

Thank you very much Mr. Chair,

In Italy in 1996, a popular mobilization promoted by "Libera" Association led by Don Luigi Ciotti - with the collection of about one million signatures - enabled the approval of the law which provides for the priority use of confiscated assets for social purposes.

The National Agency for the administration and destination of assets seized and confiscated from organized crime, which I have been managing for almost 2 years, was born in 2010, with an organization that has grown from the original 30 recruited employees to the current 210 staff units which this year will reach over 300 units. Besides, the Agency avails itself of about 800 external experts called "coadiutori".

There are 5 operational branches: Rome, Milan, Naples, Reggio Calabria and Palermo.

Currently we have around 20,000 real estate properties under management awaiting destination and around 3,000 companies.

Therefore, the confiscated asset assumes a formidable symbolic value: that of the victory of the State and the revenge of the community.

The criminal, in fact, not only loses the property permanently, but also suffers the shame of seeing it used by institutions and non-profit associations for social purposes.

The affront is even stronger because in a visible way it testifies to the loss of the intimidating power exercised up to that moment.

Therefore, the meaning exceeds the value of the use of the asset - although absolutely relevant - and it acquires an even stronger one: that of the testimony of the reliability of the institutions.

This is even more evident in the management of companies subjected to seizure and confiscation.

In fact, the use of manpower has always been the basis of the power of criminal organizations, creating a formidable system of subjection.

Hence, the gamble of the State to demonstrate its efficiency by pursuing the priority goal of safeguarding jobs, especially in those territories such as those in the Southern Italy where the unemployment rate is still very high.

The path to destination is certainly complex and full of obstacles.

Assets are often damaged, even by the criminal himself; the reception capacity of the territory is sometimes difficult, especially in small communities; companies suffer the so-called legality shock, in the transition from a criminal economy to a market economy.

For this purpose, the Recovery Fund provides 300 million euros for the enhancement of confiscated assets assigned to local authorities, for 200 projects already submitted and under evaluation.

These funds are supplemented by other EU financial resources aimed at the Southern regions, as well as specific allocations from the Italian regions.

The fruits of the destinations are absolutely evident: about 20,000 confiscated real estate assets were assigned and over 16,000 of these were given to 1200 Italian municipalities, with 75 percent being used for social purposes.

Some of these properties are managed directly by local authorities, but most of them have been allocated by them to non-profit associations for social use such as: the reception of women victims of violence, the support for disabled young people, the housing for people in need, family homes, socio-recreational activities and cultural interest, and social farming activities.

Management by non-profit associations - about 1,000 at a national level – takes on an additional symbolic meaning: that of social use in a direct way by the local community.

The large presence of young people in these associations testifies to a progressive detachment from Mafia and illegality culture and a new awareness of the affirmation of the culture of legality and trust in institutions.

In addition to an ordinary destination activity, the Agency supports institutions in emergency situations.

Recently, on behalf of the Minister of Home Affairs, Luciana Lamorgese, the Agency allocated 234 real estate properties under management for the reception of refugees from Ukraine, to which were added, for the same purpose, additional 400 confiscated assets already assigned to local authorities.

Besides, during the first period of Covid emergency, 200 real estate assets were identified for temporary use - initiative called "Spaces to re-start" - in order to meet the needs for new facilities necessary to ensure social distancing.

Nevertheless, even the use by State institutions has a great symbolic value: for example, the use of a criminal's home as a territorial garrison of the Police Forces or as a building serving Justice.

It is clear that there is still a lot to do, especially to overcome the strong inhomogeneity present at the international level in the system of

management and destination of confiscated assets, which already leads to coordination difficulties.

But, I believe that the great interest we are registering on the Italian experience from many countries all over the world can provide a strong basis for a common analysis and discussion in the perspective of an increasingly unified vision.

This project, 30 years after the Mafia massacres in Capaci and Via d'Amelio in which the magistrates Giovanni Falcone, his wife Francesca Morvillo, Paolo Borsellino and the men and women of their escort lost their lives, could represent the best tribute to their memory.