on homeless persons, a quantitative and qualitative training programme evaluation, qualitative interviews with social service organisations and a quantitative network analysis on local social service networks. An additional ANNEX including the questionnaires and guidelines used in this survey can be directly requested by mail from ANSA[3].

The evaluation of HOPE in stations is in our perspective more than impact assessment. It allows us to better understand the local contexts in which different organisations tried to implement new coordination and support structures for the benefit of homeless persons.

The evaluation team wants to thank all partners of HOPE in stations for supporting us in our difficult task. First of all, the coordinators at ANSA, Sylvie Le Bars, Diane Angermüller, and Morgan Poulizac, the staff at ANSA, in particular Lucie Assmann and Gabrielle Guerin, who took on so many responsibilities in this project, and the trainees that helped with organisation and translation.

Finally, we would like to point out the efforts undertaken by our national researchers to implement this evaluation and to collect most of the data for us, Patrick Italiano, Christophe Blanchard, and Franca Iannaccio. Without their commitment we would not have been able to implement this evaluation.

3 ANSA webpage: www.solidarites-actives.com

2. Evaluation design

"Impact evaluation" means to measure the "impacts" of an intervention or programme. It is therefore differentiated from "process evaluation" which assesses the quality of implementation instead of impacts (see Figure 1).

In evaluation terminology we however have to differentiate between the "outcomes" and the "impacts" of an intervention. The **outcomes** of an intervention are the **intended effects of a programme on the target group(s) it addresses**. This may comprise changes in individual and socio-economic characteristics. In contrast, **impacts** are the **intended and un-intended effects of a programme on "social systems"** – institutional change, organisational change, social change. The impacts therefore go beyond the target group of the intervention. Impacts are usually much more difficult to measure compared to outcomes – they relate to many complex changes, larger social systems and longer periods of time[4].

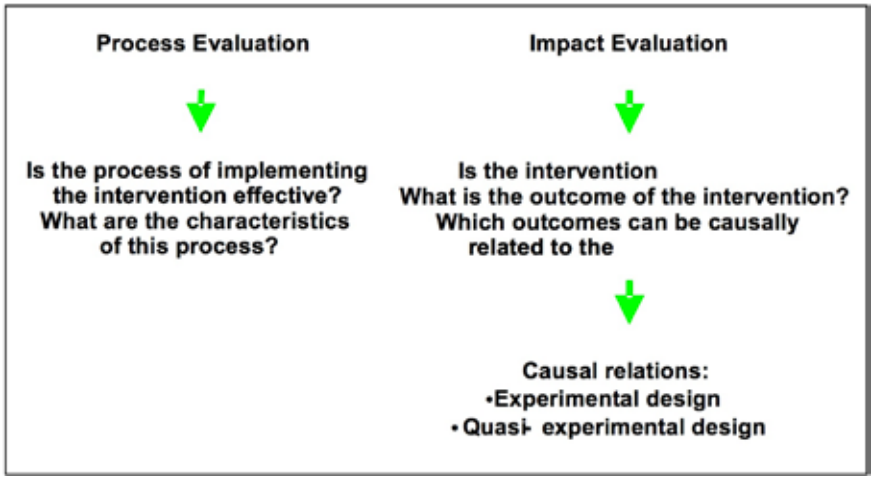

Figure 1: Process evaluation and impact evaluation

4 Rossi, P.; Freeman, H.; Lipsey, M.: 1999: Evaluation. A systematic approach. 6th edition. SAGE Publications: London.

The evaluation model applied in HOPE in stations is therefore more precisely called "outcome evaluation". We focused on the primary target groups of the interventions and the immediate outcomes.

Evaluating outcomes in a strict sense means to **prove or disprove a causal relationship between the intervention and the outcome that is measured**. The only methodologically sound way to do this is to apply **"experimental designs"**[5]. Experimental designs follow the idea of comparing an "intervention group" and a "control group" measuring and comparing indicators at different points in time before and after the intervention. The procedure: An intervention is designed and indicators are developed for measuring the expected outcome of the intervention. An intervention and a control group are selected randomly from a given population. The indicators are being measured for both groups before the intervention starts ("ex-ante"). Ideally, intervention and control group are completely isolated to assure that only the intervention group will be affected by the intervention. After the intervention, indicators are being measured again for both groups ("ex-post"). Now ex-ante and ex-post measurements are compared separately for intervention and control group as well as between the two groups. The "control group" provides the so called "contra-factual design" – a situation where ideally no intervention affected the group. Thus, if there is a measurable difference between ex-ante and ex-post measurements for the intervention group, but not for the control group, this can be seen as an indication of a causal relationship between the intervention and the measured effect with a certain statistical probability – now the measured difference can be seen as the "outcome" of the intervention.

In very basic terms this is the original experimental design. Experimental designs are primarily about control – controlling the selection, controlling the intervention, controlling the separation of intervention and control group, controlling the context – and thus are best situated in laboratories where many conditions can be controlled.

Evaluation of "real life" interventions such as social programmes will never

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5 Shadish, W.; Cook, T.; Campbell, D.: 2010: Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for generalized causal inference. Houghton Mifflin: Boston, New York

meet these strict conditions. Nonetheless, we often feel the need to assess these interventions and to be able to relate cause and effect. This need led to so called **"quasi-experimental designs"** which were derived from experimental designs while being adapted to "real life" interventions. The challenges are the same: selection, separation, control, comparison. The main difference is that quasi-experimental designs usually do not rely on random selection: Social programmes are launched for particular reasons, on particular sites, and for particular target groups without the possibility to randomly select sites and persons. Another difference is that the "context" is often impossible to control – people can not be completely isolated in "real life" situations. The target group will always be subject to many different influences which can not be controlled and often can not be detected either. However, quasi-experimental evaluation also tries to control conditions as well as possible and tries to come up with optimal comparison schemes. For instance, the evaluation can increase the number of measurements ("time series design") or it can increase the number of compared groups or both.

Experimental and quasi-experimental design relies on quantitative measurement of indicators. Only quantitative measurements can be statistically compared. This also means to be particularly aware of the definition and operationalisation of the indicators used. Indicators must be **relevant** (they must be tightly related to the expected outcomes of an intervention and they must be politically relevant, or at least relevant for the main stakeholders interested in supporting and assessing an intervention) and they must be **reliable** (they have to measure consistently the same aspects over periods in time).

The quality of quasi-experimental however not only depends on control, comparison and measurement – it also depends on the type of intervention. In the literature we find basic characteristics of interventions which usually increase the quality of quasi-experimental evaluation (REF):

- **Short** and **strong** interventions
- **Specified** and **standardised** interventions
- **Interventions based on an impact model** (What impacts can be expected from the intervention? How do certain elements of the interventions impact target groups?)

In HOPE in stations we actually started with having a quasi-experimental design in mind comprising homeless persons as well as social service organisations as the main target groups. We expected the interventions – which were not defined at the beginning – to generate measurable outcomes for these two groups.

We also knew that the intervention would be implemented on three different sites, respectively train stations. Instead of having a control group – which seemed to be impossible from the beginning given the available resources and coordination capacities – we decided to focus on the comparison of the three intervention sites. This is one of the many different types of quasi-experimental evaluation. For quasi-experimental evaluation this is often the only possible way to go. Given the short project period of 2 years (including the development and implementation of interventions) we also decided to have measurements only at two points in time, before (ex-ante) and after (ex-post) the intervention. Thus, two target groups, three sites, and two points in time.

Starting from this initial expectation we – the evaluation team as well as the coordinators and the partners – had to learn about the "real life" situation of a cross-national social experimentation project based on a partnership between research organisations, NGOs and railway companies, and what this implies for experimental evaluation. It implies much more flexibility, much more adaptation and even much more improvisation than we would have initially expected. The process report in chapter 6 will describe this process in more detail, pointing out the main challenges, adaptations and recommendations.

The final evaluation scheme is depicted in two different figures (Figure 2: Comparison scheme and Figure 3: Target groups, methods and evaluation design). Figure 2: Comparison scheme shows the overall comparison between sites (train stations in different cities) and points in time (before/after intervention). Figure 3: Target groups, methods and evaluation design summarises the evaluation surveys implemented in HOPE in stations in chronological order (read from top-down) that are the same for each of the sites. The interventions as well as the evaluation survey are targeted at different groups: Social service organisations (=organisations providing direct support

to homeless persons), homeless persons (homeless persons regularly visiting the train stations under study), training programme participants (Participants of the training programme initiated by HOPE in stations). The overall evaluation scheme comprises three different designs tailored to these specific target groups and the different indicators for measuring impacts.

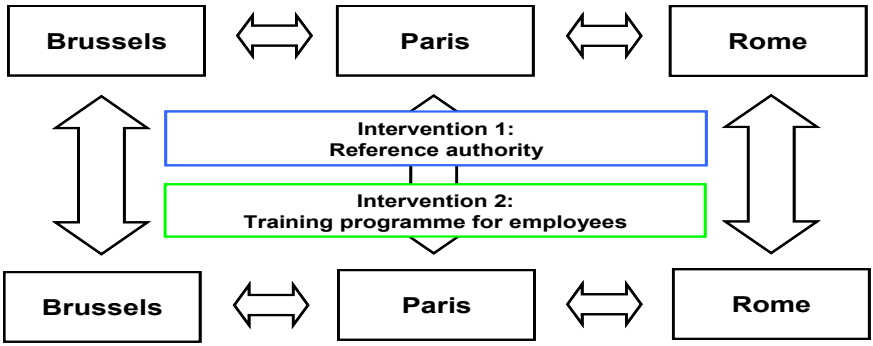


Figure 2: Comparison scheme

The final design shows that we implemented much more qualitative elements than initially expected and reduced the quantitative elements. It also shows that we applied many different methods of empirical research in this evaluation: From network analysis, to questionnaires, to interviews, to workshops. We also see that a new target group had been introduced: training participants. This also meant to develop an additional evaluation design for the training programme that was developed in the process of the project. We also see that we did only one initial survey on homeless persons that was not repeated after the intervention. We will argument this decision in detail in chapter 3 and 6.

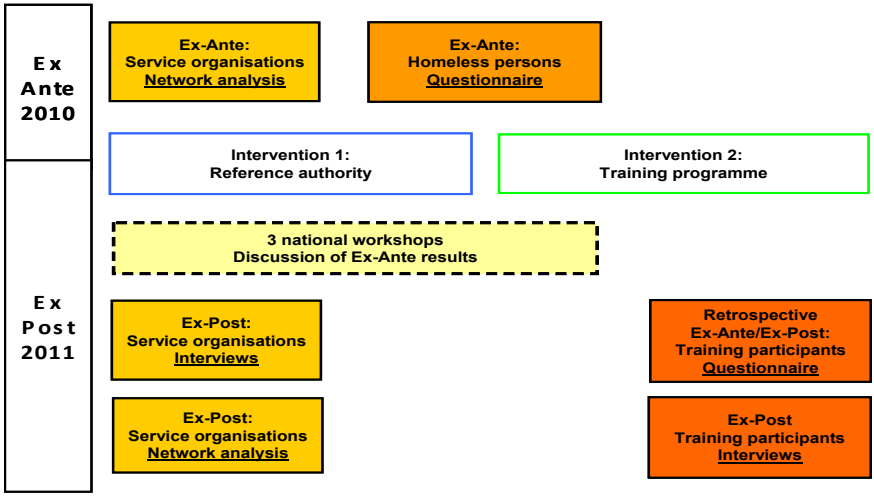


Figure 3: Target groups, methods and evaluation design

The evaluation of HOPE in stations finally became more than quasi-experimental evaluation and changed its character quite fundamentally. Throughout this process the evaluation tried to assure the scientific quality of the applied methods and approaches and tried to maintain elements of a quasi-experimental design within the possibilities of the project's organisation and resources. The measurement of service cooperation for instance was implemented as planned at three sites and two points in time and followed a quantitative approach. For homeless persons we decided that we had to leave the initially chosen path which is explained in more detail in the process report. For the training evaluation we decided to use a retrospective Ex-Ante/Ex-Post assessment by the participants themselves instead of having a measurement before and after the training. Additionally, we applied qualitative interviews that were conducted with employees several months after the training. All these methods as well as the data collection are explained in full detail in the corresponding chapters.

Assessing this evaluation design from our current position we think that we actually found an acceptable compromise that allowed us to assure the use of sound methodologies as well as to adapt to different developments and changes in the project. We think however that there is the need to quite generally reflect on the conditions necessary to implement experimental evaluation in the context of cross-national collaboration. Therefore we also included such considerations in the process report in chapter 6.

2.1 Applied Methods

This chapter provides a short overview on the applied methods. Methods are described in more detail in the corresponding chapters that present the results.

2.1.1 Questionnaire for homeless persons

At the beginning of HOPE in stations in 2010 we planned to conduct two quantitative surveys on homeless persons to compare defined indicators before and after the interventions following a quasi-experimental design. The homeless survey and the corresponding questionnaire for homeless persons were the first elements of the evaluation that ZSI designed in 2010. The design process was complicated by the fact that interventions were still discussed and negotiated so that their objective, target group and scope were difficult to anticipate. The decision of the evaluation team was however to continue on the chosen path of implementing a quantitative survey and thus ensuring the possibility for quantitative comparisons between cities and between time periods (before/after intervention).

The most complicated design decision at this stage was the definition of the target group. It was clear that interventions would have *a local respectively "geographic" focus*: The three train stations. The interventions as such were not conceptualised as a "programme" where homeless persons would register, but as *interventions in public space* with the consequence that the project had no control on the population that would actually be affected by the interventions. Since the intervention did not specify a known group of

people that would be the target group, the evaluation team had to define the target group in a more general way. We decided for a target group definition that incorporated the "local aspect" – generally speaking, we intended to interview homeless persons regularly spending time at the train station. The formal criteria of the final definition are shown in chapter 3.

Having no clear selection of and control on the group of persons which would be affected by the interventions caused a severe problem for experimental evaluation. Without these fundamental prerequisites the application of experimental evaluation had to be questioned for the target group of homeless persons. At the end of 2010, after the first experiences with the survey and now with more information on the intervention design (Comprising coordination and networking activities addressing NGOs and a training programme addressing employees at the railway stations), it became clear that the methodological approach had to be changed and that the efforts and resources necessary for undertaking a second quantitative homeless survey in 2011 were not justified anymore. The decision was then to focus more on the primary target groups of the intervention (social services, stakeholders, and training participants) and to shift from a quantitative to a qualitative approach for homeless persons, comprising the participation in focus-groups with a smaller group of homeless persons in 2011.

2.1.2 Group discussions with homeless persons

Our researchers participated in group discussions with homeless persons. In Brussels and Rome such groups had already been established by social service organisations with regular meetings and changing topics. In these groups homeless persons have the opportunity to share their experiences with additional support from social workers. Each researcher participated in one of these groups. Researchers were instructed to ask specific questions on the homeless persons' perceptions of changes at the railway station in relation to the activities of HOPE in stations and to elaborate a protocol.

2.1.3 Questionnaire for training participants

HOPE in stations implemented a training programme for employees of the railway companies and associated companies. The objective was to better prepare employees to approach and to deal with homeless persons at the train station. All training sessions were completed in the first half of 2011 and questionnaires were filled in and collected immediately after the training.

2.1.4 Qualitative interviews with training participants

In 2011, several months after the training, national researchers conducted qualitative interviews with training participants focusing on their workplace experience with homeless persons and their assessment of the training.

2.1.5 Network analysis

Strengthening the cooperation of social services related to homeless persons in the local context of the railway stations was a main objective of the reference authorities implemented by HOPE in stations. Therefore, we designed an evaluation that can be described as a quasi-experimental design comprising an ex-ante (=before the intervention) and ex-post (=after the intervention) measurement for three comparison groups (three service networks in three different cities). The method we used is quantitative network analysis which will be explained in chapter 5.2. The survey investigated differences in the level of "service integration" before and after the intervention, in the structure of the local support networks and the integration of the newly introduced reference authority. The network questionnaire was used in 2010 and in 2011 to collect data on the 12 months before each survey. The second questionnaire was slightly modified, because it now included the HOPE in stations reference authority as an additional network actor. Thus, the two surveys provide data on two distinct time periods that can be compared.

2.1.6 Qualitative interviews with social services and stakeholders

In addition to the network analysis we decided to conduct qualitative interviews with social service organisations after the implementation of the reference authorities in late 2011 to see how they perceive and assess the HOPE in stations reference authority.

2.1.7 Stakeholder workshop

A stakeholder workshop was organised in each of the three cities. The aim was to discuss the results from the homeless survey as well as to discuss the function of the reference authority as perceived by local social service organisations and railway station stakeholders.

2.1.8 Reference authority report and outlook

The reference authorities produced two reports on their activities during the implementation period. These periods were primarily designed to monitor and document their activities. Furthermore, the reference authorities together with the responsible persons from the railway companies wrote a short outlook on the continuation of the activities of the reference authority beyond HOPE in stations. The evaluation team provided additional questions to both reports to receive comprehensive information on the actual implementation.

2.2 Data collection

Table 1 below provides an overview of all evaluation data collected for HOPE in stations. This is also a summary of the different target groups we approached and the methods we applied in this evaluation. The last column indicates the number of responses we expected to receive for questionnaires, interviews, etc. We see that in several cases we did not reach the expected response, but also that the response rate varies between methods and between cities.

Target groups	Method / Data	Completed			Expected (per site)
		Brussels	Paris	Rome	
Service Organisations	Interviews 2011	9	7	5	10
	Network questionnaire 2010	10	10	12	16
	Network questionnaire 2011	8	8	6	16
Stakeholders	Workshop protocol	1	1	1	1
Training	Questionnaires	20 of 21	31 of 50	36 of 59	All part.
	Interviews	4	10	10	10
Homeless persons	Focusgroup protocols	1	1	1	1
	Questionnaires	15	40	39	40
Reference authority	Reports	2	2	2	2
	Outlook	1	1	1	1

Table 1: Overview on data collection

The evaluation team as well as the researchers invested two years of intensive work to collect these data with continuous support from the coordinator ANSA. The researchers' profiles and competences were in our view absolutely appropriate for their task and in many regards exceeded our initial expectations. The researchers in Brussels and Paris had an academic background in sociology and empirical methods. Patrick Italiano (Brussels) has long-time experience in sociological research and project work. Christophe Blanchard (Paris) is doing field research on specific sub-populations of homeless persons and writes his phd thesis on that topic. Our researcher in Rome, Franca Iannaccio has long-time experience in managing and coordinating social inclusion projects and is working with homeless persons and social service organisations, being also familiar with data collection and information management. All researchers were supported by the national HOPE in stations teams. Furthermore, they received comprehensive instructions by the evaluation team. For each data collection the evaluation team briefed and instructed the researchers personally and provided them with written

guidelines. The evaluation team further followed the process of data collection continuously, collecting feedback from the researchers and intervening when necessary. Respondents were systematically approached by mail, by phone, by personal visit and re-contacted many times.

These conditions usually are sufficient for assuring optimal data collection. In HOPE in stations we experienced however serious difficulties in collecting data. Finally, we could assure sufficient coverage, but not the optimal coverage we intended to achieve.

These difficulties were manifold, but can maybe summarised in saying that the project did not generate the commitment of all "stakeholders" in the general sense of all individuals and organisations that could potentially support or benefit from HOPE in stations. More precisely, it did not achieve full commitment to the whole concept of social experimentation with evaluation as an integral part. The commitment to the interventions generally seemed to be stronger, maybe not from the beginning, but definitively since the implementation of the reference authorities and the training programme.

This is however not only a shortcoming of the project. Based on our observations during this two-year process and the feedback from researchers we think that the restrictions in data collection were actually a reproduction of some of the existing patterns of non-cooperation between certain services, stakeholders and internal departments of the railway companies. We received for instance hardly any network questionnaires from the food distributions in Rome in 2011, which were generally cooperating only on a low level with other organisations as we knew from the survey in 2010, where at least some of them participated. We were also confronted with problems when an internal department of SNCF, which was not directly related to the project, implemented the training programme without fully complying with the evaluation procedure until the intervention of the coordinator ANSA. In Brussels we were confronted with some resistance when trying to interview training participants (who already had agreed to be interviewed), which we believe resulted from differences in assessments and expectations between internal hierarchical levels.

The main consortium partners from railway companies as well as NGOs who were directly related to HOPE in stations however showed their commitment not only in supporting and of course funding the implementation of the activities, but also in following up and complying to the evaluation. Thus, while having the commitment of directly involved partners, the responsible departments of the railway companies and key organisations in the NGO field, the project did not always achieve to integrate the "periphery" or the "ground levels" (lower management) of stakeholders in our perception.

Another reason may have been the use of demanding methods not well known to wider public audiences such as quantitative network analysis. Researchers as well as respondents sometimes had a negative impression regarding the "strictness" of the applied methods and their "administrative" character. In general, we often received the feedback that we were asking for too much information, conducting too many interviews etc. We think that it became evident what "experimental evaluation" imposes on coordinators, researchers and respondents. It is a demanding methodology and it is usually primarily a quantitative methodology. This is necessary for comparison between sites and points in time. We had the impression that the integral character of the evaluation and the framework of "social experimentation" was difficult to understand for researchers as well as respondents. It seemed that in general researchers and stakeholders would have preferred a much more conventional evaluation consisting mainly in interviews and nothing else. Qualitative interviews were much better accepted by researchers and respondents than the network analysis or the questionnaire for homeless persons. The evaluation team developed a better understanding of these difficulties during the project and tried to adapt the methods but also the instructions accordingly with more or less success.

Concluding, we can say that data collection took much more resources than initially expected and achieved sub-optimal but sufficient results for the analysis. Our experiences point however to the fact that experimental evaluation is very likely to face these restrictions when the method is applied in a more "open" context without complete and strong integration of all relevant stakeholders (including funding and legal contracts). We will further elaborate on these arguments in the process report in chapter 6.

3. Survey on homeless persons

The survey on homeless persons implemented in 2010 was based on a questionnaire primarily designed for quantitative analysis. The survey targeted a specific sub-population of homeless persons in the three cities. We attempted to solve the difficulties in target group definition explained earlier (the intervention at the railway station did not have a clearly defined target group) and decided to use four main criteria to select homeless persons for the survey.

In our definition respondents were **persons without regular accommodation at the day of the survey, who either slept outside or in a non-regular space and/or slept in an emergency shelter during the last month before the survey and regularly spent time at the train station.** The survey therefore targeted a very specific sub-population of homeless persons. The formal criteria as used in the questionnaire are shown in Table 2.

The second criterion is based on the main criterion used by a comprehensive survey on homeless persons by the national French statistical institute INSEE that was conducted in 2001[6].

Selection criteria	Response categories
Are you the regular owner or tenant of a flat or house? Criterion: Respondent is not an owner/tenant.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know
During the last month, have you ever been… Criterion: Respondent answers "yes" to at least one of these questions.	☐ sleeping in the streets or in another place which is not a regular place for living (parks, train station, cellars, squats)? ☐ sleeping in an emergency or transitional shelter?

6 Brousse, C., de la Rochère, B. , and Massé, E.: 2003: "L'enquête auprès des sans-domicile usagers des services d'hébergement et des distributions de repas chauds", INSEE Méthodes.

How often have you been visiting [train station] during the last month for other reasons than using train or metro? Nearly every day, several times a week, once a week, less than once a week or never? *Criterion: Respondent has been visiting [train station] "once a week" or more often during the last month for other purposes than using the train or the subway.*	☐ nearly every day ☐ several times a week ☐ once a week
When you visit [train station] – How much time do you spend there at average a day? *Criterion: Respondent spends at average a day at least one hour at the train station when he/she visits.*	_____ hours

Table 2: Target group selection criteria (homeless questionnaire)

The questionnaire was based on six themes:

1. Homeless persons' demographic characteristics (gender, age, etc.)
2. Homeless persons' socio-economic situation (employment, education, social benefits, etc.)
3. Homeless persons' experiences at the train station (problems, security, etc.)
4. Homeless persons' activities at the train station (time spent at station, specific activities, etc.)
5. Homeless persons' contacts with railway stakeholders and social services (social workers, security, cleaning personnel, customer service, police, etc.)
6. Homeless persons' information on and use of social services at and around the station

In particular, themes 3, 4, 5, and 6 seemed to be relevant with regard to the interventions HOPE in stations would set up. Furthermore, we attempted to collect the main socio-demographic characteristics to better know and understand the current situation of the respondents. Given the specific target group that is not enlisted anywhere and therefore can not be systematically surveyed and randomly sampled, the questionnaire has a more open and "explorative" character. It will not be possible to **statistically** make assumptions on the whole population of homeless persons meeting our criteria. We will only be able to observe and interpret the characteristics of our respondents. The number of respondents in Paris and Rome is however high enough to get a general impression based on quantitative data of homeless persons who regularly visit the railway station. It also features their own assessments of the situation at the train station and the social services provided. Although we primarily focused on collecting quantitative data we included open-ended questions for many themes to allow homeless persons to voice their opinions.

All together 92 homeless persons (according to our definition) were interviewed at and around the railway stations in Brussels, Paris and Rome. In Paris 39 homeless persons were interviewed, 42,4% of all respondents, in Rome 38 persons, or 41,3% and in Brussels 15 persons, or 16,3% of all respondents (see ANNEX).

The survey on homeless persons at a glance:

- **Conducted on three sites**: Brussels Central (Brussels), Gare du Nord-Est (Paris), Roma Termini (Rome) by our national researchers
- **Survey period**: November 2010 to February 2011
- **Target group**: Homeless persons regularly visiting the train station (see selection criteria in).
- **Objective**: Collecting information on demographic characteristics, activities at the train station, problems at the train station, contacts with stakeholders at the train station, knowledge on and use of social services

- **Method**: Questionnaire comprising closed as well as open questions. Statistical analysis with SPSS.
- **Selection of respondents**: Convenience sample (due to the fact that the target group is not listed/registered) based on formal criteria.
- **Average duration of an interview**: 30 - 60 min
- **Expected response**: 40 questionnaires for each site
- **Data collection**: We selected 2-4 organisations in each city where our researchers could conduct interviews with the support of the organisation. We decided to do additional interviews at food distributions (or at least to arrange an interview there) or directly at the train station if support from social workers would be available. Data was collected with face-to-face interviews.

3.1 Data collection

Data collection was initially planned to take two months and was scheduled at the end of 2010, shortly before the reference authorities would become active. We had to find a common approach that researchers would agree to. We were aware of the difficulties of reaching and interviewing homeless persons and the fact that our researchers could also be exposed to problematic situations. It also appeared necessary to slightly adapt the approach for each city and each researcher. Researchers had different links with the local social services and different opportunities of using their premises for doing interviews. We decided that our primary approach would be to interview homeless persons at social service organisations. We knew from our national teams (whose members represented key players in the NGO field) that specific organisations could be seen as "entry points" to the support system or first stops for persons in need of support. In Rome for instance, the Help Center as well as the Binario 95 were such organisations. Our Italian researcher, Franca Iannaccio, employed by the Help Center, had full access to these premises. In Brussels the situation was more difficult. When the national researcher approached social services in this regard the answer was often that

homeless persons from the train station would not come there. After several visits our researcher could confirm this and decided to approach homeless persons directly at the train station. In Paris our researcher was also more successful in directly approached homeless persons outside of service settings. As an academic researcher doing field research on homeless persons, he was familiar with the situation and reported no major difficulties.

The "problem" for data collection in Brussels was the low number of homeless persons at the Central Station. Brussels Central is not the main station (while Gare du Nord-Est in Paris and Termini Roma are clearly the main national train stations) and is a bit smaller. It attracts a very specific group of homeless persons, often elderly long-term homeless persons. These persons, as it is also shown in the analysis, are usually at distance from social services and use them rather selectively. It took considerable efforts to reach and interview these persons. Finding a person, making contact and conducting the interview in many cases took several hours all together. An important aspect of this approach was also to build up a basic relationship and a certain level of trust with homeless persons. Our researcher achieved to be accepted by the group and could therefore conduct a small number of interviews. The time needed for conducting these interviews equalled the time needed for conducting a much higher number of interviews in service settings.

Concluding, we can say that the data collection on homeless persons was one of the most resource-intensive tasks in this project. It also meant to prolong the data collection period for two months to collect a sufficient number of interviews. The speed and success of data collection highly depended on the national contexts.

3.2 Socio-demographic data

Only 16 persons or 17,5% of respondents are female, the majority of 82,6% or 76 persons are male. The comparison of railway stations by gender of respondents shows that the highest share of female respondents can be observed in Rome with 21,1%, followed by Paris with 20,5%. In Brussels there were no female respondents.

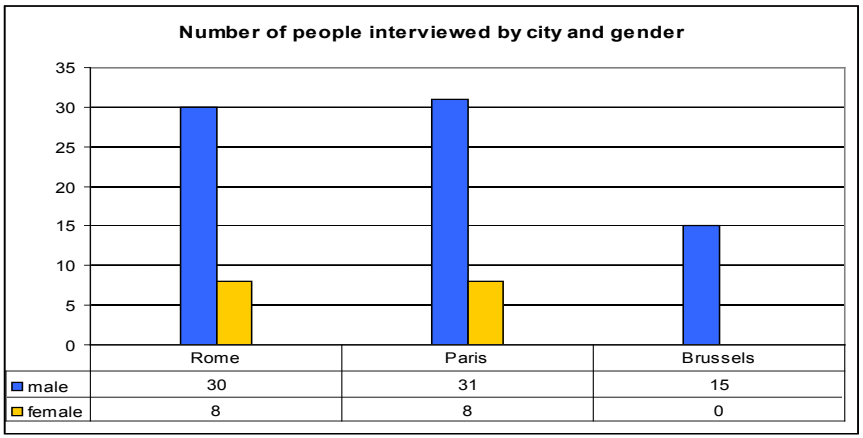
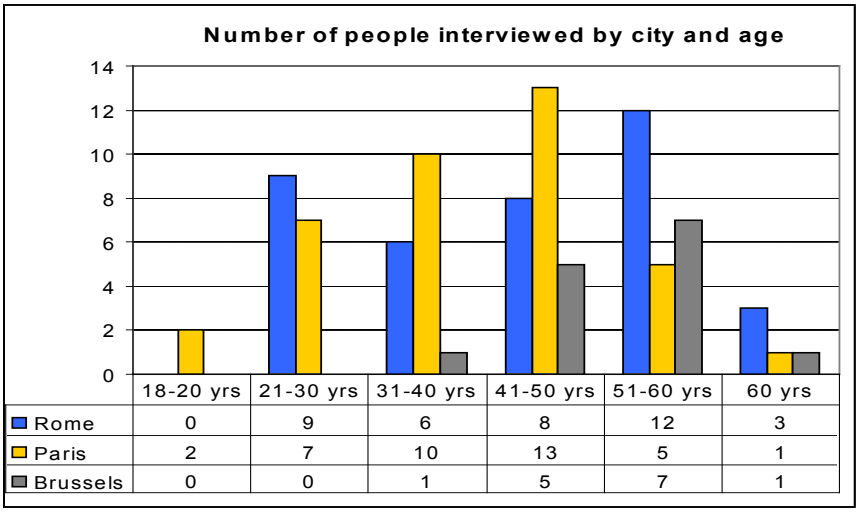


Figure 4: People interviewed by city and gender

The age of respondents varies significantly (p= 0,012) between cities (see Figure 5: Respondents by city and age): Whereas in Brussels the average age of respondents was 50,5 years, the respective value in Rome is 44,3 years and in Paris only 39,7 years. Comparison of age by gender shows no significant differences between men and women: the average age of men is 43,6 years and of women 43 years.



	18-20 yrs	21-30 yrs	31-40 yrs	41-50 yrs	51-60 yrs	60 yrs
Rome	0	9	6	8	12	3
Paris	2	7	10	13	5	1
Brussels	0	0	1	5	7	1

Figure 5: Respondents by city and age

All together 33 respondents, or 36,3%, do not have the citizenship of the country where the interview took place. The data shows significant (p= 0,023) differences between cities: whereas in Rome 19 persons or 50% of respondents did not have the citizenship, the respective amount in Paris is 20,5% and in Brussels 42,9%.

36 persons, 39% of respondents, receive subsidies such as unemployment pay, health benefit, pension, family allowance or other social welfare benefits (see Table 3). This share also differs significantly (p=0,000) between cities from 64% in Paris to 33,3% in Brussels and 15,8% in Rome and between persons with and without the citizenship of the respective country. Only 5 of 33 persons without citizenship, 15,2%, reported to receive any subsidies, whereas the respective share for the group with citizenship is 53,4% (see Table 3).

	Rome		Paris		Brussels		total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Receive any subsidy (total)	6	15,8	25	64,1	5	33,3	36	39,1
Receive any subsidy (no citizenship)	0	0,0	4	50,0	1	16,7	5	15,2

Table 3: Subsidies

All together 43 persons, 48,3% of respondents, report having social insurance. 6 persons or 6,7% do not know. 40 respondents, 44,9%, report not having social insurance. Their amount differs considerably between cities: in Paris "only" 28,9% of respondents have no social insurance, in Rome the respective share is 54,1% and in Brussels even 64,3% (see Table 4).

Also the share of respondents with and without health insurance differs significantly between cities: 8 respondents in Brussels, 66,7%, report not having health insurance, followed by 12 respondents, 32,4%, in Rome and 9 respondents, 24,3%, in Paris.

The share of respondents without Health or Social insurance is higher in Brussels compared to Rome or Paris. Comparing the group with and without citizenship, the data show significant lower insurance rates for homeless persons without citizenship in Rome and Paris.

	Rome		Paris		Brussels		total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Social insurance	15	40,5	23	60,5	5	35,7	43	48,3
Health insurance	24	64,9	23	62,2	4	33,3	51	59,3

Table 4: Insurance

3.3 Accommodation

The questionnaire included several questions on accommodation. We wanted to have a general impression on where homeless persons stay, how often they

move and how secure their temporary accommodation is. The first question simply referred to the time period without regular accommodation. The results show highly significant (p= 0,012) differences between Paris and Brussels regarding this question (not between Rome and Paris, and Rome and Brussels).

The average time without regular accommodation is in Rome with 1503,5 days or 4 years about twice as high as in Paris with 780,7 days or 2 years (see Table 5 and Table 6). In Brussels we have to observe the longest average time periods without regular accommodation with 2367,6 days or 6 years. Respondents' time without regular accommodation ranges in Brussels from 60 to 7665 days respectively 21 years.

	Rome		Paris		Brussels		total	
	N	mean	N	mean	N	mean	N	mean
Days without regular accommodation	38	1503,5	39	780,7	15	2367,6	92	1338,0

Table 5: Days without regular accommodation

Table 6: Time without regular accommodation

We asked respondents where they slept the last night before the survey assigning the answers to 17 different answer categories (see ANNEX for questionnaire A). Summarising the answer categories, all together 49 persons, 53,3% of respondents, spent last night outdoors, on the street, in railway or subway stations or in squats. This category "outdoor" includes all "non-typical" sleeping places. Interestingly, only 7 persons reported sleeping at the train station. 39,1% spent last night in "regular places" like shelters or hostels (see Figure 6: Sleeping place last night (summarised)).

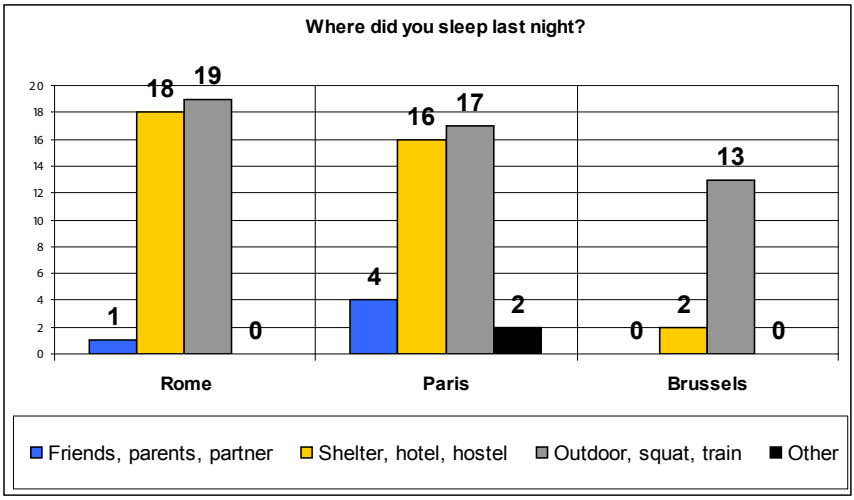


Figure 6: Sleeping place last night (summarised)

Respondents' sleeping place differs significantly between cities. The share of respondents sleeping "outdoor" in Brussels is, with 13 of 15 respondents or 86,7%, significantly higher (p= 0,045) than in Rome or Paris with 50 respectively 43,6%. Only 2 of 15 respondents, or 13,3%, in Brussels spent the last night before the survey in more regular places like shelters or hostels.

To see whether their current accommodation is more or less stable we asked respondents for how long they had already been staying at their last sleeping place. The data shows highly significant differences between cities. The

average duration of staying at the last sleeping place is lowest in Paris with about 60 days, followed by Brussels with 71 days and Rome with 864 days (see Table 7). The spent days at the last sleeping place range in Rome from 0 to 5475 days or 15 years, in Paris and Brussels from 0 to 730 days or two years. For Brussels this implies that respondents sleep for relatively long time periods outdoor. In Paris and Rome this points also to a group that spends relatively long time periods sleeping in shelters, hostels or hotels. In Rome however the sleeping place seems generally much more stable than in the other cities.

	Rome		Paris		Brussels		total	
	N	mean	N	mean	N	mean	N	mean
Days in last sleeping place	38	864,10	39	59,91	15	70,66	92	393,83

Table 7: For how many days have you been in your last sleeping place?

Whereas in Paris and Brussels 92,3% respectively 93,3% of respondents stayed less than a year in their actual "accommodation", the respective share in Rome is only 60,5%. 11 of 38 respondents in Rome stayed longer than two years at their actual sleeping place; one respondent even 15 years.

Only 66 of 92 respondents, 71,7%, answered to the question of how long they would be allowed to stay at their current sleeping place, only two in Brussels and 26 in Paris, so these results should be interpreted carefully (if at all). 16 of 38 respondents in Rome, 42,1% said that they would be allowed to stay at their sleeping place without limitation, 16 respondents in Rome said that they would not know. Interestingly the share of respondents who answered that they did not know for how long they are allowed to stay at their sleeping place is relatively high and ranges between 42,1% and 50% (see Table 8).

	Rome		Paris		Brussels		total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Without limitation	16	42,1	5	19,2	1	50,0	22	33,3
Limited	6	15,8	8	30,8	0	0,0	14	21,2
Don't know	16	42,1	13	50,0	1	50,0	30	45,5
Respondents total	38	100,0	26	100,0	2	100,0	66	100,0

Table 8: Time allowed to stay at last sleeping place

We also asked the respondents about their other sleeping places last month. The majority of respondents, 43 of 90, or 47,8%, answered that they did not use any other sleeping place last month. Their amount differs between 76,3% in Rome and 31,6% in Paris. In Brussels only a minority of 2 persons, 14,3%, said that they did not use any other sleeping place last month (see Table 9).

	Rome		Paris		Brussels		total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
No other place	29	76,3	12	31,6	2	14,3	43	47,8
At a friends' place	1	2,6	7	18,4	2	14,3	10	11,1
At a parents' place	0	0,0	1	2,6	1	7,1	2	2,2
At a partners' place	0	0,0	2	5,3	0	0,0	2	2,2
At an emergency shelter	1	2,6	5	13,2	1	7,1	7	7,8
At an transitional shelter	1	2,6	1	2,6	2	14,3	4	4,4
On the street/outdoors	2	5,3	4	10,5	4	28,6	10	11,1
At the train station	1	2,6	4	10,5	4	28,6	9	10,0
At the hospital	1	2,6	2	5,3	0	0,0	3	3,3
In the hotel/hostel	2	5,3	7	18,4	0	0,0	9	10,0
In a squat	0	0,0	1	2,6	5	35,7	6	6,7
In prison	0	0,0	0	0,0	1	7,1	1	1,1
Respondents total	38	100,0	38	100,0	14	100,0	90	100,0

Table 9: At which other places did you sleep in the last month (multiple answers)?

Respondents were asked with an open-ended question what they do to find a sleeping place in case they need one and could give multiple answers. The most important strategy to find a sleeping place is to "contact a social service organisation". 33 of 62 respondents, 53,2%, said that this would be on of their strategies to find a sleeping place. Whereas in Rome and Brussels 41,4% and 44,4% of respondents choose this strategy, the respective amount is highest in Paris with 70,8% (see Table 10). There is however also a group of respondents that reported to primarily depend on themselves when looking for a sleeping place.

	Rome		Paris		Brussels		total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Contact friends, acquaintances	3	10,3	8	33,3	5	55,6	16	25,8
Contact family members	2	6,9	0	0,0	0	0,0	2	3,2
Contact social service organisation	12	41,4	17	70,8	4	44,4	33	53,2
Finding a way on ones' own	12	41,4	6	25,0	0	0,0	18	29,0
Always sleep on the street	7	24,1	0	0,0	0	0,0	7	11,3
Do not know	1	3,4	0	0,0	0	0,0	1	1,6
Respondents total	29	100,0	24	100,0	9	100,0	62	100,0

Table 10: Strategies to find a sleeping place (multiple answers)

3.4 Activities at the train station

The majority of respondents, 93%, answered "yes" to the question whether the train station was an "important place" for them. The most important activity of respondents at the train station is with 21,7% "discussing, chatting, talking", followed by "begging" with 20,5%, "meeting friends" and "drinking" both with 19,3%, "waiting for the time to pass" with 16,9% and "warming up" with 14,5%. Only 13,3% of respondents come to train station because of using social service organisation.

The survey targeted persons that are regularly visiting the train station. We found significant (p= 0,000) differences between cities concerning the fre-

quency of visits to the train station in the last week before the survey. In Paris respondents visited the train station at average only 3 times in the last week before the survey, whereas the respective amount in Rome was 6 times and in Brussels 6,4 times. Respondents in Rome and Brussels visited the train station significantly more frequently than in Paris (see Table 11).

	Rome		Paris		Brussels		total	
	N	mean	N	mean	N	mean	N	mean
Times at railway station during last week	38	6,03	38	2,97	15	6,40	91	100,0

Table 11: How often at train station last week?

For Brussels we see that the respondents are regularly visiting the train station for years. At average they had already been visiting the train station for 3,3 years whereas the respective amount in Paris is "only" about 334,2 days, less than one year (see Table 12).

	Rome		Paris		Brussels		total	
	N	mean	N	mean	N	mean	N	mean
Visiting the train station (days)	38	1094,1	39	334,2	15	1222,4	92	792,9

Table 12: For how long having been visiting train station (days)?

3.5 The perception of security at the train station

Respondents were asked how secure they would feel at the train station by day and by night. Interestingly, there are no differences between the three cities (p= 0,988): a majority of 69 persons or 78,4% feel secure at the train station by day, 78,9% of respondents in Rome, 78,4% in Paris and 76,9% in Brussels (see Table 13).

	Rome		Paris		Brussels		total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Feel secure at train station by day	30	78,9	29	78,4	10	76,9	69	78,4
Feel secure at train station by night	12	40,0	12	37,5	2	18,2	26	35,6

Table 13: Security at the train station (number and percentage of persons that feel secure or very secure)

The situation by night shows a completely different picture. All together 73 persons assessed the security situation at the train station by night. 47 of them, 64,4%, assessed the security situation as being "rather or very insecure". Only a minority of 26 respondents, 35,6%, assessed the situation as being "very or rather secure". Also regarding this question there are no significant differences between the cities (p= 0,415).

23 respondents of 88, 26%, reported that they had been expelled from the train station within last month. No significant differences between cities occur for this question, although the respective share in Brussels with 33,3% is higher than in Rome with 25% and Paris with 24,3%. The majority of 16 persons, or 72,7%, was expelled by security, only 6 respondents by police.

40 of 82 respondents, 48,8%, reported that they had been victim of criminal behaviour at least "seldom" during the last month before the survey. Their share differs significantly (p= 0,000) between cities: whereas in Rome only 7 of 33 respondents, 21,2%, reported being victim of criminal behaviour, the respective amount in Brussels is about 78,6% (see Table 14). Only 51% of respondents, 42 persons, reported that they had never been a victim of criminal behaviour at the train station during the last month.

	Rome		Paris		Brussels		total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Victim of criminal behaviour	7	21,2	22	62,9	11	78,6	40	48,8

Table 14: Criminal behaviour

Questions on criminal behaviour and security at train station show a coherent picture: the situation for homeless people at the train station is in Rome reported to be better compared to Brussels and Paris. Respondents in Rome were less often victim of criminal behaviour and feel relatively secure at the train station. In contrast, Brussels: a majority of respondents reported that they had been victim of criminal behaviour and only a minority of 18,2% feels secure at the train station by night.

3.6 Contacts with railway stakeholders and social services

Respondents were asked about their contacts with different types of "stakeholders" at the train station in the month before the survey: social workers, security personnel, train station employees, cleaning staff, shop keepers, passengers, and police. The majority of 47 persons (61,8%) reported that they had contact with social workers: 83,8% in Paris and 80% in Brussels, but only 16,7% in Rome. 36 persons (47,4%) had contact with police: 21 in Rome, 87,5%, but only 9, or 24,3% in Paris. The results show a city specific contact pattern of respondents: whereas in Rome respondents have few contacts with social workers but many with police, in Paris the relationship is the other way round. In Rome contact with police and security is dominant whereas in Paris and Brussels the contact with social workers and passengers (see Figure 7: Contacts with railway stakeholders).

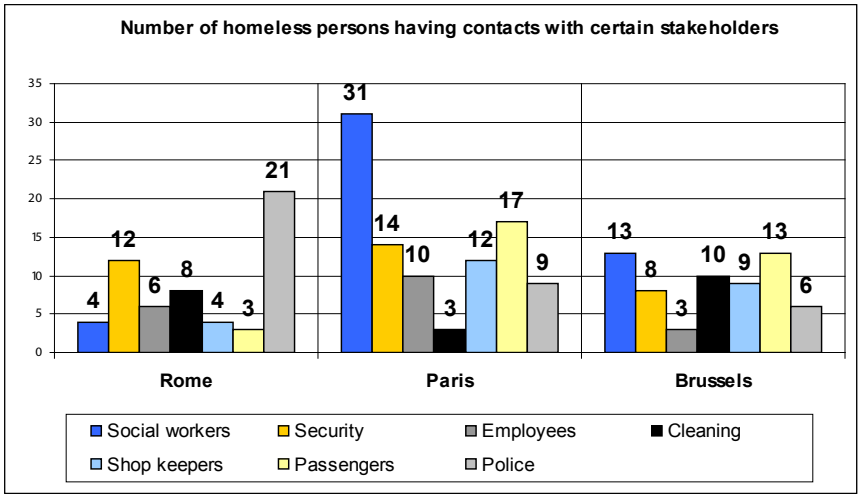


Figure 7: Contacts with railway stakeholders

The frequency of contacts was measured for the last month before the survey with the categories never, less than once a week, once a week, several times a week and every day. Interestingly, the contact frequency is generally not very high (see Table 15). Contacts with passengers at train station were most intensive with a mean value of 2,9 (about "once a week"), followed by cleaning staff with 2,8, and shop keepers with 2,8. The contact intensity with social workers is with 1,8 relatively low, less than once a week, and differs significantly between cities (p= 0,009). Contact intensity with police was lowest with a mean value of 1,58.

	Rome		Paris		Brussels		total	
	N	mean	N	mean	N	mean	N	mean
Times of contact with social workers last month	4	1,25	31	2,00	13	1,31	48	1,75
Times of contact with security last month	12	2,17	14	1,57	8	2,75	34	2,06
Times of contact with rail employees last month	6	2,67	10	1,20	3	1,67	19	1,74
Times of contact with cleaning staff last month	8	2,75	3	2,00	10	3,10	21	2,81
Times of contact with shop keepers last month	4	2,75	12	2,83	9	2,78	25	2,80
Times of contact with passengers last month	3	2,00	17	2,94	13	3,08	33	2,91
Times of contact with police last month	21	1,76	9	1,22	6	1,50	36	1,58
1= less than once a week, 2= about once a week, 3= several times a week, 4= every day								

Table 15: Frequency of contacts

Respondents were further asked to assess the support they received from these groups (very poor, poor, moderate, good, very good). Significant differences between cities occurred only for assessing the support of security (p= 0,032) and police (p= 0,016). Due to the low numbers of valid cases these results should be interpreted carefully (see Table 16). Support from police was rated worst in Paris with a mean value of 1,3. In Rome and Brussels this value is clearly higher with 3 respectively 3,3 which means that support was assessed to be moderate.

	Rome		Paris		Brussels		total	
How would you assess the support you received...	N	mean	N	mean	N	mean	N	mean
from social workers?	3	3,67	30	3,10	6	2,50	39	3,05
from security?	12	3,08	14	2,00	2	4,00	28	2,61
from train station employees?	6	4,33	10	2,80	1	4,00	17	3,41
from cleaning staff?	8	4,13	3	3,33	3	4,00	14	3,93
from shop keepers?	4	3,50	11	3,36	2	3,50	17	3,41
from passengers?	3	4,00	16	3,00	1	4,00	20	3,20
from police?	21	2,95	8	1,25	3	3,33	32	2,56
1= very poor, 2= poor, 3= moderate, 4= good, 5= very good								

Table 16: Assessment of support

3.7 Use and assessment of social services

Table 18 shows that we found statistically significant differences for the information on and use of social services between the cities. In Rome and Brussels respondents know significantly more organisations than respondents in Paris. In Rome respondents were slightly more satisfied with service quality than respondents in Brussels and Paris. They show however the lowest use of services. Respondents in Brussels used services significantly more often than the respondents in the other two cities.

City	Information (Mean number of organisations known)	Satisfaction (Mean satisfaction from 1-10)	Contacts (Mean number of contacts during last month)
Rome	6,58	7,57	1,53
Paris	4,41	6,43	2,46
Brussels	6,73	6,07	4,13
Total mean	5,68	6,83	2,35
Chi-Square	1,07	9,57	2,28
df	2,00	2,00	2,00
Asymp. Sig.	.005	.008	.000

Table 17: Information on and use of services

3.8 Conclusion

At the early stages of this project it was already clear that "homeless persons" have to be considered a highly heterogeneous target group and one that is difficult to reach and to interview. The heterogeneity is reflected in the demographic data from the survey: the main part of the age distribution ranges from 20 years to 60 years with all age groups in-between being represented. Strong variations from "normal distribution" have been observed for Brussels with most persons being aged between 41 and 60. In Rome we see a comparably larger group of persons between 51 and 60 years, but also more young persons between 21 and 30 years. In Paris the largest group is aged between 31 and 50 years. As expected, the number of women in the sample is very low which reflects results by other studies as well as theories on reasons why women are less likely to become "literally" homeless ("choosing" precarious dependency from partner instead of homelessness, more risk when living on the street, avoidance of male dominated shelters etc.). There are also differences in legal status (citizenship) between homeless persons (within local contexts and between local contexts) that are connected to the availability of social benefit schemes. In Rome for instance 50% of respondents did not have the Italian citizenship while the shares in Brussels (43%) and Paris (21%) are lower. Comparing the group with and without citizenship, the data

show significant lower insurance rates for homeless without citizenship in Rome and Paris.

The questionnaire of course collected data on the sleeping place of respondents. We asked respondents on their sleeping place the last night before the survey (a widely used indicator for identifying homeless persons and their "living conditions") and on other types of "accommodation" they used within the last month. One of the results is that respondents' sleeping place differs in our sample significantly between cities: The share of respondents sleeping "outdoor" is in Brussels with 13 of 15 respondents or 87% significantly higher than in Rome or Paris with 50% respectively 44%. Only 2 of 15 (13%) respondents in Brussels spent the last night before the survey in more "regular places" such as shelters or hostels. The results also show that a quite large group of respondents seems to change their sleeping place from time to time. In Rome the sleeping place seems to be more constant with persons spending their time either in shelters, hotels and hostels or outdoor, in squats or trains. In Brussels and Paris these two general categories also range highest for "sleeping place last night", but with more variation in the last month before the survey.

In addition to these basic characteristics the evaluation focused on the activities of homeless persons at the train station. For HOPE in stations a very important result from the survey is the small amount of persons within the sample that visit the train station to use social services – only 13% of all respondents. The train station, while being generally perceived as an "important place" by homeless persons (for very different reasons) is much more seen as a social meeting point than a social service hub. The survey shows however different characteristics of the train station that would qualify it as a place for coordinating and providing services. In all three local contexts exists a group of homeless persons that regularly spends time at the train station for other purposes than using transport (the group seems to be much smaller for Brussels Central than for the other two sites) which was of course a prerequisite for the survey, but also a result in terms of showing the existence of these groups on basis of our data. In our sample we saw that the average number of visits to the train station at our three sites ranged from about 3 to 6 times within the last week before the survey. This means that homeless persons could be regularly approached at the train station - probably more regularly than in any other public place. They seem to accept this place

and their subjective assessment of their personal security at daytime is actually positive (the assessment is much more negative at night time). Currently, it seems that social service organisations in Brussels and Paris are aware of this potential sending their social workers to the train station who seem to have quite regular contacts with homeless persons (about 62% of interviewees had contact to social workers at average once within the month before the survey). In contrast, the number of contacts with social workers in Rome is extremely low in our sample, which could however also be due the difficulties in collecting contact data that were reported by our Italian researcher. Homeless persons in Rome generally did not seem to react very positively to this question. If the result however reflects the real situation this could be a main issue for further improvements.

While the frequency of homeless persons' contacts to other stakeholders at the station is in general lower than we expected, the impression is not one of isolation. To have a look at the contacts between security (and also police) and homeless persons in terms of frequency and type of contact is definitively an issue with 46% of interviewees reporting contacts in the month before the survey (47% for police). In particular in Rome the frequency of contacts with security and police seems to be comparably high which shows the usefulness of special trainings such as the training programme launched by HOPE in stations. While these contacts could potentially be problematic for homeless persons, the survey shows no severe conflicts – For instance, the assessment of support by security and police is quite moderate with an average lying between the categories "poor" and "moderate" (closer to moderate) on the scale "very poor", "poor", "moderate", "good" and "very good". Support from other stakeholders is evaluated only slightly better, usually between moderate and good. Asked on "problems at the train station" homeless persons did report more on "thievery" (mentioned by 13 persons) and "violence and fights" (mentioned by 6 persons) than on problems with security or police – a result which could however be biased, because homeless people may try to distance themselves from criminal behaviour as well as from conflicts with police, an impression some of our researchers had during the interviews. 23 respondents of 88, 26%, declared that they were expelled from the train station within the last month before the survey. No significant differences between cities occurred for this question, al-

though the respective share in Brussels is with 33,3% higher than in Rome with 25% and Paris with 24,3%. The majority of 16 persons, or 72,7%, was expelled by security, only 6 respondents by police. This number is actually not very high given the fact that some of the train stations close at night – a much larger group of homeless persons could potentially be affected by being expelled. Taking all this together, the situation does not seem to be too negative and further training for security employees as well as policemen could probably improve the contacts with homeless persons and could enhance their function as intermediaries between homeless persons and social services.

The frequency of contacts is however highest ("about once a week") for persons that report to have contacts with passengers, followed by cleaning staff and shop keepers. These are simply stakeholders that are present at the station every day and while some homeless persons do not seem to be particularly interested in these contacts, they are quite regular for others. These are of course stakeholders that do not have a "professional" relation to homeless persons. Is seems however useful to approach these groups with awareness raising campaigns as HOPE in stations did in some train stations. In addition, cleaning personnel participated in the HOPE in stations training programme – shop keepers were considered as participants too, due to the difficult organisation this idea was however not realised. In Rome, however, it seems to be important to clarify why the survey showed such a low number of contacts with social workers. Social workers can of course offer a different quality and level of support compared to lay persons who only participate in a short training programme.

3.9 Stakeholder workshops

The stakeholder workshop had two objectives. Firstly, we wanted to receive feedback on the survey on homeless persons. We already explained the difficulty of reaching and researching the specific target group of this survey – homeless persons regularly visiting the respective train station. Stakeholders and services should comment on the survey results and assess their validity. Secondly, we wanted to initiate a discussion on the main topics of the survey and how the work of the reference authority connects to these topics from the perspective of stakeholders and services. The following table shows the participants of the workshop.

Brussels	Paris	Rome
Facilitators		
(SBJ) Silvia Bochkoltz Jacobs	(PJ) Patrick Jud	(GP) Gianni Petiti
(PI) Patrick Italiano	(CB) Christophe Blanchard	(FI) Franca Iannaccio
Participants		
(1) Bert de Bock, social worker, Diogènes	(1) Florian Griès, itinérance	(1) Pietro Ielpo, Help Center
(2) Marnick Van Gijseghem, agent, Sécurail	(2) Xavier Petitpain, Safety Gare du nord	(2) Ileana Melis, Associazione Per la strada
(3) Nico Lauwers, Brussels police, Team Herscham	(3) Natacha Lachouri, Arc 75	(3) Bianca Maisano, Stefano Salvi, Chiara De Padua, Flavia Colavita, Valentina Sartori, Caritas Poliambulatorio
(4) Isabelle Deschryver, social workers, Dune	(4) François Le Forestier, Aux captifs la libération	(4) Claudio Campani, Parrocchia S. Giovanni Battista de' Rossi
(5) Daphnée Mestrez, park warden, IBGE	(5) Thierry Venin, assistant Référent social	(5) Renato de Andreis, SMOM (Order of Malta)
(6) Jean-Philippe Gerkens, Point Vélo Gare Central		(6) Enrico Green, Villa Maraini
(7) Laetitia Cloostermans, Infirmiers de rue		(7) Tonino Sammarone, Annalisa Aragozzini, Comunità di Sant'Egidio
(8) Armand DEMPTINNE, cleaning agent		(8) Antonio Fabbrizi, Valentina Perini, Comune di Roma - Sala Operativa Sociale (SOS)
		(9) Tyrell Ogeagwo, Binario 95
Observers		
Olivia Dardenne (La Strada)	Jean-Marc Chetrit	Marina Maccari (protocol)
Evi Meirsman (CSS)	Sylvie Le Bars (ANSA)	Francesco Cozzolino (IT)
Gabrielle Guerin (ANSA)	Gabrielle Guerin (ANSA, protocol)	Giorgio Piacentini (IT)
Antoine Yon (ANSA, protocol)	Alexander Kesselring (ZSI)	

3.9.1 Brussels

In Brussels the participants generally validated our results for the distribution of gender (in Brussels Central the majority of homeless persons are man aged between 40 to 50), that the homeless persons at the station are usually long-term homeless (the participants estimate that the majority of persons have lived on the street for 6 years or more), that their number is low and decreased in recent years and that Brussels Central is less frequented by persons with migration background compared to Gare du Midi and Gare du Nord. The respondents however emphasised that "migration background" as well as "homelessness" are difficult to determine and that the train station is visited by a very heterogeneous group of marginalised respectively "wandering" people. Homeless persons are actually a minority within this larger group. In the workshop participants generally argued on the question whether categories should be used to differentiate between groups. While some participants emphasised the problematic aspect of categorisation, some participants argued for the functional necessity of categorisation to reach the right persons with appropriate services.

When we asked for typical contact situations with homeless persons the discussion immediately focused on the relationship towards homeless persons which is described as personal and direct. Stakeholders and social workers have daily contact without reporting any problem with the small group of "real" homeless persons. Participants also mentioned the relevance of the training in improving the interaction with homeless persons.

The question on problems that homeless persons might either cause or experience at the station was primarily related to the lack of basic facilities at the station such as toilets, but also lockers, as well as the problematic aspect of aggressiveness towards shop keepers. A shop keeper himself explained the problem that security was not allowed to intervene on private area and emphasised the relevance of reference authority explaining that she would be the first person he could actively approach for support. The participants exchanged on the idea of implementing a locker system, acknowledging the problem of homeless persons who have to carry all their belongings, with them which makes their situation more insecure.

The last discussion focused on the perception of the reference authority. Participants referred mainly to four issues: Better communication; stakeholders, services, and shop keepers coming together for the first time; how to better utilise the shared space at the train station that the reference authority provided; and how to extend the function of the reference authority.

Several participants emphasised the improved communication between stakeholders and services thanks to the work of the reference authority. It became evident in the workshop that actually all participants actively engaged in thinking about cooperation promoting different ideas: cooperation with trade union, information point at the station, projects for providing facilities such as lockers and toilets, awareness raising, and the extension and continuation of trainings.

Regarding the shared space the reference authority herself pointed out that she was not completely satisfied because of the lack of basic facilities. Further organisation and participation from stakeholders and services seems to be necessary to optimise the shared space and to increase its use.

3.9.2 Paris

In Paris participants assessed to results of the homeless survey and found that the percentage of women in the survey was slightly higher than they would have expected, whereas the percentage of homeless persons with migration background was clearly lower than they would have expected. The average time of being homeless for respondents in Paris was validated by the estimations of participants.

In Paris the participants seemed to be very concerned about categorisation and the simplification of the actual situation that goes along with it. The participants mentioned many small and distinct groups of marginalised persons: long-term homeless, homeless persons with psychiatric problems, immigrants, young people (typically with dogs), drug users, persons who frequent the train station irregularly, people involved in organised begging, and prostitutes. One participant argued that some of these groups would be “invisible categories” and would be difficult to reach. We also think that such a diverse

population is difficult to screen and to clearly separate. It also points to the fact that the problematic issues sometimes experienced by railway stakeholders are clearly not only related to homeless persons in the strict sense, but a fluctuating audience of people with different needs and different behaviour.

Participants in Paris reacted rather reluctantly on the question whether homeless persons would cause any specific problems for them. They proposed to formulate this question in a different way speaking more about the problems of homeless persons. The security agents obviously are aware that their relationship to homeless persons changes from situation to situation depending on whether they have to enforce rules. They referred for instance to situations when they have to expel homeless persons at night or have to prevent them from begging.

Participants in Paris found that the contacts between homeless persons and station stakeholders replicate their experience. They confirmed that there is a relatively regular contact between homeless persons and social workers in Paris. The estimations concerning the contacts with security and police also seemed to be quite coherent with the survey.

Asked on the support stakeholders would like to provide to homeless persons, participants referred to the establishment of new premises better adapted for welcoming people and a locker system. Participants also referred to specific support for persons with alcohol problems (for instance by establishing a "stabilisation shelter") and persons with psychiatric problems. One participant emphasised the important link between the NGOs and the mental hospital – this passage should be better understood and managed.

When referring to the reference authority the participants in Paris strongly emphasised the need for the continuation of activities. Coordination and "co-reflection" were mentioned, but also a continued awareness raising and training, in particular with regard to new security recruits and other employees who enter the system of the train station. Participants acknowledged the sometimes problematic situation for security agents who want to act consciously, but also have to follow certain procedures. In particular for them it seems to be important to have the reference authority as an intermediary who helps them to fulfil their role in a more balanced way.

3.9.3 Rome

In Rome participants confirmed the low percentage of women among homeless persons, the relatively high percentage of homeless persons with migration background and also the finding that the homeless population in Rome is comparably young (aged below 30 years).

Participants in Rome mentioned young immigrants, mainly from North Africa in search of a job and people being disabled, or being addicted to alcohol and drugs as specific sub-groups of the marginalised population at the train station.

The participants' estimations regarding the contacts between homeless persons with stakeholders and social workers at the station diverged significantly from the survey that indicated a very low number of contacts with social workers. Respondents estimated these contacts to be rather regular, what the presence of the Help Centre directly at the station would actually suggest.

When participants were asked on their ideas for better support they mentioned basic facilities such as toilets (free of charge), showers and washing machines that should probably be provided at or around the train station. In this case a former management decision by the railway company is mentioned as one reason for the reduction of facilities with the argument that such facilities would attract homeless persons. A participant responded to this problem in saying that the train station could be a place were service needs are identified and documented, while the services themselves could be provided in the proximity of the station. Also food distribution was mentioned as an important service.

With regard to the reference authority participants pointed out the need for better integration of stakeholders and services, but also a better and ongoing training of social workers to ensure that persons in need of support receive valid information when they are forwarded to other services, in particular on the available health services. This also includes supporting homeless persons on the long term and following up their recovery paths.

3.9.4 Conclusion

The stakeholder workshops successfully attracted main stakeholders and services and became an opportunity to openly discuss relevant issues on the perception of homeless persons and cooperation. The basic demographic characteristics of homeless persons in our sample seem to correspond well with the perceptions and estimations of stakeholders, although it became clear that the survey did not reach specific sub-populations, which have generally to be considered very difficult to reach, either because of their involvement in illegal activities or their health condition. The workshops in particular showed the willingness of stakeholders and services to participate in the further development the function of the reference authority and in the implementation of concrete projects.

3.10 Group discussions with homeless persons

As an amendment to the homeless questionnaire we decided that our researchers should join group discussions with homeless person in 2011. This is not an ex-post evaluation of the outcomes of interventions. Instead, the group discussions should provide another perspective on the life of homeless persons at the train station.

3.10.1 Brussels

In Brussels our researcher attended a meeting which is regularly organised by ATD Quart Monde every 2 weeks, 20h-21h. The meeting takes place directly in a hall in the Brussels Central station. Using this public space allows people to intervene in the discussion, who would usually not participate. The initial discussion group consisted of circa 10 persons, of which three seemed to be without accommodation. Yet none of them reported to regularly visit the central station. The discussion focused on the issue of violence and criminal behaviour (mostly theft) at the station and how marginalised and homeless people are trying to handle this situation; as well as on the perception of a high number of foreigners who use winter shelters. Our researcher reported that strong xenophobic feelings were expressed, attributing to foreigners

insecurity, violence, and disrespect of rules, and that these attitudes could hardly be mediated by social workers who argued that foreigners are in no way favoured by the rules of acceptance at the shelters. The real problem seems to be that not all places (300) of a recently acquired local shelter were open yet, so that the provisory organisation had to assign the 80 available places to persons listed as especially fragile by social services.

Our researcher could finally talk to three homeless persons regularly spending time at the railway station who joined the discussion. Their overall assessment of the situation at the station is that security at the station is becoming worse, which is their main concern. They reported on violence and in particular on theft, sometimes intentionally targeted at homeless persons. The problem seems to be connected to the fact that at least two of the participants who are long-term homeless (14 and 9 years) do not use shelters and usually sleep outside. This makes them vulnerable for theft – only sleeping with a group of others seems to make the situation safer.

One participant reported fairly good relationships with security agents he knows, while he sometimes seems to experience repression from the side of police men not known to him. It is obvious that informal arrangements and relationships that exist between security agents and homeless persons will not always protect homeless persons from certain kinds of repression.

The three participants also reported to know Silvia Bochkoltz, the reference authority, personally and that they would trust her, appreciating her attempt to smooth the relationships between homeless persons and railway station stakeholders.

3.10.2 Paris

In Paris our researcher met with a group of clients of the association Aux Captifs la libération with the support of Thierry Venin, a social worker and former employee of SNCF. Participants were aged between 50 and 60 and were regularly visiting the organisation and the train station. In addition our researcher could talk to one younger homeless person.

The main interest of participants seemed to be the opportunity to regularly keep visiting Gare du Nord where they meet other people and use basic facilities such as toilets. In general, participants assessed their relationship with SNCF staff and security guards to be rather good. They seemed to be familiar with the professional social workers in particular from Aux Captifs la libération and reported that the organisation would be very active in the area. They initially learned to know about the organisation from other homeless persons who spread the information. In general, for the participants the "word of mouth" is an important source of communication to find solutions for their social needs. Participants also knew Thierry Venin personally and emphasised his importance for creating links between the railway station, the social services and homeless persons.

Their main concern is however the lack of appropriate housing. Five of six respondents were living on the street or in basements for several months.

3.10.3 Rome

The group discussion in Rome was held in the framework of the editorial staff meeting of "Shaker, Pensieri senza dimora", the street paper produced by homeless persons attending the centre Binario 95. The group had 10 participants: 6 Italians and 4 immigrants (2 from Rumania, 1 from Central America and 1 from Somalia). The average age was 51 and only one participant was female.

For the majority of the group members homelessness started with the loss of a regular job, which caused the break-up of their family and social relations. Immigration was an additional obstacle for those who left their home countries after losing their job. They ended up at the railway station after a long intermediate period of living with family, friends, acquaintances and finally using social services, namely the Caritas night shelter, the Social Control Room of the City of Rome, the Help Center, and the Comunita di St. Egidio. At the beginning, participants attended the Binario 95 as a place where they primarily spent time when it was too cold or too hot outside. Step by step, they became more familiar with the centre and finally decided to take the opportunity to start together a process of re-inclusion.

They perceive the railway station as an "anchor", either as a shelter, or as a place where they get in contact with social services. During the last year, the work in the editorial staff, and the participation in different initiatives carried out by Binario 95 with the aim of labour inclusion, led to several changes in those persons' life. They attend the station less and less: in fact, they reported that they do not consider that it is worth spending too much time in a place that lost its attractions. In other words, they have acquired a different perception of time and time consumption due to the support of social services and their engagement in projects such as the newspaper.

3.10.4 Conclusion

The focus groups as a rather informal and only weakly structured method allowed us to get another impression on the situation at the three railway stations from the perspective of homeless persons. It was generally very difficult to relate the participants' responses to the interventions of HOPE in stations which are only a small section of the changes at and around the train station which concern homeless persons. Issues such as security, shelter and housing were the primary concern of the participants. We see however that the participants referred to the reference authority in Brussels and also referred to Thierry Venin in Paris who formerly took on a similar role when being responsible for monitoring the situation at Gare du Nord regarding marginalised and homeless persons acting as a social worker and intermediary. This direct approach obviously makes local coordination more visible for homeless persons and creates immediate benefits. The Italian case illustrates the effectiveness of a professional support that is able to create a different environment for homeless persons allowing them to organise their lives in a different way. This is at strong contrast to a support environment that primarily provides shelters which seems to be less accepted by some homeless persons. It is clear however that there seems to be much pressure on the shelter systems which have to manage a high number of persons in need of support without being able to provide a sufficient number of places.

4. Training programme evaluation

The training programme "Common training programme on homelessness in train stations", developed by the partners of the HOPE in stations project, was an attempt to provide railway employees in different functions (primarily customer services, security and cleaning) with information on homeless persons, the support network, the railway company's policy towards homeless persons and to introduce to them new practices in approaching and supporting homeless persons.

4.1 The training programme

The consortium decided for a one-day training programme with employees of the railway companies and associated companies from different occupational backgrounds (customer support, cleaning, security, management). The training programme comprised 11 modules which are listed in Table 18 below based on a training model developed by SNCF. These modules defined the common training contents for the training programmes in Brussels, Paris and Rome. The coordination of HOPE in stations provided this framework to all national teams and the appointed trainers. The training programme however had to be adapted to local structures and resources. In Paris, for instance, the internal training department of SNCF took responsibility for the training. In Brussels, the independent NGO "Infirmières de Rue" was appointed for this task. In Rome the training was implemented by Ferrovie dello stato italiane in partnership with Europe Consulting. The training was implemented by professional trainers from these different organisations, who were instructed either directly by the coordinator or by the national reference authority.

Generally, we had the impression that the national teams followed the initial guideline quite closely judging from their reports as well as their training materials. Almost all modules were covered in all of the three cities. Only module S8 – the visit to the train station – was not applied in Rome.

S1 : Introduction	S7 : The role of the railway company and its agents
S2 : Objectives of the module	Lunch break
S3 : Global context: homelessness in train stations	S8 : Visit of the station
S4 : How to identify homeless and wandering people?	S9 : Behavioural advice
S5 : Focus on health issues	S10 : Process to be followed
Break	S11 : Evaluation/Feedback
S6 : Global overview of the support network	End

Table 18: Training modules

4.2 Evaluation methods

We designed the training programme evaluation according to a widely used training evaluation scheme by Kirkpatrick[7] – the so called "Kirkpatrick Levels":

Level 1 "Reaction": *Learners' Reaction*

These outcomes relate to the participants' views of their learning experience and satisfaction with the training.

Level 2a "Learning": *Modification in Attitudes and Perceptions*

Outcomes relate to changes in attitudes or perceptions towards service users, their problems and needs, circumstances, care and treatment.

Level 2b: *Acquisition of Knowledge and Skills*

This relates to the concepts, procedures and principles of working with service users. For skills this relates to the acquisition of thinking/problem solving, assessment and intervention skills.

Level 3 "Behaviour": *Changes in Behaviour*

This level covers the implementation of learning from an educational pro-

7 Donald L. Kirkpatrick, James D. Kirkpatrick: 2006: In: Evaluating Training Programs – The four Levels. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, San Francisco.
Barr, H., Freeth, D., Hammick, M., Koppel, I., Reeves, S.: 2000. Evaluating Interprofessional Education: a United Kingdom review for health and social care. BERA/ CAIPE.

gramme in the workplace, prompted by modifications in attitudes or perceptions, or the application of newly acquired knowledge and skills.

Level 4a "Results": *Changes in Organisational Practice*

This relates to wider changes in the organisation/delivery of services, attributable to the training programme.

Level 4b: *Benefits to Users and Carers*

This final level covers any improvements in the life of people who are using services, which may be attributed to a service programme.

These levels cover different types of training outcomes and impacts. Evaluating the outcomes (=intended changes in target group behaviour, knowledge, attitude etc.) and impacts (=intended and un-intended long-term effects beyond the benefits for participants) for these levels is usually based on a combination of different methods. Generally, the evaluation becomes more demanding with each level. While level one can be immediately measured after the training, it is for instance much more difficult to measure level four.

An appropriate evaluation design relies on realistic expectations of outcomes and impacts. Given the scale of the training programme (one-day training, approximately 50 participants in each city) we decided to focus on the evaluation-levels from level one to level three. We came to the conclusion that a one-day training programme would primarily show immediate outcomes for the participants themselves (level 2) and their work practices (level 3).

Additionally assessing outcomes and impacts for level 4a would have meant to assess the organisational practice of the railway companies and associated companies. Assessing level 4b would have meant to assess the training impact on homeless persons.

Both assessments seemed to be inappropriate in terms of expected outcomes, resources needed and methodological difficulties. The training evaluation thus focused on answering following questions which cover the evaluation-levels one, two and three:

- To what extent did the training programme achieve the set objectives?
- To what extent did the training programme meet the expectations of participants?

- To what extent were participants satisfied with the training and the trainers?
- How did participants assess their knowledge on different aspects of homelessness before and after the training?
- How did participants assess their confidence in dealing with homeless persons in specific situations before and after the training?
- To what extent were participants able to apply training elements in their work practice?
- To what extent did the training programme change participants' attitudes towards homeless persons?

We tried to answer these questions using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. For measuring the immediate reaction to the training, the participants' assessment of their knowledge and confidence before and after the training, and for collecting basic socio-demographic data, we used a standardised questionnaire comprising closed and open-ended questions.

For investigating the application of training elements in work practice as well as investigating other impacts of the training programme, we decided to use semi-structured interviews based on an interview guideline (see ANNEX, interview guideline A). These interviews were conducted by our national researchers with a smaller sample of participants several months after the training. The basic design idea consisted in collecting reports on actual contacts with homeless persons after the training to see whether employees were able to apply training elements. The guideline questions covered following topics:

- occupational tasks and contact with homeless people,
- real contact-situations with homeless people,
- usefulness of learned skills in these specific situations,
- confidence in dealing with these situations,
- ability to use training elements in work practice,
- personal attitudes towards homeless people

The training programme questionnaire at a glance:

- **Conducted at three sites:** Brussels Central (Brussels), Gare du Nord-Est (Paris), Roma Termini (Rome)
- **Survey period:** January, February, March 2011
- **Target group:** Training participants
- **Objective:** Collecting information on the participants' assessment of the training and their self-assessment of learning success.
- **Method:** Questionnaire comprising closed as well as open questions. Retrospective Pre/Post design. Statistical analysis with SPSS and Excel.
- **Average duration of questionnaire:** 15 min
- **Expected response:** Full coverage of all training participants
- **Data collection:** Participants filled in the questionnaire at the end of the training. Trainers collected and scanned questionnaires and sent them to the coordinator.

4.3 Quantitative evaluation

4.3.1 The respondents

The questionnaire should have been answered by all training programme participants immediately after the training. Railway companies however did not agree to the option to oblige participants to participate in the evaluation (= to fill in the questionnaire) not being familiar with stricter evaluation routines and respecting the individual choice of employees. The evaluation team responded to this situation in instructing trainers how to promote the evaluation and in providing a detailed guideline on how to proceed with the evaluation. Figure 8: Respondents and Participants (N=130) shows that these efforts were not sufficient to get the expected full coverage of participants in

all cities. In Brussels the coverage was nearly complete, whereas in Paris and Rome only about two thirds of participants responded to the evaluation questionnaire. 87 out of 130 training participants responded to the questionnaire.

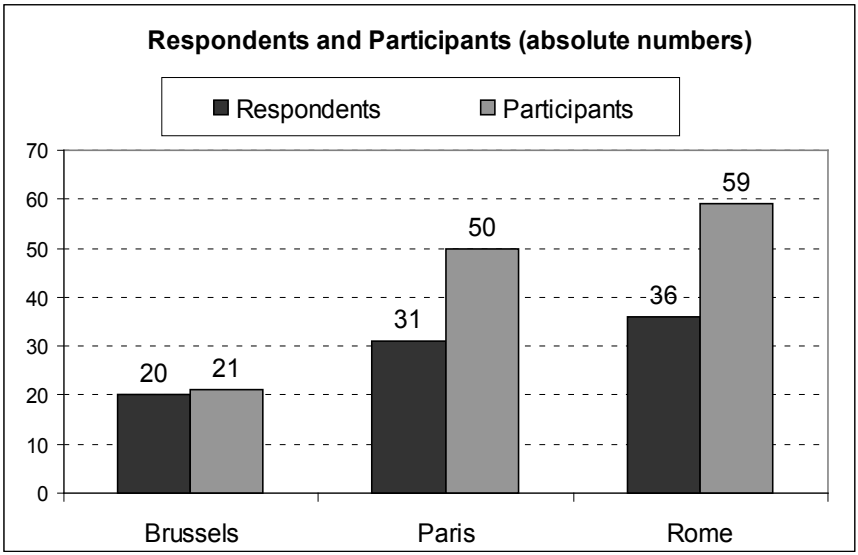


Figure 8: Respondents and Participants (N=130)

Before showing the assessment of the training programme, we will provide an overview on socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. Table 19 shows that the training reached employees with a mean age ranging between 39.5 years in Paris and 45.5 years in Brussels. More surprising are the high mean values for the time working for the respective railway company. The mean values range from 11 years in Paris to 21 years in Brussels. Thus, the training programme primarily reached employees which already had many years of working experience.

	mean values (years)		
	Rome	Paris	Brussels
Average Age of the Training Participants	44.5	39.5	45.5
Average Time the Training Participants are working for the railway company	16.7	11.0	21.0

Table 19: Average age and average time working for railway company

The training programme reached significantly more men than women as shown in Figure 9: Gender of Respondents (N=77). The selection of participants followed a different procedure in the three cities and did not follow any quota. Sometimes whole categories of employees were asked and/or obliged to participate in the training programme depending on the internal policies and regulations of railway companies. Options for standardising the selection were discussed with the partners but the need for including a sufficient number of participants made a different approach necessary.

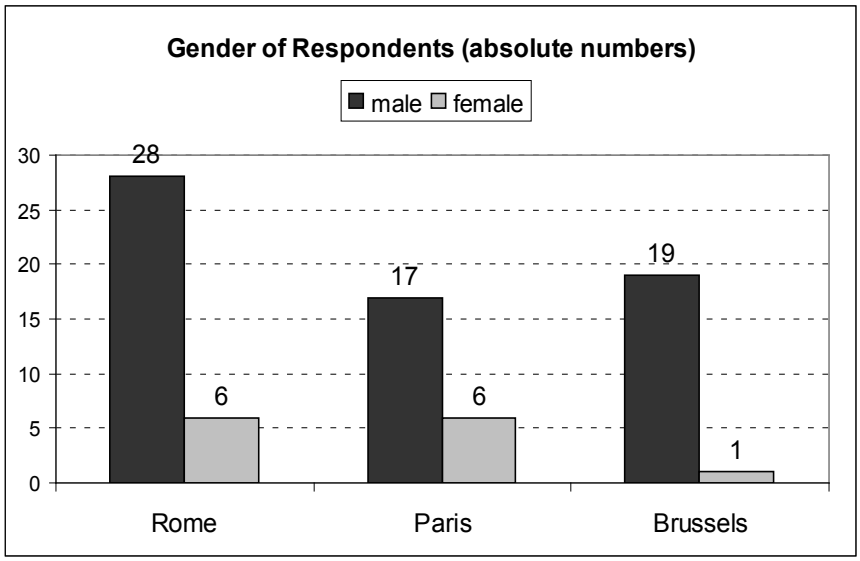


Figure 9: Gender of Respondents (N=77)

Figure 10: Occupation of Respondents (N=72) shows us for the respondents of the questionnaire survey that their composition with regard to occupational background varied significantly between the three cities. In Rome respondents are composed of persons working for security or customer services. In Paris we see a strong involvement of customer services. Although security personnel did participate in the training in Paris, we received no questionnaires from security personnel. In Brussels we see that only cleaning staff and security responded to the questionnaire.

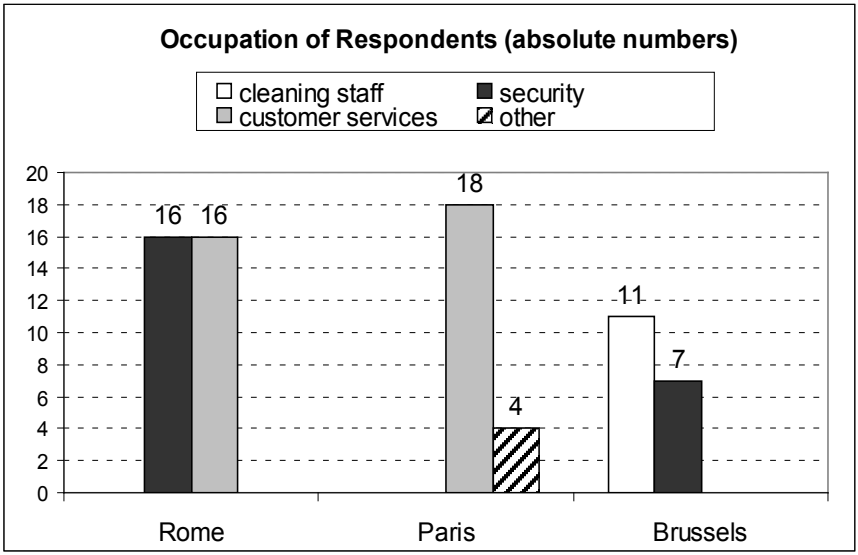


Figure 10: Occupation of Respondents (N=72)

The next figure shows us that the training programme included many employees who also coordinate the activities of other employees indicating at least a low-level management function (see Figure 11: Position of Respondents (N=71)) – The corresponding question was: "Are you responsible for coordinating the activities of other employees?". This may be connected to the higher proportion of male employees participating in the training, assum-

ing that there is a higher proportion of men in management positions as it is still often the case. It also means that the training reached potential multipliers who would probably inform or even directly train other employees.

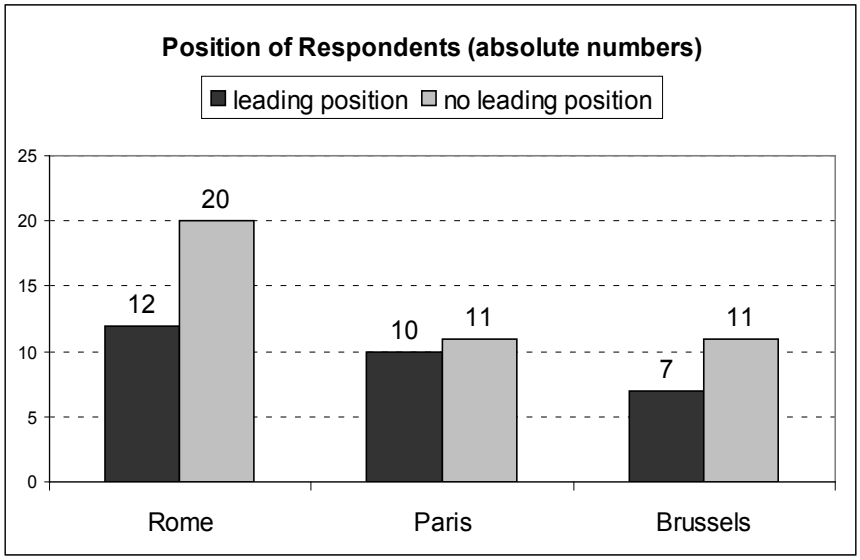


Figure 11: Position of Respondents (N=71)

We tried to standardise educational levels according to the international ISCED categories. Figure 12: Educational levels of respondents (N=63) shows that educational backgrounds were represented differently in the three cities. The educational levels correspond to the position of respondents and show that the sample also comprised persons with a higher educational background. We see this in particular for the respondents in Rome with a high proportion of persons with academic background. The strongest category for all cities is "upper secondary education". The lowest educational levels can be identified for the respondents from Brussels where several respondents reported to have no completed education.

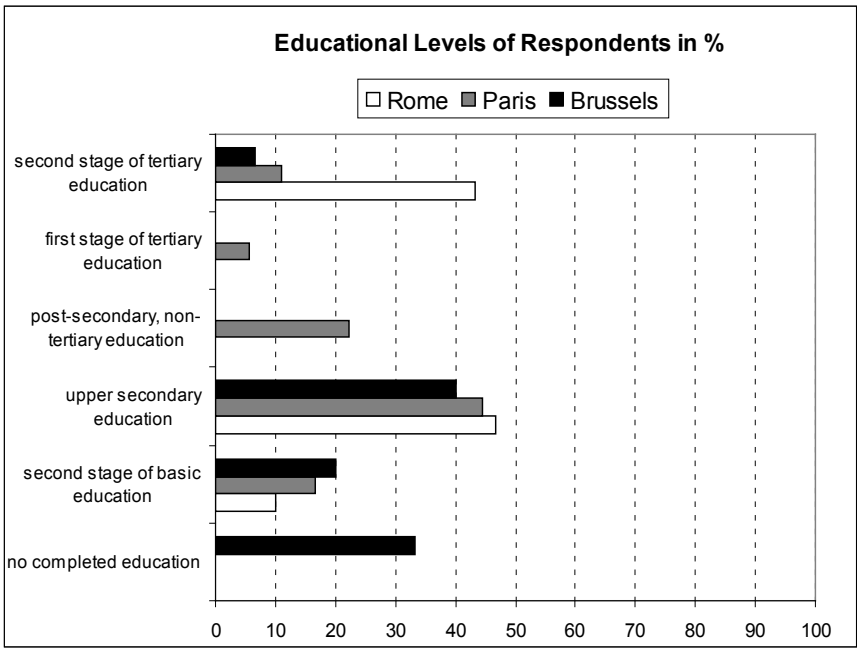


Figure 12: Educational levels of respondents (N=63)

To assess the overall relevance of the training we also asked participants on their direct contacts with homeless persons during their work routine. Figure 13: Extent of direct contact (N=83) shows that in Brussels and Paris the majority of participants is having contact with homeless persons on a daily basis – 59 % in Paris and 74% in Brussels. Rome shows significantly lower proportions for daily contact. 8% of respondents in Rome even stated that they would never have contact with homeless persons during work.

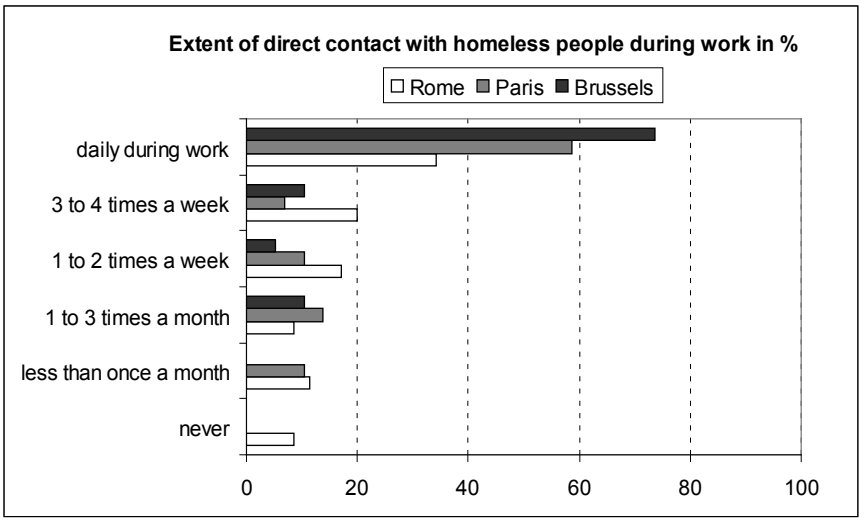


Figure 13: Extent of direct contact (N=83)

To ask whether homeless persons "interfered" with the participants work was an attempt to assess whether the presence of homeless persons is actually affecting work routines or not. Figure 14: Interference with work routines (N=82) shows that daily interference with work is mentioned by over a quarter of respondents in all cities. The percentage is highest for Brussels with 37% followed by Rome with 36% and Paris with 26%. In Paris this question was answered quite differently among respondents – one quarter reported daily interference, one quarter only "1 to 2 times a week" and one quarter "less than once a month" which either points to different work routines or (more likely because the contacts seem to be quite regular for most employees in Paris) to differences in perceiving and dealing with homeless persons.

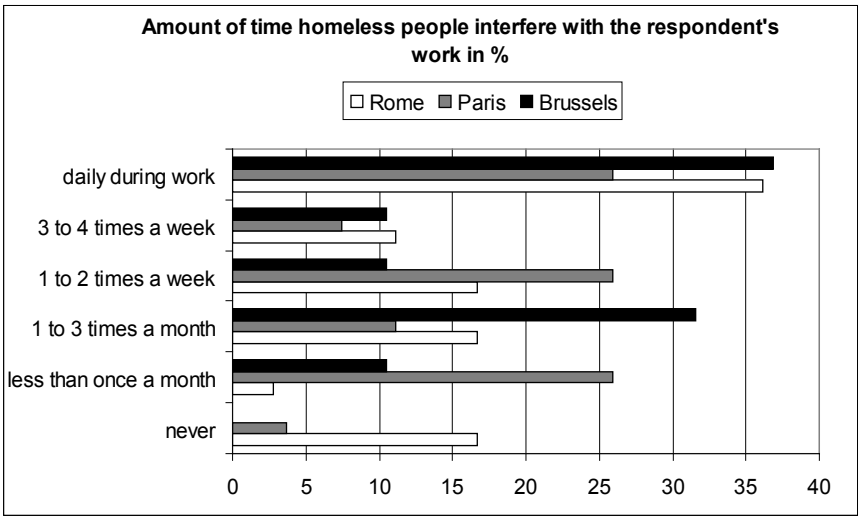


Figure 14: Interference with work routines (N=82)

4.3.2 Respondents' assessment of the training programme

On a basic level of assessment the respondents rated the training to be interesting (Rome, Paris) respectively very interesting (Brussels) as shown in Table 20. The rating of the usefulness of the training is also positive, in particular for Brussels.

	mean values			
	Rome	Paris	Brussels	Total
How would you rate the training overall? (1=not interesting at all – 5=very interesting)	4.0	4.17	4.53	4.18
How would you rate the training overall? (1=not useful at all – 5=very useful)	3.81	3.91	4.56	4.01

Table 20: General assessment (Interesting, N=78; Useful, N =77)

ANSA (Agence nouvelle des Solidarités actives (Ed.): 2011: Homeless people in European train stations. Preliminary scientific analysis. shows the respondents' subjective assessment of the overall training. We used a scale from 1 = fully disagree to 5 "fully agree" without labelling the steps in between. We see that the general pattern is similar for all three cities with some slight variation. Respondents generally agreed that the announced goals of the training programme had been met which points to the overall consistency of the training design. Respondents in Brussels and Paris also rather agreed that the training supported them in applying their new knowledge at work and that the training prepared them for working with homeless persons. Rome diverges significantly where respondents were undecided regarding the application of knowledge and even tended to disagree to the statement that the training prepared them for working with homeless persons. This first assessment already introduces a trend that we will find in the following statistics again.

The satisfaction with trainers with regard to their preparation, their encouragement of active participation, their support and respect towards participants was generally very high as shown in Figure 16.

The assessment of specific training methods as shown in Figure 17 is also positive with an emphasis on the work of the trainers that reflects the high overall satisfaction with trainers. We can conclude that on this basic level the training as well as the trainers received a very favourable assessment.

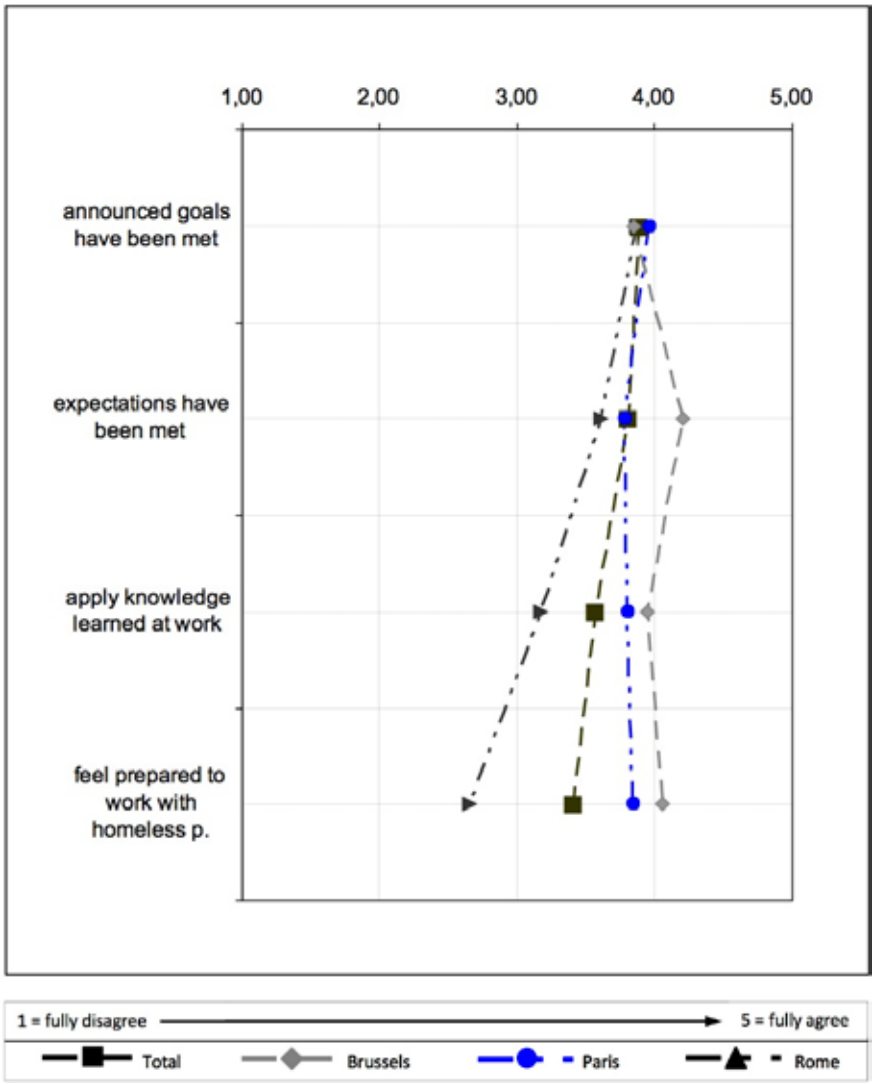


Figure 15: Assessment training

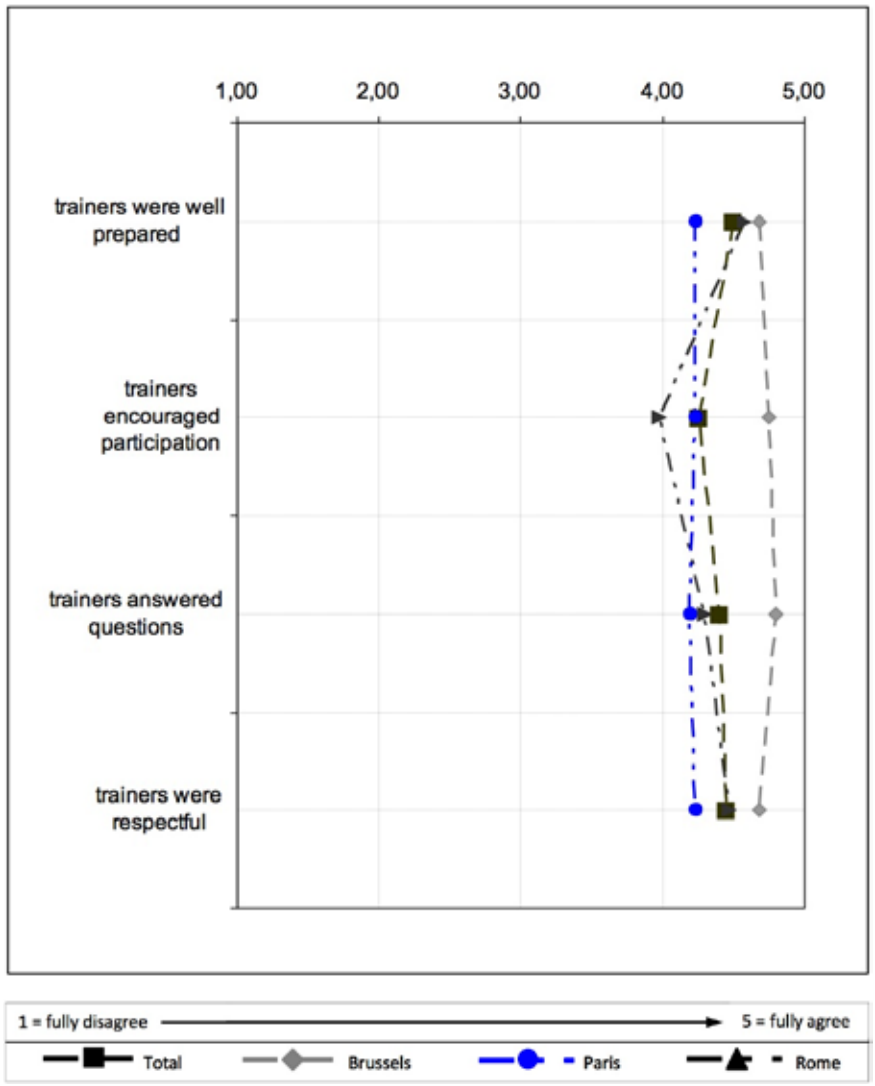


Figure 16: Assessment trainers

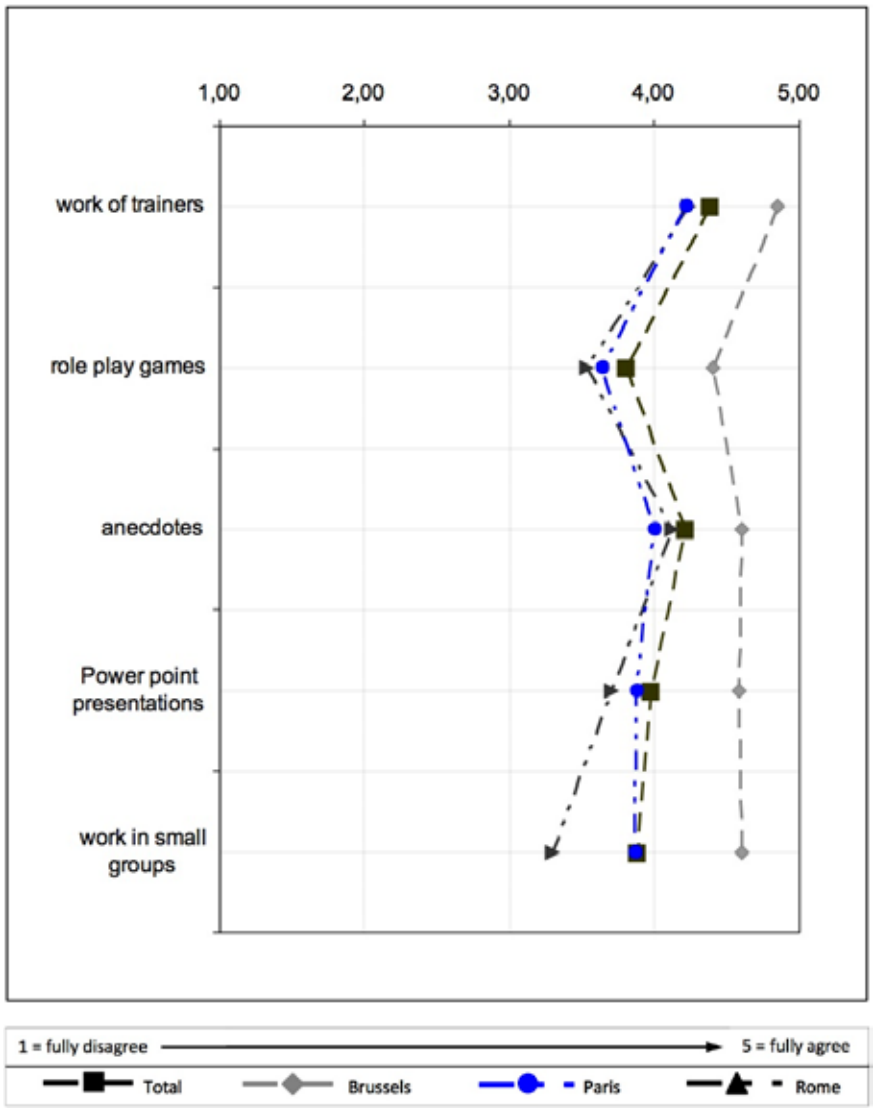


Figure 17: Assessment methods

4.3.3 "Knowledge" before and after the training

We used a retrospective Ex-Ante/Ex-Post design based on the training participants' own subjective assessment to evaluate improvements in knowledge and practical competences with regard to different training contents. We will start with the assessment of knowledge. Figure 18: Knowledge Pre/Post All cities shows the overall pattern of responses before and after the training (mean value of participants in all cities). We see a general increase in knowledge by one step according to a 5-step scale from "no knowledge" to "a lot of knowledge". Participants assessed their knowledge before the training from moderate to rather low. We received particularly low retrospective ex-ante responses for "communication tools" (a module of the training programme concerned with how to approach and communicate with homeless persons) and "information on local support" (which refers to information on social service organisations offering services to homeless persons as well as information on the reference authority). For these two items we see however the strongest increase in knowledge. This general pattern is repeated for the three cities, although with significant differences. Brussels shows the highest initial assessments for all items and also the highest assessments after the training (see Figure 19: Knowledge Pre/Post Brussels). Paris shows only moderate increases for the first three items and its highest increase for "information on local support" (see Figure 20: Knowledge Pre/Post Paris). In contrast to Brussels, respondents in Paris also reported low knowledge on the train station's policy towards homeless persons, which increased however significantly. Rome clearly shows the lowest assessment before the training, but shows similar increases (Figure 21: Knowledge Pre/Post Rome).

The most relevant result is obviously the lack of knowledge on communication tools, professional local support and – interestingly – on the train station's policy towards homeless persons. What makes this initial assessment even more relevant is that most of the respondents were long-term employees and not freshmen which points to certain shortcomings in internal communication and the general lack of very basic information on the available professional local support. The training programme obviously achieved to fill these knowledge gaps in all three cities. In particular in Paris and Rome the training programme achieved relevant improvements according to the subjective assessment of respondents.

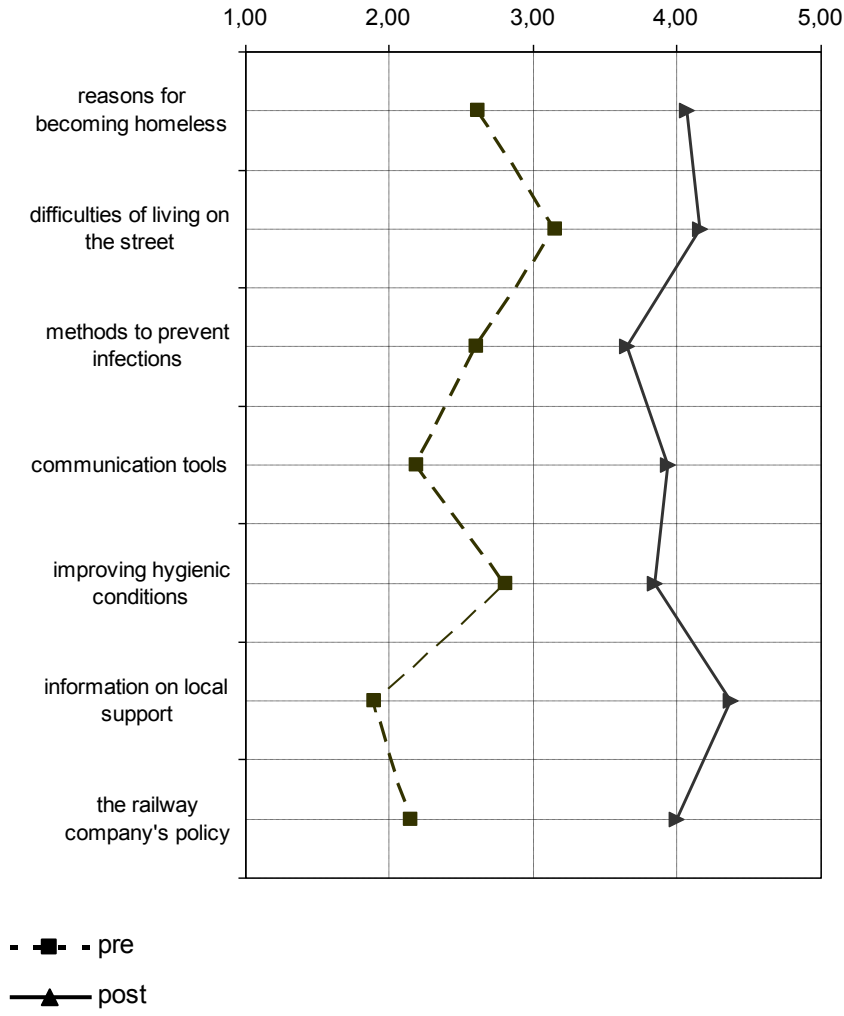


Figure 18: Knowledge Pre/Post All cities

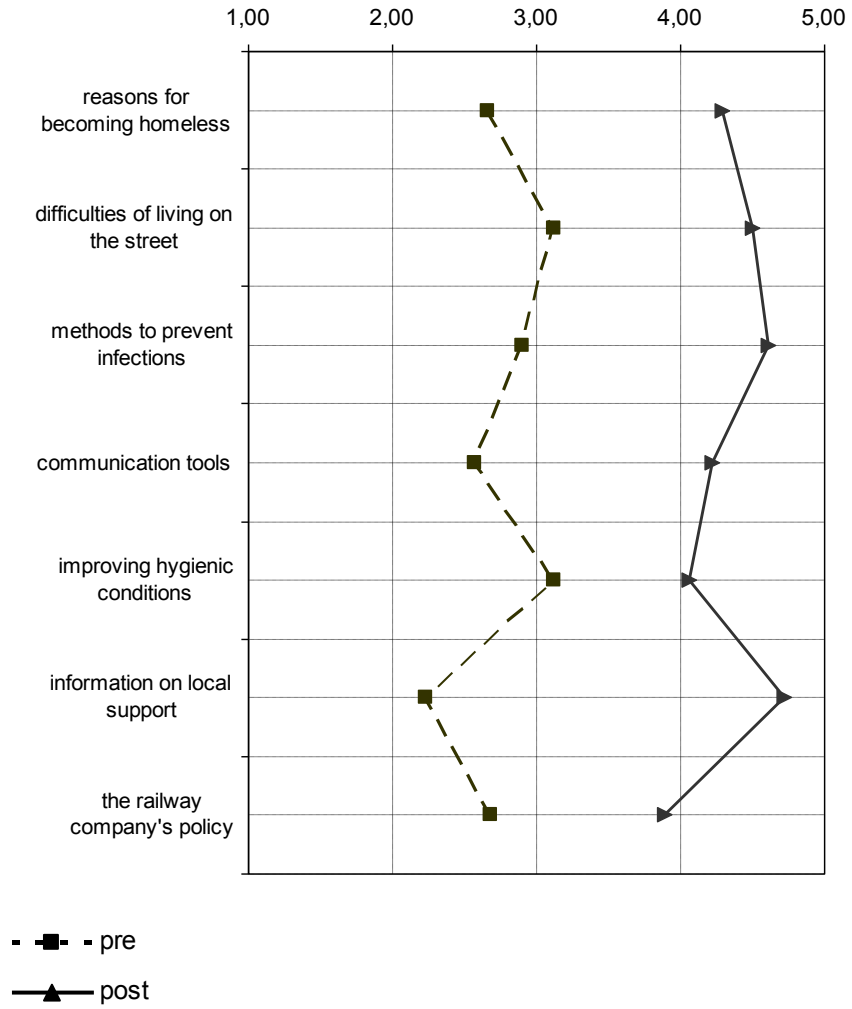


Figure 19: Knowledge Pre/Post Brussels

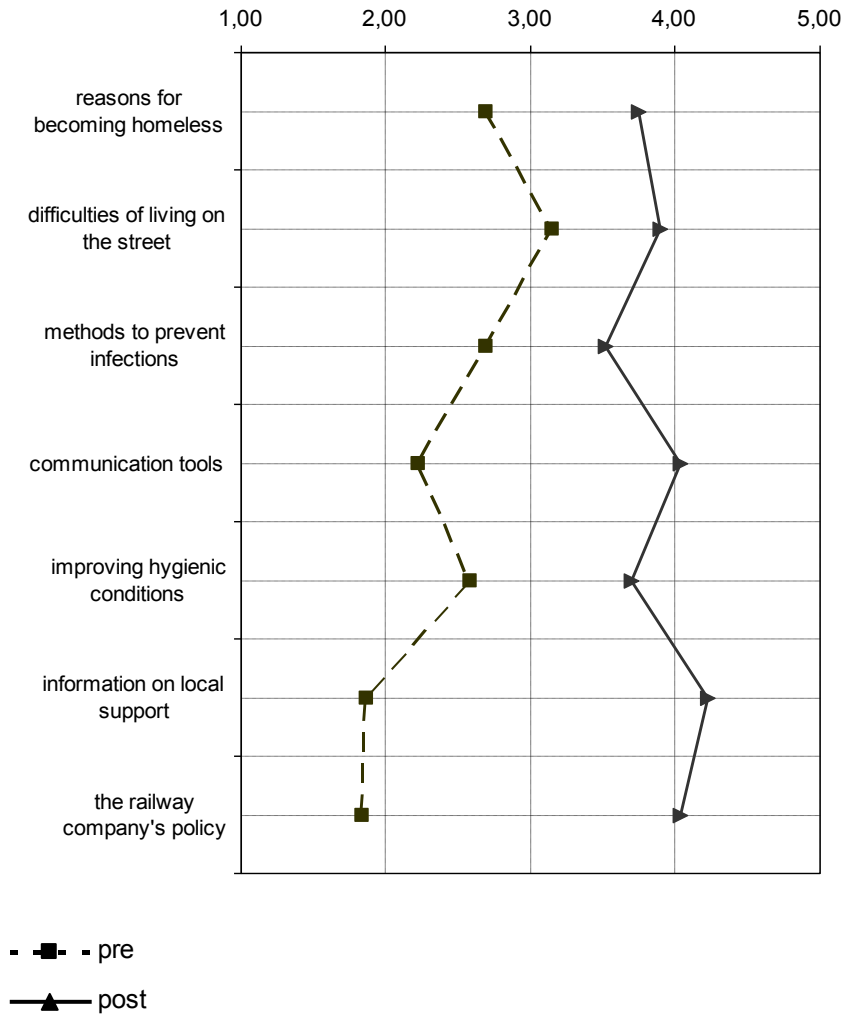


Figure 20: Knowledge Pre/Post Paris

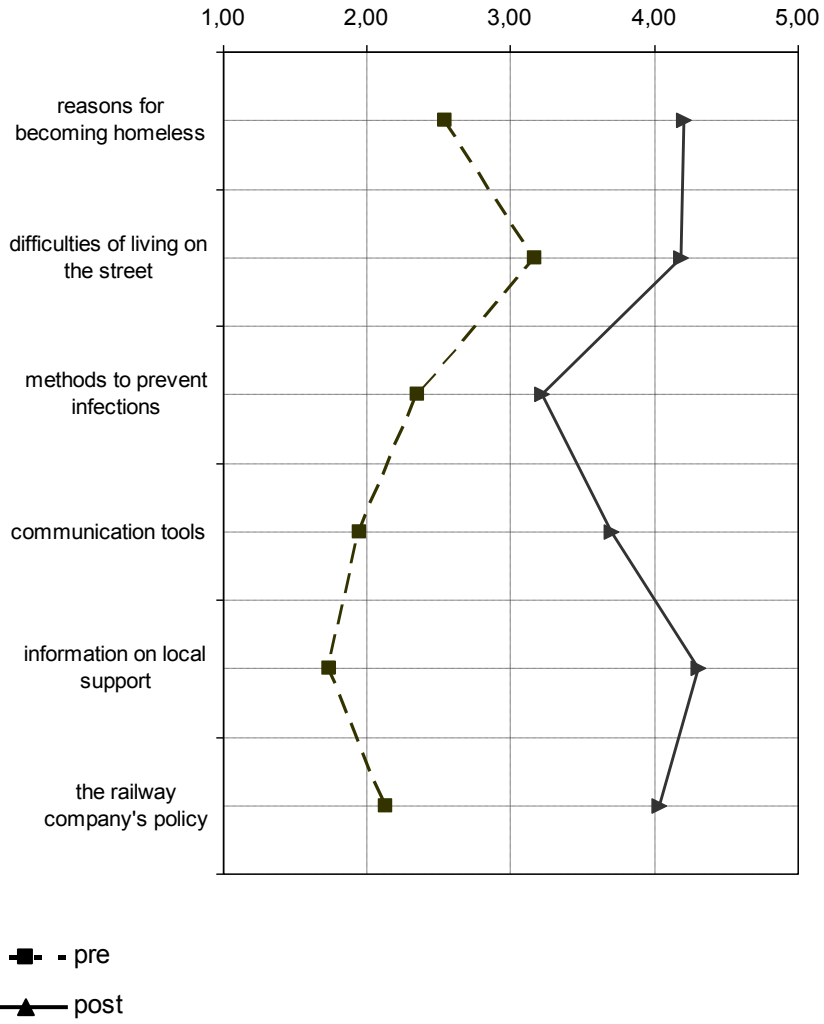


Figure 21: Knowledge Pre/Post Rome

4.3.4 "Confidence" before and after the training

Besides "Knowledge" we also asked for the confidence in handling with situations related to homeless persons and whether this confidence had been improved by the training. We regard this dimension as more demanding – in terms of the participants' practice, but also in terms of the training methods necessary to achieve this kind of impact.

In Brussels and Paris the participants reported to be moderately confident with most of the described situations in their ex-ante assessment – from less demanding practices such as communicating through more demanding practices such as emergency help (see Figure 23: Confidence Pre/Post Brussels and Figure 24: Confidence Pre/Post Paris). A significant variation is only noticeable for the item "contacting a social service organisation" where confidence was lower compared to other items. This corresponds well to the results found for "knowledge". Again, it indicates a very weak integration of social services in the work profile of railway station employees – the practice of contacting a service organisation seemed to be rather unusual and unknown to employees before the training. We see improvements after the training of about one step according to our scale. The highest improvements are again shown in relation to service organisations. In general, the improvements are slightly weaker compared to gains in "knowledge".

For this dimension Rome shows a significantly different pattern of responses compared to Brussels and Paris (see Figure 25: Confidence Pre/Post Rome). Confidence before the training was generally assessed to be rather low. Although the training programme increased the confidence by one step according to the respondents' assessment the resulting values still indicate only moderate confidence.

It is interesting that there are no significant variations between items regardless if the situation is more or rather less demanding. This may at one hand be caused by the fact that respondents in Rome generally reported to have less contacts with homeless persons, but it may also point to a general attitude of "non-interference" with homeless persons that renders any kind of contact situation partially problematic or demanding. For both explanations we found indications in the qualitative interviews.

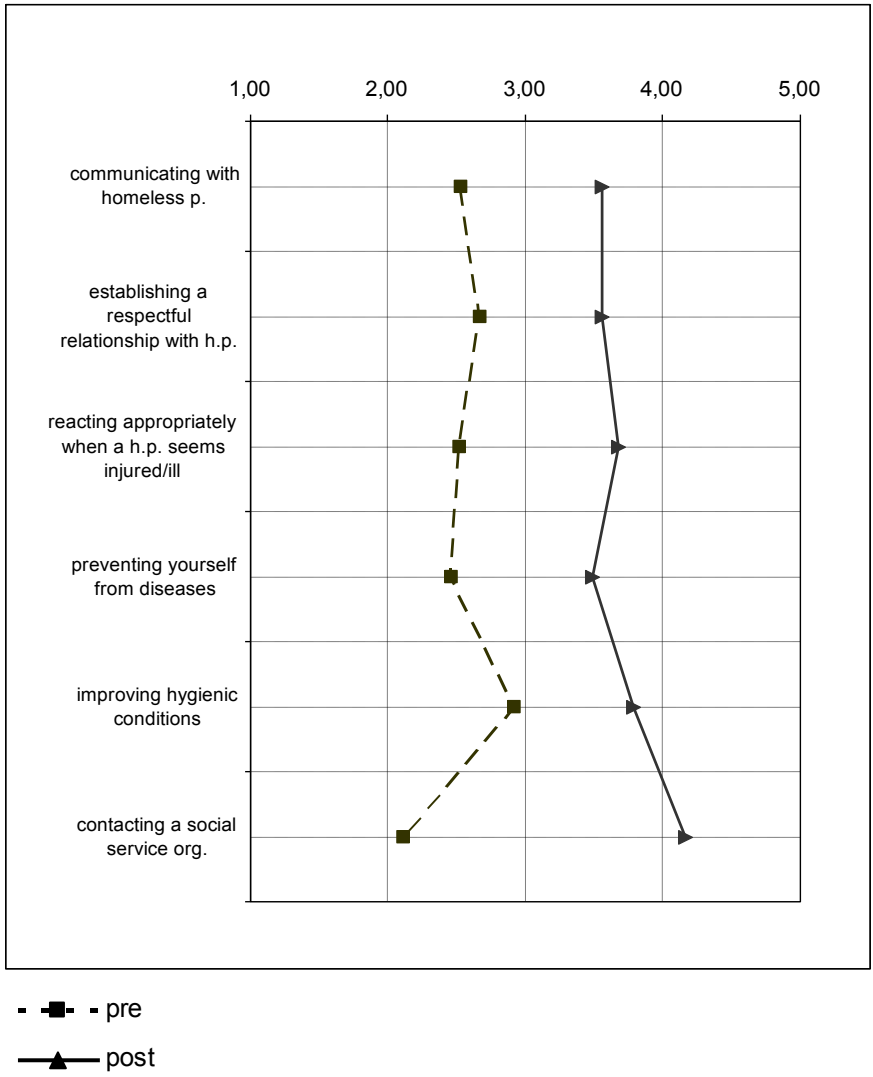


Figure 22: Confidence Pre/Post All cities

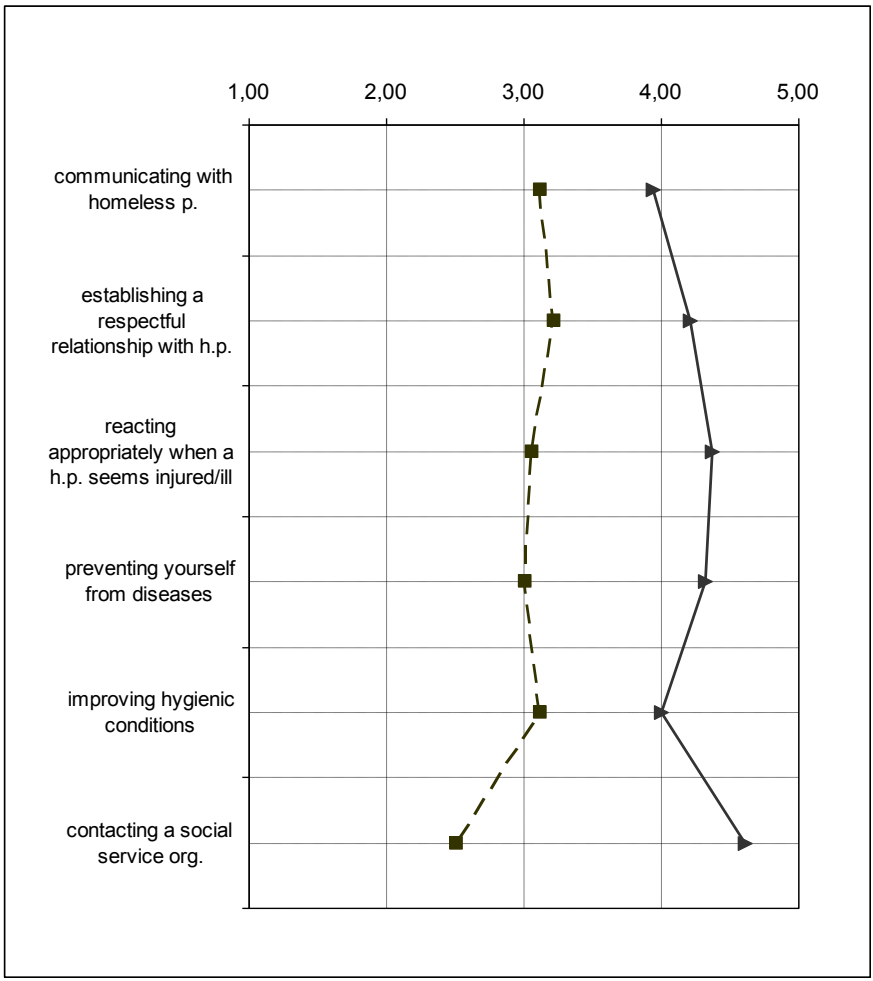


Figure 23: Confidence Pre/Post Brussels

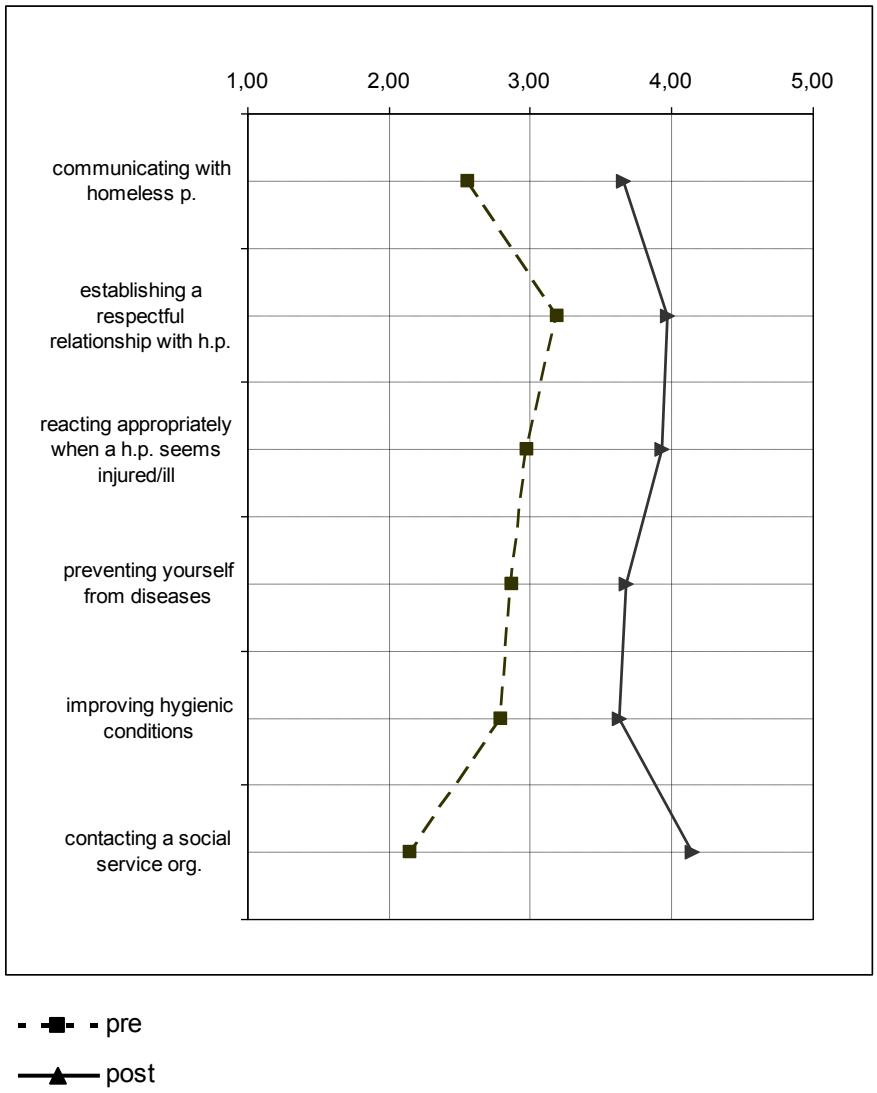


Figure 24: Confidence Pre/Post Paris

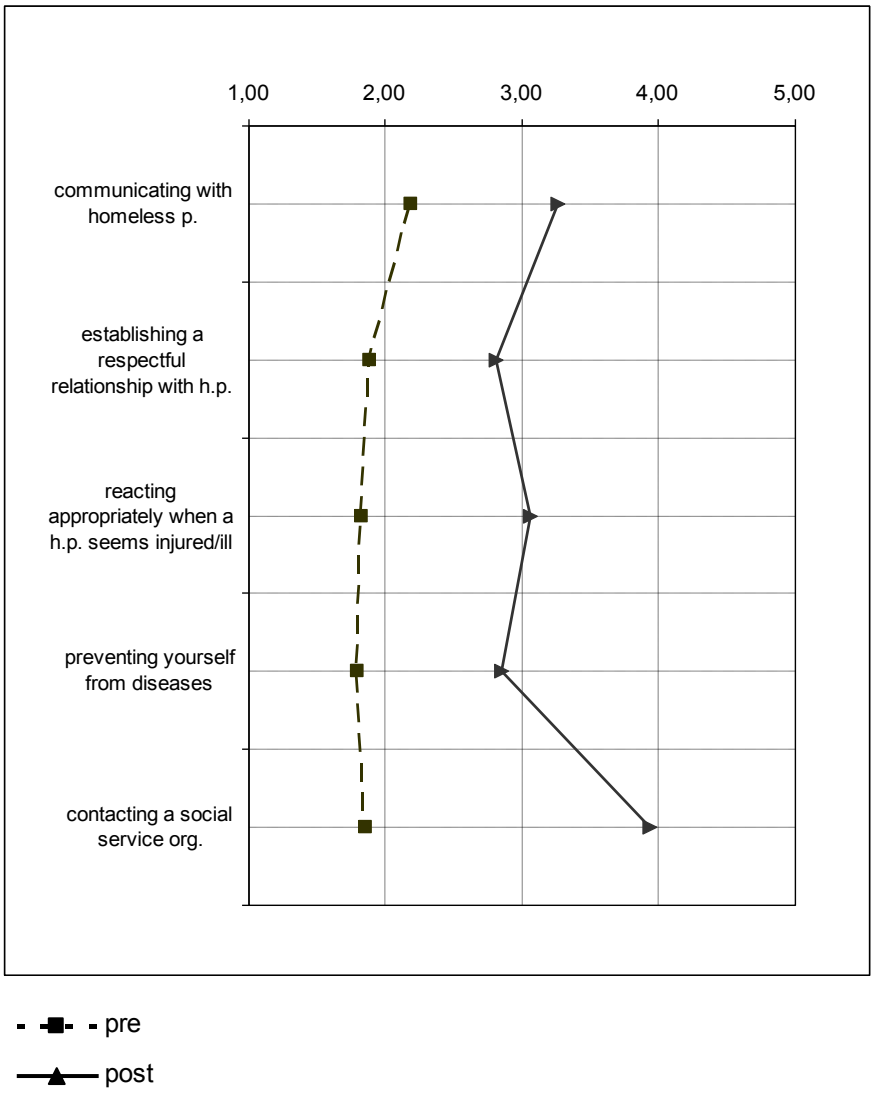


Figure 25: Confidence Pre/Post Rome

4.3.5 Respondents' answers to open-ended questions

The answers to the open-ended questions should complement the quantitative results. In Table 21 we compiled the general categories we assigned to the open answers. Understanding homeless persons and learning more about the social service organisations were the main reasons for respondents to participate in the training in Rome, Paris and Brussels. The emphasis on getting information on local social services is also reflected in the quantitative subjective assessment that showed the highest improvements when respondents compared their knowledge before and after the training with regard to social service organisations.

This can also be seen for the next question which asked for the most important things respondents learned in the training, again the information on service organisations is emphasised, but also the aspect of being directly related to homeless persons at work and the need for better understanding homeless persons and supporting them appropriately.

Issues that the training should have integrated more intensively refer to emergency situations, potentially dangerous situations (diseases, drug-use), putting theory into practice and hearing the opinions of policemen on the issue of homelessness.

This indicates that the training did not fully cover these difficult issues, which is of course difficult to do within a one-day training course. Tackling these issues would make necessary a more "hands-on" oriented training and maybe also additional and specialised trainers.

The next question was only answered by respondents who did not feel prepared to deal with homeless persons after the training. The quantitative evaluation already showed that the Italian respondents were most insecure in this regard. This impression is further substantiated by their open answers that include "fear", but also the lack of experience and the need for additional trainings. We did not receive answers from respondents in Paris and Brussels on this issue.

The last open question referred to possible improvements of the course. It is remarkable that in particular Italian respondents who generally were least

confident with their knowledge and confidence in dealing with homeless persons show a high awareness of aspects of the training programme that could be improved. For us this awareness also indicates a real interest in being involved in trainings on homeless persons. Respondents mention for instance that the training should be longer or should include more audio-visual material or even a former homeless persons talking about his/her experience. These open answers seem to be in line with the general impression we received from Rome – The respondents seem to be well aware of the importance of the issue and even want to do something about it, while realising the gap between their work profile and the competences needed for active supporting homeless persons. We also saw that respondents in Rome were least confronted with homeless persons in their daily work routine.

Respondents in Rome seem to expect from the training to close this gap and to bring them closer to the actual practices and competences needed. It seems that the HOPE in stations training programme could not fully live up to this expectation although receiving very favourable general assessments from respondents in Rome.

Rome	
Why did you participate in the Training?	• out of curiosity • to get to know the Help Centre, its mission, function and its activities • acquiring new knowledge about homeless people at the station • to better understand homeless people • information to better help homeless people • information on how to deal with (communicate with) homeless people
What are the most important things you learned in this training?	• motivation • information on needs of homeless people • the existence of the Help Centre and its services • information on organisations and activities for homeless people • how to help homeless people • information on the reasons for becoming homeless
Which issues, which you would have wished to deal with, were not discussed in the training?	• legal aspects/questions • hygienic issues • dealing with infectious diseases • dealing with complex and dangerous situations at the station • future meetings/trainings and potential common activities • how theoretical information can be put into practice • additional lecture held by a policeman

Rome	
If you do not feel prepared to perform job tasks related to homeless people, please explain briefly why you do not.	• not experienced enough • psychological knowledge is a pre-requisite • fear • it needs years of experience • more additional trainings • more practical knowledge/experience • lacking motivation
How can we improve this course?	• tell people that homeless people are human beings like me and you, who should not be excluded • use video material to present homeless people who talk about their destiny • dealing with people's attitudes and behaviour towards homeless people • more practical issues – not too much theory • more details on how to help • instead of a 1-day training, 2 days of training • shorter lectures and more audio-visual material • the training took too long • more direct involvement of participants • lecture held by a (former) homeless person

Paris	
Why did you participate in the Training?	• to better understand homeless people • information on homeless people and how to deal with them • possibility of networking/interaction and cooperation with the main local organisations at the station • information on institutions/organisations, current activities and services for homeless people
What are the most important things you learned in this training?	• don't hesitate to help • getting to know the project "Hope in Stations" • the importance of SNCF • understanding homelessness and its sources • information on organisations who deal with homeless people
Which issues, which you would have wished to deal with, were not discussed in the training?	• discussions with local organisations and policemen • different types of homelessness • drugs and psycho-social diseases
If you do not feel prepared to perform job tasks related to homeless people, please explain briefly why you do not.	• No answers
How can we improve this course?	• the room was too small • all organisations which work at the station should have been present at the training • the lecture of Mr. Venin could have taken longer

Brussels	
Why did you participate in the Training?	• We come into contact with homeless persons on a daily basis, so it seems normal that we try to understand their problems • To be able to achieve an improved cooperation between the security officers and the homeless persons • To understand how homeless persons live • Which diseases there are and how to avoid them • How to communicate better in difficult situations • Which non-profit organization to call when a problem arises
What are the most important things you learned in this training?	• Understanding why they ended up living on the street • To be someone who listens • Escaping poverty is hard yet possible. • Being homeless is a full-time job • Mutual respect • How to put communicative skills into practice • What kinds of different contacts there are • An improved understanding of the risks and dangers
Which issues, which you would have wished to deal with, were not discussed in the training?	• I would have liked to see a homeless person present in the classroom
If you do not feel prepared to perform job tasks related to homeless people, please explain briefly why you do not.	No answers
How can we improve this course?	No answers

Table 21: Answers to open-ended questions

4.4 Qualitative evaluation

In 2011, several months after the training, national researchers conducted qualitative interviews with training participants focusing on their workplace experience with homeless persons and their assessment of the training.

The qualitative interviews with trainings participants at a glance:

- **Conducted at three sites:** Brussels Central (Brussels), Gare du Nord-Est (Paris), Roma Termini (Rome)
- **Survey period:** From June to September 2011
- **Target group:** Training participants who agreed to be interviewed for the follow-up evaluation
- **Objective:** Collecting information on the participants' experiences with homeless persons since the training. And assessing whether and how training participants applied training elements in their work practice.
- **Method:** Semi-structured guideline interview. Qualitative analysis with MAXQDA software.
- **Average duration of the interviews:** 30 min
- **Expected response :** 10 interviews per site
- **Data collection:** Participants were contacted by mail for arranging a date for the interview. Most interviews were conducted via phone. Some interviews (in particular in Brussels) had to be done face-to-face.

4.4.1 Brussels

In Brussels only 4 qualitative interviews were conducted as shown in Table 22. This is very unfortunate because initially 12 participants agreed to be interviewed. This low response rate is surprising, because Brussels not only had the highest response rate for questionnaires (only 1 person out of 21 did not return

the questionnaire) but also the highest values for satisfaction with the training programme. This general satisfaction is also documented in the interviews.

Our researchers had to face different problems in conducting interviews with participants in Brussels. Many contact details were either invalid or mails were not answered by employees (Most employees provided us only with their SNCB mail account information). SNCB officials were contacted in this regard to **check contact information**. This brought some clarification, but most of the participants (who already agreed to be interviewed) still did not answer to our request. We then **decided to involve the reference authority to make direct contact with these employees at the train station**. Several employees being approached **confirmed again to be available for the interview.** Interviews were scheduled and Patrick Italiano, the national researcher, came to Brussels Central three times to conduct further interviews – without much success. **Either employees changed shift and were not available at the scheduled date or employees suddenly refused to be interviewed.** Throughout this process we received little or no support from the SNCB "ground level management". We had the impression that the direct superiors of training participants had a negative attitude towards the project and the training (contrary to their employees!). Although the upper SNCB management supported the training as it supported the project in general, this did not lead to any significant success in terms of involving more participants. After several unsuccessful attempts to reach more respondents the evaluation team had to close the data collection.

This situation was quite surprising for us – we still think that our approach (written consent to participate in interview, mail contact, direct contact, privacy of respondents etc.) was appropriate and furthermore, that the interviews put no pressure on employees. The interviews were about their subjective assessment of the training and did not include any sensitive issues. The interviews were conducted by professional researchers who also approached participants in a friendly and professional way. This and other episodes showed us more than once that the evaluation was not fully accepted and supported by all stakeholders or at least not all management levels of stakeholder organisations, although we invested considerable efforts in communicating and negotiating with stakeholders to find a common approach.

Now we will turn to the four interviews conducted successfully that included cleaning and security personnel.

Respondent No.	Occupational function	Years working for railway company	Coordinating other employees	Sex
No.1	Chief of cleaning staff	30	Yes	male
No.2	Cleaning staff worker	10	No	male
No.3	Security agent	10	No	male
No.4	Security agent	2	No	male

Table 22: Respondents Brussels

4.4.1.1 Regular contact

All four Brussels respondents reported daily contact with homeless persons. Security agents of course have a more direct contact. Respondent No. 3, a security agent, reported on his daily contacts with homeless persons, which are usually routine, but also pointed to more problematic situations. In these statements the security agents emphasises the enforcement of rules and points to the legal frameworks of the rules he has to enforce. We will see further below that the same security agent, although emphasising these unavoidable aspects of his duty, will point out several ways of approaching homeless persons in a more cooperative and productive way.

Respondent No. 3: *"I work daily at the station, in alternating shifts. Now 100% Central, before also at Nord and Midi…. Therefore I have daily contact with homeless…**On a daily basis I have to remind homeless persons that they are not allowed to smoke inside the station. I try to discuss with them, but it's every day the same thing. I have to repeat it.** I tell them 10 times the same thing. There are also often disputes between them. I have to make sure that the passengers or other people are not becoming involved.*

Respondent No. 3: ***"The most common situation is enforcing the smoking restriction. It's a law, I have to do it every day. Another common situation is to make sure that the dogs are kept on a leash. It's a municipal rule. Also***

they are not allowed to lie down on the ground in the station. I then try to explain them the reasons, the image issue with the travellers. *Those are all daily situations I manage without any need of external help.* ***It is less common, but still happens a few times a month, that a dispute degenerates into a fight.*** *It happens mostly during winter, and it's always caused by alcohol, say in 95% of cases. Otherwise, it can be caused by former issues. We are not often aware of such backgrounds, of course. It can end with blood pouring, bottles as weapons,…"*

4.4.1.2 Contact situations since the training

We not only asked for the regularity of contacts related to the work task, but also for specific situations where respondents had to communicate with or support homeless persons. We asked respondents to describe these situations in detail to see whether they were able to apply elements of the training. We used the question: "Please think about contact-situations with homeless people since the training – did you experience any of the following situations?" and defined four types of relevant situations: situations where homeless persons were injured or ill, situations where it seemed useful to contact social service organisations, or situations with conflicts or problems among or with homeless persons.

Three respondents reported contact situations with homeless persons after the training. We will take a closer look at their reports to see how they reacted and whether they could apply training elements in these specific situations. Respondent No. 2, a cleaning staff worker, reported a situation where he tried to support a homeless person who had been mobbed at the train station.

Respondent No. 2: "*Yesterday, I witnessed problems with one of them. He is in a wheel chair, and has often problems with others, they don't like him. Yesterday he received a water bucket on him from another homeless, with threats, someone had a knife. He was told he was stinking. Then he came to me asking for a bucket, for retaliation.* ***I've seen the scene, he was wet. I asked him if he had the possibility to change clothes. He didn't, but he went away. I referred the incident to my boss, to see if we could do something.***

I was told that my task was just to clean. The problem is mainly between them. It would be a good idea to address the problem with them all together, to see how they could solve their conflict. *As for myself, I don't see that man in wheel chair as a nuisance: I don't perceive him as dangerous or 'dirty'. He is just strange, there's something wrong in his head."*

Respondent No.2 obviously wanted to support the homeless person and even tried to initiate further actions when reporting to his superior – the superior's response however seems to be exactly what local coordination and training programmes want to avoid – complete non-response and discouragement of committed employees. Employees who show commitment beyond their narrow job profile should be at least enabled to report and ask for further support. The employee even proposes a kind of "conflict mediation" for homeless persons out of understanding the precarious situation of a mentally ill homeless and the group dynamics causing his exclusion. Again, this is an indication of the high awareness of an employee regarding the existing problems but also his competence in proposing possible solutions.

The respondent however does not connect his behaviour to the training programme. He further mentions that usually he would call Securail (security) in case of any problems.

Respondent No. 2: ***I can't say the training was really useful in this situation. I would have tried to discuss with him anyway. I have always had an easy contact with other people.*** *When I'm faced with an important problem, I call Securail. It never happened so far that I called SBJ (HOPE in stations reference authority), nor had I any request to her.*

Respondent No. 3, a security agent, describes an emergency situation where security had to use force against an aggressive person. He describes the "routine" reaction by security in such cases: "*Earlier this year, we had to face a more exceptional situation. One of them had a cutter in his hand, we needed to get a grip on him. A colleague seized his hand. We were a team of four then (it is quite common, at certain moments, that the usual team of two is complemented with two colleagues who travel with the trains between North and Midi – they can support the team in charge of any single station). […] In such a situation, two manage the offending guy, while the others keep watchers at distance.*

The steps of the intervention are: firstly, we show that we are there, hoping that it will be enough for settling the situation. Secondly, we intervene - it's easier of course if we are four, which is more common in winter. Thirdly, in such a case, since there has been the use of a weapon, we have to call the police. When there's some weapon used, dialogue is no longer an option. We have to protect ourselves with some use of force."

We report this episode, because it shows that security is sometimes confronted with very difficult and dangerous situations where they have to follow stricter procedures. It is however interesting how clearly this respondent differentiates between different situations. He reports another case where he was able to apply a different approach which he relates to the training programme.

Respondent No. 3: "*On the other hand, there are situations where dialogue is useful, I remember a homeless person of eastern origins.* ***We contacted his embassy. They got in touch with his family, and it turned out that he was a missing person in his country. They came and brought him home.***"

And furthermore: "*The Eastern man situation is typical of the usefulness of the training.* ***Before the training, we would certainly not have thought about calling the embassy. The Infirmiers have explained a lot of issues with homeless, and now we have more resources. If someone needs a place to sleep, we can call some shelters to find a place. If there's a health issue, we call the "Infirmières de Rue". When there are administrative issues, we call the Herscham team (specialised police team).***"

It seems that the training programme helped the respondent to connect his own actions to a small group of social service organisations. It also shows that rather simple actions – such as calling the embassy – can make a big difference for persons in need of support and can significantly improve the reaction of employees in certain situations. This is not about learning new skills, but simply to extend the options of employees and to support them in these cases. Having more options will also help them to become more sensitive for different contexts and cases.

Respondent No. 4, a security agent, also refers to the restrictions in his approach to homeless persons – before the training he seemed to handle

situations either on his own or by calling police. He also points to the fact that he had been instructed to act this way as a security agent. Referring to the training programme he points out that "enforcing some rule" can also go along with communicating openly with homeless persons.

Respondent No. 4: "*The most common and serious situations are fights between them. What's most difficult?* ***To properly assess the situation and intervene when it's really mandatory.*** *If they don't obey, we have to call our coordinator, who will possibly call the police. These are not easy situations. Last time when it happened, I tried to solve the problem by myself. The bottom line is that we are not social workers.* ***We used to call the police more often rather than social services. That's the way we were instructed to work as security guards.***"

And furthermore: "Otherwise, more common situations are to tell them they are not allowed to lie down in the station, or to smoke. There's still a risk that they become aggressive, it can degenerate into insults or threats. **The impact of the training is anyway positive. When I have to enforce some rule, I try to dialogue with them, and it really helps.**"

4.4.1.3 Contact with service organisations

Respondents in Brussels also mentioned NGOs they interacted with since the training. "Infirmières de rue" (the same organisation that implemented the training) was mentioned two times with relation to homeless persons with health problems. A security agent also mentioned other social services which also were involved in the general coordination effort of HOPE in stations such as SAMU social or La Fontaine. Respondent No. 3 is actually the only interviewee who reported that he had been approached by a social service organisation. At least this shows that this cooperation does not necessarily have to be a one-way-communication, but that employees can also provide with useful information to social service organisations.

Respondent No. 4: "*I have been faced with ill homeless since the training****. I have called the Infirmiers de rue****. If the case seems more urgent, we call the medical emergency help. I have had no other occasion to call any social service."*

Respondent No. 3: *"I have sometimes to deal with homeless persons who seem to need health care. When it looks urgent**, then I call medical emergency help ("100"). When it doesn't seem that urgent, I directly call Infirmières de Rue.** Typically, they promise they will come the next day."*

Respondent No. 3: *"It happened **that I call Infirmières de Rue, SAMU social, La Fontaine or shelters** I got the contact infos of. I have received calls from Infirmieres when they are seeking a person and they ask if I have seen him."*

4.4.1.4 Applied training elements

Apart from applying training elements in specific situations respondents also reported on general positive aspects of the training programme which had an effect on their work routines. The statement of respondent No. 1 is pointing out the usefulness of the contact list, but also a change in behaviour caused by the training programme.

Respondent No 1: *"In my opinion, the training was very useful. **We now have lists of contacts and phone numbers of associations, we know what does exist and we know we can contact them if needed.** The psychological side of the training is also very useful, as we learned to have a **more positive behaviour toward homeless. It should be repeated on a regular basis, in order to exchange experience with other agents, and to review the current situation. In 30 years of work here, I have never had that kind of training before."***

Although respondent No. 2 did not see many relevant changes due to the training programme he talks about a change in perception as well as a change in his approach to homeless persons. He reports to be more open and communicative due to the training.

Respondent No 2: *"But I have no problematic relations. **I have no memory of cases where I had to use the training contents.** I have **changed a bit my perception** on how one can happen to arrive in such a situation, on what is really they living mode, not much more. **The impact of the training is that I maybe talk more to them. Before, I used more often to ignore them, to do as if I had not seen them, to clean around them.** Now I am maybe more prone to discuss, ask them to move themselves a bit so I can clean all the place.*

This change of perception was also reported by respondent No. 3. Respondent No. 2 and No. 3 refer to the information on the reasons for becoming homeless. These issues were discussed in a dedicated module of the training and obviously increased their understanding towards homeless persons. Respondent No. 3 draws a connection between this more subtle perception and better communication with homeless persons.

Respondent No. 3: ***"I have changed my perception of them since the training. I no longer see them only as troublemakers. They are human beings who encountered difficulties, and their situation went out of hand. The training explained us how that can happen.*** *With some of them,* ***wondering how they arrived there allows a better contact, some dialogue.*** *Of course, with others, there's nothing to do, they are just delinquents, no matter if they have an accommodation or not."*

Furthermore, respondent No. 3 refers to the restrictions in dealing differently with homeless persons due to his job profile. However, for him finding a balance between "enforcing the rules" and being flexible, friendly and more communicative seems to be possible.

Respondent No. 3: ***"We still are not social workers - that's the limit of what they taught us. If I were to confuse my mission, I would get in trouble with my hierarchy. We can listen to them, talk, but the bottom line is that we have to enforce the rules. The result is however that it helped a lot. Most of them now cooperate, and when they do so they also find us more relaxed toward them. It's a win/win option, some of them appreciate it.*** *We of course cannot just leave them alone, but be a bit more flexible. For instance, those who sleep outside are to be found into the station in the morning.* ***Those who cooperate best can be allowed to stay, say a quarter or half an hour instead of expelling them immediately****. I negotiate, "I will come back after 15 minutes, and you will no longer be there then" instead of bringing him outside right now."*

Although respondent No. 3 is well aware of the restrictions of his professional role as security agent, he obviously found many elements of the training to be practically useful. However, he seems to be a bit undecided on the actual effects of the training programme.

Respondent No. 3: "*The dialogue helps a lot.* ***I try to listen*** *to them. Sometimes, it calms them down, but not every time. I have now* ***more ways*** *to get in touch with them,* ***also giving advice****. If I see one who is dirty,* ***I give him an address*** *for a shower and get clean clothes.* ***I also make use of the addresses we received****. When we advise them, they usually listen to us. If really one has no will to go by himself, we call the Infirmiers, and often they accept the help.* ***I give them the shelter addresses when I see someone who needs a place to sleep.*** *I use the address guide. They don't always follow the indication, for instance one with a dog cannot go to the shelter.* ***What we learned at the training is good, but it's still theory****….*

Also respondent No. 4 reported that he regularly uses the address guide and now calls Infirmières de Rue for medical support instead of the general emergency service. It seems that the training could promote a locally focused cooperation involving NGOs who might better know the train station and its regular homeless visitors than general medical services. When NGOs cooperate with employees it probably would enable them to better keep track of homeless persons and to find a more individualised approach to known homeless persons.

Respondent No 4: *In average,* ***I use the address guide once or twice a month****. I call according to the hours indicated. Usually, they arrive more or less quickly, it depends. We always have a good relationship with them. Before the training, we didn't know the Infirmiers de Rue, we always called the medical emergency help.*

4.4.1.5 Attitudes towards homeless persons

Belgian respondents were asked about their personal attitudes towards homeless persons at the train station. In general, we saw that the respondents in Brussels have a rather relaxed relationship with homeless persons which became more direct and communicative due to the training. We also want to report on some of the negative impressions that show that employees are well aware of different groups and different strategies to approach or avoid them – but also that training programmes need to include the issue of aggressive behaviour.

Respondent No. 2 reported that the train station is a meeting point of youth gangs: *"On the other hand, there are **gangs of youngsters**, with some leaders. They argue, cause troubles, fight. Most of the time we keep ourselves out of that. Only if it's too serious, we call Securail."*

Respondent No. 3 distinguishes between different groups of homeless persons at the station: "normal" homeless and deviant people who try to get money with aggressive begging: *"I would separate the homeless (young or older; Belgian, Arabs, Eastern) form delinquents. The latter are mostly younger, mostly hanging around in the Square Madeleine, maybe a dozen. They **immediately seek conflict, raise the tone, are more violent. They are also more prone to involve passengers in disputes. We have to intervene for avoiding fights with passengers or shopkeepers. Typically they insult those who don't give when they beg.***

Respondent No. 4 mentioned the role of alcohol for the behaviour of homeless persons: *"Really, only some of them make some effort to comply to the rules. They are like chameleons, at some moments they are kind, and **when they are drunk it changes all**. They become aggressive according to the amount of alcohol."*

4.4.2 Paris

In Paris the national researcher interviewed 10 training participants as shown in Table 23. Again we see a wide range of different occupations from managers through to operating agents and security personnel. In contrast to Rome (next chapter) the respondents in Paris have significantly less working experience, although two respondents are obviously long-time employees of the railway company (No. 2 and 9).

Respondent No.	Occupational function	Years working for railway company	Coordinating other employees	Sex
Paris No.1	Video controller	3	No	male
Paris No.2	Instruction assistant	22	Yes	female
Paris No.3	Operating agent	6	No	male
Paris No.4	Operating agent	5	No	male
Paris No.5	Operative manager	5	Yes	male
Paris No.6	Service coordinator	6	No	male
Paris No.7	Manager	5	Yes	male
Paris No.8	Security Manager	13	Yes	male
Paris No. 9	DLS assistant	29	No	male
Paris No.10	Controlling agent	8	No	male

Table 23: Respondents Paris

4.4.2.1 Regular contact situations

Most respondents in Paris reported to meet homeless people daily during their work at the train station (No. 10, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4 and 3). In Paris, respondents are actually much more involved with homeless persons as a part of their job responsibilities. They regularly meet homeless persons and also interact with them. Homeless persons are for instance regularly asked to leave the train station premises. Two respondents (1 and 2) reported not having any contact with homeless persons due to a change in their job duties.

Respondent No. 3: *"Of course, my activity on the platforms but also in the all station brings me to meet homeless people all the time. I meet them every day at every hour, especially in the evening when the stations closes."*

Respondent No. 4: *"During my work time, I often meet homeless people roaming in the train station, especially by night. Generally when the train station closes, we have to direct them towards the exits."*

Respondent No. 5: *"As a part of my activities I have always contact with homeless persons at the train station. I'm regularly doing my "Social tour" to keep contact with the public which also includes these disadvantaged persons."*

Respondent No. 8: *"Being responsible for the train station premises I meet homeless persons daily, often only to tell them to leave the premises, which is certainly not a place for getting appropriate support."*

Respondent No. 10: *"As I often work in staggered hours, I regularly meet homeless people. I'd say that I encounter them daily. I meet them late in the evening, or early in the morning. Indeed, very often, I find some people sleeping in the TGV trains."*

4.4.2.2 Contact situations since the training

Four respondents reported specific contact situations with homeless persons since the training (No. 4, 5, 7 and 10). 5 respondents reported no contact situation since training (No. 1, 2, 3, 6 and 8). We will look at the two cases where respondents mentioned they applied elements of the training. Respondent No. 4 sometimes makes use of emergency numbers when encountering homeless persons in problematic conditions or calls SUGE (train station police) in case of conflict situations.

Respondent No. 4: ***"In general, I did not have any particular problem with homeless people in the station, especially the "regular" ones. There are new people of course, notably young homeless with dogs. But sometimes we have problems with very alcoholised homeless****. As I do not want to take any risks or to be in trouble, I often call the SUGE agents (train station police) who are especially trained to deal with this kind of conflicting situation."*

The training seemed to help him to differentiate between different "groups" of homeless persons. He seemed to be concerned about different groups before as indicated in the citation above when assessing whether a situation is dangerous or not.

Respondent No. 4: ***"The training session enabled me to differentiate the different types of excluded people.*** *Before, I did not really make the difference between these target groups, or I found out that there are numerous types of homelessness.* ***This better knowledge can avoid us to make mistakes on the field when we approach them.*** *I think this part of the training session was very useful."*

Respondent No. 5 mentions a very specific contact situation with a man in a difficult mental condition. He refers to his own long-time experience as a railway employee when explaining his calm reaction.

Respondent No. 5: *"Yesterday, on the 4th of July I encountered a man aged between 30 and 40 who spoke to them. Was he homeless? It is difficult to say for sure. He showed however many characteristics which were described in the training (for instance he had no teeth anymore). He spoke inconsistently. He asked for instance: "Are you alone?" The question surprised me and could have scared many employees with less experience than me. The man however was not threatening, but seemed to live in his own world. […] I remained calm when asked this question repeatedly and answered: 'No, I'm not alone. There are many people here and I can call my colleagues any time'. The man then went away without becoming aggressive."*

The training programme itself primarily helped him in introducing different emergency numbers. He is however concerned of finding appropriate solutions for homeless persons at the train station and feels not fully prepared for that.

Respondent No. 5: *"I appreciated the training, because I regularly meet homeless persons as a part of my job routine. I learned several things, in particular on contact persons.* ***I was introduced to three different telephone numbers we may use and I actually used one of them recently.*** *Despite these numbers we do not have the means to find appropriate solutions for these homeless persons.* ***I'm waiting impatiently for the continuation of this train-***

ing to learn about "detailed procedures" we can follow when we want to support a homeless person at the train station. At moment the only possibility I have is to call SUGE (train station police)."

Respondent No. 7, manager of the Vinci park company who coordinates four parking lots and a team of 17 employees, speaks openly about the regular practices of his employees towards homeless persons: ***"We meet many marginalised people (homeless people, drug-addicts, prostitutes) who hang around in parking lots. So far, we adopted quite a repressive approach towards them. Of course, at VINCI, we were not insensitive to their problems. These people are indeed the direct victims of a crisis that affects our entire society.*** *These marginalised people have very different backgrounds. Some come from poor housing, others are precarious workers, some are undocumented people, others have had accidents of life. In short, we find all types of profiles in our profession. As I said, so far, we had no concrete answers to provide to them."*

Respondent No. 7 also recalled a specific contact situation with homeless persons: *"Recently, I went to meet wandering people on our premises. During this, I was stopped by 3 of them, among which there was a couple who asked me whether I could find them a place to sleep. I didn't want to make them believe in unrealistic things, but* ***I told them what NGOs they could contact and what resource-person at the Town Hall would also be likely to help them."***

He refers directly to the training and mentions its usefulness: *"The knowledge learnt during the training sessions was useful to me in terms of being able to orient these people towards specialized NGOs.* ***This training allowed me to better understand homeless people's needs, and even if I can't do anything personally to find them housing, at least I can orient them towards professionals who will help them."***

His last statement also points to the important multiplier function of managers that participated in the training programme: *"****I think the training allowed me to be more careful concerning the general problem of homeless people, and maybe also to be less cautious about them.*** *It is something I'm going to promote also to my agents who are directly in contact with these people and who sometimes fear for their security (for example, being attacked or bitten by syringes)"*

4.4.2.3 Contacts with service organisations

Only 2 out of 9 respondents in Paris reported any contact with social service organisations.

Respondent No. 7: *"Indeed, I recently contacted an NGO, specialised in this type of problematic situation. I also talked to a manager of the urban community (Communauté d' agglomération) who knows well about the questions connected to the problems that exclusion creates.* ***The interest that I also see in this training on homeless persons is that it provides access to many connections with NGOs or institutional entities, but also with SNCF, who has a real expertise on those questions about homelessness.*** *We can now rely on all these stakeholders to try to go ahead ourselves as a private company on these complex issues."*

Respondent No. 8, who is a security manager, reports intensified contacts to social organisations as a result of the training: *"Indeed, I had some contact with social service organisations since the training, in particular with those that are specialised in supporting drug-addicts.* ***One of these organisations is since visiting us twice a week, Tuesday and Friday, to support us in collecting the used needles. This cooperation is of course very useful for our employees****"*

He also refers to the information brochures that were given to training participants in Paris comprising information on social service organisations, their services and contact details. Since the training he seems to be actively involved in strengthening the contacts with social services and to improve the work routine of his employees in particular regarding the issue of drug-use: *"Furthermore****, thanks to the different brochures we received during the training I have the telephone numbers of social organisations****, which work in the surroundings of Gare du Nord. And I did not know that so many existed."*

He reports of being contacted to join further activities: *"Since the* ***training the city administration of Paris also asked me to participate in an information event on drug-addiction. This is a new opportunity for me to make new contacts with regard to this particular issue"***

Most employees however reported no contact with social service organisations (No. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 10). This result corresponds with the findings for Rome (next chapter) that employees usually have no or very little contact to social service organisations.

4.4.2.4 Applied training elements

Despite applying training elements in specific situation the respondents also answered to the general question whether they found any of the training elements useful for the work. Most respondents in Paris stated that the training provided useful information about service organisations and emergency help (No. 2, 4, 6, 7, and 10).

For instance respondent No. 2: "*Before the training I did not know the existing actors who are able to support homeless persons well.* ***My motivation was particularly to learn to know this network of actors***. ***Although having no possibility to apply this knowledge by myself, because I'm responsible for doing vocational training, I think that I'm now able to better talk about these questions with my trainees.*** *I found this training very interesting, because I'm a trainer myself. I think I really understood better the different categories of marginalised persons at the train station as well as their different problems."*

Although respondent No. 6 reported to be generally well informed on how to contact organisations in cases of emergency, he appreciated that the training provided him with better knowledge on organisation particularly supporting homeless persons: *"I learned interesting things in the training,* ***in particular regarding the list of social service organisations, which are able to act inside the train station, and details about the emergency call number 115."***

Respondents No. 7 and 10 also reported having been able to apply certain training elements. Respondent No. 7: *"… that* ***I could orient these people towards specialised NGOs***. *This training allowed me to better understand homeless people's needs, and even if I can't do anything personally to find them housing, at least I can orient them towards professionals who will help them."*

Respondent No. 10: *„****What I found most interesting in the training are the ways to use to invite wandering people to leave the station***. *…I know the*

social services which intervene in the 10th district of Paris. But I do not necessarily have regular contacts with them. However, ***the training introduced me to the emergency number that SNCF implemented****. I haven't had the opportunity to use it yet, but I think it's a very good initiative".*

Not all respondents were fully satisfied with training outcomes. In particular respondent No. 3 assessed the training programme negatively and criticised the general policy of the railway company SNCF: *"Of course, I learned that there were specific organisations which help homeless people in and around the train station and that there was a notebook in the train stations to inform about the difficult situations, but otherwise, not much.* ***Actually, this training session was more of a confirmation that the SNCF has set for objective to hide the problem and not to deal with it. That's the reality that I found pretty sad… No, the training session of March did not bring me any different solutions from those I already practice to help homeless people roaming in the train station…****But to be honest, training session or not, that's something that I did naturally before. So I cannot tell that the training about homelessness had an impact on my attitude toward homeless people in the train station.*

Respondent No. 5 expected to learn more about clear procedures when encountering homeless persons: *"The training confirmed several things that I already knew more or less. I expect however much more from further training sessions.* ***In particular, I would like to have clearer procedures, which I can implement when encountering a homeless person at the train station. At the moment I do not have many concrete solutions at hand."***

4.4.2.5 Attitudes towards homeless persons

The attitudes of French interviewees towards homeless expressed compassion, charity and the awareness that homelessness can happen to everybody: For instance respondent No. 1: "***From my personal perspective I feel pity for these persons, who obviously have a very difficult life. The training reminded me of that."***

Or the statement of respondent No. 2: *"I'm rather calm with these persons. I think they did not choose to become homeless. In general, these persons are*

calm and friendly and personally I would not say that to disturb me in any way. Furthermore, I never heard any complains by customers about them, when I still worked at the train station."

Respondent No. 3, a train station employee from Morocco, stated that the threat of homelessness would not be restricted to marginal groups, but that everybody may potentially end-up being homeless: *"**Marginality can happen to anybody**. That's why we must remain careful listeners to these people, because behind the negative and disturbing image they send back to the society, **we realise that they are just like us…**"*

Respondent No. 6, who feels much empathy for homeless persons, mentions the „normalisation" of their presence which may lead to ignorance and that the training helped him to refocus on the problem: *„The homeless persons do not disturb my work. Unfortunately, we are already so used to their presence, that we sometimes start to ignore them. **The training allowed me to raise my awareness on this issue again**, although I consider myself as being someone who generally reacts sensitive to marginalised groups."*

4.4.3 Rome

Table 24 gives an overview on the participants our national researcher interviewed for the qualitative training evaluation in Rome. We see that the occupational backgrounds are actually quite diverse and include customer services, management as well as technical staff.

We also see that the majority of respondents is already working for a long time for the railway company which indicates a high level of work experience as well as experience with the train station as such. In Rome not all interviews were recorded so that our researcher had to take notes and summarise the responses after the interviews. Therefore, interview paragraphs are written in third person style.

Respondent No.	Occupational function	Years working for railway company	Coordinating other employees	Sex
No. 1	Technical trainer on the job	15	No	male
No. 2	External station manager	35	Yes	female
No. 3	Corporate security agent	20	No	male
No. 4	Statistics	9	No	male
No. 5	Customer Care Coordinator	24	Yes	female
No. 6	Administrative manager	32	Yes	female
No. 7	Regional transport tutor	26	Yes	male
No. 8	Customer Care Coordinator	24	Yes	male
No. 9	Technical staff	37	No	male
No. 10	Crew instructor	11	Yes	male

Table 24: Respondents Rome

4.4.3.1 Regular contact situations

In Rome several respondents reported having regular "contacts" with homeless persons. Such contacts were reported in Interview No. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 10. Respondents relate these contacts to the work location, in particular employees who work directly at the platforms (or specific platforms). Since many of the offices are located directly at the station some persons from the administrative or management staff also reported regular contact when entering and leaving their offices. Two respondents reported no contacts either due to their job location (No. 8) or their job function (No. 4). The only job related contact was reported by the security agent (No. 3) who has daily contact with homeless persons seeking for shelter at the station who he often has to expel from the train station.

Most of these "contacts" however do not imply supporting homeless persons or having a more personal contact. Only one respondent reported to have such a regular, personal contact with a homeless woman she regularly talks to at the station (No. 6).

4.4.3.2 Contact situations since the training

Interestingly, most of the respondents in Rome were not involved in contact situations since the training (No. 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10). Some interviews however point to the fact that these contacts are in general very rare events. For example in interview No. 9: *"Concerning situation contact, after the training the interviewee did not experience any particular situation involving homeless. In any case, also for the past, he never intervened directly to deal with difficult situation; sometimes, he provided disadvantaged people with some general information (mainly concerning food and/or housing)."*

One exception is respondent No. 6. This respondent tries to help homeless people and informs help centre: ***"During the month of March, the respondent has been working to try to help a homeless recently arrived at Termini Station in critical physical and hygienic conditions.*** *For this reason, this person was unable to move, remaining most of the time on the ground, lying against a gate.* ***The respondent and some colleagues of hers often brought him food and beverages, informing the Help Center about his presence at the station."***

A dangerous situation with a drunken homeless is reported in interview No. 2: "*A passenger had called her to intervene, as it seemed that a homeless person was lying dead on the rails. She followed the passenger full of anxiety up to the place where a homeless was actually lying, but in fact he was only very drunk. He then stood up and started staggering along the rails, where a train was to arrive in a few minutes. The interviewee tried to convince the man to move out from the rails. At his refusal, she had to push him physically onto the platform, to avoid major risks. Once having secured the man, she called her colleagues for help.*

Such episodes are more frequent on platform n. 1 than in other parts of the station. Yet, it is quite common to find people sleeping in front of the door of her office (platform n.12)"

Interestingly, both respondents stated they did not apply knowledge from the training in these situations. In general, it seems to be difficult to prepare employees for very rare and irregular situations.

While most respondents do not see a direct link between their job duties and homeless persons, they are well aware of homeless persons at the train station and also observe problematic situations and conditions. For instance respondent No. 10: ***"The respondent spoke of a very deteriorated situation, in which groups of homeless, in very poor hygienic conditions stay by the trains along the platforms.*** *Such a situation is quite an inconvenience for passengers, who have to find their way through the homeless themselves and their belongings."*

Another respondent also pointed to an observed condition: ***"She pointed out that sanitary conditions of the homeless in the station are getting worse, especially after the fountains were deactivated, the medical facilities were removed and given the absence of accessible toilets. Such situation determines the degradation and misuse of the station spaces****; in particular, the respondent pointed out that the area behind the elevator located on platform 1 is now used as a toilet. The resulting level of filth and stinking affects the living conditions for both homeless and passengers."*

Both respondents actually make relevant observations on hygienic conditions at the station and even provide interpretations and solutions. Interestingly, the respondents do not relate these observations to any further action or training contents. Both reported in the interview that they could not apply knowledge from the training. Furthermore, there seems to be no institutionalised reporting system that would allow employees to professionally act on these issues. They rather seem to remain passive observers. It is also relevant that the second respondents points to the removal of relevant facilities that would improve the hygienic situation at the station. It is clear that the removal of this kind of basic infrastructure is also restricting employees in taking professional action – for instance guiding a homeless persons to an appropriate facility at the train station.

4.4.3.3 Contacts with service organisations

An important aspect of the training programme was to inform participants on the existing social services, their field of competence and how to contact these services in case of emergency. Most respondents have no contact with

social services, although being aware of their function and appreciating their work (No. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10) as for instance respondent No. 2: ***"The interviewee is aware of the activities carried on by the Help Center and of its social function in the station, which she judges crucial, in consideration of the wide range of the social needs expressed in this very context. She thinks that railway personnel do not have, and neither can acquire, the competence, which is necessary to treat social cases properly.*** *The interviewee has never requested the intervention of the Help Center so far, but she would not hesitate to do that, if necessary."*

This statement reflects a general attitude which we also found in the responses to the training questionnaire for Rome. The respondent is obviously concerned about homeless persons and appreciates the competences of social service organisations – but at the same time professional support to homeless persons is not seen as a part of the job profile of regular employees. This is certainly true for professional support and long-term support – What may be missed in these statements is however the function of employees as intermediaries between homeless persons, who they regularly observe at the train station during work, the social service organisations and the railway company. This type of intermediary function is however not only based on the knowledge and competence of employees – to fulfil this function depends on certain frameworks that companies or NGOs have to provide, for instance a reporting system for employees. HOPE in stations attempted to set up exactly such a system in Paris, the "exclusion alert".

Two respondents reported contacts with service organisations. These contacts situations happened however before the training - No. 8. and No. 9: *"He (interviewee) knows the Help Center and, in some occasions, he sent people there to receive support from social operators. Nevertheless, he cannot consider this function as a form of contact."*.

4.4.3.4 Applied training elements

We also asked respondents whether they generally utilised any knowledge they gained through the training programme: "Generally, have you been able to apply training contents in your working practice?" In Rome, none of the

respondents reported any application of training knowledge in specific situations. One reason obviously was the fact that these situations are very rare. However, also the more general question on applying training contents was answered negatively by most respondents (No. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10 and 12). This does however not indicate their dissatisfaction with the training as can be shown based on their statements. In general, respondents in Rome do not report many occasions where they would be able to directly apply skills (No. 2, 3, 4 and 7). Respondents appreciate to have a better understanding on the problem of homelessness and more information on the service organisations after the training (No. 2, 3, and 5).

For instance respondent No. 10: *"Concerning the training contents, the interviewee had* ***no occasion*** *to put them into practice. He rather tried to transfer to his colleagues all the elements he acquired regarding the different reasons, which can lead a person to homelessness, and the information about the social services operating in the station. The interviewee said that he spends a lot of time* ***sensitising his colleagues'*** *awareness about the complexity of the social framework in which homelessness evolves, and about the measures the different actors (FS, Public Administrations, etc.) implement to tackle this phenomenon."*

Respondent No. 5: ***"As for the training programme, she judges it positively, with special reference to a better understanding of the social causes leading to the homeless condition.*** *Besides, for personal attitude and professional role, the interviewee seems to be a sympathetic person, used to face the complexity of the situations, going beyond appearances.*

Respondent No. 7: *"After the training course, he did not experience any particular situation concerning homeless people….* ***The respondent did not have the chance to apply any of the contents acquired during the training course, even if the better knowledge of the social system within the station would enable him to better manage any future problem occurring during his professional activities."***

4.4.3.5 Attitudes towards homeless persons

Respondents were also asked about their personal attitudes towards homeless persons and whether the training had any impact on their attitudes. It is interesting to see how railway employees reflect on the issue of homelessness. It seems to be either reflected as a personal issue – respondents mention feelings of fear and insecurity (No. 5 and 6) – or as a societal issue. In particular the following statement is remarkable in showing the complexity of the issue of homelessness from the perspective of a railway employee, his sensitivity but also the problem of how to relate professionally to this issue:

Respondent No. 10: "*Talking about homeless, the interviewee said that being aware of the causes and the nature of this phenomenon, makes him uncomfortable … **The interviewee admits to feel uncomfortable when dealing with homelessness and other forms of social disadvantage, for he is well aware of the nature and the causes of this phenomenon, which make him feel powerless and inadequate. […] Homeless' precariousness recalls a much wider one, which might have a strong impact on everybody's life**. A homeless person is not perceived as the extreme consequence of a process of self deterioration; he/she is rather the expression of the fragility of the social system as a whole, unable to support the individual."*

In general, the respondents seem to share a basic sensitivity on the issue of homelessness. This sensitivity was obviously not generated by the training alone, but existed before. There are however respondents who feel that the training helped them to look at homeless people in a different way, feeling a greater sympathy and having a better understanding (No. 9, 8, 6 and 2). For instance respondent No. 2: "*More concretely, **she declared to have modified her own perception of homeless people, whom she now considers desperate persons, who must have gone through harsh situations to end up living in the station.** Her attitude is to help those people as much as she can, with food, cigarettes or clothes."*

4.5 Conclusion

4.5.1 Brussels

Respondents in Brussels reported the highest positive assessment of trainers, training methods and the training in general among respondents in the three cities. Their mean values for satisfaction were close to the maximum values of the scales we used.

Brussels also showed the highest self-assessments of respondents before **and** after the training regarding their knowledge on issues related to homeless persons and their confidence in handling situations related to homeless persons. Despite the higher initial assessments the improvements for both dimensions were significant.

Interestingly, all three cities showed the same pattern with regard to the self-assessment of knowledge and confidence. The knowledge on local social support services received the lowest assessment in all three countries before the training. Also the knowledge on communication tools (this referred to ways of approaching and communicating with homeless persons) and the railway company's policy on homeless persons was comparable low for Brussels as well as for the other two cities. The weak assessment of the second item points to certain shortcomings on the side of railway companies either in establishing a policy towards homeless persons or in internally communicating this policy to employees. The training however was an attempt to change this situation and it succeeded according to the self-assessments of respondents in all three cities.

Brussels showed statistically significant increases for all items in the knowledge dimension. Usually, this increases amounted to more than one step on a 5-step scale from "no knowledge" to "lots of knowledge". For Brussels we saw a change from "moderate" knowledge to "much" or "lots of" knowledge for most items. The increase in knowledge on social service organisation was highest.

We already explained that is was only possible to interview 4 training participants in Brussels despite all our efforts. In Brussels it was however possible to talk to two security employees which we think is very valuable for the evalu-

ation – The behaviour of security towards homeless person is a key factor for improving the general situation, which was also pointed out by NGOs (see the respective interviews in chapter 5.1). For security agents the contact and communication with homeless persons is part of their job and sometimes implies to enforce the existing rules and to expel homeless persons from the train station. For some of them it is a daily struggle as reported in Brussels by one respondent.

The respondents from security reported that the generally attempt to act appropriately in different situations that are however difficult to assess – a better assessment of such situation is what they expected and also received from the training.

Security agents actually were the ones who could report most detailed on situations involving "homeless persons" (sometimes it is of course not clear whether the respective person is actually homeless). From violent incidents where they had to use force to active support for instance when successfully calling up the respective embassy for one foreign person at the train station who seemed to be disoriented.

In particular, for their supportive, communicative actions they assessed the training programme to be useful providing them with more resources and contacts and generally with more flexibility in acting towards homeless persons. The behaviour of security agents was also stressed in the interviews with NGOs (see chapter 5.1) who reported positive change which they assign to the work of the reference authority as well as to the training programme.

Security agents seem to be a key target group for training, not only because their behaviour is an important element, but also because these employees might profit the most from trainings, clear policies, and cooperation with NGOs. They are the ones who might apply training elements on a regular basis.

The security agents in Brussels also actively contacted social service organisations, in particular Infirmiere de Rue, SAMU social and La Fontaine. It is probably not by chance that Infermiere de Rue was also organising the training. This points out the advantage of having NGOs organising the training, which also helps them to share their experiences, and present their organisation and services.

The application of the training elements focused on contacting service organisations as well as using a more open and friendly way of communicating with homeless persons and generally a greater sensibility towards homeless persons. It became obvious that security agents are very positive about the fact that they learned to act in a much more supportive way in some situations.

4.5.2 Paris

Respondents in Paris were generally satisfied with the trainers, the training methods and the training in general. Their initial self-assessment of their knowledge and confidence in handling situations related to homeless persons was slightly higher than for respondents in Rome and slightly lower than for respondents in Brussels.

The general pattern is the same here: the self-assessment of knowledge was lowest regarding communication tools, the railway company's policy towards homeless persons, and in particular the information on local social support services. For these item we saw however also the most significant improvements after the training. Respondents in Paris were in general moderately confident in handling situations with homeless persons, at a similar level as Brussels, but significantly more confident than the respondents in Rome. For confidence we saw similar improvements for all items of one step on a-step scale. Thus, confidence was improved from "moderate" to "rather confident".

Most respondents in Paris reported to meet homeless people daily during their work at the train station. In Paris, the respondents for the qualitative interviews were much more involved with homeless persons as respondents in Rome.

The respondents in Paris reported only on a small number of contact situations with homeless persons since the training where they had to become active. The respondents reported that some training elements were helpful in these situations, in particular for taking more time to assess a certain situation and to differentiate between different groups and their behaviour at the train station. Additionally, the emergency numbers that the training introduced to

them were used in these situations. A change in attitude was also reported by some participants who reported to be generally more sensitive to the problems of homeless persons, but also less cautious in approaching them.

In particular respondents responsible for security issues at and around the railway station reported an intensified contact with social services due to the training. These respondents are in management functions established small-scale but useful collaborations with NGOs, for instance on the issue of drugs and drug waste at the station. Before the training the managers did not have comprehensive information on the local NGOs and now obviously seek for different ways in building up cooperations. One of these managers also reported that he tried to give his new knowledge onto his employees. We regard these multipliers as highly relevant for the long-term success of the training programme. The respondents in Paris were clearly focusing on getting information on social services to be able to forward homeless persons to appropriate services.

Providing appropriate support without acting outside ones' professional function depends on the coordination of several actors – train station managers, security, police, and social service organisations. Employees need this framework to act responsibly and professionally as intermediaries. Also in Paris employees regularly meet homeless persons and are concerned about their conditions searching for appropriate procedures to support them. The issues does not seem to be a lack of regular contact or awareness, but rather a certain lack of coordinated cooperation, detailed procedures and transparent policies towards homeless persons.

4.5.3 Rome

Respondents in Rome shared the positive assessment of trainers, training methods and the training in general with the respondents from the other two cities. Their self-assessments before and after the training are however consistently lower compared to Brussels and Paris. Regarding their knowledge on training elements the items "communication tools", "information on local support" and "the railway company's policy towards homeless persons" received the lowest assessment before the training, while the respondents

showed higher initial assessments of their general knowledge on homeless persons. This complements the findings from the qualitative interviews quite consistently, where respondents expressed real concerns about social inclusion in general and homeless persons in particular, but also the experienced lack of procedures and tools to become supporters rather than observers.

The respondents assessed the training to be actually quite effective in filling these knowledge gaps. Rome shows here similar increases compared with the other cities.

The self-assessment of the confidence in handling situations with homeless persons was however on a critically low level before the training. Regardless if we asked for emergency situations or routine communication we received very low self-assessments for the confidence in handling these situations in Rome. The training programme could improve this self-assessment, in particular regarding the activity of contacting a social service organisation. For "confidence" the final assessment remained however on moderate level despite these improvements – we could also use the terms "indecisive" or "insecure" which we think expresses well where the respondents in Rome are currently standing with regard to the active support of homeless persons. This is also confirmed by the answers to the open-ended questions where respondents in Rome expressed their insecurity as well as their interest in further training and continuing efforts.

We also saw that after the training respondents from Rome felt less prepared to deal with homeless persons compared to respondents in Brussels and Paris.

In Rome the respondents reported regular contacts with homeless persons at work – these contacts however do not necessarily involve direct interaction. Respondents often refer to observations when entering or leaving their offices without having much further interaction. In general, the respondents seem to be rather separated from homeless persons during their work routine, which does however not indicate a lack of empathy or an unwillingness to support homeless persons – on the contrary, employees in Rome explained their empathic attitude towards homeless persons – the problem of homelessness as such is sometimes described as a societal problem that is relevant for all citizens and can happen to everyone. Respondents expressed however their insecurity regarding their competences for direct action. We received these answers also in

the questionnaire, where respondents from Rome had a comparably low self-confidence in directly supporting homeless persons, feeling rather insecure and not well prepared for this task.

This "separation" also means that railway employees were hardly involved in any emergency situations or other special situation with homeless persons. Only 2 out of 10 employees reported such situations for the time after the training. Some answers on emergency situations furthermore indicated that these situations are generally occurring seldom at work. The question is here however, whether this depends on their professional function or their general perception of relevant situations.

Although not being directly involved for most of the time the respondents observe their environment at the train station very carefully and also point to particular problems as for instance bad hygienic conditions in specific places. Respondents even proposed solutions. The impression is however that they do not really know with whom they should talk or what they could do to implement these solutions. These activities seem to be rather detached from their regular work.

We think that this situation also points to the responsibility of low and mid-level management to introduce employees to new procedures that foster a stronger connection between such observations and professional action. This context may partly be missing for employees in Rome.

The high awareness on the issue of homelessness was also expressed in the answers to the open-ended questions in the training questionnaire for Rome. Respondents in Rome actually provided more inputs to these questions than respondents in Brussels and Paris. The answers express their wish to be enabled to support homeless persons ("dealing with complex and dangerous situations at the station", "legal aspects", "future meetings/trainings and potential common activities"), but also their ambivalence in doing so ("not experienced enough", "psychological knowledge is a pre-requisite", "fear", "it needs years of experience")

With regard to social service organisation we saw the same combination of a relatively high awareness and relatively low direct contacts. Respondents for instance know and appreciate the "Help Center" (HOPE in stations reference authority) and its functions, but to not directly interact with the Help Centre.

One respondent expressed an opinion that we think is capturing the ambivalence with regard to supporting homeless persons in Rome quite well. She emphasised that railway employees would not have the competence to professionally support homeless persons – and that they would not be able to acquire this competence. This is not simply a negative statement, because it also expresses the appreciation for the professional NGOs and the general awareness of the difficulty of the task. What may however be missed in such statements, and what is probably relevant for the training programme, is the attempt to develop a more differentiated understanding of the professional roles of employees as well as their relation to NGOs. They will not become social workers, but they may become better mediators, intermediaries, informants as well as participants in activities related to social inclusion.

The respondents in Rome seem to share many of the prerequisites in knowledge and attitude for making this change possible – their concern about homeless person and social inclusion issues, their awareness of the problem at the train station, their basic attitude of helping and supporting, their non-rejection of homeless persons etc. They however did not take the final step yet and maybe would need more continuous support. In the questionnaire survey they asked for further trainings, which is an indication of their general interest, their critical self-assessment and their assessment of the demands of their extended function.

Fulfilling this extended function depends on frameworks that railway companies and NGOs have to provide, for instance a reporting system for employees. But it also depends on a clear policy on homeless persons at the train station. We saw in the questionnaire that employees in all three cities were not really aware of any such policy.

HOPE in stations attempted to created this framework, but we think that the reference authorities need more time to be able to approach more employees and to develop instruments that support them in being more active and fulfilling their roles as intermediaries, supporters and informants for NGOs, the reference authority as well as the railway company.

The respondents generally appreciated the training but lacked the occasions for applying any specific training elements.

5. Reference authority evaluation

The implementation of the reference authority was the main intervention of HOPE in stations. The general aim was to create the function of a local coordinator tightly connected to the railway station and the railway company, but also connected to the network of social service providers. This complex role could not be completely defined in advance as it depended on the local resources and priorities and in particular the available persons. The coordinators of HOPE in stations however managed to provide a general outline of activities for the reference authorities that included: Strengthening the cooperation between services and in particular between services and station stakeholders (Railway station employees, security, police, shop keeper, cleaning personnel etc.). Additionally, the reference authorities should organise the provision of a room directly at the train station, suitable for meeting but also partly for service provision, make an effort to coordinate the street work of NGOs and prepare the implementation of a monitoring of homeless persons at the station in terms of documenting needs and support activities as well as the general presence of homeless persons.

Brussels: In Brussels, Silvia Bochkoltz was appointed for the function of the reference authority. She has a professional background in social work. After initial difficulties in defining her role and function and prioritising her tasks she effectively (according to the interviews we will discuss below) mapped the existing stakeholders, approached a high number of NGOs and station stakeholders and brought them together at regular meeting, started to do her own regular tours through the train station talking to homeless persons as well as stakeholders, supported NGOs in service provision, and initiated several additional mini-projects (for instance one on the provision of lockers at the station). It is clear that her background as social worker influenced her approach to the function of being reference authority. According to the response of stakeholders it seems however that she understood the specific role she took on as an intermediary rather than a front-row social worker. She clearly emphasised the cooperation among stakeholders and tried to maintain a “neutral” role.

Paris: In Paris, Patrick Jud, a former railway station employee was appointed as reference authority. He had the advantage of being familiar with the internal hierarchies, functions and practices of SNCF, also being well connected to most railway station stakeholders. According to the policy of SNCF, which contracted with three NGOs that are allowed to provide services directly at the station, Patrick Jud focused on strengthening the cooperation with these three NGOs and in particular linking them to the railway station stakeholders as for instance security. Together with the services and stakeholders he developed the so called "exclusion alert" apart from other smaller initiatives, a documenting system for all requests referring to homeless persons (or other groups at the train station). Incoming calls are recorded and further processed by the reference authority who is able to identify the appropriate social service or stakeholder for resolving a specific situation.

Rome: In Rome, the reference authority actually was implemented as an organisational function of the Help Center, a part of the NGO Europe Consulting, the main Italian partner of the HOPE in stations project. The Help Center already had a history of acting in the function of a local coordinator. The Help Center already implemented a monitoring system before the start of HOPE in stations and also provided facilities for meetings and service provision. In the framework of HOPE in stations the Help Center attempted to intensify its coordination efforts and to include a wider range of services and stakeholders.

5.1 Qualitative Interviews

The evaluation of HOPE IN STATION is generally based on a mixed-method approach. We also used a mixed-method approach to evaluate the primary intervention of HOPE in stations: the national reference authorities. The approach consisted in a combination of quantitative network analysis and qualitative interviews. While the quantitative network analysis focused strictly on the cooperation pattern among relevant social services at and around the train station, the qualitative interviews focused on the service organisations' assessment of the reference authority.

Based on the reports of the reference authorities we knew about the scope of their activities which varied significantly between countries. Therefore a qualitative approach seemed to be the only possible way of achieving any valid assessment. The interview guideline basically tried to cover all fields of the reference authorities' activity. Respondents were asked about their current practice and cooperation and whether and how the reference authority had an effect on the following aspects:

1. Cooperation of social service organisations with railway station stakeholders (security, cleaning, customer service, shop keepers)
2. Cooperation among social service organisations
3. Support of homeless persons at the railway station

We decided to interview only social service organisations and stakeholders that had worked with the reference authority during the implementation period (approximately one year). The selection was made by the evaluation team based on the reference authorities' reports were they reported on all meetings, collaborations and activities. Our resources would not have allowed interviewing all social service organisations which would potentially be relevant for the train station to receive a full image of the acceptance of the reference authority – To focus on the direct assessment of cooperation partners seemed much more manageable, appropriate and valuable to us for assessing the activities in detail.

We may have excluded organisations that did not want to cooperate with the reference authorities – these organisations however would not have been able to assess any of the reference authorities' concrete activities directly without being involved.

The qualitative interviews with social service organisations and stakeholders at a glance:

- **Conducted on three sites:** Brussels Central (Brussels), Gare du Nord-Est (Paris), Roma Termini (Rome)
- **Survey period:** From September to November 2011
- **Target group:** Social service organisations and stakeholders which collaborated with the reference authority.
- **Objective:** Assessing the outcome of the activities of the reference authorities on local cooperation
- **Method:** Semi-structured guideline interview. Qualitative analysis with MAXQDA software.
- **Average duration of the interviews:** 40 min
- **Expected response :** 10 interviews per site
- **Data collection:** Social service organisations were contacted by mail for arranging a date for the interview. Interviews were conducted via phone or face-to-face.

5.1.1 On the necessity of local coordination

Before discussing the results for the three cities we will introduce the topic of local coordination referring to the interview question whether services and stakeholder think that a local coordination is necessary or not. This is of course a crucial issue for HOPE in stations that implemented exactly such coordination with the reference authority. In general, most of the respondents in all three cities see many different benefits of local coordination.

In Brussels respondents No. 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10 support the concept of local coordination, even if the network of services is already highly integrated. Some NGOs are however also emphasising that they do not understand coordination as “external control” (respondent No. 2) but as an activity of coordinating basic tasks carried out at the station as for instance food distri-

bution and of mediating between different stakeholders. All Brussels NGOs however perceive the strong benefit of having a competent intermediary at the station. In Rome all respondents explicitly support local coordination and emphasise the relevance of the Help Center's (reference authority) work in this regard. In Paris not all interviewees directly responded to this question, but the general impression is that while NGOs do not see much need to be coordinated directly (stating that there is not enough overlap between the different services they provide) they highly appreciate efforts to mediate between railway stakeholders and NGOs as well as the implementation of specific tools such as the "exclusion alert" to make the support of homeless persons at the station more effective and the work of NGOs more visible.

The benefits of local coordination that respondents mentioned include better communication among station stakeholders and services, mutual understanding, less conflicts, more visibility of social services and their approach/efficiency, better information on rules and regulation at the train station, more coherence in service provision and better follow-up services. We will illustrate this only with one example from each city.

For instance respondent No. 3, an NGO in Rome, who explains several benefits: ***"First of all to facilitate contacts and exchange amongst all the actors involved.*** *Sometimes the relation with Railway police, for example, is conflict-laden due to the poor knowledge about the services provided at the train station. This means that each of the organisation concerned has to develop a continuous process of individual negotiation to be in the position of delivering a given service (this process mainly concerns food distribution organizations).* ***The stable presence of a common table of discussion would facilitate the work as well as the exchange amongst the actors concerned."***

Or respondent No. 4, representing an NGO in Paris: *"From a social point of view, the benefit is not negligible either.* ***Indeed, the less important the tensions will be between the social services that intervene in the station and the other SNCF partners (police, SUJE, etc...), the more we'll be able to answer efficiently to marginalised people's needs. The reference authority must lead a real communication strategy towards the station stakeholders.*** *To me, this is really his role. His legitimacy is reinforced by the fact that he*

belongs to SNCF. When a railway worker talks to railway workers, things are obviously simpler."

Also in Brussels respondent No. 1, again from an NGO, perceives significant benefits of local coordination: *"In particular at the station, every user has contacts with several services. Each of them receives a fraction of the demand.* ***In such a context, it is self evidently useful to organise a coordinated care, in order to ensure some coherence in the follow up.*** *It is useful to know who takes care of each user.* ***That's coordination around concrete situations. If instead it's all improvised, then we risk duplicating interventions."***

5.1.2 The train station as a service hub?

One of the most relevant questions in the context of HOPE in stations is whether the train station should become a "service hub" with dedicated services for homeless persons or whether it should rather provide coordination and intermediary functions for better supporting social service organisations active at and around the train station. An interesting result is that NGOs generally do not support the idea of providing additional services at the train station, although they perceive the train station as a relevant place for street work and certain services that seem appropriate. Concerns with regard to providing more services at the train a stations are for instance: the train stations often lacks the premises to deliver high-quality services, homeless persons should generally be directed towards general public services having the right to use standard quality services, more services could attract more homeless person making the work of railway stakeholders and social services more difficult, and, homeless persons should be supported in a more appropriate environment. In general, we were surprised by the sensitivity of NGOs regarding these arguments and their attempt to understand the perspective of railway stakeholders, which is general a positive signal for further cooperation. Again, we will only shortly illustrate these arguments.

Respondent No. 1 from Paris, an NGO representative: *"It's a sensitive question. Let's say that today, social services are already provided in the North station since NGOs under agreement can do street work there.* ***It's a good thing because they can meet wandering people directly on the site. However, it's***

not necessarily relevant to provide other services directly inside the station, because otherwise, there would be a risk of creating a "magnet effect". We must avoid that, of course."

Respondent No. 1 from Brussels, also an NGO representative: *"It is difficult to say, in such a framework, which services should be provided at the station,* ***because it's better if homeless can go to generalist services. It's not about providing answers on the spot. Homeless first of all need to be heard, to be listened to."***

Another NGO in Brussels, respondent No. 7, on the question whether the train station should be a "service hub": "*It is not SNCB's role to provide premises nor to organize it. It's the state's role. The SNCB needs to preserve its image, the station has to be kept clean and pleasant for travellers.* ***It would be better to have premises very close to the station, but not at the station directly."***

Another NGO in Brussels is also expressing that advantage of having the railway station as a "meeting point" and also as a point of reference for homeless persons as well as NGOs, but at the same time mentions the disadvantages. Respondent No. 4: *"The station is an open public space, it is logical that homeless gather there. When weather is poor, it's a more comfortable location.* ***For that reason, it's an important place when the services want to go and meet homeless, for establishing dialogue, creating some social link, etc. On the negative side, it's also an uncomfortable place for looking after them, and it's also a place where much violence can take place between them."***

5.1.3 Brussels

Table 25 provides an overview of all respondents in Brussels and the primary function of the respective organisation.

Respondent No.	Name of organisation	Primary function
No. 1	Diogenes	Help Centre
No. 2	SAMU social	Coordination
No. 3	Home Beaudouin	Shelter
No. 4	Dune	Street work
No. 5	Infirmiers de rue	Medical services
No. 6	Point Velo	Shop
No. 7	La Fontaine	Help Centre
No. 8	La Strada	Coordination
No. 9	SNCB	Railway company

Table 25: Respondents Brussels

5.1.3.1 Assessment of the reference authority's function

This chapter is concerned with how the social service organisations generally assessed the reference authority and its function at the train station. We will see that while NGOs reflected critically on the task of local coordination they arrived at a very positive and differentiated assessment of the reference authority.

We will start with more overall assessments by different stakeholders and then go into detail with more specific assessments. Respondent No. 1 emphasises the aspect of building up an inclusive and open cooperation structure: *"The way SBJ manages the project is fine:* ***all partners have been involved from the very beginning, and there is room for taking into account everyone's wishes"*** and respondent No. 8 stated that: *"SBJ makes an* ***important job in managing the relations with cleaning staff and security agents.*** *They do a difficult work, and they deserve being listened to. It the long term, such a function has a real return."*

This is also emphasised by respondent No. 5 from an NGO which is providing medical support to homeless persons: ***"She allowed to consistently***

improve the level of cooperation with Securail, and to get in touch with the cleaning agents. *She is also and* ***useful link with other stakeholders such as the shopkeepers****, as it happened around the public toilets project."*

From the reference authority's report in Brussels we know that the reference authority was very active in visiting the train station, observing the situation, and keeping contact with stakeholders and homeless persons as well. This is also emphasised by respondent No. 6, a local shop keeper who had regular contact with the reference authority and joined several meetings: ***"She often comes and informs herself in an informal way to know what's going on, to follow up specifically the situation of certain persons. She has a phone permanence: we can call her as intermediate when a social service is needed, or if calling Securail or the police is appropriated. She then keeps herself informed of the follow up."***

In Brussels the social service organisations particularly emphasised the reference authority's role as "intermediary" – a neutral role that interlinks different stakeholders and tries to find a common basis for cooperation despite different priorities and approaches.

Respondent No. 7 from a local NGO also emphasised the function as "intermediary": "*We discuss about security issues at the station.* ***We exchange our perceptions, for instance on the Securail agents' behaviour towards homeless persons****. There was an important event last winter: a homeless was expelled from the station, he was drunk and handicapped, and was found dead the next day. That needed to be discussed, I did with SBJ. I first had to "release the anger" concerning such a tragedy.* ***She is a valid intermediary for such issues."***

Respondent No. 2, representing a large NGO, reported*: "She is seen as* ***"neutral"*** *with the other organisations"* and another social service organisation, respondent No. 1, also emphasised this intermediary role: *"That's the way we conceive her task.* ***She has not to act directly as a social worker in charge of solving the problem; she is a direct (and trained) witness who reports situations."***

The sentence "This is the way we conceive her task" already shows that NGOs in Brussels generally are not passively joining coordination efforts,

they have a clear picture on what kind of activities they expect from a local "coordination" or rather a local "intermediary". The Brussels reference authority also emphasised in her report that her activity would not be adequately described with only or primarily referring to the coordination social service organisations in the strict sense of managing and relating their activities. The differences in organisational culture, approach, provided services etc. are large and would become immediate obstacles for direct coordination. Furthermore, it seems that this idea of coordination would not have the support of most of the NGOs who sometimes emphasis their independent status. The positive emphasis of the "intermediary function" might possibly lead to a more precise understanding of the reference authority's function and is also more in line with the self-perception of the reference authority.

It will become clearer in the next chapter that not all NGOs are in favour of "coordination" or "being coordinated" by another entity. Either they perceive themselves as coordinators or they think that their services – in being emergency services – can not be subject to any coordination.

Social service organisation however also talked about the restrictions of the current model of the reference authority. The role of the reference authority is perceived as being quite demanding by some NGOs. For instance by respondent No. 2 who states: ***"It should not rely on the shoulders of a single person. It should be more of a formalised protocol, otherwise there's a risk that contact gets lost. It's too heavy for a single person to follow up everything."***

Respondent No. 7 is sceptical about the idea of overall coordination and emphasis again the function as intermediary: ***"It is not about organizing an overall coordination, that's too huge a task and possibly a waste of time.*** *But keeping regular contacts, plus a couple of meetings a year is fine for discussing major problems."*

5.1.3.2 Impacts on cooperation with railway station stakeholders

We saw that the general assessment of the reference authority's function was generally positive. Now we will turn to the immediate outcomes of the activities for different types of cooperation as perceived by the respondents. First,

we will discuss the outcomes for the cooperation with railway stakeholders (security, cleaning, police, shop keepers etc.).

Most respondents (All except No. 1 and No. 9) actually reported specific improvements in their relationships with these stakeholders. Interestingly, the social service organisation primarily perceived a positive change in their cooperation with and the behaviour of security personnel. They relate this change to the reference authority's activities as well as to the HOPE in stations training programme.

For instance respondent No. 4: ***"We have noticed at the evaluation workshop, that the point of view of Securail and other stakeholders has evolved.*** *There's a difference since the first meeting. I think it can be attributed to HOPE, both to the presence of SBJ and the impact of the training"* and respondent No. 5: *"The cooperation existed already before HOPE, and we have been committed in keeping it alive.* ***Yet HOPE allowed enhancing it. The main result is that now Securail has a better relationship with the homeless themselves, and is a resource for us. This happened with the help of SBJ, but not only."***

Also respondent No. 6, the local shopkeeper, refers to the training and the reference authority: ***"Since the Securail agents have been trained, I trust them more. Before, I felt they tended to behave pretty violently, now I have a personal trust with some, I have individual phone numbers. And SBJ takes care of some follow up of what happens.*** *Overall, it makes a more pleasant climate."*

Regarding security agents respondent No. 5, who implemented the training programme for HOPE in stations, reports an interesting observation: *"As we have been in charge of the training,* ***we could witness that the security agents are torn between human feelings and work orders and targets. That means that they need a free speech space for expressing their experiences. They feel more acknowledged with that,*** *or when they are enabled to help homeless persons by calling some service, or helping to solve problems****. It is important to give them information on the resources of the social network.*** *They are in position to help us, as they witness situations in the field. They help us when we seek for someone, and they call us when they see some need."*

Respondent No. 8 refers to the same issue and relates positive changes to the activities of the reference authority: ***"At former meetings, I noticed that the station agents were humanly affected by witnessing the homeless conditions. SBJ allows them to share what they experience, that avoids developing anger or other negative feelings. If they feel better in their work, they will behave more gently with homeless."***

While the assessments of NGOs are actually quite positive, respondent No. 10, a SNCB representative from mid-level management, reported no significant improvements: "*I'm convinced SCB does good things. But at the beginning, we were convinced she would be a help for us.* ***We are currently not convinced. It is possibly helpful for some of the actors, but it's neither a solution for the station workers nor for the shopkeepers."***

The SNCB representative obviously had different expectations that were directly related to the presence of homeless persons at the train station, which he describes as a pressing problem that could not be solved. What is also relevant is that he mentions the lack of clear objectives set for the HOPE in stations intervention: ***"We had the hope it would be a solution for us. But on the other hand, no one has ever defined clearly the scope. We don't see where we are heading, which results are expected."***

As evaluators and observers of the process and the implementation of the interventions we share this impression that objectives were not clearly defined at first, which was also a problem for setting up the evaluation. The reference authority herself reported about the difficulties of finding her own approach and setting and prioritising her objectives. She also reported that SNCB, her employer, included specific objects in her task profile in addition to the general objectives formulated by HOPE in stations. However, it seems that several stakeholders managed to adapt to this open process of implementation and could finally appreciate the activities of the reference authorities. It is however worrying that in particular the mid-level management did not share this opinion.

5.1.3.3 Impacts on cooperation among social service organisations

The impacts of the reference authority's activities on the cooperation among social organisations were assessed to be much weaker or even inexistent by the NGOs. We have to understand that the support network between NGOs in Brussels that we measured in 2010 and 2011 (see chapter 5.2) was already very dense before the start of HOPE in stations. And as for instance respondent No. 7 emphasises these "cooperations very already active for many years".

Respondent No. 4 points to the institutional restrictions in explaining the weak impact on service organisations: ***"SBJ is willing to do well, but she is limited by her institutional context, by the means that SNCB allocates to her, by the framework. We cannot expect miracles."***

There are however NGOs who see advantages in cooperation when having a local reference persons. For instance respondent No. 8: *"A centralisation of the information about active services at the Central station seems useful"* and respondent No. 5 perceived the impact on the level of *"launching a common project and promoting it at the political level"* referring to HOPE in stations as a whole.

The interviews in Brussels showed that cooperation among service organisations is by far not the most important issue for social services – they are much more interested in having an intermediary at the station that keeps contact with the stakeholders and handles local issues. For them HOPE in stations was not so much about "service integration" – a concept we used at the initial stages of the project which pointed to the objective of intensifying the cooperation among social services. For Brussels, it turned out that his did not become the priority of the reference authority or the NGOs – and would definitively have been a much too demanding task for one person within the period of one year given the long history and complexity of local cooperation structures. We will come back to this issue when discussing the network analysis in chapter 5.2. We see however that the NGOs developed a realistic understanding of the reference authorities' possibilities in the current model that allowed appreciating many different aspects while also having a critical approach in some instances.

5.1.3.4 Impacts on the support of homeless persons

The last assessment of impacts refers to impacts of the reference authority that social service organisations relate to how they support homeless persons at and around the train station. Several social service organisations reported positive impacts (No. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 8) in particular regarding the forwarding of information on homeless persons at the station as for instance respondent No. 1: *"By reporting situations or persons in need of help, she helps us, and she can also stay on the spot until we arrive, if needed. […]* ***Our intervention can be more focused upon her reporting."***

Or respondent No. 2 who also points out the special competence of the reference authority to categorise a specific case: ***"She detects and sorts quite well the needs, so that people are more likely to be sent at the right place. She knows what kind of situation our organisation handles, and she calls us only as far as she knows it's within our scope.*** *If it's about a family, or children, there's of course no kind of "filter", we react on the spot."*

A similar assessment is reported by respondent No. 4: ***"Her information helps providing proper care."***

Respondent No. 2 also pointed out the importance of accompanying or staying with a homeless person until support arrives: *"If she calls us, sometimes we are able to come immediately, sometimes it's delayed.* ***She is often in the position to make sure that the person in need is not left alone until we arrive"***

Or, if the organisation is not able to provide immediate support, the reference authority assures that other services are contacted as respondent No. 5 points out: *"We do not always manage to come to the place and take care, or to accept new "clients".* ***Yet with SBJ, we can make sure that if we are not in the position to come, the urgent situation will be handed over to another service."***

Another indirect effect related to the work of security agents is reported by respondent No. 5. We discussed the positive impact of the reference authority as well as the training programme on security in the chapter on stakeholder cooperation. It is clear that these impacts also translate into benefits for the work with homeless persons: *"At former meetings, I noticed that the station agents were humanly affected by witnessing the homeless conditions.* ***SBJ***

allows them to share what they experience, that avoids developing anger or other negative feelings. If they feel better in their work, they will be gentler with homeless."

We see that NGOs see specific advantages of having a reference authority at the train station for their support of homeless persons. It is a soft form of coordination that obviously helps to find appropriate support faster and to assure that homeless persons in need of support are not left alone. The NGOs seem to be willing to trust on the competences of the reference authorities to make decisions regarding the appropriate of support.

One service organisation, respondent No. 7, which reported of no impacts, simply stated that there was no occasion for any cooperation yet, but that cooperation would be generally welcomed. The SNCB respondent was again negative regarding the impacts on his work with homeless persons.

5.1.4 Paris

Table 26 provides an overview of all respondents in Paris and the primary function of the respective organisation.

Respondent No.	Organisation	Primary function
No. 1	SNCF DLS	Security
No. 2	SNCF MES	Corporate social responsibility
No. 3	FNARS	Coordination
No. 4	Aurore-Itinérances	Help Centre
No. 5	Emmaüs coordination maraudes Xème	Coordination
No. 6	Aux Captifs	Help Centre
No. 7	ARC 75	Street work

Table 26: Respondents Paris

5.1.4.1 Assessment of the reference authority's function

When assessing the function of the reference authority in Paris the stakeholders from SNCF emphasised the role as intermediary and mediator, connecting SNCF departments with other stakeholders and services but also among

each other and furthermore fostering a change in perception, in particular regarding the sometimes negative perception of security by social services.

Respondent No. 1: "Sometimes, working directly with the NGOs was OK, sometimes it wasn't at all. Indeed, for some of them, I wore the "cop"-hat. I regret it and I'd like their attitude to evolve about this. ***And in fact, I think that the reference authority, who comes from SNCF and by consequence, who knows perfectly the way the railway company works, is the most relevant person to talk with the most reluctant NGOs and make them understand that our safety mission isn't necessarily in absolute opposition with their concerns."***

Furthermore, respondent No. 1 also emphasises the need to combine security and social aspects, which he perceives as another function of the reference authority: ***"The introduction of the reference authority reinforced and helped me in the social aspect of my missions.*** *Thanks to him, I finally have a real partner to whom I can give my impressions and finding in station. He became the main intermediary person between me, which means safety, and NGOs.* ***I really wanted this connection between 'security' and "social" to exist. The reference authority allows making the connection between both."***

Respondent No. 2 talks about the intermediary function of the reference authority: *"The MES are not compulsorily directly in contact with the station professionals, like the shop keepers for instance. That's why the presence of a reference authority, furthermore belonging to our company, is very useful for us.* ***Indeed, he is a real intermediary point / relay to better understand the situation of the stakeholders in the station.*** *Patrick Jud and his current replacement are real assets in the frame of our own mission."*

Respondent No 2. also points to the function of interlinking different SNCF departments: ***"Besides, the reference authority contributes to improve the coordination between SNCF professionals themselves. Thus, thanks to his intervention, I know have more regular contacts (via meetings organised by the reference authority), with the Safety Local Delegate (DLS) of the North Station."***

Respondent No. 4, representing an NGO having a contract with SNCF, perceives the function of the reference authority as being primarily restricted to linking railway stakeholders and SNCF to social services: ***"The role of the reference authority must consist in making a link between us and sta-***

tion professionals. To me, the rest doesn't seem to be his work. *Acting with clients in difficulty is the heart of our job, not that of the reference authority. Besides, I never communicated with my clients on the question of the reference authority."*

Respondent No. 7 also points out the reference authority's function of reminding NGOs on their status at the train station and to support the general agreement between SNCF and the NGOs with a contractual allowance to act at the station: ***"What I find useful about his presence is that it can reaffirm the conventions that bind us to the station.*** *Sometimes, there are indeed associations still involved in activities at the station without having a contract which are not supposed to be there. The reference authority can help in clarifying these points with these associations."*

5.1.4.2 Impacts on cooperation with railway station stakeholders

Also from the perspective of NGOs the reference authority is perceived as an intermediary. NGOs appreciate this function and assessed the reference authority's impact in this regard to be positive. For instance respondent No. 3: *"Of course, there were already some connections.* ***However, NGOs didn't have a specific stakeholder toward whom they could come and talk if necessary. A person was missing in the station to centralize that.*** *During a meeting I could participate into with the reference authority, I realized that.* ***Indeed, the reference authority had gathered around the same table a series of partners (NGOs, DLS, MES, etc) who wouldn't have met that way before."***

Respondent 3 also emphasises the importance of having a "constant presence" at the station: *"This constant presence also fosters the contact with other stakeholders of the station. For example****, I think about shop keepers, cleaning agents, but also security agents or the police. In brief, The SNCF reference authority plays a central role."***

Respondent No. 4 is referring to the mediator function that was also pointed out by SNCF representatives (in particular respondent No. 1): ***"Since his arrival, the SNCF reference authority became a kind of mediator and intermediary person between NGOs and station professionals (except the East***

Station DLS with whom we don't have contacts anymore, I repeat it). *Basically, it is a good thing because he acts like a "buffer" between the different people who, in their professional practice, can have different sensitivities."*

He also refers to the reference authority's function of supporting and coordinating the contact with NGOs when NGOs are called to the train station: *"His action as a mediator is also interesting if we talk about the link between us and the shop keepers in station.* ***Indeed, if shop keepers contacted us directly, I think it wouldn't work. It would be too heavy for us to deal with that because we don't have much time to "discuss", given the magnitude of the missions to help our users.*** *The fact that the reference authority is the intermediary person seems much more adapted."*

Although respondent No. 5 did not perceive strong impacts she appreciates the general work of the reference authority in inheriting a dedicated "social function" at the train station: *"I don't think so because three of the NGOs that are in the North and East stations were already under agreement with SNCF. So they already had regular contacts with the railway company.* ***However, I think the reference authority contributed to make things "smoother". Indeed, now, his really "social" functions allow the SNCF to make more connections between shops keepers / security services and social NGOs."***

Respondent No. 6 and 7, representing two NGOs, only perceive very weak impacts on their cooperation with stakeholders. The NGO respondent No. 6 is working for initially had a contact person at the train station that is not active anymore. Regarding the impacts on cooperation with stakeholder respondent No. 6 answered: ***"Yes and no. Yes, because the reference authority serves as our "office" at the train station, but not to the extent that we have lost touch with the employee who previously worked with us.*** *Moreover, the new reference authority who has taken over from the former one in September 2011 does not know much about the social problem of homelessness. It's a bit worrying for the future."*

Respondent No. 7 is not very extensively involved in stakeholder cooperation and perceives the train station security (DLS) as primary intermediary: ***"There is no real collaboration, strictly speaking, with "stakeholders".*** *We are however in regular contact with the DLS, which is the interface between*

us and the police if necessary. ***The social background of the reference authority probably brings a more social "touch" and a sensitivity that allows us to foster our understanding of each other.*** *But the DLS remains still an important interlocutor for all matters related to security in general."*

5.1.4.3 Impacts on cooperation among social service organisations

NGOs share the position that the cooperation among them was already in place before the implementation of the reference authority and could not be significantly improved, whereas some NGOs see an advantage in simply meeting other NGOs they didn't meet before. In general the interest in intensive cooperation seems to be not particularly strong among NGOs. NGOs argue in this regard that their services and clients only overlap to some degree, but that they in general follow different objectives (No. 4 and 7).

Respondent No. 4: *"The reference authority allows us to participate in meetings with all the NGOs under agreement. I think that if the reference authority weren't here, we wouldn't meet some NGOs with whom we don't have real affinity.* ***Thus, we can say his presence forces us to meet formally, which is a positive point. Nevertheless, it doesn't fundamentally change the way one or another organisation works daily.*** *To be clear, sometimes we work with ARC 75 that sometimes shares common clients with us. Sometimes they come and visit us at our place. However, the exchanges are much weaker with Les Captifs."*

Respondent No. 6: ***"It allowed us to meet us and know us better between associations. But beyond this, the benefit seems quite limited."***

Respondent No. 7: *"I think we were already used to work in a network with various associations. In this sense, we have not really expected that the reference authority is there for this reason.* ***Of course the presence of the referent promotes certain interactions, but overall, we already interacted before."***

In contrast, respondent No. 1, the SNCF DLS representative, assesses the impact on stakeholder cooperation much more positive: *Yes, there was a real impact, that I judge extremely positive. The reference authority and his assis-*

tant have brought a lot since the implementation of the device. ***Before, I only spoke directly to one NGO (Aux captifs la libération), but now, thanks to the presence of this mediator that the reference authority is, I can dialogue with all the NGOs more efficiently. Indeed, the reference authority brings a social expertise that I didn't really have."***

5.1.4.4 Impacts on the support of homeless persons

Respondents who speak about positive impacts on the support of homeless persons primarily refer to the so called "exclusion alert", a telephone and answering machine systems that allows the reference authority to document and redirect incoming requests concerning homeless persons as well as emergency calls. The reference authority then contacts the NGO offering the appropriate service. The corresponding call number has been disseminated to all relevant station stakeholders by the reference authority. The model for the "exclusion alert" has been developed in cooperation with NGOs and stakeholders.

Respondent No. 1: ***"The implementation of the "Exclusion Alert" service, that I consider as a real 'revolution', makes the action of the reference authority even more relevant. I've called this number very regularly since its implementation.*** *When we are confronted with very complex situations, now we can have adapted answers to the situation, these being defined by the reference authority who calls the most relevant NGOs depending on the type of issue. For instance, we have heavy psychiatric examples that we were afraid to deal with until now. Now, with the implementation of the reference authority and the reinforcement of the Exclusion Alert number, we can find interlocutors better adapted to these complex support."*

Also respondents from NGOs pointed to the implementation of the "exclusion alert" as for instance respondent No. 3 and 4. Interestingly, respondent No. 4, points to a further function of the emergency number which is to document to efficient work of NGOs at the station: ***"I think that the implementation of an emergency number (a project in which we collaborated) is a great thing.*** *The device is still quite new (July 2011) but I think we must keep working on that. Indeed, we must have feedbacks concerning this new number.* ***It will permit to show that we intervene efficiently in the station.***

It's important for us in terms of visibility because the station professionals see better that some NGOs intervene on the site."

Besides the implementation of the exclusion alert NGOs do however not perceive any significant impacts on the direct support of homeless persons (No. 6 and 7).

Respondent No. 6: ***"No Impact, because the reference authority is too far away from our ground truth.*** *So, I do not see really the added value of its tangible presence with regard to homeless persons."*

Respondent No. 7: ***"Actually no, or only very indirectly and not to this day. The reference authority is not a social worker, so his role is not to work with homeless people themselves.*** *It's our job. Indirectly, the reference authority that allows us to have the link with SNCF (in terms of communication in particular) may eventually help us to address some problems that affected the public that we follow."*

Respondent No. 7 perceives however some potential for future impacts on supporting homeless persons more directly: *"When the referent will initiate concrete actions, we can say that things are on track. Some of these initiatives exist,* ***including the SNCF staff training on homeless persons*** *and others are planned, including the* ***possibility of opening a service with local associations for the users.*** *Finally, my battle cry (and I spoke at length with the reference authority who seemed to be very interested in this kind of project) would be to provide small jobs at SNCF and to offer them to young people or people who wander, who are not necessarily able to work regularly, but can perform certain tasks supervised by educators."*

Respondent No. 1 points out two further impacts, one regarding the general understanding towards homeless persons and the other regarding the increased traceability of clients: "*The reference authority, but more widely all the actions led by SNCF during the last months (I think of the training sessions about wandering for example),* ***help me to better understand homeless people*** *and better deal with the issues they can create for the station. […]* ***Moreover, there is "traceability" regarding these people. When a shop keeper asks us what happened to a wandering person, we can now have information thanks to the reference authority, which represents a progress, of course."***

5.1.5 Rome

Table 27 provides an overview of all respondents in Rome and the primary function of the respective organisation.

Respondent No.	Organisation	Primary function
No. 1	INMP National Institute for Health, Migration and Poverty	Medical services
No. 2	Sovereign Military Order of Malta	Food distribution
No. 3	P. S. Giovanni Battista de' Rossi	Food distribution
No. 4	Binario 95	Help Centre
No. 5	Caritas: Poliambulatorio	Medical services

Table 27: Respondents Rome

5.1.5.1 Assessment of the reference authority's function

The social service organisations in Rome primarily perceived the reference authorities function in terms of stabilising and further developing the cooperation between all relevant services and stakeholders active at and around the station.

For instance respondent No. 4: ***"The purpose of these meetings was to foster collaboration and efficiency of services provided at the train station, meaning specific interventions developed through the concrete involvement of all stakeholders, namely police, health services, etc."*** or respondent No. 5: ***"The focus was on common needs in terms of coordination with specific reference to social interventions addressed to homeless people****, actually, the very emerging problem in the city. There is a common and* ***widespread demand which is to avoid that existing resources do not overlap or act in an uncoordinated way resulting in a loss of potential****. It is useful, instead, to direct these resources towards common goals.* Also respondent No. 3 emphasised the same function: *"The main purpose has been that of building a wider cooperation network including different organizations delivering social services, for homeless clients, at Roma Termini station."*

5.1.5.2 Impacts on cooperation with railway station stakeholders

The common response regarding the impacts of the reference authority on the cooperation of social service organisations and railway stakeholders is to acknowledge and appreciate the continuous work of the Help Center to further development and strengthen cooperation in a complex environment of many different organisations.

For instance respondent No. 1: *"In particular, we acknowledge the importance of the work done by the HC having* ***defined and introduced specific procedures to establish and maintain cooperation within the station network****. In the same way,* ***roles and functions of all the participating organization have been strongly emphasised and this has been a key element to achieve common objective of social inclusion."***

Respondent No. 1 is a medical organisation which is not directly related to the train station and therefore has no regular contacts with stakeholders. The respondents emphasises however the reference authority's important role as an intermediary: *"Not directly, since NIHMP has no direct linkages with them.* ***Nevertheless, the function of intermediary organisation ("bridge"), inherited by the HC, has always be seen by NIHMP as a specific "social function" essential for every type of intervention addressing homeless clients. That is the reason why NIHMP reserved for itself only the specific medical intervention function while "delegating" the HC to comply with the most relevant social mediation role."***

Also respondent No. 4, representing an organisation linked institutionally to the Help Centre, acknowledges the coordination efforts undertaken, but also identifies a weakness in not including all stakeholders: *"The cooperation achieved was what was possible to achieve given the current context conditions:* ***HC was able to invest in the network development through training – addressed to a wide and heterogeneous public -, participation in meetings, etc. On the other hand, the respondent reports a lack of involvement, in terms of participation, on the part of other stakeholders, even if the results achieved can be considered excellent".***

In Rome the "current context conditions" the respondent referred to but did not specify in the interview may relate to the fact that the cooperation network in Rome until now could not strongly connect professional and voluntary organ-

isations, the latter primarily providing food to homeless persons at the train station. We confirm with our network analysis that integration among professional organisations was much stronger than cooperation between professional and voluntary organisations.

The respondent No. 2 representing one of these voluntary organisations is expressing his organisation's usual way of cooperation: ***"The relationship with the stakeholders is developed on a personal and non-structured basis;*** *furthermore it is strictly addressed to distribution activity."*

Respondent No. 4 refers to the same issue, but also sees some positive impact of the reference authority: ***"Cooperation activities are currently more structured: during the past, the connection with other local organizations was based on direct and personal contacts. Now there are specific structured procedures regulating cooperation amongst the actors concerned, including meeting scheduling, periodical reports, etc"***

We see that the Help Center in its role as reference authority continued its efforts of coordination and the interlinking of social service organisations and railway stakeholders. Maybe the shift was not decisive enough to really open up the cooperation to all participants. There is however also indication that voluntary respectively religious organisations are not as interested in coordination being focused primarily on their charity work.

5.1.5.3 Impacts on cooperation among social service organisations

The impact of the reference authority on the cooperation among social services is perceived a bit weaker compared to the impact on service/stakeholder cooperation. Three respondents state that there were no relevant impacts at all (No. 1, 2 and 3).

Respondents No. 2 elaborates further: "*The Help Center is still seen as an operational facilitator and a point of reference for material support (i.e. availability of goods and/or basic items), rather than a partner.* ***For the future, and in working together for the construction of the station social network, it would be possible to increase the cooperation and make more concrete the coordination of services."***

Respondent No. 2, representing a voluntary organisation engaged primarily in food distribution, may be typical for a larger number of smaller organisations which are not yet fully integrated into the local system of coordination which was also emphasised by our partners from Rome at several instances.

Also respondent No. 4 refers to future developments rather than perceived impacts: ***"In general, we can see that a concrete working method is going to be more and more implemented within the station,*** *based on common action for the aim of building a social service system within the station. This would be possible thanks to the contribution of each organization involved, in terms of skills, competences and resources."*

A concrete impact is observed only by respondent No. 5: ***"With specific reference to the problem of shelter and accommodation, the collaboration has been extended to other organisations. In this sense, the support received by the Help Center, as leader and partner of a specific social services network, has been very useful."***

5.1.5.4 Impacts on the support of homeless persons

In general, social service organisations perceived moderate impacts of the reference authority on their work with homeless persons. Only respondent No. 2 reported no relevant impacts.

In particular respondent No. 1 from a medical service emphasised that due to the support network established by the reference authority service can be provided "closer" to homeless persons**: "*Thanks to the work done by the HC, through the development of the station social network, it has been possible to ensure the effective proximity of health services directly at the places where people live.*** *In this way, also our mission - to take care of people living in the most critical and social disadvantaged conditions - can be accomplished.*

The same respondent is also pointing out the general advantage that cooperation brings for homeless persons: *"First of all, the creation of the social network, which allowed us taking in charge specific cases and promoted contacts amongst the various organizations involved; in addition, the HC*

facilitated the encounter between our organisation and the operators of the social control room of the City of Rome, also essential for reaching homeless people having health problems."

Respondent No. 4 emphasises the intensified exchange of information: "*First of all the **exchange of information**, which was one of the main results as well as the **ability to plan joint actions and interventions.** This allowed also to achieve **specific solutions related to the individuals** and, in some cases, it has led to **the mobilisation of additional resources and potential."***

Respondent No. 5 referred to the training activities of the Help Center which in his perception had the strongest impact on the support of homeless persons at the train station: ***"Training activities have been the activities that generated the strongest influence on the work with homeless people. Social operators trained at the Help Center (currently 9) have had the opportunity to experience the direct contact with people directly in the field, in the streets where homeless people live daily.** The sensitivity developed through this experience generated an added value also for the ordinary work at our organisation."*

5.2 Network analysis

In the United States, where quasi-experimental designs have a long history in the social sciences and are implemented on a more regular basis compared to Europe, network analysis has already been used to evaluate the impact of service integration programmes on homeless persons as well as on the service organisations themselves and their network. These evaluations however compare specific indicators for whole networks (specific measurements of network density or centrality for instance) rather than comparing the actual network structures before and after the intervention[8]. The evaluation then reports on changes in these indicators which may be caused by the inter-

8 Morrissey, J. et al: 2002: Integration of Service Systems for Homeless Persons With Serious Mental Illness Through the ACCESS Program. In: Psychatric services, August 2002, Volume 53, Number 8
Greenberg, Greg A, Rosenheck, Robert A: An Evaluation of an Initiative to Improve Coordination and Service Delivery of Homeless Services Networks. In: The Journal of Behavioral Health Services and Research, April 2010, Volume 37, Number 2

ventions under study. In HOPE in stations we use the same method of data collection and quantitative analysis. We will however focus more on structural aspects of the networks of social service organisations. Therefore, we also use visual network analysis as an additional tool to investigate network structures. The comparison has two levels: **we compare between sites and between points in time (2010 and 2011).** We see a more detailed description of local support networks as an essential "added value" to impact evaluation, but it also allows us to assess impacts in a more differentiated way not just registering "more integration" or "better integration", but also differences and shifts in underlying structures. Another scenario would also be to use results from these surveys for more specific coordination activities in the future that concentrate on certain structural aspects.

The service integration survey at a glance:

- Conducted in Brussels, Paris and Rome
- **Objective:** Comparing the structure of the support network for homeless persons before and after the intervention
- **Target group:** In each city 16 organisations have been selected to participate in the service integration survey
- **Method:** Network analysis, questionnaire
- **Selection of organisations:** The aim was to identify the local social service organisations that are most relevant to the target group. The selection included all organisation that provide services directly at the train station and additional organisations providing "core services": Advice and support centre, Day centre, Food distribution, Medical support, Shelter, and Street work

The selection process consisted of the elaboration of a preliminary list of local organisations that provide core services together with our researchers and national partners. A section in the social mapping (preliminary research) was dedicated to types of cooperation and cooperation partners. Organisations also commented on the preliminary list and proposed new organisations. According to this information we revised the preliminary lists and selected the organisations.

- **Data collection:** Researchers sent the service integration questionnaires to all selected organisations and contacted the organisations personally by phone to explain the questionnaire. Our researchers sent a reminder and continued to contact the organisations.

5.2.1 The dimensions of service integration

"Service integration" can be defined in different ways. In this project we define service integration based on 7 different dimensions (see Table 28). These dimensions were carefully selected based on scientific literature[9] as well as direct information from the social service organisations participating in this survey. We collected information on the most relevant types of coordination as a part of the preliminary research activities carried out by the same researchers and coordinated by the Italian institute ISFORT. Thus, the resulting dimensions were selected not only on basis of theoretical considerations and expertise, but also based on the actual responses from social service organisations. Furthermore, **all these dimensions are focused on homeless persons** and not the service organisations clients in general.

We decided to use a questionnaire format for collecting the network data. The questionnaire consisted in a matrix comprising the names of **16 preselected organisations** and the questions with the corresponding response categories. This means that every of these 16 organisations had to answer

9 Michael S. Knapp: 1996: Methodological Issues in Evaluating Integrated Services Initiatives. In: New directions for evaluation, Spring 1996, Number 69
Provan, Keith G, Milward, H Brinton: A preliminary theory of interorganizational network effectiveness. In: Administrative Science Quarterly, March 1995, Volume 40, Number 1

questions on the 15 other organisations (see ANNEX questionnaire B).

The dimensions of service integration and their operationalisation are shown in Table 28. All questions refer to the so called **"reference period" of 12 months before the survey**. The first question was a "filter" question – If there was no cooperation, organisations were asked to continue with the next organisation in the column. The second question was directed at identifying the amount of time throughout the last twelve months two organisations cooperated, because we knew that some organisations were not active throughout the whole year. At the same time this relation indicates the continuity/discontinuity of cooperation. In the questionnaire **the following questions on specific cooperation activities were related to the number of months that were indicated for cooperation in general.** The questions on the intensity of cooperation therefore had a clear reference period (the months in which one organisation states to be cooperating with the other).

The next three relations are measuring different forms of cooperation: exchanging information, coordinating services, sending homeless clients. All these relations are measured on the same 0-4 scale. The scale we chose proved to be appropriate to capture realistic amounts of cooperation and at the same time produced enough variation in responses for meaningful comparisons. The categories have a clear meaning (rather than categories such as "very strong", "strong" etc.) and do not overlap.

In addition, the questionnaire included questions on planning activities and the assessment of cooperation as well as the assessment of the trend in cooperation.

We used the same questionnaire for 2010 and 2011 with two slight changes. In 2011 we included the **reference authority as the 17th actor.** Furthermore, we decided to change the scale for long-term planning. Already in 2010 we used a specific scale for this dimension because long-term planning activities can not be expected to occur as regularly as for instance the exchange of information on homeless clients. We thought however that this scale should be more detailed for assessing the reference authorities planning activities. It is however still possible to compare the two different scales.

Dimensions of service integration	Questions	Response categories (and coding)
Filter question	Is there any cooperation or exchange between your organisation and organisation 1,2,3...	**1=** Yes **0=** No **X=** I do not know this organisation
Time period of cooperation	**For the last 12 months** please indicate the **number of months** during which you and organisation 1,2,3... had **any cooperation or exchange**	Number of months (from 1 to 12 months)
Exchange of information	How often did you **exchange (non-confidential) information on homeless clients** with organisation 1,2,3…	**4=** 3 times a week or more **3=** 1 to 2 times a week **2=** 1 to 3 times a month **1=** less than once a month **0=** Never
Coordination of services	How often did you **coordinate the provision of services to homeless clients** with organisation 1,2,3…	**4=** 3 times a week or more **3=** 1 to 2 times a week **2=** 1 to 3 times a month **1=** less than once a month **0=** Never
Sending homeless clients	How often did you **send homeless clients** to organisation 1,2,3…	**4=** 3 times a week or more **3=** 1 to 2 times a week **2=** 1 to 3 times a month **1=** less than once a month **0=** Never

Long-term planning	How often did you have an exchange on **long-term planning of services for homeless clients** with organisation 1,2,3...	**Ex-Ante 2010:** **2=** Several times **1=** Once **0=** Never	**Ex-Post 2011:** **4=** More than once a month **3=** Once a month **2=** Once every two months **1=** Less often **0=** Never
Assessment of cooperation	Please **assess the degree of cooperation** between your organisation and organisation 1,2,3…	**4=** Very strong **3=** Strong **2=** Moderate **1=** Weak **0=** Very weak	
Assessment of trend	Please assess whether there is an **increase or decrease in cooperation** between your organisation and organisation 1,2,3… compared to 12 months ago.	**4=** Strong Increase **3=** Increase **2=** No change **1=** Decrease **0=** Strong Decrease	

Table 28: Dimensions, questions and response categories

5.2.2 Understanding network visualisations

The main function of network visualisations is to make specific structural characteristics of networks directly observable that would be difficult to identify in tables or other forms of data presentation. The networks in this report are so called one-mode networks consisting only of one type of nodes: Social service organisations. The network visualisation shows the **links between these organisations that are strictly based on the quantitative data collected with the corresponding questionnaire**. This means that the visual characteristics such as node size and the thickness of links are based on the numbers that were assigned to response categories in the questionnaire. The third column of Table 28 shows these assignments. The colour coding of the nodes (= organisations) as shown in Table 29 indicates the primary function of an organisation.

The spatial distribution of nodes (organisations) reflects their connectedness, meaning that nodes which are strongly connected are close to each other (see Figure 26). The spatial distribution is based on a mathematical model called "spring embedding" which is a feature of the SNA software UCINET/ Netdraw which we used for all presented visualisations. The mathematical model ensures that strongly connected nodes are close to each other and furthermore tries to create a visually comprehensible network picture in avoiding an overlap of different nodes and links. Each dimension of service integration results in a separate network. Thus, there are different networks for information exchange, coordination of services, forwarding clients etc. which will be analysed in the following chapters.

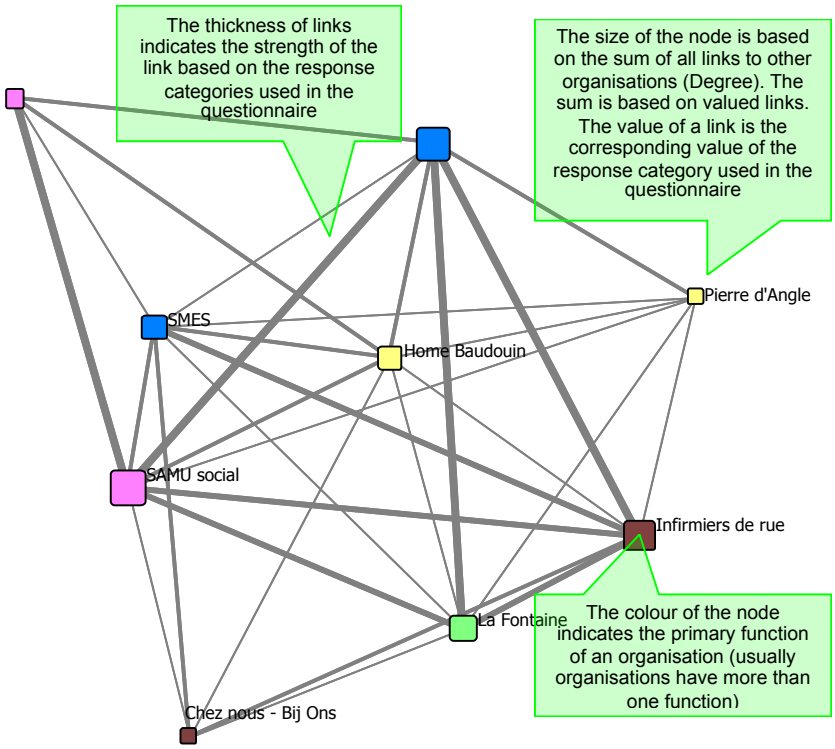


Figure 26: Network visualisation example

Primary function	Node colour
Coordination and Multifunctional	
Day centre	
Food distribution	
Help centre	
Medical service	
Shelter	
Street work	

Table 29: Node colours

5.2.2.1 Simplification of network visualisations

For comprehensible network visualisations a reduction in complexity is sometimes necessary which means showing only selected parts or levels of the network. In this report we simplified some of the networks in excluding the weakest level of links from the visualisation: "1= less than once a month". "Less than once a month" indicates that the exchange or cooperation is not happening on a regular basis so that it seems to be justified to exclude these links. When we use this simplification it is always indicated in the figure description with the note "links > 1". These links are however only excluded from the visualisation and NOT from mathematical routines (when we calculate the degree value for instance). Note that also the cliques are calculated on the "links > 1" level.

5.2.2.2 Directed and undirected relations

Some of the dimensions of service integration have been measured as "directed relations" and others as "undirected relations". "Sending homeless clients" is for instance a directed relation, because organisation A sends clients to organisation B and vice versa. In contrast, we assume that "Coordinating services directed at homeless clients" is an undirected relation, because "coordination" is a common activity that always involves both organisations. The difference between "directed" and "undirected" relations has an important consequence – in both cases we receive for each pair of organisations two values (Both organisations indicate the frequency of cooperation in the questionnaire). When looking at directed relations (such as sending clients) we will continue to work with both values. When working with undirected relations, however, we need to combine the two values. There should only be one link with one value between organisation A and B. Sometimes these values will be the same, sometimes they will be different. Differences in values can result for many reasons. The main reason is of course that the answers in the questionnaire are all based on estimations: organisations usually do not have data on the exact amount of exchange with other organisations. In addition, there are several other reasons: lack of information, lack of attention when filling out the questionnaire, differences in how organisations perceive each other etc.

We encounter here a problem that is common to all methods of collecting data and practically unavoidable: there will be mistakes in measurement at least to some degree. Having two values for the same relation can however be perceived as a possibility to make a better estimation based on assessments from two instead of only one organisation. Mathematically, the simplest procedure is to take the average value. Because the average sometimes results in odd numbers, meaning that we would loose the scaling that is based on response categories, we decided to round down all average values. We decided to round values down, because we assume that a trend in "overestimating" is more likely than a trend in "underestimating" when organisations know that their cooperation is evaluated.

Example: When organisation A indicates that it coordinates services with organisation B "1 to 2 times a week" (= value of 3) and organisation B indicates that it coordinates services with organisation A "1= less than once a month" (= value of 1) the corresponding average is value of 2 (= 1 to 3 times a month).

5.2.2.3 Cliques

In network analysis a "clique" is a set of nodes (in our case organisations) **where every node is connected to every other.** When we use expressions such as "4-clique" or "5-clique" the number simply refers to the number of organisations being part of that clique. We tried to identify cliques only for stronger links – this means for instance that organisations have to be at least connected by link *above* the category "less than once a month".

5.2.3 Comparison of social service networks

For the internal mid-term report of the project we already described the network structures for 2010 and observed quite distinct structures when we compared the three sites. Now we add even more complexity in not only comparing between sites but also between points in time **to see whether the network structures changed, whether service integration improved and how the reference authority could connect to the existing network of service organisations.** We face however a difficulty in doing so. We already

explained in chapter 2.2 that it was not possible to collect responses from all selected organisations. In 2010 we received 10 out of 16 questionnaires in Brussels as well as in Paris and 12 out of 16 questionnaires in Rome. We decided to work only with questionnaires received and to exclude non-respondents from the analysis although in network analysis we would have had the option to use the information received from respondents to show their connections to non-respondents. Unfortunately, in 2011 the response rate was even lower. We received 8 out of 17 (now the survey included the reference authority) questionnaires in Brussels as well as in Paris and only 6 out of 17 questionnaires in Rome. Despite our efforts we did not have another possibility then to work with what we received at the end of 2011 when the evaluation had to be finalised and presented. **For 2011 we decided to include the connections to non-respondents to be at least able to compare the same organisations between 2010 and 2011.** Fortunately, many of the organisations responding in 2010 responded again in 2011, but there were also a few new respondents (from the initial 16 organisations) that we wanted to include. The result is the selection shown in Table 30. Only the orange marked organisations did respond in 2011, but all organisations will be included in the analysis. It is clear that data becomes less reliable in this case, in particular for 2011. The analysis of the 2010 data however showed that we were able to actually capture structures of the support networks that corresponded very well with the observations of NGOs, researchers and partners. This means that we have a stable basis for comparison in 2010. But also 2011 data provides useful information and most importantly allows a general assessment of the projects' impact with regard to service integration.

Brussels	Paris	Rome
HOPE Reference authority	HOPE Reference authority	Help center – HOPE Reference authority
Chez nous - Bij Ons	Arc 75	Per la Strada
Clos Ste Thérèse	Aurore-Itinérance	Binario95
Dune	Autre Monde	Caritas: Ostello
Home Baudouin	Aux Captifs La Libération	Caritas: Poliambulatoria
Hopital St Pierre	Charonne	Cavalieri di Malta
Infirmiers de rue	Coordination maraudes Xème	Comunità di Sant'Egidio
La Fontaine	Emmaüs	Conferenza di S. Vincenzo de' Paoli
Operation Thermos	FNARS	Croce Rossa Italiana
Pierre d'Angle	Réseau souffrance Précarité	INMP
SAMU social	Restaurant du Coeur	Parrocchia S. Maria del Buon Consiglio
SMES	Secours Catholique Xème	Parrocchia San Giovanni Battista de' Rossi

Table 30: Network analysis respondents

We will start now comparing the network structures for the different dimensions of service integration between sites and between 2010 and 2011.

5.2.4 Months of cooperation

Organisations were asked on the number of months within the last 12 months before the survey they had any cooperation or exchange with any other organisation. Thus, responses could range from 0 to 12 months. This is a basic indicator for the continuity of cooperation throughout the year. Figure 27: Months: Mean degree comparison shows the "mean degree" which is a measure for network density. We see that in 2010, Brussels had the densest network for "months of cooperation" followed by Rome and Paris. For 2011 we see an increase for Brussels and Paris which indicates a higher continuity of cooperation, while the difference between the two cities remained the same. The reduction we see in Rome is very likely a statistical artefact caused by the many missing values (see Figure 28: Months: Distribution of links). There is no real indication from service organisation interviews and the stakeholder workshop for a real reduction.

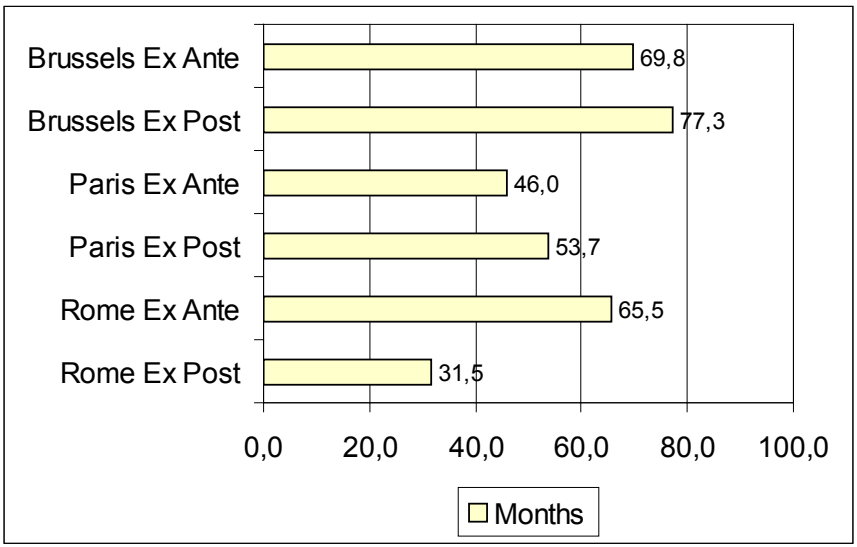


Figure 27: Months: Mean degree comparison

We also clustered the number of months in 5 categories for the presentation in Figure 28: Months: Distribution of links. An example: The number "6" in the first row means that in Brussels 6 out of all possible links between organisations were "0 months" (which means no cooperation). The next number, "6", means that in Brussels 6 out of all possible links between organisations were "1 to 3 months".

Before comparing between the results for 2010 and 2011, we will have a look at the initial situation in 2010 ("ex ante") in the three different cities. Even this simple figure immediately points to remarkable differences between the cities in 2010: Most remarkable is the high number of links for the 10-12 month category in Brussels which make nearly 50% of all links (22 links). In Paris we see only 2 links with the same continuity. The majority of organisations in Paris is cooperating and exchanging between 4-6 months (17 links). The network in Brussels is therefore much denser than in Paris and shows much more temporal continuity in cooperation. Continuity and intensity are however not the same: it could be that organisations in Paris cooperate for a

fewer number of months, but more intensively in terms of their activities. We will investigate this issue later when looking at different types of cooperation.

Rome shows higher absolute numbers because we had two respondents more than in Brussels and Paris in 2010 – the percentage values however help us to compare the distribution of response categories. We could say that Rome lies between Brussels and Paris in terms of the density of temporal cooperation.

For 2011 the first impression is that **Brussels** basically shows the same level of continuity in cooperation. In **Paris** we see more inexistent connections (21 for "0 months"), but also more links with very high continuity (18 links for "10 to 12 months"). This may indicate that a certain group of organisations is not cooperating with more continuity while others have rather been separated from the network. We will investigate this further in the following chapters.

In **Rome** the impression is one of decreased continuity in cooperation. In Rome the results are however significantly biased due to the large number of "missing values" (28 for "missing") caused by the low response rates for the questionnaire in 2011 that was only answered by 6 organisations. A "missing value" means that a possible connection between two organisations had no value, because neither of the two organisations answered to this particular question. Therefore, we do not have any information on this particular connection. It could be strong, weak or inexistent. We simply do not know. Generally, we can however say that there is no indication for increased continuity of cooperation.

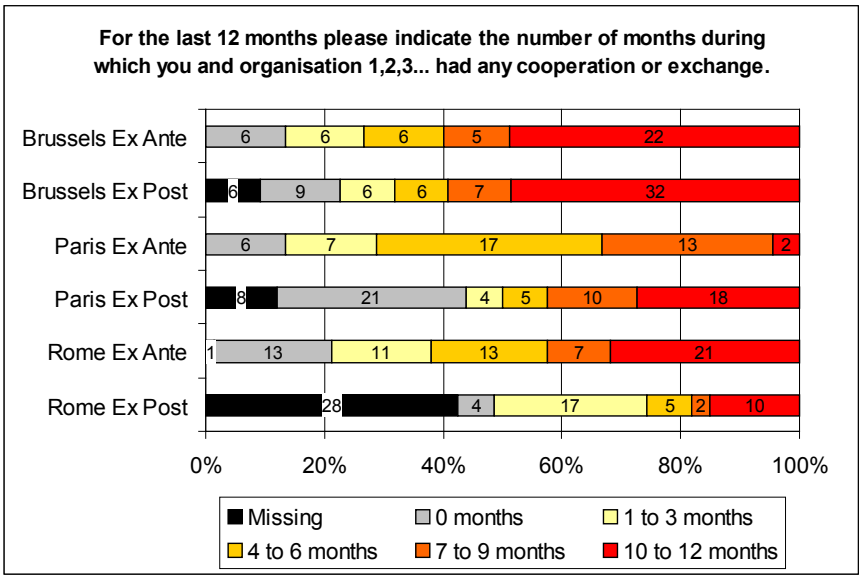


Figure 28: Months: Distribution of links

The visual analysis will now tell us more about the different structures in cooperation based on measurement of months. The visualisation in this case only includes links with more than 6 months and therefore tells us something about cooperation that is more regular. First, we will look at the networks in 2010 which showed very significant cooperation patterns for the three cities. The network in Brussels consisted of a highly integrated group of organisations in the centre of the network (see Figure 29). The clique analysis tells us that Hopital St. Pierre, SAMU Social, SMES and Pierre d'Angle were all part of several "5-cliques" – a 5-clique is a set of 5 organisations where every organisation is linked to every other. Hopital St. Pierre and SAMU social were part of all 6 5-cliques. The periphery of the network was however also continuously involved in cooperation – Operation Thermos is the only organisation that was actually not part of a 5-clique. SAMU social clearly had the highest degree with 102, which is the sum of all links an organisation has to every other organisation meaning that SAMU social is highly networked and has many and strong links to the other organisations. Pierre d'Angle

and Hopital St. Pierre came next, followed by a group of 4 organisations with quite similar degrees ranging from 71 to 77. Only Operation Thermos seemed to be weakly connected to the network with a degree of 8.

In contrast, the network in Paris came very close to what is called a "star-network" in network analysis on this level of continuity (more than 6 months!) (see Figure 31). A formally perfect star network would be a network with one organisation that is linked with every other while these organisations *are not linked with each other*. FNARS (coordination) took the centre position in Paris. The other organisations were only weakly linked with each other – the only 3-clique in the periphery was the one comprising Emmaüs, Aux Captifs La Libération and Coordination maraudes Xème. We will later see that these three organisations played an important role in other sub-networks. The clique analysis as well as the visual inspection show us that in Paris we had only 3-cliques (on the level of links >6 month). In Brussels we had several 5-cliques on the same level, which means that there were several large clusters of organisations working together.

In Rome the network based on months of cooperation revealed a very specific structure in 2010. When we look at the visualisation we actually see two different "clusters" of organisations that were characterised by dominant institutional types (see Figure 33). We see a 4-clique of food distributions (orange) that are connected with each other on the left side, and on the right side we see a cluster of organisations consisting of medical organisations (blues), help centres (green) and a shelter (yellow). There was a 5-clique consisting of Comunità di Sant'Egidio, Caritas: Ostello, Caritas: Poliambulatoria, Binario95, Help Center and another very similar 5-clique including INMP (medical) instead of Caritas: Poliambulatorio (medical). Both clusters could be described as consisting of professionalised organisations providing specialised and complex services to homeless persons.

In the centre we see Comunità di Sant'Egidio which is a multifunctional organisation that seemed to act as a kind of coordinator for food distributions having links to all four organisations of this type. Actually, it forms together with the food distributions a highly integrated 5-clique where every of the 5 organisations is connected to every other. At the same time Comunità was

also strongly linked to the other cluster. In network analysis this is called a "bridging function". The two organisations of Caritas are also linked to food distribution but not as strong as Comunità.

The three networks for 2011 now include the reference authority and are shown on the right side for each city in Figure 30, Figure 32, and Figure 34. We actually can see the increased density in Brussels and Paris. Most remarkable is however the integration of the reference authorities, in particular in Brussels. In Brussels, the reference authority in 2011 had a very regular cooperation (more than 6 months) with 8 organisations in the network, comprising the most integrated ones such as SAMU social and La Fontaine. In Paris, the reference authority had a regular cooperation with Aux Captifs, Arc75, and Aurore-Itinérance, the three NGOs that have an official agreement with the SNCF. Furthermore, the reference authority was regularly cooperating with FNARS, which we remember to be the organisation with the central position in 2011. It is less central, but it is still part of the central group. For Rome we see the same picture we saw for 2011, only less dense, which we think is resulting from the many missing values. The food distributions are still not regularly cooperating with the central group. The Help Center however seems to have a very stable cooperation with the professional support organisations in the network.

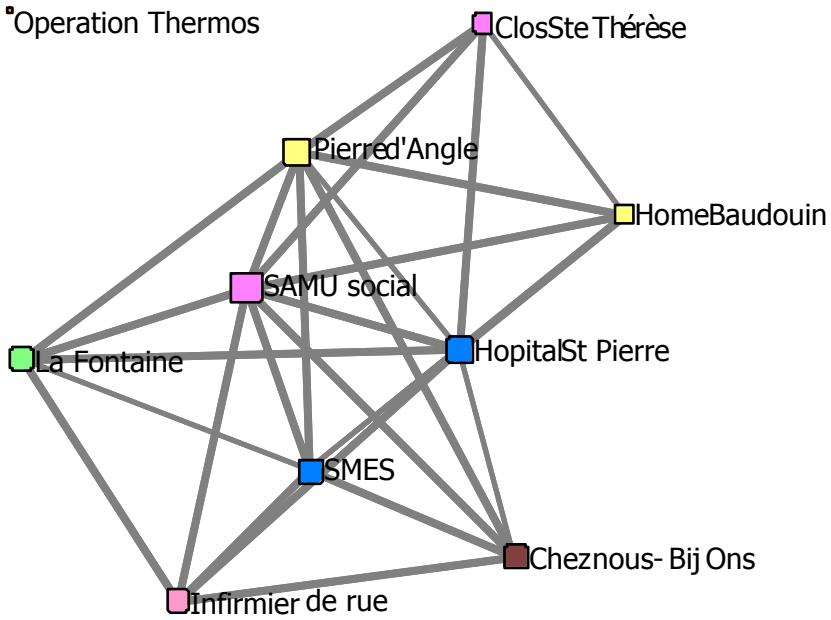


Figure 29: Brussels Months Ex Ante: links > 6

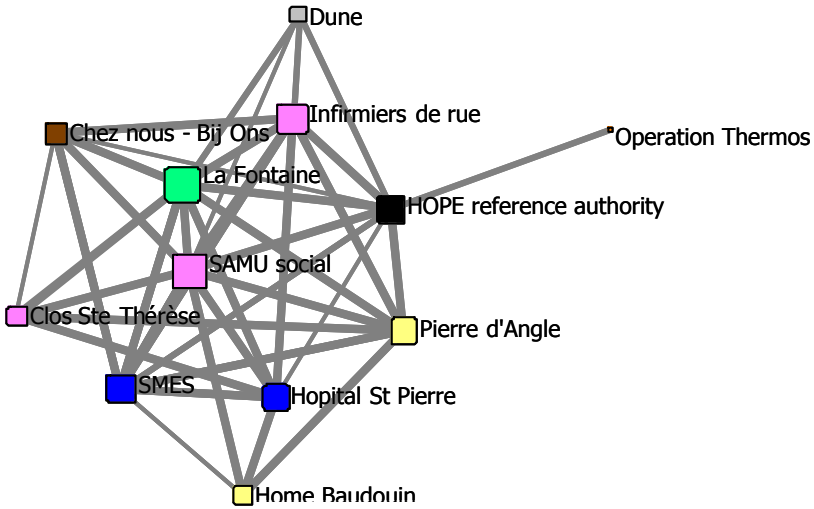


Figure 30: Brussels Months Ex Post: links > 6

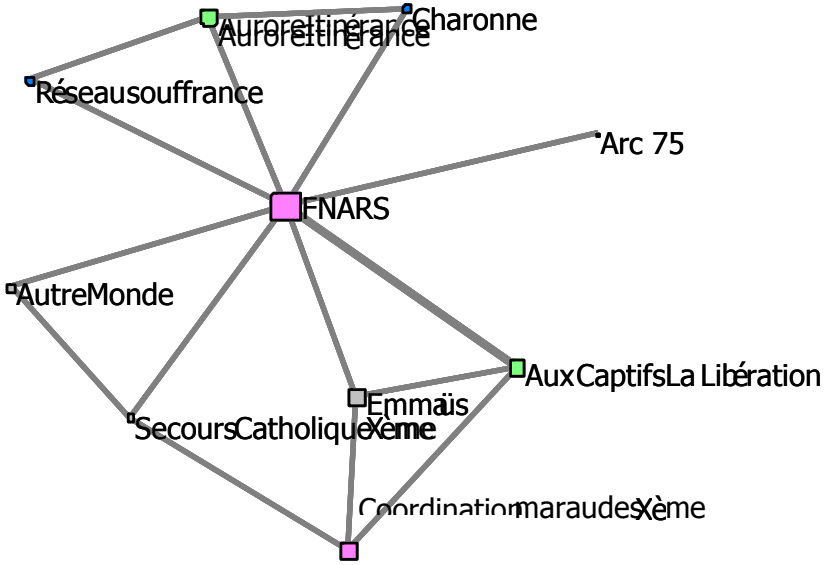


Figure 31: Paris Months Ex Ante: links > 6

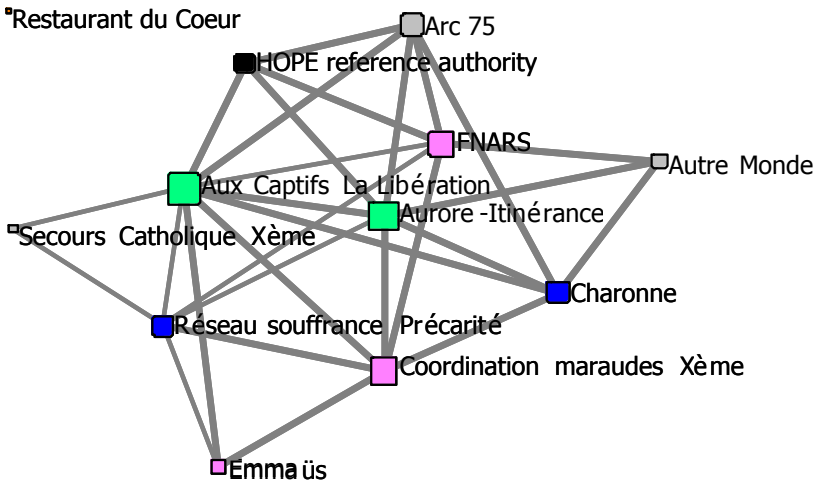


Figure 32: Paris Months Ex Post: links > 6

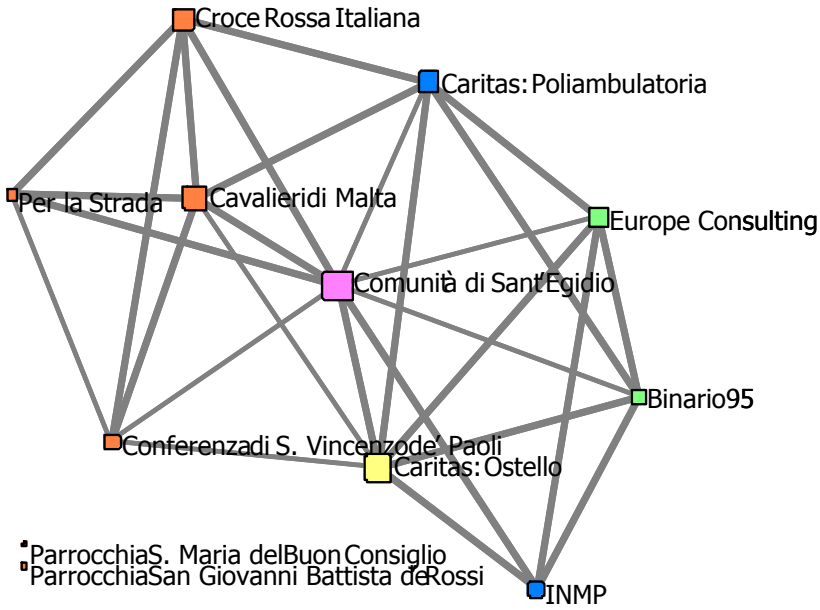


Figure 33: Rome Months Ex Ante: links > 6

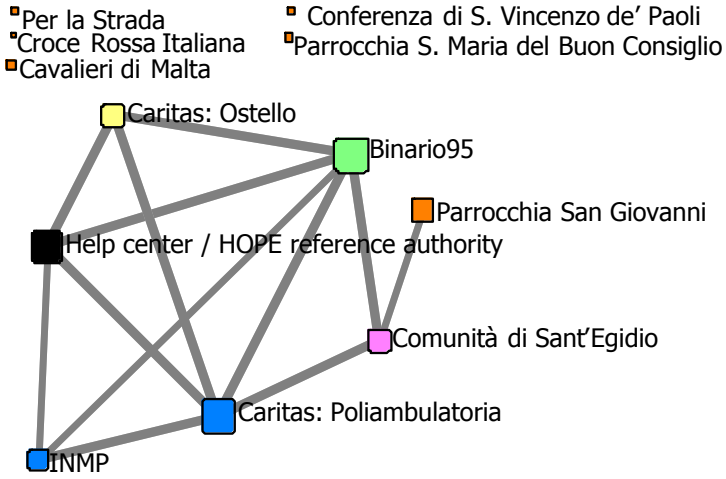


Figure 34: Rome Months Ex Post: links > 6

5.2.5 Specific cooperation activities

The first relation based on months of cooperation is a basic measure for the continuity of cooperation. Now we will turn to specific cooperation activities and the corresponding network structures. Table 28 showed these activities together with response categories. We have to keep the response categories in mind when interpreting the data. For convenience we will refer to the four main activities as “Information”, “Forward”, “Coordination” and “Planning”.

Figure 35: Comparison of specific cooperation activities: Mean degree and Figure 36: Comparison of specific cooperation activities: Mean tie strength provide a comparison between activities, cities and points in time. In Figure 35: Comparison of specific cooperation activities: Mean degree we again calculated the “mean degree” for measuring the general density of the networks. It becomes immediately evident that the relations between the different networks for each of the sites remained very stable. The only difference is that Brussels shows higher density for the information network than for the forward network. The coordination network as well as the information network increased in density, while the forward network is now less dense. For Paris and Rome, we actually see a decrease in density. We will have to investigate in detail for each of the networks whether this could be caused by missing values, whereas Rome generally shows more missing values due to the low number of responses.

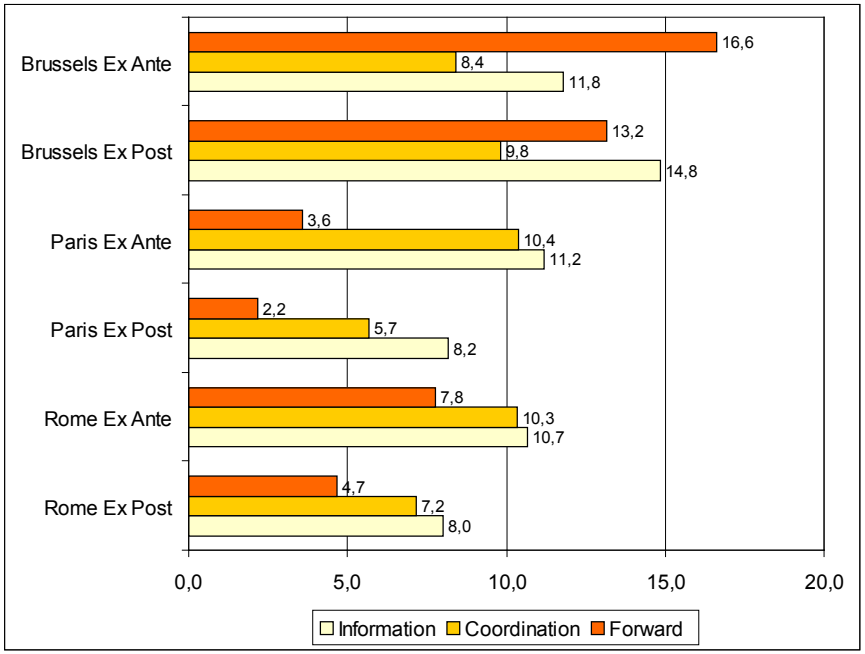


Figure 35: Comparison of specific cooperation activities: Mean degree

In Figure 36: Comparison of specific cooperation activities: Mean tie strength we show mean values again, but this time they refer to the **strength of links. We calculated the mean strength of all existing links in the networks.** Generally, we see that the mean strength of existing links is more stable than the density when we compare 2010 and 2011. We see that the links in Brussels are for all three networks stronger than in Paris and Rome. In particular the forward network seems to be very strong with a mean strength of 2,4 that is between the categories "1 to 3 times a month" and "1 to 2 times a week". The respective value for Paris is for instance only 1,6 and therefore between the categories "less than once a month" and "1 to 3 times a month" – clearly a less regular mode of cooperation. In general, we see however that there was no significant improvement regarding the strength of links in all three networks.

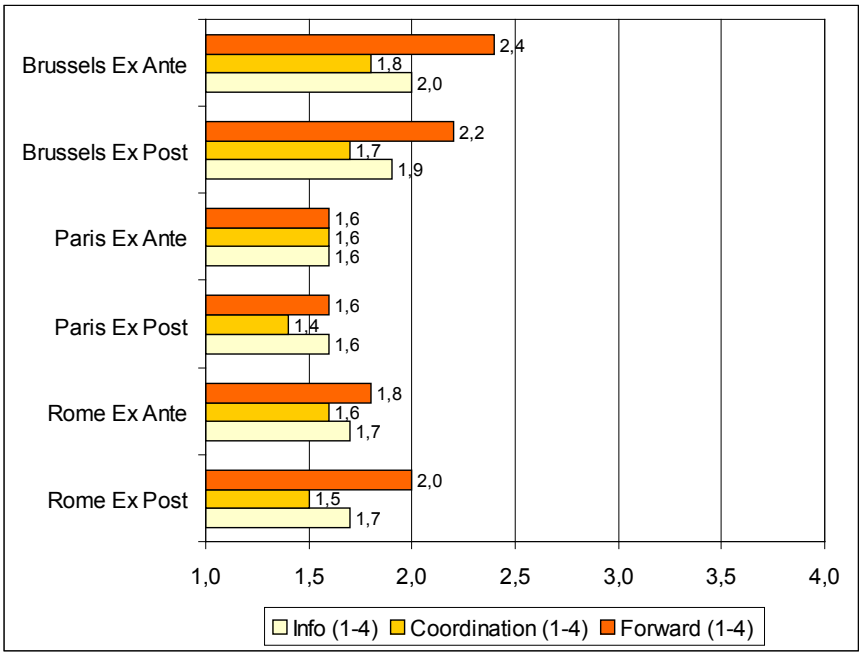


Figure 36: Comparison of specific cooperation activities: Mean tie strength

5.2.5.1 Exchanging information on homeless clients

The first network we will investigate in more detail refers to the exchange of information on homeless clients. The overall distribution of links looked quite similar for the three cities for 2010 (see Figure 37: Information: Distribution of links). It seemed however that in Paris information exchange happened with weak or moderate intensity, the majority of links being comprised in the categories "Less than once a month" and "1 to 2 times a month". Only one pair of organisations was actually exchanging information on clients "1 or 2 times a week". We see that this was different for Rome as well as Brussels having more links in the categories "1 to 2 times a week" and "3 times a week or more". Paris had however the lowest number of for the category "Never". Thus, in Rome and Brussels there were more pairs of organisations that do not exchange information on clients with each other.

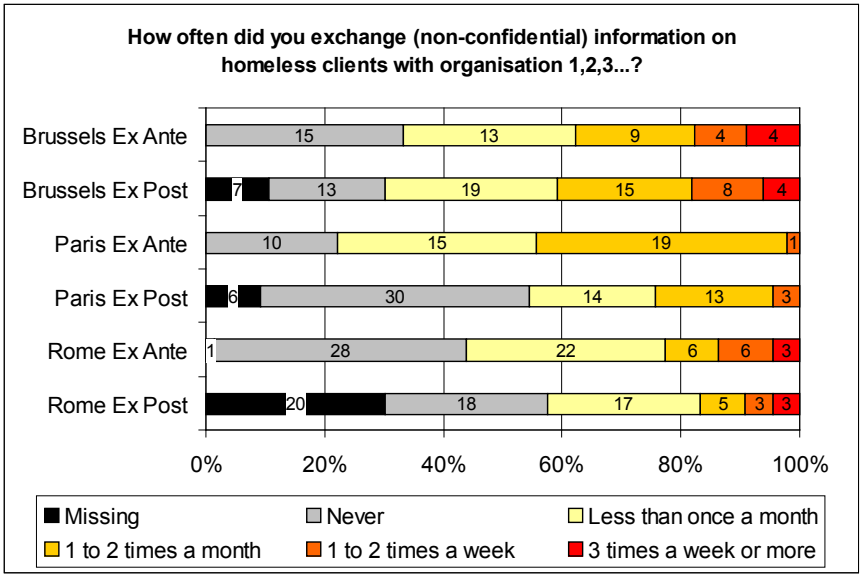


Figure 37: Information: Distribution of links

When we turn now to the ex post values for 2011 we see a very stable distribution for Brussels with only slight shifts between the categories. In Paris it appears that the network for exchanging information actually became less dense with more non-interlinked organisations – an increase from 10 to 30. As for 2010 we do not see any links for the category "3 times a week or more". Thus, the "weak point" in Paris actually remained a weak point. In Rome we see that we have 20 missing values for 2011 – this means 20 links where we do not know about their existence or strength. It is very likely that these values would have changed the overall image of a decrease in cooperation, because the distribution of links among the categories seems very similar to 2010 indicating a rather stable cooperation.

The figures below show us the information networks for Brussels, Paris and Rome for 2010 and 2011. In 2010 Brussels showed a well integrated and balanced network of information exchange (see Figure 38). There was no central actor or clique that would dominate the exchange of information or

a fragmentation of the network into different clusters. Also the periphery of the network showed links that indicated a regular exchange of information albeit on a relatively low level ("1 to 3 times a month"). There was however a 4-clique of very well integrated organisations regarding information exchange consisting of Hopital St. Pierre, SAMU social, Infirmiers de rue and La Fontaine. The organisations in this 4-clique exchange information on clients at least "1 to 2 times a week".

For 2011 we see an even denser network of information exchange with a very strong integrated 4-clique consisting of SAMU social, SMES, Infirmières de rue and the Hopital St. Pierre (see Figure 39). It is interesting that in particular the medical services are so strongly involved in the exchange of information on homeless clients. The reference authority exchanged information with two of these organisations on a more regular basis, SAMU and Infirmières, but also connected to two organisations which are rather on the periphery of the network, one shelter and the organisation Dune, which is primarily doing street work.

For 2010 the information network in Paris was well integrated albeit on a lower level of exchange compared to Brussels (see Figure 40) – Many organisations exchanged information "1 to 2 times a month". Only the link between Emmaüs and Coordination maraudes Xème was stronger with "1 to 2 times a week" due to the fact that both organisations are institutionally associated. We see however that many organisations are part of 4-cliques and 3-cliques where organisations exchanged information among each other. There was a 4-clique consisting of Emmaüs, Aurore-Itinérance, Aux Captifs La Libération, and Coordination maraudes Xème. In the second 4-clique Aurore-Itinérance is replaced by FNARS. In addition, there were several 3-cliques that connect the periphery with the centre.

In 2011 the networks show less links among the organisations – we however also see that some links are now stronger than before which means that information exchange intensified between these organisations (see Figure 41). It seems that in particular the organisations that have an agreement with the SNCF and cooperated most closely with the reference authority exchange information on a more regular basis compared to 2010. The reference au-

thority is however connected only to two of them on this relation level, Aux Captifs and Arc 75.

In 2010 the information network in Rome reflected the structure of the months network (see Figure 42). Again we saw two clusters of organisations: food distributions (orange) on the left and more "professionalised" or "specialised" services on the right. It is evident that the exchange of information was much stronger among the specialised services. Food distributions were in most cases not regularly exchanging information ("less than once a month") among each other as well as with specialised services. The bridging function of Comunità di Sant'Egidio becomes even more evident in the information network. It exchanged information regularly ("1 to 3 times a month") with three food distributions (Conferenza di S. Vincenzo de' Paoli, Cavalieri die Malta, Parrocchia San Giovanni Battista de' Rossi) and was also connected to the cluster of specialised organisations – in particular with Caritas: Ostello. Comunità is however not part of the two 4-cliques with a high exchange of information on clients.

For 2011 the analysis again is less reliable due to missing values, but it definitively shows that the structure discovered in 2010 did not change (see Figure 43). The food distributions are clearly disconnected from the professionalised organisations that form the centre of the network. The Help Center is again a part of this network and has regular exchange with these organisations. There is however a strong indication that the Help Center did not achieve a better integration of food distributions in this regard.

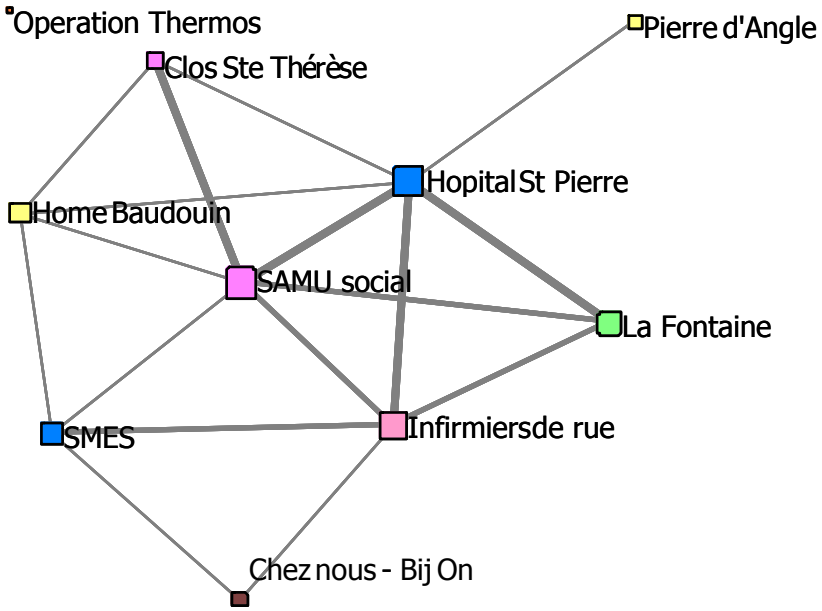


Figure 38: Brussels Information Ex Ante: links > 1

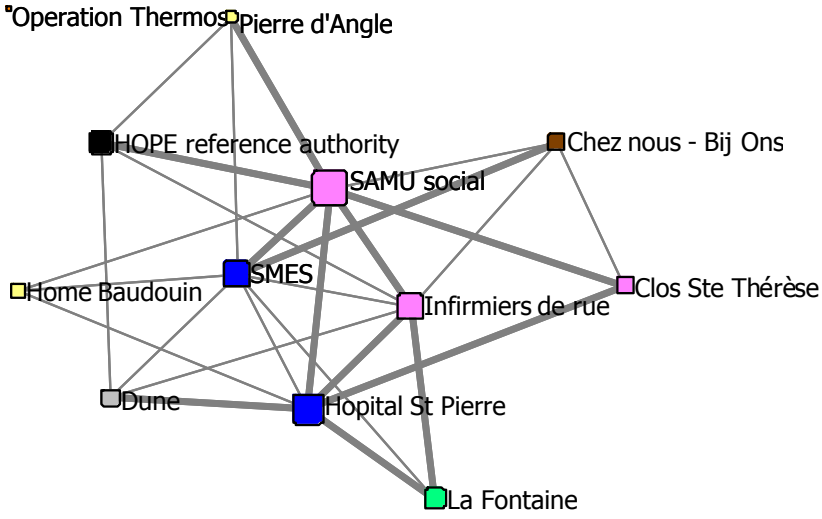


Figure 39: Brussels Information Ex Post: links > 1

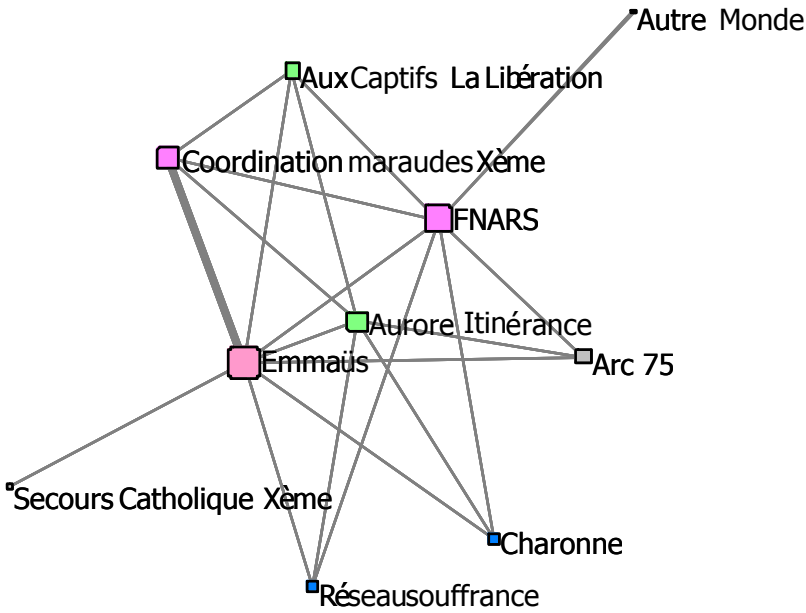


Figure 40: Paris Information Ex Ante: links > 1

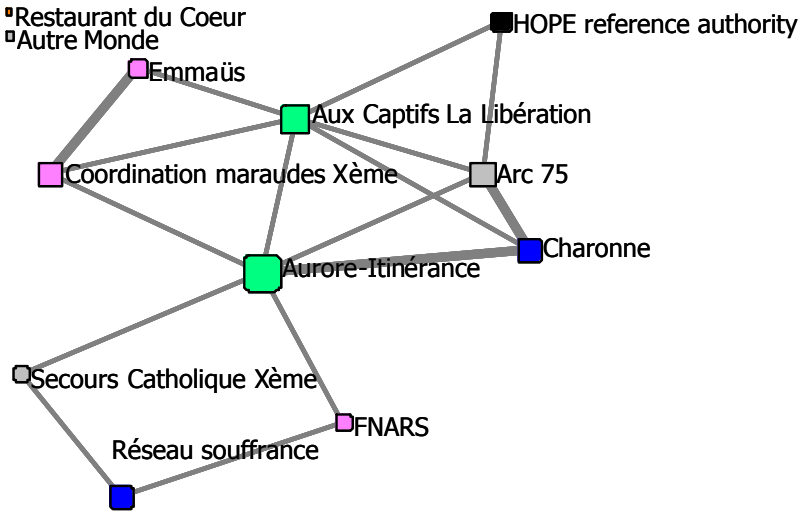


Figure 41: Paris Information Ex Post: links > 1

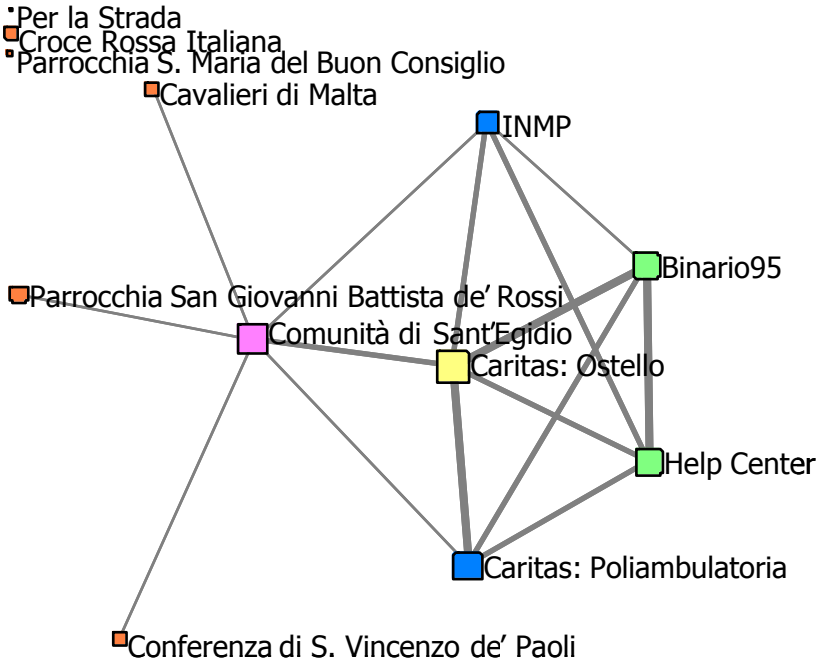


Figure 42: Rome Information Ex Ante: links > 1

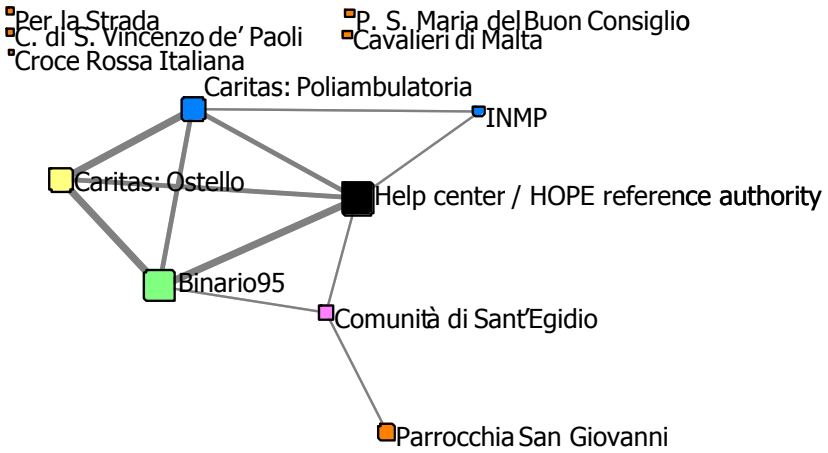


Figure 43: Rome Information Ex Post: links > 1

5.2.5.2 Coordinating services

For 2010 the link distribution for the coordination networks as shown in Figure 44: Coordination: Distribution of links was more similar than for the information or months network when cities are compared. Brussels and Rome showed very similar distributions, with some rather intensive coordination activities at the "three times a week or more" and the "1 to 2 times a week" level. The percentage of non-existing links was however above the 40% mark for both cities.

Paris had the lowest number of non-existing links meaning that most organisations were integrated in the network. The existing links were however not considerably strong with a low number of links at level "1 to 2 times a week" and no link at level "3 times a week or more". But again the network in Paris shows a comparably high number/percentage of weak links ("Less than once a month" and "1 to 2 times a month").

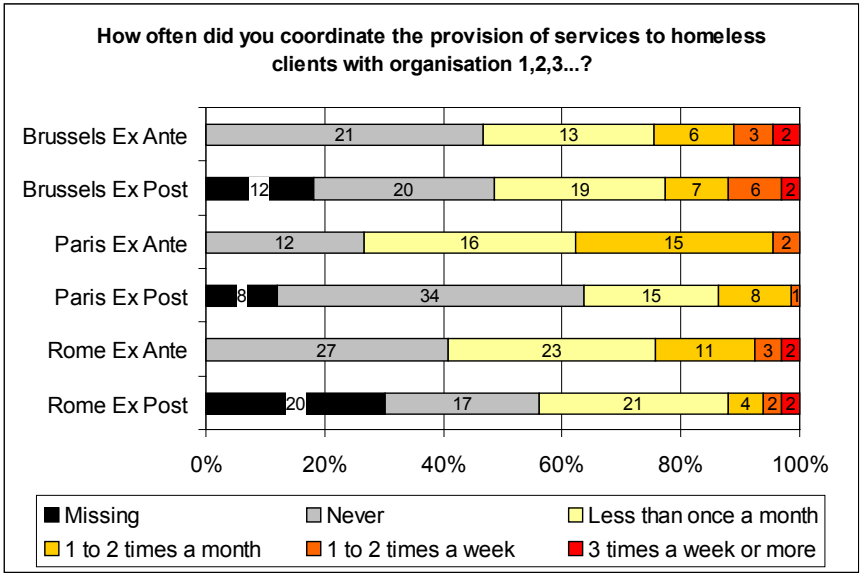


Figure 44: Coordination: Distribution of links

For 2010 the mean values in Figure 27: Months: Mean degree comparison indicated for Brussels that the coordination network was less dense than the information network. The visualisation reflects this weaker integration (see Figure 45). We see the same 4-clique of highly networked organisations consisting of Infirmiers de rue, SAMU social, Hopital St Pierre and La Fontaine, but the periphery is much weaker connected.

The data for 2011 reproduces a nearly identical image (see Figure 46). We see however that the reference authority is not integrated in coordination activities on a regular basis. We know from the qualitative interviews in chapter 5.1 as well as from the reference authorities' reports that this kind of coordination was not the main concern of the reference authority. In a strong connected support network with its own history and very specific relations among the organisations it was probably too demanding to expect significant impacts only due to one person in a very specific function. Neither the reference authority nor the NGOs had this expectation and the data confirms that the reference authority was not regularly involved in coordinating the services to homeless persons with other organisations. Also the structure of the coordination network did not change.

In 2010 Paris had a comparably dense coordination network (denser than the information network for instance). There was a large cluster of organisations consisting of Emmaüs, Coordination maraudes Xème, Aurore-Itinérance, Aux Captifs La Libération – which formed a 4-clique – and FNARS and Charonne (see Figure 47). Charonne as a medical service was much better connected in terms of coordinating services than in terms of exchanging information on clients.

For 2011 we see that also in Paris the reference authority is here less integrated compared to the information network (Figure 48). There is only one regular link to Aux Captifs. The network as a whole is less dense and in particular Emmaüs and FNARS are not part of the center. However, Emmaüs did not respond to the second survey and the response by FNARS was invalidly filled in, so that we remain a bit unsure about their actual position in the network. We used the values for respondents for calculating the relationships of these two organisations – It is however clear that the information they would have provided would have changed the results.

The cluster structure we identified for Rome for the months network and the information network looked somewhat differently in the coordination network in 2010 (see Figure 49). The integration of food distributions among each other was even weaker, but their connection to the other services was stronger and more specific. We see for instance a quite regular coordination of services between Croce Rossa Italiana and the medical services INMP and Caritas: Poliambulatorio and the Conferenza di S. Vincenzo de' Paoli formed a 3-clique with Caritas: Ostello and Comunità di Sant'Egidio. There was still a strong 4-clique consisting of Caritas: Ostello, Caritas: Poliambulatoria, Europe Consulting and Binario95. Comunità di Sant'Egidio was at the centre of the network being connected to all other organisations albeit on a rather moderate level.

For 2011 this slight indication of a better integration of food distributions in the coordination network has to be revised, although missing values may partly bias the structure (Figure 50). We see however nearly exact the same structure as for the other networks: the centre is formed by the professional support organisations which are well connected to each other, including the Help Center as the reference authority.

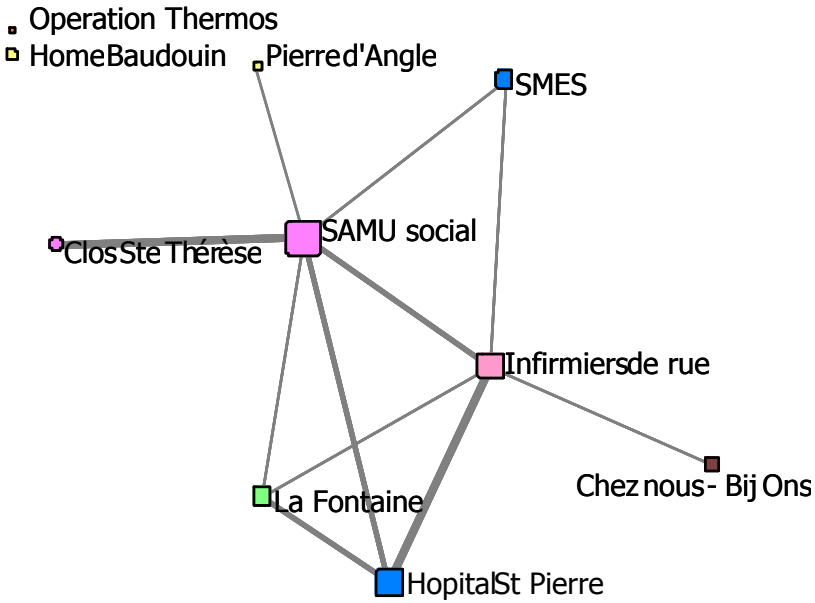


Figure 45: Brussels Coordination Ex Ante: links > 1

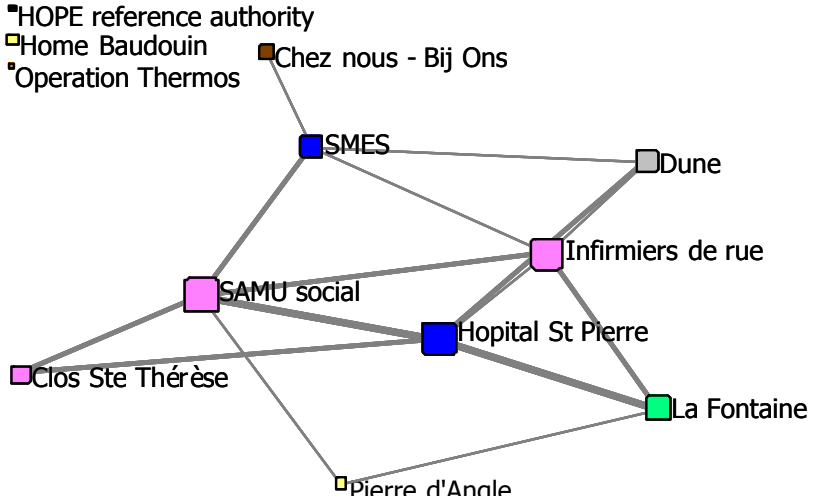


Figure 46: Brussels Coordination Ex Post: links > 1

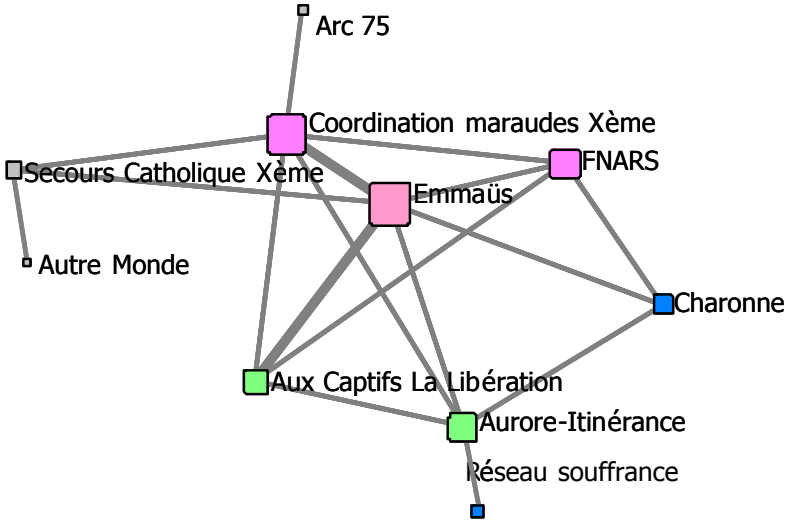


Figure 47: Paris Coordination Ex Ante: links > 1

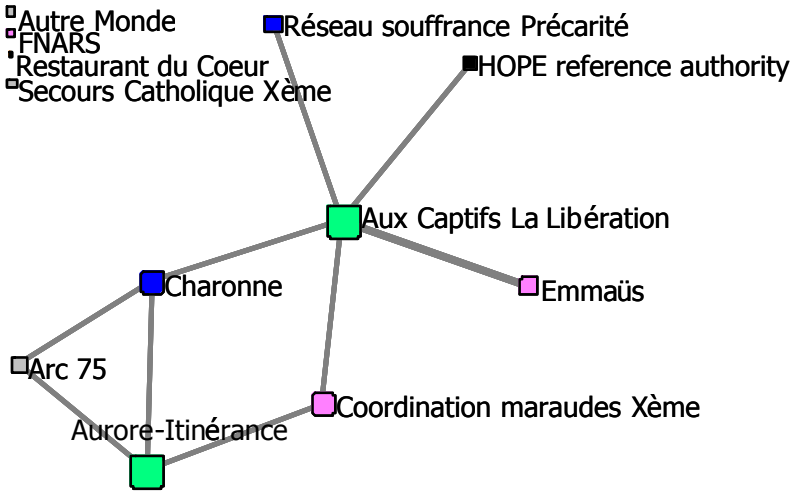


Figure 48: Paris Coordination Ex Post: links > 1

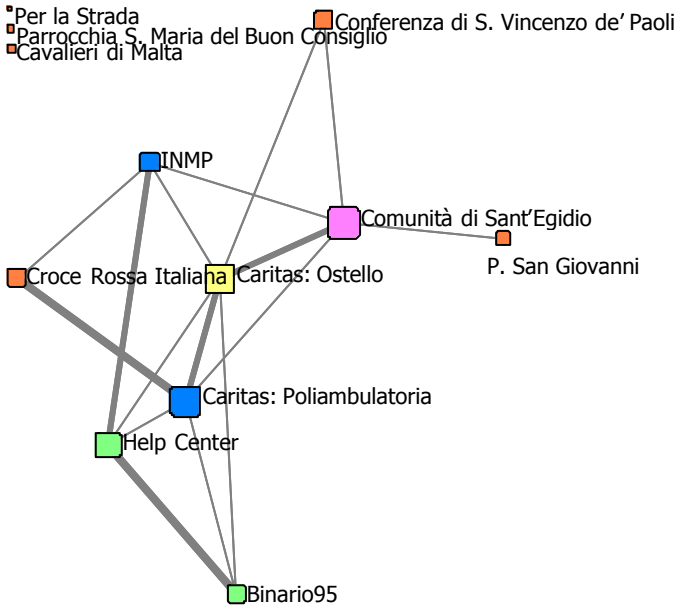


Figure 49: Rome Coordination Ex Ante: links > 1

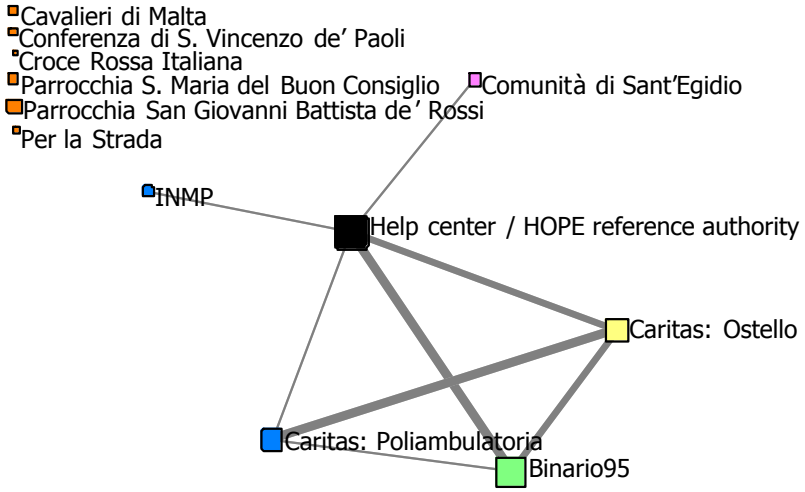


Figure 50: Rome Coordination Ex Post: links > 1

5.2.5.3 Sending homeless clients

We already pointed out the large differences between cities with regard to sending clients to other organisations in 2010, but also still in 2011. A direct comparison is however difficult due to the high number of missing values (see Figure 51: Forward: Distribution of links). The numbers are higher for the forward network, because it is a directed network. A sends to B and B sends to A. This means that we cannot replace missing values with the values from respondents. Generally, we see however some indication for a rather stable distribution of links when comparing 2010 and 2011 taking the missing values into account. There is no indication of significant improvements for any of the cities. Brussels still shows a very strong cooperation in sending homeless clients to other organisations, much stronger than Paris and Rome. Paris remained on a very weak level of integration in this regard. These are clearly the most pronounced differences we find between cities for specific cooperation activities.

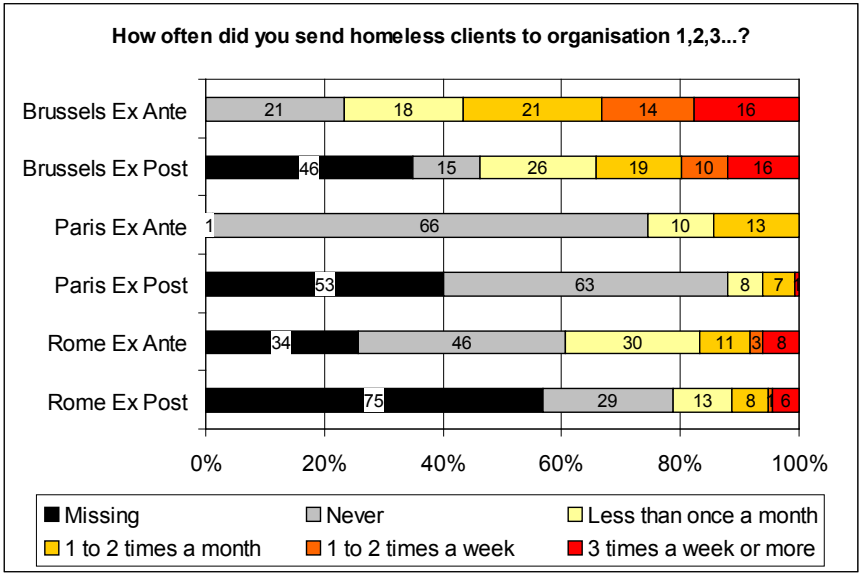


Figure 51: Forward: Distribution of links

The differences in network density become immediately evident when inspecting the network visualisations. In 2010 Brussels had a highly integrated forward network that included all organisations under study. SAMU social was clearly the centre of the network receiving homeless clients from many other organisations as well as sending homeless clients with high regularity (see Figure 52). The Hopital St Pierre, La Fontaine and Pierre d'Angle were also receiving many homeless clients. When we compare OutDegree (sending clients) with InDegree (receiving clients) we see that these are also the organisations that send clients most regularly to other organisations.

In 2011 the picture is quite the same (see Figure 53). We see however that the reference authority was very active in sending clients to 9 different organisations in the network. The reference authority therefore was among the most active "forwarders" in the network.

In 2010 the forward network for Paris had a simple, but interesting structure (see Figure 54). The links all have a value of 2 ("1 to 3 times a month"). Two organisations only have links of value 1 and are therefore separated from the network (FNARS, Coordination maraudes Xème) – These two are coordinators and are probably not providing direct support for homeless persons. The pattern of sending clients was a very specific one, with organisations that are sending homeless clients regularly only to one or two other organisations. The organisations that received clients most regularly are Emmaüs, Aurore-Itinérance and Charonne.

In 2011, also because of missing values, we see a less dense network (see Figure 55). The reference authority was not involved in sending clients directly to other organisations on a regular level.

In 2010 in Rome the medical services were clearly receiving clients most regularly, both INMP and Caritas: Poliambulatorio. The activities were more concentrated than in the other forward networks and the roles of "senders" and "receivers" seemed to be differentiated more clearly. In particular the help centres Binario 95 and Help Center were very active in sending homeless clients to other organisations, which is actually one of their main functions, while the medical services were rather the "receivers" - The network analysis was however slightly biased by the fact that Caritas:

Poliambulatoria, Comunità di Sant'Egidio and Conferenza di S. Vincenzo de' Paoli did not answer this segment of the questionnaire. We would actually expect that in particular Caritas: Poliambulatoria would send clients also to the help centres (see Figure 56).

In 2011 this structure is actually reproduced to a large degree (see Figure 57). The Help Center, now acting as the HOPE in stations reference authority could hold its position as one of the most active "forwarders" in the network. The food distributions are clearly forming the periphery of the network again. The Binario 95 however seems to regularly send clients to three of them. The Help Center however did not forward clients to these food distributions on a more regular basis showing no link above the category 1.

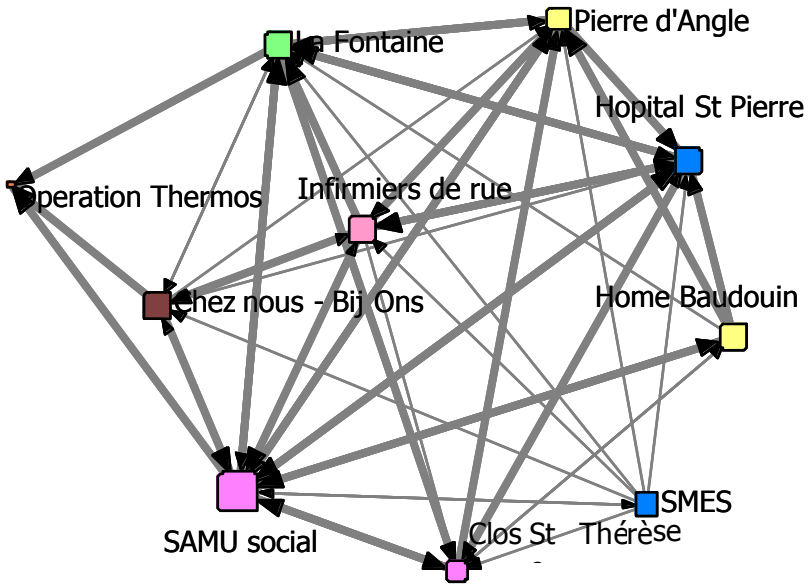


Figure 52: Brussels Forward Ex Ante: links > 1

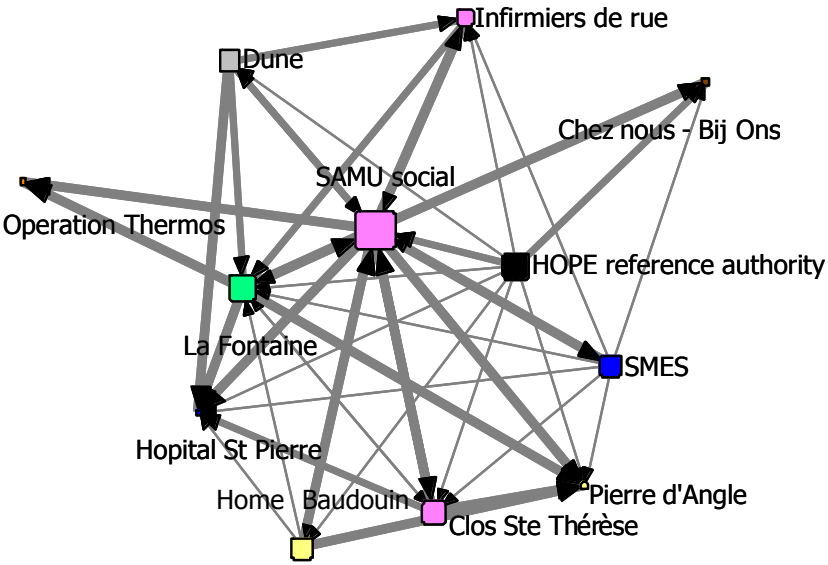


Figure 53: Brussels Forward Ex Post: links > 1

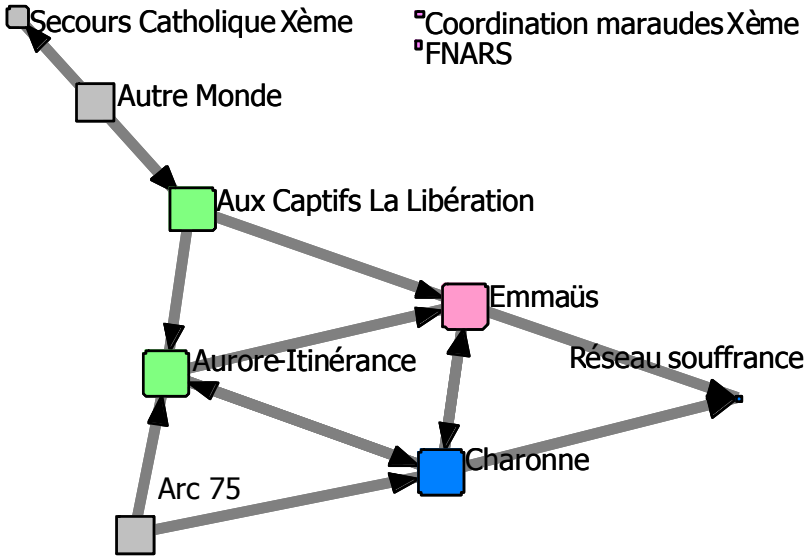


Figure 54: Paris Forward Ex Ante: links > 1

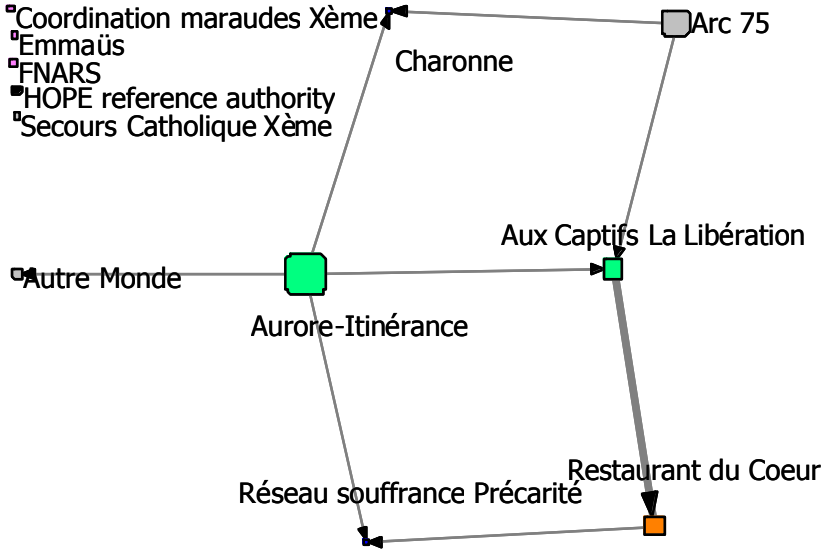


Figure 55: Paris Forward Ex Post: links > 1

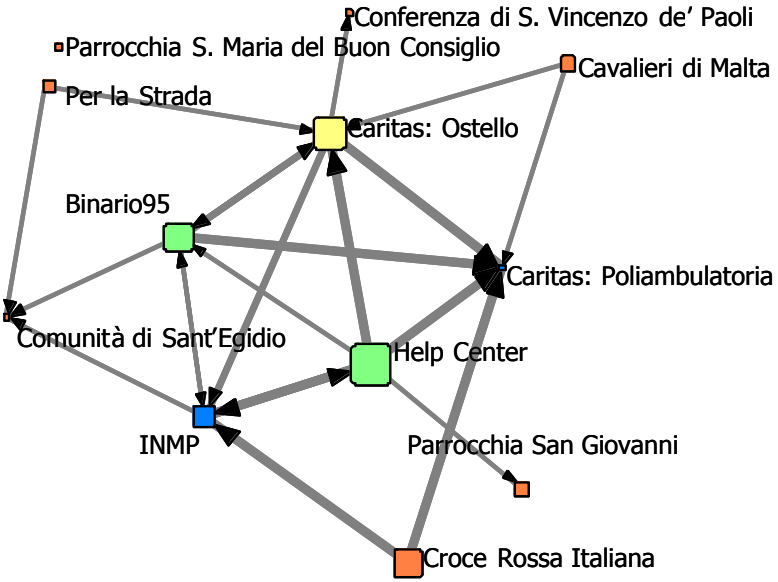


Figure 56: Rome Forward Ex Ante: links > 1

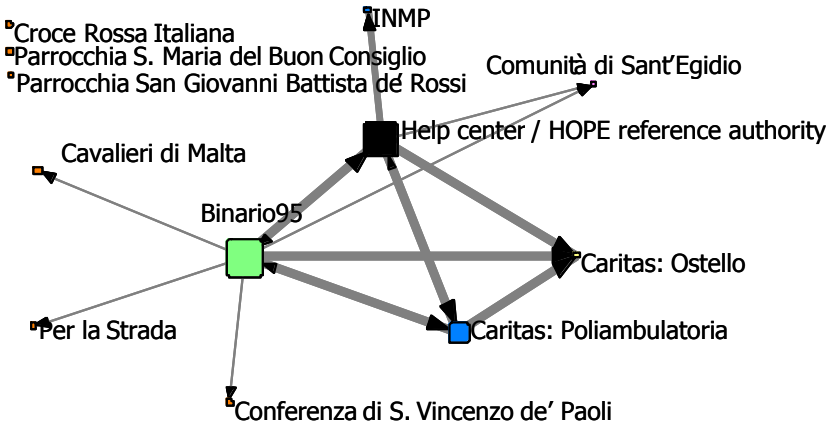


Figure 57: Rome Forward Ex Post: links > 1

5.2.5.4 Long-term planning

For the activity of long-term planning we used only three answer categories in 2010: Never, Once, Several times within the last twelve months. In 2011 we decided to be more specific for this item to receive better results on the reference authorities' planning activities. In 2010 we used 5 categories: 4= More than once a month, 3= Once a month, 2= Once every two months, 1= Less often and 0= Never. For comparison we combined the answer categories 4, 3, and 2 = several times, whereas 1 = once.

We see results similar to the ones for the other dimensions of service integration (see Figure 58: Planning: Distribution of links). Brussels has more or less the same distribution of links. In 2011 we have however several missing values which could potentially change the results. For Paris we actually see a decrease in long-term planning with 36 non-existing links. In Rome we see a similar results but with more missing values.

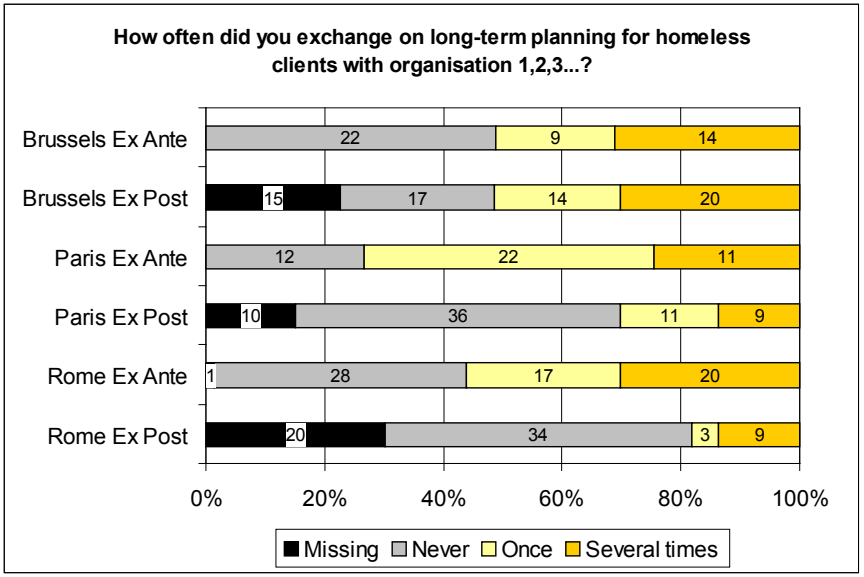


Figure 58: Planning: Distribution of links

In 2010, the planning network in Brussels was actually not very dense and more centralised than the other networks in Brussels (see Figure 59). SMES took the centre position of the planning network in Brussels being connected to both 4-cliques: In the first 4-clique with Hopital St Pierre, Infirmiers de rue and La Fontaine and in the second 4-clique with SAMU social instead of La Fontaine. SMES however also integrated smaller organisations such as Chez nous - Bij Ons and Home Baudouin into more regular long-term planning activities.

In 2011, SMES is still a part of central group, whereas SAMU social, Infermiers de rue, and Dune have stronger links now (see Figure 60). Dune as a new respondent is clearly situated in the centre of the network as part of a 4-clique with SMES, SAMU social, and Infirmiers de rue. The reference authority is present at the periphery of the network being connected to other organisations at the periphery such as La Fontaine, Pierre d'Angle, and Chez nous. The connection with the network center is however rather weak, with one regular link with SAMU social.

In 2010, the planning network in Paris had a quite interesting structure regarding exchanges on long-term planning between specific types of organisation (see Figure 61). At the centre we see a 4-clique consisting of FNARS, Coordination maraudes Xème, Emmaüs and Aux Captifs La Libération. The second help centre, Aurore-Itinérance, was also connected to the centre but not as a part of the central clique. The periphery consisted of medical organisations and street work organisations.

In 2011, the structure is slightly more fragmented (see Figure 62). The coordinators show a weaker integration, but again, these two organisations did not respond to the survey in 2011. Their estimations on their own connections are therefore not considered, only the estimations of the respondents. Regarding long-term planning the reference authority in Paris however seems to play a more important role compared to other dimensions of service integration. The reference authority had a regular exchange with the three organisation associated with the railway company. His activities however did not reach much beyond these organisations.

In Rome the planning network was comparably dense in 2010 (see Figure 63). In particular some of the food distributions (Cavalieri di Malta, Conferenza di S. Vincenzo de' Paoli, Croce Rossa Italiana) were not only connected among each other but also with the three organisations Caritas: Ostello, Caritas: Poliambulatoria, and Comunità di Sant'Egidio. The Help Center was not at a very central position, but nevertheless well connected to the professional support organisations.

In 2011 we see again a less dense network for Rome (see Figure 64). It is clear that missing values as well as the non-response by most of the food distributions is responsible for this decrease rather than an actual change in the network. But again, the conclusion is that the basic separation between professionalised support organisations and food distributions did not change while the relations between the central organisations seem to be very stable.

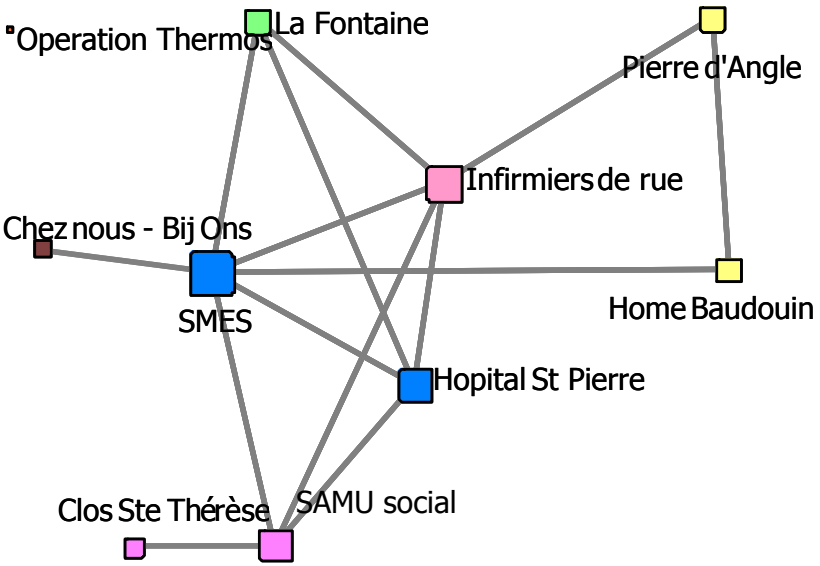


Figure 59: Brussels Planning Ex Ante: links > 1

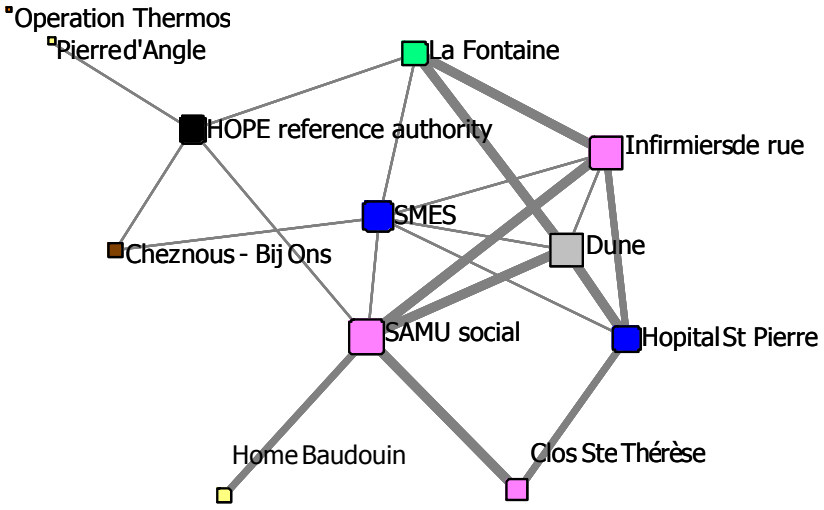


Figure 60: Brussels Planning Ex Post: links > 1

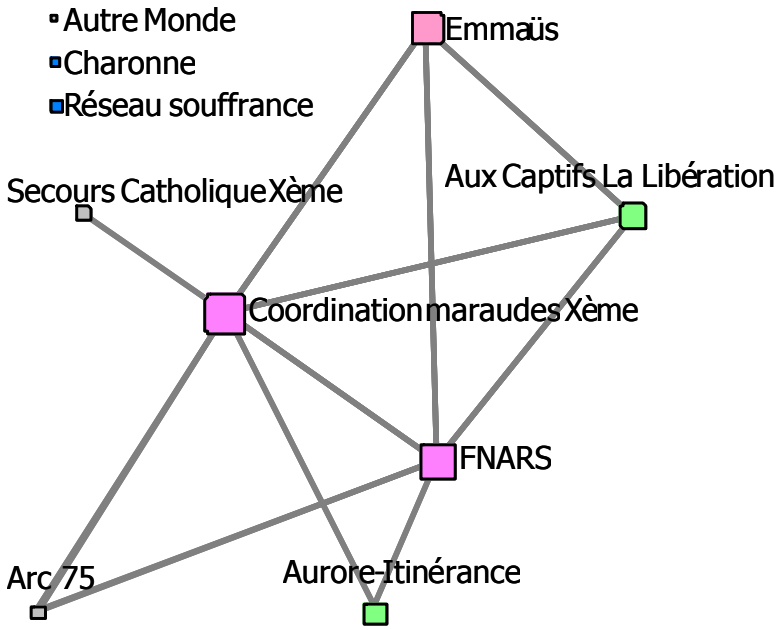


Figure 61: Paris Planning Ex Ante: links > 1

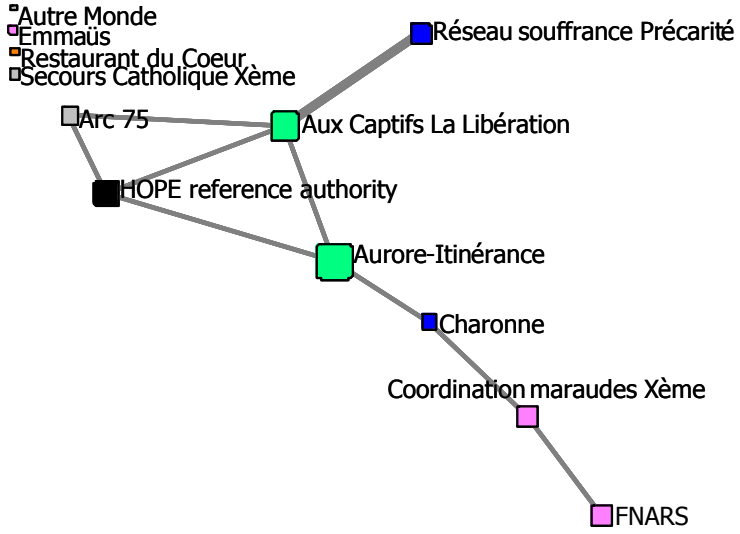


Figure 62: Paris Planning Ex Post: links > 1

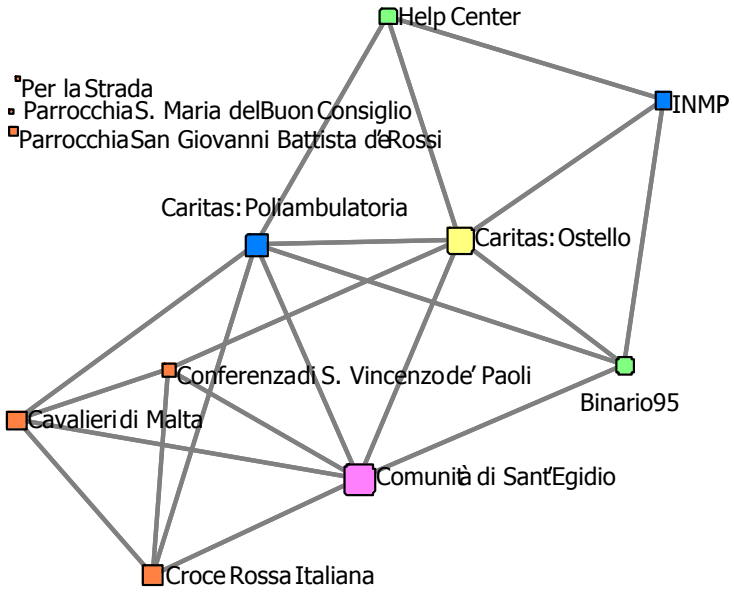


Figure 63: Rome Planning Ex Ante: links > 1

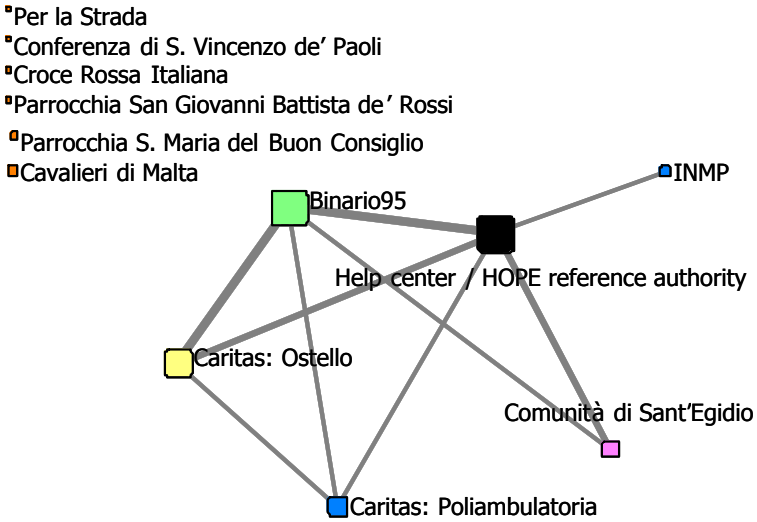


Figure 64: Rome Planning Ex Post: links > 1

5.2.5.5 Degree ranking

Table 31 shows the degree ranking for the networks information, coordination, and planning. We highlighted the position of the respective reference authority. The degree rank simply shows us how well connected the reference authority is compared to the other organisations in the network. The degree is sum of all links (and their strength) of an organisation.

INFORMATION		COORDINATION		PLANNING	
Brussels					
SAMU social	27	SAMU social	19	SAMU social	19
Hopital St Pierre	23	Hopital St Pierre	18	Dune	18
Infirmiers de rue	20	Infirmiers de rue	17	Infirmiers de rue	18
SMES	20	La Fontaine	13	SMES	15
HOPE ref. authority	16	SMES	12	HOPE ref. authority	14
La Fontaine	15	Dune	11	Hopital St Pierre	14
Chez nous - Bij Ons	12	Clos Ste Thérèse	9	La Fontaine	13
Clos Ste Thérèse	12	Chez nous - Bij Ons	6	Clos Ste Thérèse	11
Dune	12	Home Baudouin	5	Chez nous - Bij Ons	7
Home Baudouin	10	Pierre d'Angle	5	Home Baudouin	6
Pierre d'Angle	8	HOPE ref. authority	2	Pierre d'Angle	2
Operation Thermos	3	Operation Thermos	1	Operation Thermos	1
Paris					
Aurore-Itinérance	17	Aurore-Itinérance	13	Aurore-Itinérance	12
Aux Captifs La Libération	13	Aux Captifs La Libération	13	Aux Captifs La Libération	9
Arc 75	11	Charonne	8	HOPE ref. authority	8
Charonne	10	Coordination maraudes	8	Coordination maraudes	6
Coordination maraudes	10	Emmaüs	6	FNARS	6
Réseau souffrance	9	Réseau souffrance	6	Réseau souffrance	6
HOPE ref. authority	8	Arc 75	5	Arc 75	5
Emmaüs	7	HOPE ref. authority	4	Charonne	4
FNARS	6	Autre Monde	2	Secours Catholique Xème	2
Secours Catholique	5	Secours Catholique	2	Emmaüs	1
Autre Monde	2	FNARS	1	Restaurant du Coeur	1
Restaurant du Coeur	0	Restaurant du Coeur	0	Autre Monde	0

Rome					
Help center	19	Help center	18	Help center	14
Binario95	18	Binario95	16	Binario95	14
Caritas: Ostello	13	Caritas: Ostello	12	Caritas: Ostello	10
Caritas: Poliambulatoria	13	Caritas: Poliambulatoria	10	Caritas: Poliambulatoria	6
P. San Giovanni Battista	8	P. San Giovanni Battista	7	Comunità di Sant'Egidio	5
Comunità di Sant'Egidio	7	Comunità di Sant'Egidio	5	Cavalieri di Malta	2
INMP	5	Cavalieri di Malta	4	INMP	2
P. S. Maria del Buon C.	4	INMP	4	P. S. Maria del Buon C.	1
Cavalieri di Malta	3	P. S. Maria del Buon C.	4	Per la Strada	0
C. di S. Vincenzo de' Paoli	3	C. di S. Vincenzo de' Paoli	3	C. di S. Vincenzo de' Paoli	0
Per la Strada	2	Per la Strada	2	Croce Rossa Italiana	0
Croce Rossa Italiana	1	Croce Rossa Italiana	1	P. San Giovanni Battista	0

Table 31: Degree Ranking

5.3 Conclusion

5.3.1 The benefits of local coordination

The necessity of local coordination has been emphasised by almost all the interviewees in the three cities. The mentioned benefits include better communication among station stakeholders and services, mutual understanding, less conflicts, more visibility of social services and their approach/efficiency, better information on rules and regulations at the train station, more coherence in service provision and better follow-up services. NGOs in Brussels perceive the strong benefit of having a competent intermediary at the station. In Rome all respondents explicitly support local coordination and emphasise the relevance of the Help Center's (reference authority) work in this regard. In Paris not all interviewees directly responded to this question, but the general impression is that while NGOs do not see much need to be coordinated directly (stating that there is not enough overlap between the different services they provide) they highly appreciate efforts to mediate between railway stakeholders and NGOs as well as the implementation of specific tools such

as the "exclusion alert" to make the support of homeless persons at the station more effective and the work of NGOs more visible.

5.3.2 A more refined image of the train station in relation to homeless persons

The question of whether the train station should be seen as a "service hub" where different services should be offered to homeless persons is however more sensitive.

NGOs generally do not support the idea of providing many additional services at the train station, although they perceive the train station as a relevant place for street work and certain services that seem appropriate. Concerns with regard to providing more services at the train a stations are for instance: the train stations often lacks the premises to deliver high-quality services, homeless persons should generally be directed towards general public services having the right to use standard quality services, more services could attract more homeless person making the work of railway stakeholders and social services more difficult, and, homeless persons should be supported in a more appropriate environment. In general, we were surprised by the sensitivity of NGOs regarding these arguments and their attempt to understand the perspective of railway stakeholders, which is general a positive signal for further cooperation. We think this is also an impact of HOPE in stations – the exploration of new ways of conceptualising the cooperation around the train station as a point of reference and intensified local coordination rather than a service hub.

5.3.3 A more specified role for the "reference authority"

The function of the reference authority is primarily perceived as an intermediary between station stakeholders and services. This also means to act as a conflict mediator, helping services and stakeholders to find a common approach towards homeless persons even if there are conflicting interests. "Neutrality" is mentioned as an important characteristic of the reference authority and also ascribed by NGOs to the reference authorities. In the per-

ception of NGOs this neutrality does however not necessarily conflict with the fact that the reference authority (in Brussels and Paris) is employed by the railway company. This is actually seen as an additional advantage – to have a person being familiar with the railway company, but taking on a more neutral role. This was in particularly emphasised in Paris where the reference authority was a former SNCF employee, but also in Brussels where the reference authority had a background in social work but was also employed by the railway company. It is a positive outcome to see that the NGOs in general accepted and appreciated the role of the reference authority and the way this function was institutionally implemented. In Rome, the situation was fundamentally different having an organisation as reference authority. Furthermore, the Help Center was not a newly established organisation, but one that already existed at the station. The impression is that the Help Center continued to play a strong role in supporting and forwarding homeless clients. Reframing the activities of the Help Centre within the project was not an easy task, in particular because the reference authority function was not strictly defined and had to be adapted to local conditions, but HOPE in stations clearly provided the Help Center with the official mandate to act as a coordinator. However, this did not directly lead to a significant change in cooperation patterns or a better cooperation with weakly integrated organisations such as the many food distributions in Rome.

Due to the fact that HOPE in stations did not define clear benchmarks in service integration that should be achieved and did not have the explicit objective to change specific aspects of the cooperation networks, the Help Centre continued its well established work rather than changing its approach. It is clear that the Help Center already started in a “privileged” position in being partly funded by the railway station as well as having good relationships with railway station officials. As part of the NGO Europe Consulting (partner in the HOPE in stations) it was always located at the interface between services and stakeholders.

5.3.4 Positive and negative restrictions

NGOs in Brussels and Paris were however also well aware of the restrictions of the reference authority. It is only one person that is partly restricted by the railway station's policy and the institutional framework – Since they do not expect and do not wish to be fully coordinated by the reference authority they however seem to accept these restrictions. We have to remember that the support network in Brussels was already highly integrated including the presence of coordinating organisations, although the connection to the station stakeholders was reported to be rather weak. In Brussels, there are furthermore larger organisations such as SAMU social that provides many different services itself. The reference authority in Brussels thus was hardly in the position to build up a strong coordination structure, which would probably have been confronted with the rejection of NGOs. The reference authority herself pointed out that the structures had a too long history and that services were too heterogeneous to speak of real coordination. The network analysis showed that the coordination of services for homeless clients was definitively not the strength of the reference authorities in Brussels and Paris. Only the Help Centre, as a well established organisation that partly fulfilled this task in the past, is more involved in this kind of coordination. The initial optimistic expectation of achieving more "service integration" clearly has to be revised for HOPE in stations. We can see now that this would have been a too large tasks for the resources and structures available – but furthermore, and that is important for the future development of the reference authority – we see a profile developing that is maybe more confined to the main function of being an intermediary at the train station than being a service coordinator, but at the same time more accepted by NGOs. The reference authority is the "missing link" between their service provision and the stakeholders at the train station. This is something that HOPE in stations seems to have achieved or at least successfully initiated.

The feedback on impacts on the cooperation between services and railway station stakeholders is therefore much more positive that the assessments of the impacts on the cooperation among social services.

We think that restrictions in the function of the reference authority that depend on the general framework also became visible in Paris. While the general attempt of SNCF to contract certain NGOs and to allow these NGOs to intervene at the train station, while excluding other NGOs, might be legitimate as a form of quality management and coordination, we think that it would have been more useful to open up the cooperation and to include other NGOs in the framework of HOPE in stations. The network analysis showed that this did not really happened and that cooperation was restricted to mainly three NGOs.

When we see now how the function of the reference authority turned out to be implemented, we might also question the appropriateness of the name reference authority itself. And indeed, other names than reference authority were used, in Brussels and Paris "référent social" and in Rome "referente unico". At the beginning of the project "reference authority" obviously implied a strong coordination function and the term "service integration" was used. We think that HOPE in stations finally arrived at a much more realistic vision of this function that is now also better adapted to the expectations of services and stakeholders. We think that in particular the qualitative interviews with service organisation document this change in perception.

5.3.5 Three reference authorities – complementary competences

What is actually a very interesting result of HOPE in stations is that the three reference authority all developed or provided elements that enrich this function and make it more effective. In Brussels we see that the reference authority in actively visiting and monitoring the train station could connect to stakeholders as well as directly to homeless persons. This direct contact also allowed the reference authority to become an intermediary, communicating the requests of shop keepers as well as the requests and service needs of homeless persons directly to NGOs and railway officials in an effective and professional way that was particularly appreciated by NGOs. The background of being a social worker helped obviously in establishing this approach, but it also needed "profile work" to not just become another social worker at the train station. According to statements of NGOs the reference authority in Brussels found this balance.

The reference authority initiated many mini-projects and let the NGOs participate. The NGOs themselves mentioned this participation – This participation obviously creates co-ownership of newly implemented projects and generates more commitment and support from NGOs. It is not something we can measure in numbers, but we also think that the resources – meaning the resources of one person – where maybe not sufficient to immediately implement all these projects, not within the short period of HOPE IN STATION – many of them will (hopefully) become future activities.

The special feature in Paris was the strong interlink between reference authority and the railway company. The reference authority as a former employee was appreciated by the railway company, but was also accepted by the NGOs. Furthermore, the introduction of the so called "exclusion alert" was welcomed by services and stakeholders, by some perceived as a real innovation in the train station system. A weakness of the model became however visible when the reference authority was replaced in a late stage of the project by a new person. The relationships between NGOs and reference authority were clearly based on trust – this trust has to be developed again when a new person takes on this role.

The help centre in Rome represents another version of the reference authority – one that is institutionally established, does not depend on a single person, is institutionally independent from the train station, but at the same time partly funded by and interlinked with the train station. We think that these three models developed in the framework of HOPE in stations provide very useful insights into the implementation of such a function and will hopefully be used for optimising the way local coordination and intermediation is implemented at train stations.

5.3.6 The integration of low and mid-level management

We also see at least a certain weakness in not explicitly targeting the low and mid-level management at the railway stations. Some of these managers were involved in the interventions, cooperated with the reference authority and/or participated in the training. We see however the need of very directly approaching different hierarchic levels and departments of the railway com-

panies as well as the social service organisations and to bring them together working on a consistent policy towards homeless persons and consistent practices. There is some indication that certain stakeholders follow or have to follow a logic of action that is sometimes at odds with the general attempt to fight social exclusion, who are also assessed according to this logic from their superiors. The idea of having a train station without homeless persons will put pressure on security personnel for instance. Exactly, these logics have to be identified and articulated. If they are not articulated it is very likely that low-level management and the employees who directly interact with homeless persons will feel the tension of conflicting objectives and instructions. In HOPE in stations these tensions sometimes became visible and we think that they deserve more attention.

5.3.7 Impacts on service integration and structure

Initially, we selected 16 organisations for the network analysis for each train station. The idea was to include the organisations providing core services for homeless persons which are at the same time related to the train station, either trough their activities directly at the train station and/or through their proximity to the train station. Although not all of the initially selected organisations answered to our survey we are confident that we managed include most of the key players in the three local contexts. In general, the social support networks in European cities are relatively dense consisting of a multiplicity of different organisations with different functions. The organisations are not only connected among themselves but also with centralised institutions of the national and local welfare system through direct funding and the coordination of support activities. This means that HOPE in stations "intervened" in an already highly structured context in terms of organisational identities, functional differentiation, funding structures, coordination, and cooperation practices. While there are significant differences between our local networks all of them must be regarded as well integrated support networks that provide a diversified set of services. With regard to impact analysis this means that we expected rather small and specific changes in the support structure due to the interventions of HOPE in stations instead of significant structural changes.

The comparison of the networks for the three local contexts in 2010 showed us the general differences between the support networks – the measurement of months of cooperation within the 12 months before the study showed the basic structures quite well: a more distributed and highly integrated network in Brussels, a more centralised and less integrated network in Paris, and a network consisting of two clusters that are connected through organisations that fulfil a bridging function in Rome. These network characteristics show however different variations for specific cooperation activities that we also measured: exchanging information, coordinating services, sending clients and long-term planning. For 2011 we generally saw quite similar network structures. While Brussels shows stability without any "surprises" we actually see a tendency for the reduction of service integration for Paris and also slight reductions for Rome. In both cases the lower response rates (compared to 2010) make it difficult to arrive at a final assessment. What we can however say with some certainty is that we do not see improvements in service integration and we also do not see significant changes in the structure of the networks. The network analysis however also included the reference authority in 2011 which makes it possible to assess its integration for different networks. We must certainly add that an implementation period of about one year in which the reference authorities were active does not seem sufficient for achieving significant changes in cooperation structures.

Exchanging information: Brussels showed a well integrated and balanced network of information exchange in 2010. There is no central actor or clique that would dominate the exchange of information or a fragmentation of the network into different clusters. In 2011 the density even slightly increased and we also saw that the reference authority regularly exchanged information with many of the organisations. The information network in **Paris** in 2010 was also well integrated albeit on a lower level of exchange compared to Brussels – Many organisations exchanged information on homeless clients only "1 to 2 times a month". We saw however that many organisations are part of cliques where organisations exchanged information among each other. In 2011 the network shows less links among the organisations – we saw however that some links are now stronger than before which means that information exchange intensified between these organisations. It seems that

in particular the organisations that have an agreement with the SNCF and cooperated most closely with the reference authority exchange information on a more regular basis compared to 2010. In 2010, the information network in **Rome** was also clustered. There were two clusters of organisations: food distributions formed one cluster and more "professionalised" or "specialised" services formed the other. The network visualisation showed however that the exchange of information was much stronger among the specialised services. Food distributions are in most cases not regularly exchanging information ("less than once a month") among each other as well as with specialised services. This separation did not change in 2011. The missing values for Rome due to the low response to the questionnaire in 2011 however make id difficult to say whether the exchange remained stable or decreased. The data we have rather points to a decrease.

Coordinating services: In 2010 the coordination network in **Brussels** was less integrated than the information network. The visualisation reflected this weaker integration. There was a clique with four highly networked organisations, but the periphery was much weaker connected. The data for 2010 reproduces a nearly identical image, but we saw however that the reference authority is not integrated in coordination activities on a regular basis and is only weakly connected in this network.

In 2010 this network was in **Paris** denser compared to the information exchange network. There was a large cluster of organisations which formed a 4-clique. In 2011 this network appeared to be less dense and the reference authority appeared not to be connected to other organisations on a regular basis.

In 2010 the cluster structure we identified for **Rome** for the months network and the information network looked somewhat differently in the coordination network. The integration of food distributions among each other was even weaker, but their connection to the other services is more specific respectively selective. In 2011 however we have to revise this slight indication of a better integration of food distributions in the coordination network, although missing values may partly bias the structure. We saw the same cluster structure as for the other networks. The Help Center as an established organisation was however much better connected to this network compared to the other reference authorities.

Forwarding clients: In 2010 we found significant differences between local contexts with regard to the frequency of sending clients to other organisations and the density of the corresponding cooperation networks. The weak integration of the **Paris** network in this regard became immediately evident when we inspected the distribution of links – more than 70% of possible links were actually not realised in Paris. And the ones that were realised indicated a rather low frequency of sending clients to other organisations. This is completely different for **Brussels** where about 30% of organisations were actually sending clients with high regularity (1 to 2 times a week/3 times a week or more). **Rome** took a position between Brussels and Paris. In 2011 these differences are basically reproduced, Brussels is again remarkable strong connected and Paris remarkably weak. An interesting difference is also that the reference authority in Brussels was highly active in sending homeless clients to service organisations on a regular basis, whereas this seemed not to be the case in Paris. Forwarding clients to other organisations is clearly the strength of the Help Center in Rome that was again very active in 2011.

Long-term planning: In 2010 the planning network in **Brussels** was actually not very dense and more centralised than the other networks in Brussels. In 2011 the network was slightly denser. The reference authority is present at the periphery of the network and is actually quite well connected to other organisations at the periphery.

The planning network in **Paris** had a quite interesting structure in 2010 regarding exchanges on long-term planning between specific types of organisation. At the centre we saw a 4-clique consisting mainly of the coordinators. The periphery consisted of medical organisations and street work organisations. They were connected to the centre, but in most cases there was only one exchange on long-term planning within the last 12 months. In 2011 the networks looks less dense although we have to consider that there are some missing values. The reference authority actually is connected quite well to three NGOs which also were the main cooperation partners throughout HOPE in stations.

In 2010 in Rome the planning network was comparably dense. In particular some of the food distributions were not only highly connected among each

other but also with the three organisations that had a particular bridging function in the Rome support network. For 2011 we saw however a reproduction of the separation of the two different clusters, food distributions and professional support organisations. Again, the problem of having many missing values makes it difficult to assess this result.

5.3.8 Direct impacts on homeless persons?

Parallel to the discussion on coordination and service integration the project was at the beginning extremely focused on the expectable impacts of the interventions on homeless persons. It was demanded that the evaluation should cover the outcomes for homeless persons. We did so in the beginning and then had to change our focus and our methods to be able to follow the interventions and realistically assess them. This transition was by far not perfect, but at least we achieved a better matching of evaluation and intervention than we had at the beginning. And it meant to methodologically turn away from direct impacts on homeless persons, which was disappointing to some degree, but also unavoidable. We generally think that HOPE in stations had soft and fragmented effects on a diverse group of marginalised persons at the train station, not only homeless persons. There is the direct contact to the reference authority for instance in Brussels, there are security agents who reported to behave differently towards homeless persons and to be more supportive, there are some NGOs who could more efficiently support homeless persons, because they received information from the reference authority. Furthermore, HOPE in stations certainly raised the awareness on the issue of homeless persons through all its activities. All these impacts are however not strong enough to measure them quantitatively and to clearly causally relate them to the interventions. We already arrived at this conclusion when we knew which interventions would be implemented. We still think that the framework and the interventions of HOPE in stations did not really allow for measuring direct impacts on homeless persons and we therefore defend the decision to cancel the ex-post questionnaire survey for homeless persons. But again, this does not mean that HOPE in stations had no effects in this regard – it was simply not the right setting to do a strict measurement of these effects.

The qualitative interviews with NGOs also tried to cover possible indirect impacts of HOPE in stations. We asked NGOs whether the reference authority had an impact on their work with homeless persons. The assessment of the NGOs in this regard ranges between no, weak or moderate impacts. Although the way NGOs support homeless persons at the train station did not change considerably, they assessed specific elements of the interventions to be very useful for their work. In Brussels the impact is mainly consisting in the reference authority's activity of forwarding information on homeless persons at the train station, who seem to have specific needs/problems, to the social services. This information is highly appreciated, in particular because services trust in the competencies of the reference authority to identify relevant "cases". In Paris the impact is mainly based on a new emergency phone number – the so called "exclusion alert". Stakeholders can now directly contact the reference authority when they observe homeless persons or any other persons in need of support. The call will be documented, which obviously increases the information on support activities at the train station and makes follow-up activities and coordination of activities easier. The reference authority will then contact the appropriate service or stakeholder. In particular by station stakeholders this is perceived as a real innovation in the support system. In Rome this impact is primarily based on coordinated case work with different services. The Help Centre as an established organisation had the opportunity to really focus on this stronger version of service coordination that integrates the competences of many different organisations. The network analysis shows that the Help Center is among the most active organisations with regard to forwarding clients.

5.3.9 A simple solution for a complex problem?

An expectation that has to be revised is that interventions such as the implementation of a local reference authority or a training programme would be an immediate answer to the presence of homeless persons at the train station in simply reducing the number of homeless persons. Instead of providing a quick solution which can actually be only a technocratic one ignoring the many different interests of the organisations and persons involved, the

project HOPE in stations in our perspective initiated a common learning process that needs continuous support. We believe that it will probably change the way homeless persons are perceived at the train station. Already in the short implementation period of this project the interviews indicate a readiness of employees, in particular security personnel, to further develop their understanding of homeless persons and to adapt their methods accordingly. Being able to support comes along with more self-appreciation and it helps certain functional groups to change their image, develop new cooperation and finally to become a bit more satisfied with how they daily live their professional roles. But we should also remember that the large train station we observed in this evaluation are among the most frequented and most relevant public spaces in their countries. Many influences act on these public spaces and the conditions for stakeholders, NGOs and homeless persons: availability of affordable and supported accommodation, availability of public benefits and general support structures, the funding situation of NGOs, immigration and inclusion policies, etc. Changes in these factors are likely to change the situation at train station more radically than local coordination. Local coordination should not be burdened by the expectation to compensate for missing framework conditions or to find a quick solution. It can however enable stakeholders and services to adapt more flexibly to changing framework conditions and to maintain local structures in a more stable way.

6. Process report

In this chapter we will try to summarise the main challenges in the implementation of the HOPE in stations project. The evaluation was designed as impact evaluation. Nevertheless, we think that is necessary to document the process of implementation, firstly to explain changes in the evaluation design, secondly to reflect on the overall process, and thirdly to inform readers on the context of the project and the general difficulties that experimental evaluation is likely to generate in such projects.

The evaluation scheme and the tailored designs underwent significant changes since the beginning of the project. HOPE in stations is characterised by the parallel development of interventions (roles/functions, organisation, methods, target group(s), resources, strategy etc.) and evaluation tools (Indicator definition, target group definition, interview guidelines, questionnaires etc.). Therefore, the evaluation had to adapt flexibly to changes in the design and implementation of interventions and sometimes even had to anticipate elements of the interventions. What is actually a very common process in programme development and implementation (and in particular on EU-level where a consortium consisting of organisations from different countries has to find a common approach) likely becomes a problem for experimental evaluation where decisions in intervention and evaluation design are closely related and have to be made early enough in the process to prepare the ex-ante data collection before the intervention starts. Furthermore, considering homeless persons as a target group for quasi-experimental evaluation was out of several reasons a complicated issue.

The following report will focus on the changes in the evaluation design which we often perceived as a consequence of the tension between a methodologically and practically demanding evaluation method and the cross-national implementation of interventions within the very short period of 2 years. We identified three main challenges that we will address:

1. Challenge: Coordinating a cross-national intervention
2. Challenge: Designing and implementing an experimental evaluation

3. Challenge: Reaching and researching homeless persons

We decided to present these **challenges** in a table format to directly relate them to the **adaptations** they made necessary in the project as well as **recommendations** that go beyond HOPE in stations addressing other projects on social experimentation.

Challenge: Designing, implementing and coordinating a cross-national intervention
Challenge
Parallel development of intervention and evaluation:
The main challenge for coordination was the **parallel design and implementation of the intervention and the evaluation** and the overall coordination of these parallel activities. In the beginning neither the general coordination nor the research coordination was satisfying. Without a clear intervention design the evaluation team had difficulties in designing the specific elements of the evaluation and in instructing the researchers. This situation caused irritation and delays due to a lack of transparency, communication and a clear outline of future activities.
Different national and local contexts:
Compared to national social experimentation EU projects face the additional challenge of cross-national coordination. This means **centralised coordination of decentralised activities**. HOPE in stations furthermore implemented its activities at train stations, private territories characterised by certain policies, organisational structures, corporate cultures and work practices. **Different national and local contexts (continued)**
Appointing and coordinating national researchers:
The initial profile for “national researchers” restricted their task mainly to data collection. In the process of the project it became however evident that the accompanying work became more relevant and intensive: (1) Commenting on evaluation design and tools (2) Interacting with NGOs and assuring support (3) Reaching homeless persons (4) Interacting with the national HOPE in stations technical group and the reference authority (5) Elaborating reports etc.

Adaptation
Rethinking the initial intervention and evaluation concepts:
(1) The different options of implementing interventions in the local contexts had to be developed at the beginning of the project. This process took more time and resources than initially expected and delayed the start of the evaluation. We observed a **tension between local adaptations and the attempt to standardise the evaluation**. To re-adjust the evaluation design was an ongoing and difficult process which meant to (2) rethink the general approach, (3) the research tools as well as the (4) target group definitions.
Building coordination structures:
The newly established partner network first had to build regular relationships and communication routines. Coordination was complex and happened on several interrelated levels: (1) Coordinator (ANSA) coordinated implementation of interventions (2) Coordinator established the local framework to implement interventions (3) The national technical group supported and partly coordinated the implementation of interventions (4) Coordinator communicated with different research teams (Social mapping, evaluation) (5) Evaluation team coordinated national researchers (6) Reference authorities coordinated activities with the NGOs, the railway stakeholders, the coordinator and the evaluation team. In the process these **coordination activities became more and more interrelated and communication was intensified**. It took however much time to generate a direct and efficient communication with all partners across all levels of coordination.
Expanding the role of researchers:
The evaluation team had to learn (1) finding a **balance between flexibility and control** and (2) letting researchers **participate in design development** (3) **understanding their complex role** within the national contexts. Researchers had to learn to be (4) **more flexible with regard to changing work tasks** and to (5) **accept standardisation and control** to a certain degree. (6) **The researchers turned from "data collectors" to "experts of the field"**. Without their professional networks and their intensive communication with NGOs, railway stakeholders and homeless persons the project would not have succeeded in setting up the evaluation.

Recommendation
Open approach OR detailed implementation plan:
The framework of HOPE in stations made both options difficult. The project felt obliged to implement an experimental evaluation, but also had to be pragmatic with regard to the interventions. Thus, we recommend either open decision making on interventions AND evaluation or having a much stricter and more detailed project plan in the proposal and the official commitment by all involved stakeholders.
Clear communication routines and tools:
(1) **Proper communication routines and tools** have to be implemented right from the beginning of the project. It seems difficult to change the communication routine during the project. In HOPE in stations the introduction of the online communication platform was delayed due to technical issues and thus was never really adopted as the primary communication tool. (2) **Setting up different functional groups** proved to be useful and has to be balanced with cross-cutting coordination that brings together the different groups. (3) **The evaluation team also needs direct communication paths to the persons who implement interventions** and who are partly responsible for implementing certain elements of the evaluation (distributing and collecting questionnaires, etc.). **Explicating and discussing local differences:** In a project such as HOPE in stations the different stakeholders have their own ideas and expectations on the process and effects of an EU project. (1) These initial ideas and expectations should be **clearly formulated and discussed** at the beginning of the project. (2) Partners have to be aware that the **local contexts all have their specific resources and restrictions**. These resources and restrictions have to be taken into account when designing intervention and evaluation.
Different framework for national researchers:
There are several elements which could be improved: (1) **More flexible appointment of researchers** on an hour/week basis and not on work task basis (2) **Early appointment and participation in evaluation design** (3) **Small research teams** (at least two persons) instead of a single person.

Challenge: Designing, implementing and coordinating an experimental evaluation
Challenge
Funding:
Quasi-experimental evaluations are generally applied for interventions that receive strong institutional and financial support. The interventions of HOPE in stations were exclusively funded by the private partners (railway companies). Co-financing is a benefit in public-private partnerships, but only relying on co-financing for interventions is problematic in terms of assuring a proper design and scale of the intervention and exercising control on the design and implementation of the intervention and the evaluation.
Commitment and control:
(1) In most quasi-experimental evaluations of social programmes for homeless persons organisations as well as homeless persons are **directly or indirectly funded and contractually obliged to participate in the evaluation**. This was not the case in HOPE in stations where we relied on the good-will of individual persons and organisations. (2) The attempt to control contexts is particularly difficult in cross-national projects without direct funding of interventions. The coordination unit is not locally present and is not familiar with the specific contexts (here: the social service support network, the internal organisation of railway companies etc.). (3) The lack of commitment and control became evident in the cooperation with NGOs but also with railway companies – Generally, our researchers had great difficulties in collecting data.
Missing policy integration:
HOPE in stations was not attached to any social programme supported by public authorities. This implied that the interventions of HOPE in stations which had to be designed and implemented within one year were likely to lack the necessary scale for experimental evaluation.

Adaptation
Negotiating and finding a common approach:
HOPE in stations had to be pragmatic in finding a common intervention that would: (1) fit within the funding envelope (2) have the support of railway station managers (3) be possible to implement within 2 years (4) would show some measurable effects (5) would allow for evaluation. Criteria 1,2,3 had to be balanced with 5,6 – From our perspective HOPE in stations achieved to set up useful and effective interventions, which however were not ideal for experimental evaluation.
Building trustful relationships:
To increase commitment and to ensure control without being well established institutionally in the national contexts is difficult and relies on "trust". HOPE in stations in our view achieved finally to create these trustful relationships. It took however much time to arrive at this point.
Pooling resources; common framework, re-specification of target groups:
HOPE in stations attempted to bundle resources and to find a common approach without standardising every element. Training programme and reference authorities were designed in similar ways, although significant differences appeared in practice. Training programme participants and social service organisations became the primary target group of the interventions.
Recommendation
Direct funding of interventions:
Although it may be in many cases very difficult for EU level activities to intervene in national social policies (by directly funding social programmes) this would – given the appropriate structures exist to coordinate such a cooperation between EU and national/regional authorities – generate a much better framework for social experimentation.
Specifying the level of control:
The level of "control" that is necessary for setting up and implementing an experimental evaluation has to be specified and negotiated at an early stage of the programme. **Engaging more in generating commitment:** HOPE in stations probably failed to generate high commitment on the side of NGOs right from the start. Here again, the lack of direct funding and immediate benefits for NGOs may have been an important factor. Only when HOPE in stations started to implement its interventions, NGOs began to appreciate these activities, whereas the commitment to the evaluation remained relatively low.

Experimental evaluation for existing policy programmes:

Although it would have been very difficult to identify or even to initiate an appropriate programme that the evaluation could have followed in the context of HOPE in stations, such an approach would be more appropriate for experimental evaluation.

Challenge: Reaching and researching homeless persons

Challenge

Appropriateness of data collection tools:

Homeless persons are a sensitive target group for research activities in many ways:

(1) Vulnerability and ethics: Being excluded from many aspects of social life makes homeless persons particularly vulnerable, which has to be reflected ethically by social scientists.

(2) Reachability: Homeless persons are difficult to reach and re-contact which causes problems for data collection.

(3) Health problems: Many homeless persons suffer from health and/or addiction problems. This makes it more difficult to approach them properly and is also likely to have negative effects on the reliability of collected data.

(4) Different migration backgrounds: The number of migrants is rising among homeless persons in many countries. This causes language problems and sometimes implies the difficulty to reach persons without legal status.

(5) Privacy and "tracking": Experimental evaluation is not fully anonymous, due to the need for follow-up data collection. This means that private information on participants is connected to their questionnaires responses and will be used to contact them again.

All these issues have implications for the approach, the research tools, the indicators etc. Although many of these issues were known before (ZSI even conducted expert interviews with professionals in the homeless field before designing the evaluation), they appeared in different contexts and caused problems not only for data collection but also in the relationship between the evaluation team and the researchers.
Researchers spoke out against the use of a standardised questionnaire – which was however seen a main tool for comparing results between sites and between points in time by the evaluation team.

Adaptation

Shift from quantitative to qualitative tools:

The adaptation to these three challenges resulted in rethinking the evaluation design with regard to homeless persons. This was the most difficult adaptation because it meant to change a key element of the evaluation. The arguments however to change the approach became too strong:

(1) Interventions (reference authority, training programme) were not primarily targeted at homeless persons. Instead they targeted NGOs and stakeholders as well as employees participating in the training programme

(2) We only expected rather weak and indirect impacts on homeless persons

(3) Quantitative indicators did not seem appropriate to measure these indirect impacts

(4) The character of the interventions (public space, no social programme, and no strict target group definition) did not meet the prerequisites for a strict experimental evaluation.

(5) Researchers stressed the practical impossibility (judging from their experience with homeless persons) to collect valid contact information for re-contacting the respondents again.

(6) Researchers needed more time to reach homeless persons than expected and had difficulties in reaching the planned number of respondents.

These arguments led to the decision not to repeat the survey on homeless persons as planned in 2011, and instead to focus primarily on the other target groups while including focus groups with homeless persons in the overall design.

Recommendation

Matching of intervention, target group(s) and indicators:

(1) What sounds obvious for experimental evaluation is very difficult to achieve in the framework of EU projects. The proposal that is usually a general outline of activities would actually have to be a detailed implementation plan to allow for planning and re-adjusting the evaluation in-time. Or projects should include an open orientation phase where intervention and evaluation are re-adjusted.

(2) Being fully aware of the difficulty of reaching homeless persons, of maintaining an ethically sound approach, of adapting research tools to the individual and contextual conditions characteristic for homeless persons.

(3) Privacy issues have to be clarified as early as possible. Ideally, this should be done in cooperation with the responsible national authorities, which is however very difficult for a cross-national project and may lead to delays in the process.

7. Outlook

This report provided comprehensive information on the two interventions implemented by HOPE in stations: the reference authority as a new intermediary and coordination function at the train station, and the training programme for railway employees. The corresponding assessment of the evaluation have been described and summarised in chapters 4.5 and 5.3. Although not all of the initial expectations have been met, we come to the conclusion that the project developed a more realistic concept of the reference authority than it had at the beginning and that this more specified concept showed positive outcomes in particular on the local interaction between railway station stakeholders and social service organisations. The reference authority and the training programme complemented each other as interventions and combined improved coordination with awareness raising and the introduction of procedures that allow a more effective and also a more visible and better documented support of homeless persons at the train station. HOPE in stations also initiated a new dialogue on the general issue of homeless persons at train stations that again emphasised the need for better local coordination and intermediation, but also showed that there is the possibility of a shared understanding and mutual support for railway stakeholders and social service organisation which has to be further developed leading to institutionalised long-term structures. This however also means to observe the general societal and political conditions for improving the situation at train stations for stakeholders, NGOs and of course homeless persons. There are factors such as irregular funding of NGOs, lack of accommodation, reduction of public benefits, social and integration policies, etc. that are likely to have much more impact on the situation at train stations than local coordination. A strong cooperation between large private companies such as railway companies and NGOs may be able to send a signal to political representatives that there are efficient forms of coordination, cooperation and support that need to be maintained.

The outlook that we received from the railway companies' management confirms our impression that the reference authorities proved their usefulness.

In the following we summarised the railway companies' own assessment of the reference authority and the plans for continuing respectively extending the model.

7.1 Brussels

The SNCB Holding intends to keep the function of the reference authority after the end of the project. SNCB found that the work of the referent in the context of the missions assigned to him contributed to a clear improvement of living's comfort and safety in the station:

- Less tension between homeless people and station staff
- Better understanding of the rules of the station by the homeless people
- Station staff shows better understanding of the experience of homeless people
- Increased the well-being at work for the staff station
- Increased collaboration between the company and the social support sector
- Emergence of new proposals for solidarity projects beneficial for the company

The two strong points SNCB emphasised for the way the reference authority was implemented in Brussels are the field work, which is seen to be very important to create links with different types of stakeholders and the coordination work which allows stakeholders to be continuously informed of the different problems in the stations regarding homeless people. These two dimensions existed before the function of reference authority, but they were not combined in the hands of one person working on two objectives: the interests of the company and improving the combination of the different devices of support for homeless people.

SNCB plans to attribute additional missions to the reference authority in the future without having an detailed outline yet. SNCB wants to expand the function of the reference authority to other stations across the country and

especially in the regions. The objective is to have one reference authority for each region: one in Brussels, one in Flanders and one in Wallonia.

7.2 Paris

In Paris, the mission of reference authority will be continued after December 2011. Currently, the reference authority is in charge of the sector Paris Nord, Paris Est and Magenta. The reference authority is reported to be known to all the railway station stakeholders now and to have become the primary contact for SNCF staff, but also associations, institutions, neighborhood committees, traders and police. Further actions to improve the management of wandering and homeless people in the station are still developing. The work done in collaboration with stakeholders has been considered beneficial by SNCF. The function will not only be maintained, but well also be extended to the St. Lazare station in Paris in 2012. Furthermore, a reference authority for the south station is currently being recruited to lead the management of wandering people at the railway stations of Paris Lyon, Paris Bercy, Paris Austerlitz at first. Paris Montparnasse may also become part of the coordination.

Besides their role as facilitators of the management of wandering people in the station, the reference authorities will be responsible for initiating new collaborations in order to meet the needs identified on the northern and southern premises. They will be responsible for promoting the formation of "wandering" from the various internal and external stakeholders, and lead, with support from the pole to the societal development of new tools and actions to further improve support while meeting our service commitments towards our customers.

7.3 Rome

Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane is planning to keep the reference authority in Rome (appointing Europe Consulting), and to implement it in all the other railway stations in which a Help Center is active. Following the same model put into practice in Roma Termini, Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane will appoint third sector organisations as reference authorities which are currently running the Help Centers. Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane will also test new forms

of the reference authority in minor railway stations, where a more limited impact of homelessness does not require the implementation of a Help Center.

In this phase, no major modification in the Reference Authority structure and tasks is envisaged: Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane prefers to support the reference authority in consolidating its position among the station stakeholders, namely the various branches of Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane, and to extend the model as it has been developed in the project's framework. Yet, with reference to the "Help Center" model, Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane currently discusses whether a fundraising function should also be adopted by the Help Centers in order to explore funding opportunities to support social actions in railway stations.