



**MINISTERO DEL LAVORO, DELLA
SALUTE E DELLE POLITICHE SOCIALI**

ISFOL

**ISTITUTO PER LO SVILUPPO DELLA
FORMAZIONE PROFESSIONALE
DEI LAVORATORI**

**REPORTING ON NATIONAL FOLLOW-UP
TO THE UNECE REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY (RIS)
OF THE MADRID INTERNATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION ON AGEING
(MIPAA)**

November 2008

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	2
General information	5
1. Situation, Activities and Priorities Related to Ageing	6
1.1. National ageing situation – Demographic indicators	6
1.2. National ageing situation – Social and economic indicators	11
1.3. Description of the social and political situation	13
1.4. Instrumental assessment	15
1.5. Identification of areas for in-depth evaluation	17
2. Methodology of In-Depth Evaluation of Identified Priorities	18
3. National Capacities for Follow-up to MIPAA/RIS	18
4. Review and Appraisal by Subject Area	19
4.1. Mainstreaming ageing	19
4.2. Integration and participation of older persons	20
4.3. Promotion of equitable and sustainable economic growth in response to population ageing	24
4.4. Adjustment of social protection systems in response to demographic changes and their social and economic consequences	29
4.5. Enabling labour markets to respond to the economic and social consequences of population ageing	38
4.6. Promotion of lifelong learning and adaptation of the educational system in order to meet the changing economic, social and demographic conditions	46
4.7. Striving to ensure quality of life at all ages and maintain independent living including health and well-being	49
4.8. Mainstreaming a gender approach in an ageing society to support families that provide care for older persons and promote intergenerational and intra-generational solidarity among their members	53
4.9. Support for families that provide care for older persons and promote intergenerational and intra-generational solidarity among their members	54
4.10. Promotion of the implementation and the follow-up of the Regional Implementation Strategy through regional cooperation	55

ABSTRACT

The institutional frame of reference within which the contents of this report are situated is the process of reallocation of competences, between the central State and regional and local Administrations, that was set in motion with the 2001 constitutional reform¹. According to this reform, legislative authority is exercised by the State and the Regions in the respect of the Constitution, and of the obligations deriving from EU regulations and international obligations. As far as the issues covered by this report are concerned, the central government maintains exclusive responsibility in tax legislation, general legislation regarding education and social security and in the definition of *Essential Service Levels* (ESLs) related to civil and social rights. The central administration also retains control of monitoring, association and exchange of information, strategic evaluation and consulting, all of which are strictly linked to the objectives of equal treatment determined by the ESLs, to the related financial and substitutive powers foreseen by the new distribution of institutional competences.

In compliance with the constitutional principles of loyal cooperation, subsidiarity and “faithful mutual aid among public bodies”, the government – in partnership with the Regions – has recently commenced the process of definition of the ESLs, which is part of a general strategy to deal with the full spectrum of ageing issues in a more coherent manner. This ageing strategy, as well as the welfare reform shaped in the Green Paper of July 2008, will be defined by a wide-ranging consultation process involving all relevant institutions and social components (local bodies, social partners, trade unions, non-profit organisations, citizen committees, etc.), in order to point the main priorities that will be subjected to continuous verification and update.

In this context, the report provides updated information on national ageing policies in Italy.

Between 2002 and 2008, Italy’s priorities for action were the *reorganisation of its social protection systems in response to demographic changes* (Commitment 4) and the *reform of the labour market in response to the economic and social consequences of ageing* (Commitment 5). In relation to the former, the current economic context, in Italy as elsewhere, has led to the introduction of elements of flexibility in the pension system, both in order to offer individual workers margins of choice and to address the requirements of financial adequacy and sustainability. This has resulted, during the course of the current year, in the further implementation of a complex reform process, which began in the mid-1990s and whose application is still constantly monitored. In the same context, the financial commitment to ensure the provision of appropriate tools for the support of disabled persons’ income – many of whom are in the over 65 age group – has been reasserted.

With reference to the labour market, the reforms implemented from the mid-1990s onwards, have been mainly aimed at raising the levels of participation, in line with the European employment strategy. Older workers employment rates (55-64 years) have consistently grown in Italy since 2002, increasing from 28.9% to 33.8% in 2007. However, this increase has been of small effect in closing the gap with the European Union as a whole. In this age group, as in others, the employment growth entirely corresponds to the number of newly-employed women; this fact demonstrates the effectiveness of the gender-based measures that have been introduced, although the under-representation of women is considerable in this context.

The priorities aimed at supporting income and participation in the labour market have been paired over recent years by substantial efforts directed towards the *construction of a social security and health services system* that is truly universal and able to meet the needs of the ageing population (Commitments 7 and 9). On the health front, regional policies have either been geared directly towards the aged as a “vulnerable” population group or towards the supply of support to households which include aged people. The objective has been to avoid, as far as possible, the institutionalisation of the aged, rebalancing the distribution of resources between hospital-based and

¹ Reform of Title V of the Constitution, Constitutional Law No. 3, 18 October 2001.

non-hospital-based assistance and promoting the role of domestic support, which (when necessary) can be complemented by health services at home. Numerous campaigns for the prevention of distress and illness (e.g. campaigns against smoking and climate-based illnesses or campaigns promoting flu vaccinations and the prevention of metabolic or cardiovascular illnesses) have rendered the aged a priority target, aged who have also been given greater access to preventive health check ups.

At the same time, the reforms of the social security system (supported by the ongoing financial commitment of the central government), have mainly concentrated on quality of life issues, and on the prevention, reduction and elimination of disability and personal/family distress, thereby affirming a concept of social intervention which views citizens as active subjects – in the sense that each citizen is entitled to a set of rights – towards whom interventions aimed at the removal of situations of psycho/social distress and marginalisation should be focused. The integrated involvement of a variety of public, private and non-profit stakeholders in the delivery of social services is part of a multi-dimensional approach to the issue of public well-being – one which takes a range of sectors of intervention (health, first and foremost, but also training, town planning, homes, transport, culture, etc.) into account and that is able to effectively respond to the needs expressed by the aged.

Over the years, the *promotion of life-long learning* (Commitment 6) has also been one of the cornerstones of the policies which are intended to bolster the reform of the labour market. In terms of the participation of adults in education and training, Italy has focused on reducing the lag with respect to the objectives of the European strategy for 2010, taking specific action on full-time education and life-long learning. In example, full-time education initiatives for adults have included: the regional training package; the activities of the Local Life-Long Learning Centres for adult education; the academic university package; the initiatives of the so-called “Popular Universities” and “Universities for the Third Age”. In terms of employment, public support for life-long learning is being pursued on the basis of the legislation launched in the 1990s (Law no. 236, 1993), paired by Joint Inter-professional Funds, that are promoted by the social partners due to legal requirements.

In the sphere of the national policy mix outlined above, the gender-based approach has been implemented essentially through: a) the fight against discrimination and the promotion of equal opportunities for both sexes; and b) financial support to promote participation in the labour market and the balancing between work and family life.

In the first case, the complex set of existing provisions has been recently systematized through the introduction of the Code of Equal Opportunities². The Code contains eleven laws and fifty-nine articles which aim at promoting measures suitable for “the eradication of all distinctions, exclusions or limitations based on gender which compromise or impede (whether deliberately or inadvertently) the recognition, entitlement or exercise of human rights and of fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural and civil field”. In the second case, measures, which are aimed at the limitation of the negative effects of discontinuous employment in terms of social security, have been introduced, as measures relating to the “flexibilisation” (such as allowing part-time work) of certain institutes, through a more effective conciliation of working hours arrangements. Finally, as far as schools and training are concerned, the general instructions issued in the ministerial programmes on gender-based issues are worth highlighting, and, most importantly, the implementation of Measure 7 – “Promotion of scholastic and training choices targeted at improving the access and the participation of women in the labour market” – contained in the national Operational Programme named “The School for Development”, funded in the sphere of the European Social Fund programming for 2000-2006 period.

The rather slow growth of the national economy has certainly contributed to the reduction of the amount of funds earmarked by government for the *promotion of forms of equitable and sustainable growth that are able to respond to the challenges of an ageing population* (Commitment 3). In this regard, the fact that the ESLs definition process has not been completed yet, has made it impossible

² Legislative Decree No. 198, 2006.

to extend the (currently equivocal) results of the experimentation on minimum revenue, which is intended as a potential general national instrument for the struggle against poverty and social exclusion. In the meantime, however, a large number of other experimentations have been carried out by the authorities of Autonomous Regions and Provinces in relation to the support of income. The recent (July 2008) Green Paper on welfare issued by the Italian Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies places the main issues of active ageing at the centre of public attention and of national debate.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Country: Italy

Report authors:

Paola Andreani, Antonella Attanasio, M. Luisa Aversa, Valentina Cardinali, Pietro Checcucci, Francesco Chiurco, Paola Ferri, Diana Gilli, Giovanna Indiretto, Sante Marchetti, M. Laura Marini, Manuel Marocco, Camilla Micheletta, Maurizio Mosca, Paola Nicoletti, Elena Murtas, Davide Premutico, Guadalupe Riccio, Pierluigi Richini, Valeria Scalmato and Giuliana Scarpetti.

English review:

Christopher Milton Paul

Contacts:

Diana Gilli, Director, “Labour Systems Research Area”, ISFOL, Rome
Tel: +39 06 44590 675 / 44590 683 / d.gilli@isfol.it

Antonella Attanasio, Director “Support Structure for ESF Transnational Co-operation”
Tel: +39 06 44590 876 / a.attanasio@isfol.it

Focal point:

Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies – ISFOL, Istituto per la Formazione professionale dei lavoratori (Institute for the Vocational Training of Workers), Via Morgagni 33, 00161 Rome, Italy. Tel: +39 06 445901

Status of the national strategy on ageing:

Currently being defined

1. Situation, Activities and Priorities on Ageing

1.1. National ageing situation – Demographic indicators

On the basis of the data issued by the Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT), Italy's demographic situation can be described in light of the main indicators of reference³.

On the 31st of December 2007 the Italian overall population was of 59,619,290, while the figure in the same date of the year 2006 was of 59,131,287 inhabitants. The increase compared to the previous year – 488,003 (0.8%) – was purely caused by immigration⁴. The women were 30,669,543 and the men 28,949,747, meaning that there were 1,719,796 more women than men.

Considering future projections, until the year 2050 (Table 1), it is clear that the population is destined to constantly increase at least until the year 2045, and will subsequently begin to decline⁵.

Table 1 – Population size by gender. 1995 - 2050 (a.v.)

Year	Men	Women	Total
1995	27,560,294	29,283,903	56,844,197
2000	27,576,326	29,384,366	56,960,692
2005	28,526,888	30,224,823	58,751,711
2010	29,242,194	30,981,919	60,224,114
2015	29,714,085	31,423,931	61,138,016
2020	30,017,521	31,616,893	61,634,414
2025	30,225,235	31,713,060	61,938,295
2030	30,369,058	31,759,935	62,128,993
2035	30,463,493	31,772,319	62,235,812
2040	30,501,238	31,739,078	62,240,316
2045	30,457,862	31,632,585	62,090,447
2050	30,302,641	31,413,876	61,716,517

Source: ISFOL, based on ISTAT data

The male and female components tangentially maintain their respective proportions over time. The structure of the population by age group reflects the ageing dynamics of society, which have been surveyed some time ago (Figure 1)⁶.

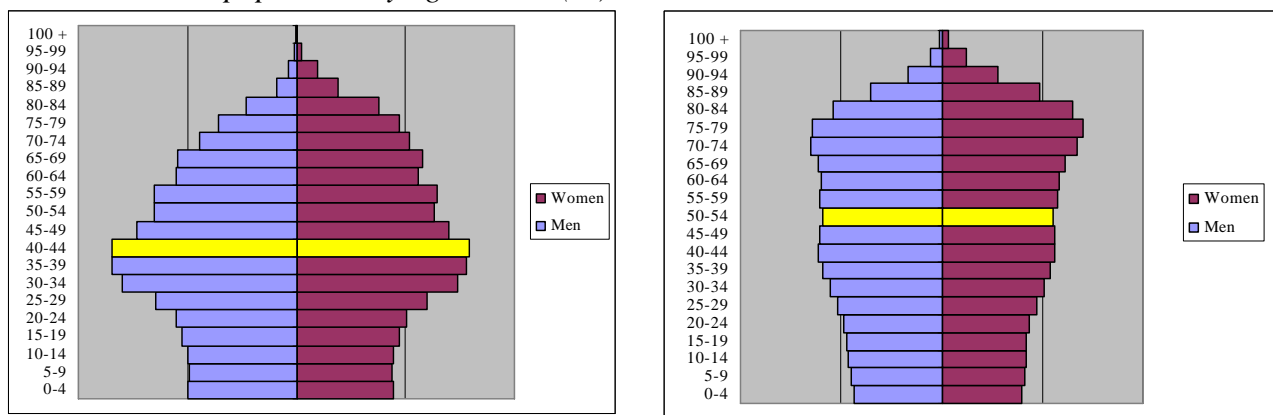
³ The demographic indicators used mainly refer to the list prepared in the sphere of the MA.IMI project, drafted by the European Centre in Vienna in order to assist national governments and focal points in monitoring the MIPAA's Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS).

⁴ ISTAT, *Bilancio demografico nazionale. Anno 2007 (Demographic National Balance. 2007)*, Press Release, 3 July 2008.

⁵ ISTAT, *Previsioni demografiche. 1° gennaio 2007 – 1° gennaio 2051 (Demographic Forecast. 1 January 2007 – 1 January 2051)*, Information sheet, 19 June 2008. The forecasts are broken down into three different scenarios. With the first of these scenarios – the central one, which is that to which the data presented here refers to – a set of “realistic” estimates is provided, based on recent demographic trends in fertility, life expectancy and migratory phenomena. The data for 1995 and 2000 refers to the inter-census reconstruction of the demographic balance for the years 1992 – 2001 as shown on the ISTAT site; the data for 2005 refers to the demographic balance and resident population per gender at 31 December, which is also available on the ISTAT site.

⁶ ISTAT, *Previsioni demografiche. 1° gennaio 2007 – 1° gennaio 2051 (Demographic Forecast. 1 January 2007 – 1 January 2051)*, op. cit.

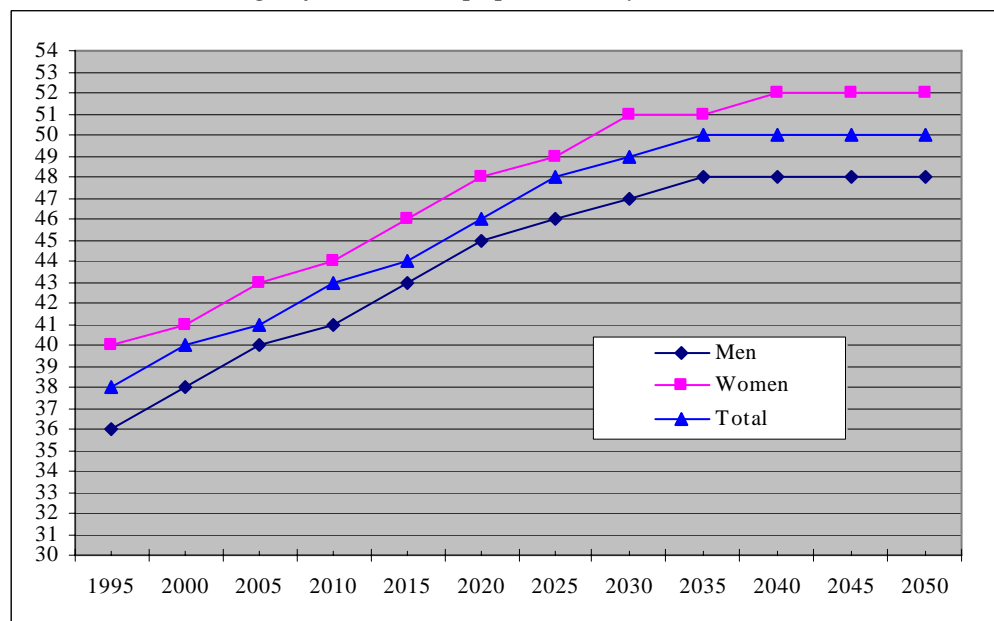
Chart 1 – Italian population by age and sex(%). Years 2007 and 2050



Source: ISFOL, based on ISTAT data

The median age, highlighted in the graph in correspondence of the 40-44 group, corresponds with 42 years of age for the population as a whole. The median age for women is 43 years, whereas for men it is 40. Figure 2 shows the evolutionary dynamics for the same variable, calculated on the basis of the available demographic forecasts⁷.

Chart 2 – Median age of the Italian population by sex. 1995 – 2050.



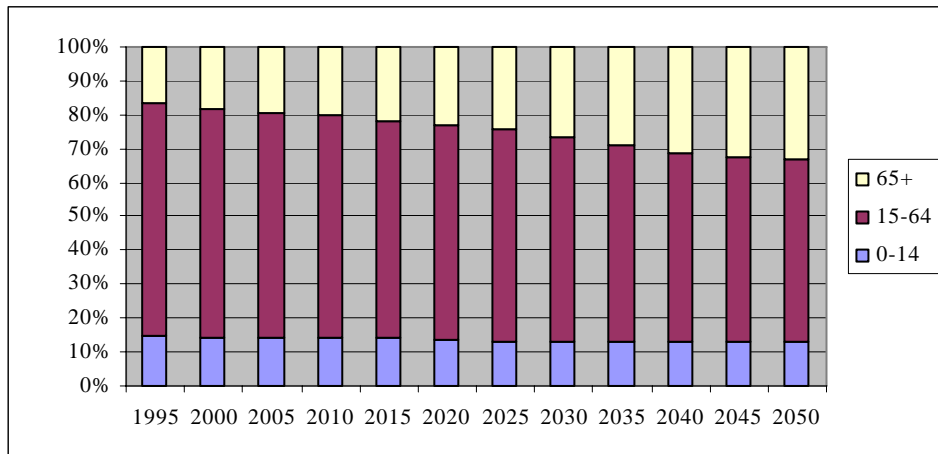
Source: ISFOL, based on ISTAT data

The natural population growth rate for 2007 was of negative sign, equal to -0.1 per thousand. The total population growth rate, however, as already stated, was positive due to the contribution of the migrations from abroad was fixed at 8,2 per thousand.

⁷ Ibid.

The current structure of the population and the modalities of its probable evolution in the mid and long term obviously imply increasing demographic dependency ratios. Figure 3 shows the variations in the percentage share of the aggregate age group⁸.

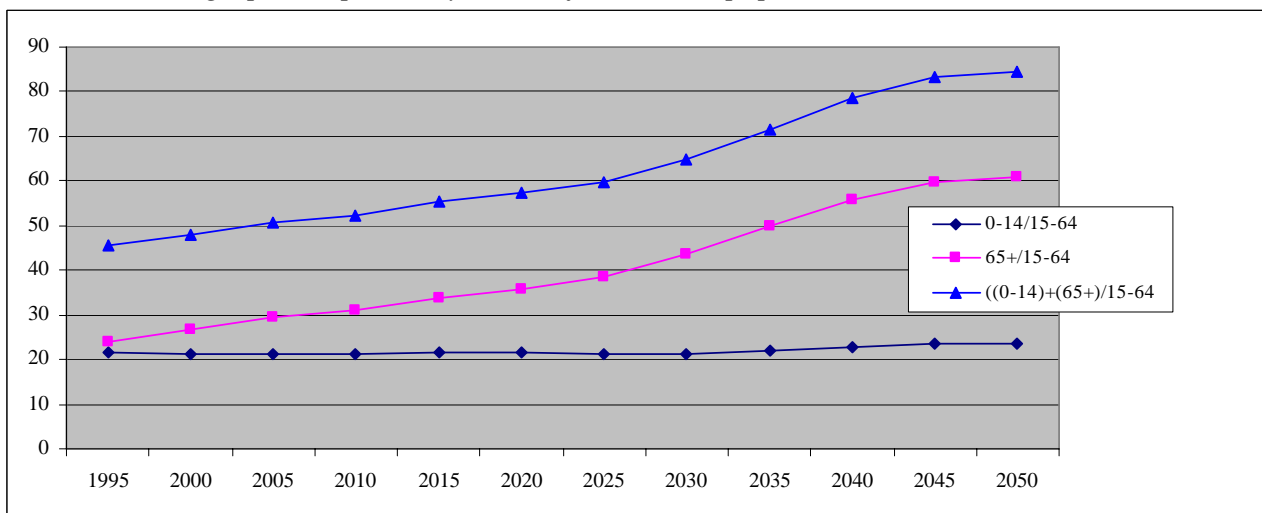
Chart 3 – Italian population by age groups (%). 1995 - 2050



Source: ISFOL, based on ISTAT data

The relative stability over time of the 0-14 aggregate and the progressive contraction of the 15-64 age group are reflected in an increase of the dependency ratios (Figure 4)⁹.

Chart 4 – Demographic dependency ratios of the Italian population. 1995 – 2050.



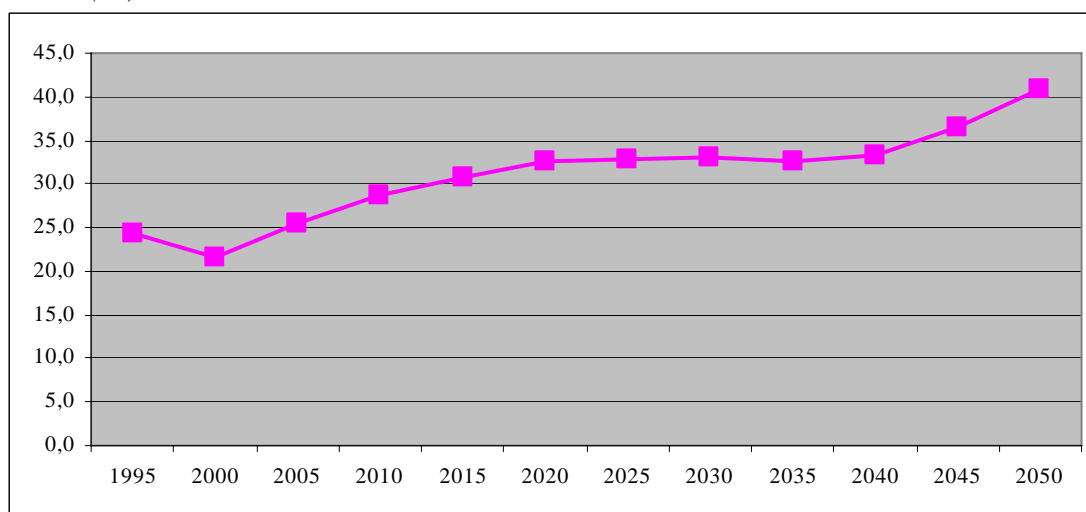
Source: ISFOL, based on ISTAT data

In this regard, the relative stability of the youngest aggregate's dependency is noteworthy, against the considerable increase in the pressure exercised on the working-age population by people over 65 group and, proportionately, by the two groups considered as a whole. Further conclusions can be formulated by considering the increasing weight of the very old (80+) group on the overall over 65 population (Figure 5)¹⁰.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

Chart 5 – Ageing of the aged. Share of the very old (80+) in the total elder population (65+). 1995 - 2050 (%)



Source: ISFOL, based on ISTAT data

As can be seen, the demographic hypotheses underpinning the projections formulated by ISTAT for 2050 prefigure a more than 6% increase in the weight of people over 80 on the total number of the aged in 2030, going from 26.6% to 33.2%. This trend towards increase is destined to accentuate starting from 2040, and will lead the rate of people over 80 to 41% by 2050 – after an increase during the considered period equal to and above 12 points.

In 2007, 325,681 individuals, 0.5% of the overall population, lived in 28,370 institutional households (such as barracks, care homes, prisons, monasteries, etc.)¹¹. According to the 2001 Census data, 9.4% of the population lived in single-person households. As seen in Table 2, the percentage of the population in this condition increases significantly in the higher age groups, falling close to one half of the population once the over 85 threshold is surpassed.

Table 2 – Italian population living in single-person households (%). Year 2001

below 25	0.7
25 - 34	6.9
35 - 44	7
45 - 54	6.8
55 - 64	9.9
65 - 74	19.4
75 - 84	34.1
85+	43.5
Total	9.4

Source: ISFOL, based on ISTAT data

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ ISTAT, *Bilancio demografico nazionale. Anno 2007 (Demographic National Balance. 2007)*, op. cit.

In Italy, longevity emerges as one of the factors which mostly influence the population's ageing trend¹². The estimate for life expectancy at birth in fact is of 78,6 years for men, while it goes over 84 for women (84,1). Compared to 2002, the increase was of 1,1 years for women and of 1,5 years for men. The interval which separates the two sexes is decreasing, considering that life expectancy at 65 years of age is now 17,9 years for men and 21,7 years for women.

Table 3 - Healthy life expectancy by age and sex. 1999-2000 and 2004-2005¹³

	Age				
	0	15	45	65	75
	Men				
2004-2005	54.3	40.54	15.6	4.68	2.07
1999-2000	50	36.7	13	3.6	1.6
	Women				
2004-2005	51.47	37.37	13.31	4.01	1.86
1999-2000	46.6	33	10.9	3.2	1.5

Source: ISFOL, based on ISTAT data

There are 2.6 million people with disabilities in Italy¹⁴. There are 2 million aged people with disabilities, although disability is significantly in decline (4.7%) compared to 10 years ago (5.7%) even amongst the aged population (18.8% against 21.7%: the total percentage refers to the population aged 6 and over; the percentage for the aged refers to the population aged 65 and over). Disability is more common among women (6.1%) than among men (3.3%). A total of 1.13 million people (2.1%) are confined in their homes, with the percentage among the aged for this indicator standing at 8.7%. 3% of the population aged 6 and over have trouble coping with their own basic personal care.

¹² ISTAT, *Indicatori demografici 2007 (Demographic indicators 2007)*, Information sheet, 7 February 2008.

¹³ Health expectancy at age x: mean number of years people reaching age x expected to live in good health. People in good health were those who declared to be "good" or "very good" during the Istat survey on "Health status and use of health services".

¹⁴ ISTAT, *Condizioni di salute, fattori di rischio e ricorso ai servizi sanitari. 2005. (Health conditions, risk factors and use of health services. 2005)*, Press release, 2 March 2007. A person is defined as disabled when the individual, regardless of temporary limitations, declares himself or herself as facing the maximum level of difficulty in at least one of the functions surveyed by each question, taking due account of the use of aids (prostheses, sticks, glasses, etc.). Four types of disability have been defined on the basis of the compromised type of functional autonomy: confinement; movement difficulties; day-to-day living difficulties; communication difficulties. "Confinement" is intended as having no other alternative but to remain in bed, in a chair or at home for physical or psychological reasons; those defined as "confined" answer only to the questions on motor activities which are compatible with the related type of confinement. "Movement difficulties" are intended as problems in walking – those who have movement difficulties can only take a few steps before needing to pause – they are unable to climb or descend flights of stairs on their own without stopping and cannot bend to pick things up from the floor. "Day-to-day living difficulties" are intended as the total absence of autonomy in carrying out essential daily tasks and personal care, such as getting into bed, sitting down, dressing, washing, bathing, showering or cutting/eating food alone. "Communication difficulties include hearing problems (not being able to follow a TV programme, even with the volume turned up and a hearing aid turned on), sight problems (not recognising a friend from a metre away) and speech problems (being unable to speak without difficulty). The set of requirements used to define the disability includes the ADL (*Activities of Daily Living*) scale, which was designed to evaluate the level of autonomy in carrying out day-to-day living activities. It is important to underline that the ADL scale is not suitable for use on children up to and including the age of 5.

10.3% of households have at least one member who suffers from disability problems. 35.4% of these households are composed of disabled people who live alone. In 6.4% of households, all members suffer from disabilities.

1.2. National ageing situation - Social and economic indicators

In 2005¹⁵, the mean income for households with a single wage earner was 14,231 Euros, whereas the average for households with three or more wage earners was 42,299 Euros. If the main source of income was a pension or other type of State benefit, the mean net income was 16,008 Euros (1,334 Euros per month).

Lone elders have a lower level of net income. Considering the median income, it is clear that 50% of them have earned less than 11.034 Euros, which is equal to 920 Euros per month. Instead, single people under 65 were able to count on a more consistent income: for them the median is equal to 15.025 Euros. However, households which include at least one old person have lower income at their disposal. In particular, their median income is equal to 14.998 Euros, against the 21.309 Euros of those households with two or more old people.

Table 4 – Net household income (excluding charged rent) by age of the main wage earner. 2005 (Euros)

	Average income	Median
below 35	27,091	23,893
35 - 44	30,476	26,703
45 - 54	33,832	29,695
55 - 64	33,650	27,184
65 +	19,402	15,039

Source: ISFOL, based on ISTAT data

Adding the charged rent to the other income produces an increase in the income of those households typologies which are characterized by a higher percentage of homeowners, usufructaries or tenants who pay rent below the market rates¹⁶. It follows that the amplitude of differences is modified, since the mean and median incomes for households with young wage earners (under 35) are higher than those for households with aged wage earners (over 65) both before and after any charged rent. However, given that home ownership is higher amongst aged households, the inclusion of charged rent reduces the gap between the median incomes of the two typologies of households.

¹⁵ ISTAT, *Distribuzione del reddito e condizioni di vita in Italia (2005-2006) (Distribution of revenue and living conditions in Italy (2005-2006))*, Statistics in brief, 17 January 2008.

¹⁶ In order to compare the economic conditions of households with different numerosness and composition, the household income is usually divided by appropriate parameters, so as to obtain an equivalent income, which has a distribution that is typically more concentrated than the distribution of monetary income. The inclusion of charged rent in the calculation of household income also makes it possible to compare the situations of homeowner households and tenant households. Using the equivalent income, households can be classified from the lowest to the highest income and subsequently divided into five groups (fifths). The first fifth includes 20% of households that have the lowest equivalent income, whereas the last fifth is composed by the 20% of households with the highest income. For information on the equivalence scale, refer to the Glossary in ISTAT, *Distribuzione del reddito e condizioni di vita in Italia (2005-2006) (Distribution of revenue and living conditions in Italy (2005-2006))*, cit.

Aged people living alone are more likely to fall within the lowest two fifths in the distribution of income (50.7% of cases). Instead, people under 65 years of age living alone are prevalently positioned in the highest two fifths (46.4% of cases).

Table 5 – Distribution of households throughout the fifths of net equivalent income (including charged rent) by the age of the main wage earner. 2005 (%).

	Income				
	1°	2°	3°	4°	5°
below 35	23.2	18.8	18.7	21.8	17.5
35 - 44	20.5	18.1	18.4	21.6	21.4
45 - 54	19.2	16.9	19.5	21.2	23.3
55 - 64	14.3	15.5	20.4	21.6	28.2
65 +	21.2	26.3	22	16.2	14.3

Source: ISFOL, based on ISTAT data

The incidence of the relative poverty rate is more than 2 percentage points higher than the national average if the household includes one person over 65 (13.0%), and rises to 15.3% if there are two or more aged people¹⁷. Among the households with aged members in Central and Northern Italy, relative poverty is (7.9% and 9.3%, respectively) is approximately one and a half times higher than that averagely observed in the division for the entire population (5.2% in Northern Italy and 6.9% in Central Italy). In Southern Italy, this ratio decreases, but the percentage of households with 1 or 2 or more aged persons below the poverty threshold are respectively of 23.8% and 29.3%, against national averages which are equal to 13% and 15.3%.

Table 6 –Relative poverty by age of the main wage earner (%). 2005-2006

	2005	2006
below 35	11.1	9.5
35 - 44	10.9	11.5
45 - 54	9.1	10.1
55 - 64	8.2	7.5
65 +	13.8	13.8

Source: ISFOL, based on ISTAT data

In Northern Italy, the incidence of poverty increased between the year 2005 and 2006 as follows: from 5.8% to 8.2% for aged people living alone, from 6.3% to 8.1% for aged couples and from 7.2% to 11.2% for aged single-parent families (mostly aged women with children). Relative poverty is also increasing amongst households where the head of the household is a retired person (from

¹⁷ ISTAT, *La povertà relativa in Italia nel 2006 (Relative poverty in Italy in 2006)*, Statistics in brief, 4 October 2007. The estimate of relative poverty's incidence (the percentage of poor households and individuals on the total number of households and residents) is calculated by ISTAT on the basis of an agreed threshold (the poverty line) that defines the level of expenditure for consumption below which a household is defined as poor in relative terms. The average monthly expenditure per person represents the poverty threshold for a household with two members – in 2006, this figure amounted to 970.34 Euros (+3,6% compared to the 2005 line). Households including two members who have an average monthly expenditure that is equal to, or lower than the said threshold are classified as poor. For households of different sizes, the value of the line is calculated by applying an appropriate equivalence scale that takes account of the economies of scale that can be achieved as the number of members of the household increases.

5.2% to 6.9%) or a person of low educational qualification (from 7.7% to 9.5%) and in households composed of two members (from 4.2% to 5.4%). The same trend is observed for Central Italy, while Southern Italy continues to show the relative improvement already observed in previous years among households with aged members. In fact, the incidence of poverty has gone down from 28.2% to 25.5%, decreasing from 28.4% to 25.4% for poor households where the head of the household is aged over 65.

On the side of the labour market, the employment rate for aged workers (55 – 64 years of age) has been growing constantly since 2002, passing from 28.9% to 33.8% in 2007 (Table 7). However, this increase has left the gap between the European Union as a whole substantially unvaried at around 11 points (nearly 13 considering the EU15 data). The increase in these employment rates are to be attributed entirely to the increase in the female component¹⁸.

Table 7 – Employment rates of aged workers aged 55-64 (%). 2002 - 2007

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
EU 27	38.05	40.00	40.07	42.04	43.05	44.07
EU 25	38.07	40.03	41.00	42.06	43.07	44.09
EU 15	40.02	41.07	42.05	44.02	45.03	46.06
Italy	28.09	30.03	30.05	31.04	32.05	33.08

Source: Eurostat, 2008.

During the same period, the mean retirement age fluctuated between a minimum of 59,7 to a maximum, reached in 2006, of 60,2 (Table 8). In this case also, a negative gap in relation to the European average, which reaches its upper limit when compared with the EU15 data (61,4 years of age).

Table 8 – Average retirement age. 2002 – 2006

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
EU 27	60.1	61.0	60.5	61.0	61.2
EU 25	60.4	61.0	60.5	60.9	61.0
EU 15	60.8	61.3	60.9	61.1	61.4
Italy	59.9	61.0	-	59.7	60.2

Source: Eurostat

1.3. Description of the social and political situation

Italy is a democratic republic governed by a parliament. Sovereignty is in the hands of the people, who exercise their right to sovereignty in the forms set out by the Constitution and within the limits defined therein.

The Republic is constituted by Municipalities, Provinces, Metropolitan Cities, Regions and the State. The Municipalities, Provinces, Metropolitan Cities and Regions are autonomous bodies with their own statutes, powers and functions, in accordance with the principles set out by the Constitution¹⁹.

¹⁸ ISFOL, *Rapporto 2007 (2007 Report)*, Rome 2007

¹⁹ The described constitutional setup is the one deriving from the reform of Article 5 of the Constitution, Constitutional Law No. 3, 18 October 2001.

Friuli Venezia Giulia, Sardinia, Sicily, Trentino-Alto Adige / Südtirol and Valle d'Aosta / Vallée d'Aoste dispose of particular types and conditions of autonomy, in accordance with the respective special statutes adopted through constitutional law.

Legislative power is exercised by the State and by the Regions in compliance with the Constitution and with the commitments deriving by EU regulations and other international obligations. The division of legislative power between the State and the Regions is outlined in the following outline²⁰.

Outline 1 - The division of legislative power between the State and the Regions in accordance with the reform of the Constitution

Areas for which central government is exclusively responsible	Areas for which there is parallel responsibility (1)	Areas for which regional government is exclusively responsible (2)
State foreign policy and international relations; State relations with the European Union; right of asylum and legal status of citizens from countries out of the European Union	Regional international relations and relations with the European Union of Regions	Agriculture
Immigration	Foreign trade	Industry
Relations between the Republic and religious faiths	Health & Safety at Work	Trade, expos and markets
Defence and armed forces; State security; arms, munitions and explosives	Education, without prejudice to the autonomy of scholastic institutions and with the exclusion of vocational education and training	Small business
Monetary policy, protection of savings and financial markets; competition protection; currency system; State taxation and accounting system; equalisation of financial resources	Professions	Energy, production and distribution of energy at the regional level
State bodies and relevant electoral laws; State referenda; election of the European Parliament	Scientific and technological research and support of innovation in industry	Mines, quarries and peatbogs
Administrative systems of the State and of national public bodies	Health protection	Tourism and the industry of hospitality
Law & Order and public safety	Food	Employment policies
Citizenship, civil status, official records	Sporting infrastructure	Water resources, aqueducts, mineral and thermal springs
Jurisdiction and court regulations; civil and criminal law; administrative justice	Civil defence	Hunting and fishing in internal waters
Definition of essential service levels for civil and social rights, which must be guaranteed throughout the national territory	Territorial government	Construction and town planning
General guidelines on education	Civil airports and seaports	Civil airports and seaports of regional importance
Social security	Major transport and navigation networks	Regional transport and navigation networks, road networks
Electoral legislation, government bodies and fundamental functions of Municipal Authorities, Provincial Authorities and City Councils	Communications infrastructure	Local public transportation
Customs, protection of national borders and international epidemic prevention	Production, transport and national distribution of energy	Regional museums and libraries

²⁰ ISAE, *Rapporto annuale 2003 sull'attuazione del federalismo (2003 Annual Report on the Implementation of Federalism)*, February 2003, p. 39.

Weights, measures and the definition of time; statistical / IT coordination of central / regional / local government data; intellectual property	Occupational and supplementary pensions	Professional education and training; local, urban and rural police
Protection of the environment, the ecosystem and cultural assets	Harmonisation of public balance sheets and coordination of the public finances and of the tax system	Social services
	Enhancement of cultural and environmental assets and promotion and organisation of cultural activities	Organisation of administrative offices and bodies depending on Regional Authorities
	Regional savings banks, rural banks, regional credit associations, mortgage banks and land banks	Establishment of new local bodies

(1) These are areas for which “the Regions have legislative power, except in relation to the definition of the fundamental principles, which are reserved for the State legislature”, Art. 117 of the Constitution.

(2) The areas for which the Regions are exclusively responsible are not explicitly stated in the new text of the Constitution. As such, these areas are delineated on the basis of the interpretations of the ISAE, in compliance with the principle, set out in Article 117, according to which “the Regions have legislative power over all matters not expressly reserved for the State legislature”.

Source: ISAE 2003

1.4. Instrumental assessment

In 2005, Italy’s expenditure on social protection services as a proportion of GDP (25.5%) was once again, as in previous years, below the EU15 average, with a gap of 1,2% of GDP (1.5% in 2004)²¹. With respect to the EU25 average, the 2005 differential was 0.8% (1.2% in 2004). Total expenditure on invalidity, the aged and survivors is higher in Italy (1.9% in 2005 and one-tenth less than 2004) than in any other country, with the exception of Sweden (17.3% in 2005, 17.4% in 2004). The EU15 average was 14.3% in 2005 (14.2% in 2004) while the EU25 average was one-tenth less during both years. Expenditure on the aforementioned areas in 2005 accounted for 66.6% of all allowances, as opposed to the EU15 average of 53.6% (53.8% for the EU25).

In 2007, the level of GDP earmarked for allowances out of the “Institutional Total” for invalidity, the aged and survivors increased to 17.3%²². In the same year, expenditure by Public Administrations on pensions and annuities amounted to 216,380,000,000 Euros, equal to 59% of the total amount made available for Public Administration social allowances (58.9% in 2006) and to 14.1% of GDP (an almost identical share to that of the previous year).

With respect to 2006, in 2007 expenditure increased by 4.1%, whereas the increase between 2005 and 2006 had been of 3.3%. In 2007, there was a 2% increase to keep pace with increasing prices (1.8% during the previous year).

It is worth highlighting that in 2007 an increase of low-level pensions became operative. This increase was implemented through the introduction of an additional tax-free sum – the so-called “fourteenth month pension” – for a variable amount based on the period of contribution, to be paid to all social-security retirees aged 64 years and over, with an annual income below a pre-set threshold, which in 2007 was of 8,504.73 Euros (i.e. 1.5 times the minimum treatment of the Pension Fund for Subordinate Employees of the National Social Security Institute - INPS)²³.

Expenditure on welfare allowances – including pensions and social security cheques, services for disabled civilians, deaf and blind people and war pensions – grew by 5.2%, compared to the 4.7%

²¹ Ministry of Economy and Finances, *Relazione generale sulla situazione economica del Paese (2007) (General Report on the economic situation of the country (2007))*.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid. – in 2007, the so-called “super-bonus” was still in force. On the basis of this bonus, those who met the requirements for retirement between 2004 and 2007 were offered the opportunity to postpone retirement and remain at work without having to pay social security contributions, which were received instead as a direct increase to the tax-free allowance on their salaries (Law 243/2004).

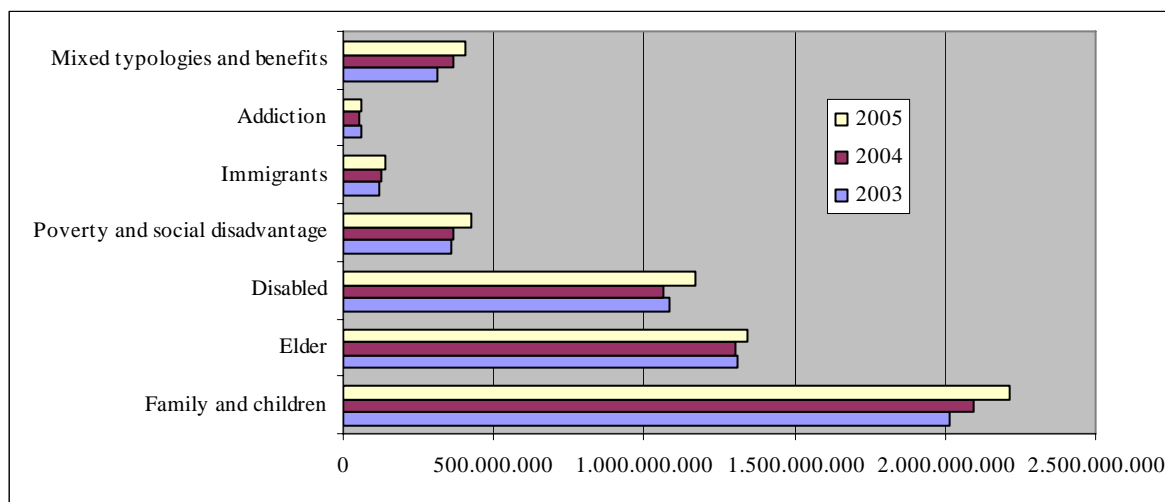
increase in 2006. In 2007, all the aforementioned components were subject to increases that went from 2.4% to 5.8%.

As far as housing policies are concerned, the two measures of support to needy households continued during the year 2007. The first of these, the “Fund for the support of access to leased housing”, introduced by Law no. 431 of 1998, foresees the provision of a monetary contribution for the payment of the lease fee. The second, called the “Fund for special-rate housing”, introduced by Law no. 350 of 2003, is aimed at the construction and recovery of properties in municipalities with high population density, which are subsequently leased out for rates that are lower than the current market ones.

The 2007 Budget Law established the “Fund for non-self-sufficiency” at the purpose of contributing towards the implementation of the essential levels of social care at the benefit of those who are not self-sufficient.

The evolution of the expenditure of Italian Municipalities on social interventions and services offers a view of the commitment of local Administrations in relation to the target of aged people²⁴.

Chart 6– Expenditure for social services of Municipalities by target group. 2003, 2004 and 2005 (Euros)



Source: ISFOL, based on ISTAT data

In the period 2003 – 2005, the aged represented the second highest user area in terms of expenditure expressed in absolute values (1,340,000,000 Euros in 2005), equal to more than 23% of the total expenditure (a slight drop compared to the 24.9% of 2003). However, aged people fall into third place when the per capita expenditure is considered (Table 9)²⁵.

²⁴ ISTAT, *L'indagine censuaria sugli interventi e i servizi sociali dei comuni. Anno 2005 (Census survey of the social interventions and services of the municipalities. 2005)*, Statistics in brief, 26 June 2008; ISTAT, *La seconda indagine censuaria sugli interventi e i servizi sociali dei comuni. Anno 2004 (Second census survey of the social interventions and services of the municipalities. 2005)*, Statistics in brief, 4 April 2007; ISTAT, *La prima indagine censuaria sugli interventi e i servizi sociali dei comuni. Anno 2003 (First census survey of social interventions and services of municipalities. 2003)*, Statistics in brief, 2 December 2005. The expenditure figures include interventions and services, monetary transfers and expenditure for facilities (care homes for the aged, etc.).

²⁵ The per capita value is the ratio between the expenditure and the population of reference in each user area. The population of reference for the area of the “aged” is constituted by the population over 65 years in the year of reference.

Table 9 – Per capita expenditure for social services of Municipalities by user area. 2003, 2004 and 2005 (Euros)

	Family and children	Elder	Disabled	Poverty and social disadvantage	Immigrants	Addiction	Mixed typologies and benefits	Total
2003	86.3	119	1,568.60	9.8	67	1.2	5.4	91.3
2004	89.9	115.8	1,889.00	9.8	57.9	1.1	6.3	92.4
2005	94.8	116.7	2,071.10	11.4	53.9	1.1	6.9	98

Source: ISFOL, based on ISTAT data

The gap between the disabled and all other user areas comes out clearly. It is also evident that the expenditure commitment for the aged has remained substantially unvaried.

1.5. Identification of areas for in-depth evaluation

During the currently legislature, the government in power intends to develop its actions along three fundamental axes: growth, stability and social cohesion²⁶.

The objective of the governmental action is to enact a drastic increase in the level of regular employment – particularly amongst women, the young and people who are over 50 – with a view to bringing Italy in line with countries such as the UK and the Netherlands, which (through stringent employment policies) have ensured high levels of participation in the labour market for several years²⁷.

The objective set by the EU to balance the budget by 2011 has been confirmed. In this situation, the financial policies will need to collect an amount slightly higher than 35 billion Euros, concentrating their corrective action principally on public expenditure. Specifically, the objectives will be reached without imposing new taxes, with the exception of a number of tax equalisations and duties on the right of regulation and of ethical destination of part of the related yield²⁸.

The specific measures are especially aimed at the sectors of public employment, decentralised finance, health and social security²⁹.

The interventions on decentralised finance foresee savings of approximately 9,2 million Euros in a three-year period (a third of which in 2009) through a reduction in transfers.

In the health sector, the following measures have been foreseen:

- the introduction of online prescriptions for specialised services and medication
- the reinforcement of the monitoring of expenditure and of the appropriateness of the prescribed treatments
- a consequential effect of rationalisation of the expenditure estimated at approximately 3 billions.

In Italy, as already stated, the most substantial component of overall social protection expenditure is represented by social security³⁰. Expenditure on health is heavily damaged by the excessive weight of pension expenditure.

²⁶ Ministry of Economy and Finances, *Documento di programmazione economica e finanziaria per gli anni 2009 – 2013 (Economic and financial planning document for the years 2009-2013)*.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

In view of this situation, the ageing of the population and the low birth rates have determined a change in the priorities of the healthcare system on the basis of the available epidemiological data³¹. The pathologies of aging, and specifically chronic illnesses, increased by 50% in the past 10 years and, according to ways in which they are prevented and treated, considerably effect the level and the duration of disability. The consumption of social security and health resources for persons over 75 is 11 times higher than that of those in the 25-34 age group. Chronic patients represent 25% of the population and absorb 70% of expenditure.

Regulatory interventions, including recent ones, were introduced to limit the expenditure on pensions but have not generated any real stability, since expenditure for pensions is subjected to demographic pressures, even if to a smaller extent than health expenditure.

Along with these interventions, it will be necessary to reconsider the sustainability of the public pension system, for which it will be necessary to consider a further increase in the retirement age, once the gradual raising of the minimum age to 62 has been completed³².

The drafting of new redistribution policies will imply the further consideration of the minimum guaranteed income for people of working age and of the benefits to be granted to those whose state of need or whose age is such as to make it impossible for them to perform work (aged over 65 with minimum pensions; single-parent households, especially women with dependent children; parents with disabled children, etc.)³³.

In terms of social care and healthcare, the ageing of the population requires the cultural reconsideration of the approach towards aged patients on the territory, starting from the definition of a number of critical priorities³⁴:

- continuity of care between the territory and the hospital;
- the correct targeting of the aged patient in the various support settings;
- the identification of pathologies and their prevalently territorial management;
- geriatric training of the involved professional figures.

All of the above are deemed susceptible to exercise a considerable impact on the articulation of the policies that are the object of this report. For this reason, each area must be subjected to further in-depth evaluation.

2. Methodology of In-Depth Evaluation of Identified Priorities

Currently being defined.

3. National Capacities for Follow-up to MIPAA/RIS

Currently being defined.

³⁰ Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies, *La vita buona nella società attiva. Libro verde sul futuro del modello sociale (Living well in an active society, Green Paper on the future of the social model)*, Document for public consultation, 25 July 2008.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

4. Review and Appraisal by Subject Area

4.1. Mainstreaming ageing

In Italy, the issue of active ageing has exerted an across-the-board influence on policy strategies in the fields of employment, education, health and social protection/inclusion. In the 2006-2008 national report³⁵ on the strategies for social protection and social inclusion, it is clearly stated that these fields must be dealt with by using consolidated strategic approaches in order to achieve a solid and cohesive social fabric. In organisational terms, this approach has translated into the construction of shared paths between central Administrations and between the Government, the Regions and local autonomous areas. This has led to the definition of national priorities for the enhancement of the well-being of citizens and the creation of systems to monitor the undertaken initiatives.

On 23 July 2007, the Protocol on “Social Security, Employment and Competitiveness for Sustainable Equality and Growth”³⁶ was signed. The document sets out measures for the safeguard and promotion of an active role for the elderly:

- approximately 300 Euros of raise for those who receive the lowest pensions (it has been calculated that this benefit will interest approximately three million people);
- the reform of social security cushions; the definition of a set of tools is expected to support the employment of those aged over 55, as well as the improvement of the economic safeguards in case of non agricultural unemployment for the weakest subjects; when all requirements are met, the duration of unemployment benefits will rise to 8 months for those aged under 50 and 12 months for those over 50;
- the enhancement of employment policies to be pursued through the strengthening of the network of services for employment, the availability of courses for training, updating and the re-qualification of the workforce and the recalibration of economic incentives aimed at obtaining employment; active policies and services for employment focus particularly on the most vulnerable citizens in the labour market.

In relation to the regulatory aspects, Italy has now integrated (through the issue of Legislative Decree No. 216, 9 July 2003 – the so-called “anti-discrimination law”) European Council’s Directive 2000/78/CE on the equitable treatment of persons regardless of their religion, personal convictions, disabilities, age or sexual orientation, in terms of employment and working conditions. The principle of fair treatment is applied to all those employed both in the public and the private sector.

The current government, which has been in power since May 2008, has unified the departments of employment, health and inclusion into a single Ministry dedicated to social development, thereby acknowledging the strict bond between health and economic prosperity, as emphasised in the European Commission’s recent green paper on health.³⁷ The issue of active ageing is fully addressed in the social and employment policies put together by the current legislature. However, it is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of such policies, since their impact has only begun to be felt since the second quarter of 2008.

³⁵ Ministry of Social Solidarity, *Rapporto nazionale sulle strategie per la protezione sociale e l’inclusione sociale 2006-2008 (National report on the strategies for social protection and social inclusion, 2006-2008)*, November 2006.

³⁶ *Protocollo su previdenza, lavoro e competitività per l’equità e la crescita sostenibili (Protocol on social security, employment and competitiveness for sustainable equality and growth)*, 23 July 2007, transferred into Law No. 247, 24 December 2007, “Regulations for the implementation of the 23 July 2007 Protocol regarding welfare, labour and competitiveness for the promotion of sustainable equality and growth, in addition to regulations regarding labour and social security”.

³⁷ European Commission, *Together for Health: A Strategic Approach for the EU 2008-2013*, Com. 2007, 630 def., Brussels, 23 October 2007.

The government intends to equip the country with a target-based welfare system and with a monitoring and evaluation system which will promptly highlight possible deviations. Among the proposals submitted in July by the green paper entitled “Living Well in an Active Society”, there is the proposal to define a set of indicators which partially coincide with the European Union’s ones, and, that take into account the dynamics of birth rates and life expectancy, the supply/demand ratio for childcare services, the levels of employment and activity of young people, of women and of aged people and the participation of workers in training activities³⁸.

The general objective of the reforms being drafted is to create a welfare system in which synergies (in terms of resources, tools and approaches) can be generated between public-sector bodies and citizens with a view to creating widespread, far-reaching networks of services. In this way, the intention is to promote a reciprocal process geared towards the assumption of responsibility – a process based on the concept of “community building”³⁹. Next to the provision of services by both public and private bodies, an improvement of lifestyles will also be necessary, in an effort to safeguard the good health of citizens throughout their lifetime.

Aged people take on a central role in the new welfare system in relation to policies regarding employment, health and support.

The promotion of good health during the lifetimes of citizens, which is aimed at ensuring the “healthy ageing”⁴⁰ of the population, requires the careful review of the processes and factors which lead to an effective and efficient social care/healthcare system. The increasing number of old and very old citizens will cause demand for support to rise inexorably and, at the same time, will also require greater economic, organisational and infrastructural input on the part of society. For this reason, it is essential to develop suitable protection strategies, based on integration between a multitude of field services and the providers of such services, both public and private.

4.2. Integration and participation of older persons

Involving the aged in the planning of services

Since the beginning of the current decade, two profound regulatory transformations have strongly influenced the policies intended to face the issue of the population’s active ageing in Italy. On one hand, the social care sector was regulated at the national level (Framework Law no. 328 of 2000), and on the other, there was a transfer of responsibilities from the central government to regional authorities and local bodies (Constitutional Law no. 3 of 2001 – Amendment of Article 5).

Quality of life and the prevention, reduction and elimination of disabilities and of personal and family distress are the objectives of Law no. 328, which – surpassing the “welfaristic concept” of social intervention – deems citizens to be active subjects (in the sense that each citizen is entitled to a set of rights) on whom interventions aimed at the eradication of situations of psycho/social distress and marginalisation should be focused.

Among the strengths of the welfare system’s reform law, the integrated involvement of public and private bodies in the delivery of social services deserves to be highlighted.

The concept of integration not only demands a particularly strong type of cooperation between the various components (public, private and non-profit) that act within the social sphere, but also encourages the implementation of a multi-dimensional approach to the issue of public health – one which takes a range of sectors of intervention (health, first and foremost, but also training, town planning, homes, transport, culture, etc.) into consideration and that is able to improve the welfare of citizens, with a particular focus on those who are in greater need.

³⁸ Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies, *La vita buona nella società attiva. Libro verde sul futuro del modello sociale (Living well in an active society, Green Paper on the future of the social model)*, op. cit.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

In accordance with legislative guidelines, the management of social services is the responsibility of municipal authorities, which develop the integrated system – through Area Plans – with the resources earmarked by the regional authorities. In order to manage and coordinate their activities, the municipalities engage with local bodies, healthcare organisations and citizen associations.

Tertiary-sector bodies are viewed as “actors” by the law both in terms of the programming and organisation of the integrated system (Article 1, Paragraph 4) and in terms of service delivery (Art. 1, Paragraph 5). The law sanctions and promotes the provision of social care activities by citizen associations such as ONLUS non-profit organisations, social cooperatives, voluntary organisations, social promotion bodies and foundations.

In this context, the 2001-2003 national plan for social interventions and services, which integrated Law no. 328 of 2000, enabled the establishment of many (provincial and municipal) “committees for the aged” and “round tables”, where anyone involved in the sphere of aging was welcome to participate.

According to the National Social Plan (2001-2003), local policies on the aged must aim at the promotion of a positive attitude towards aged citizens. The objective is to support households with aged members who require help at home; to support the innovation and diversification of the offered interventions and services; the acknowledgement of the right of aged persons to choose where they wish to live; etc.

Specifically, the social and health plans of regional authorities and public-sector administrative bodies prioritise the promotion of:

- meetings between citizens of different generations
- political participation
- voluntary work
- active social participation and the right to choose where to live.

In this way, in many cases, aged people were placed in situations where they were able to participate at various levels in the drafting of the policies aimed at them. However, not all regions have achieved the same results, given the profound regional and local differences which characterise Italy as a whole.

In general, the committees are all about giving aged people a say, even though it is not guaranteed that their opinions will influence the decision-making process.

Something important has occurred as far as Area Plans are concerned: at local round tables, where aged people themselves express their own needs, they have provided valuable ideas and solutions on issues such as health, accommodation, transport, recreational facilities, etc.

The world of associations and voluntary groups

In Italy, one-third of people over 65 are members of an association and one out of ten regularly carries out voluntary work. The organisations with whom aged people engage are mostly associations such as the Italian Union of Retirees (SPI⁴¹), Anteas⁴² and Auser⁴³. A recent report by Auser reveals that 10.8% of volunteers in Italy are aged over 60.

⁴¹ The SPI of CGIL (the Italian General Confederation of Labour) is the largest and most representative organisation for policies regarding the aged in Italy.

⁴² Anteas, the National Association Third Age Active for Solidarity is a non-profit organisation that implements services in favour of and with the aged. Promoted and inspired by the Federation of Retirees of CISL (the Italian Confederation of Labour Unions), it is an attempt to meet the needs of thousands of retirees who wish to continue to feel useful, involving them in “interesting, innovative experiences that are appreciated by the citizens”.

⁴³ Auser is an association of voluntary service and social promotion that aims to encourage active ageing on the part of the aged and to boost their role in society. Launched in 1989 on initiative of CGIL and the CGIL Union of Retirees, it endeavours to combat all types of social exclusion, enhance the quality of life and promote culture and solidarity in the belief that all generations should be valued and each person should have a life-long plan through which to become a useful resource for himself/herself and for others. Auser works to ensure that everyone can give and receive help, meet

In terms of sex, aged people who do voluntary work are more likely to be men than women (53% for the former against 46% of the latter). In most cases, aged volunteers are married (61.5%), although a considerable percentage of them (22%) are widows and widowers, for whom voluntary work is a way to compensate the loneliness caused by the passing of their spouse.

For the most part, aged volunteers deal with other aged people: 38.7% of these groups focus on the aged. Moreover, aged volunteers represent the category most likely to look after people who are afflicted by illness (20.4%).

As far as the motivations that lead people who are no longer young to get involved in voluntary activities are concerned, religion comes first: 28% of the volunteers aged over 65 state that their commitment is the result of a “faith-based decision”. One quarter of the total stated that volunteering was “a way to give a meaning to their own lives”.

In addition to their involvement in activities that have socially beneficial purposes, the aged are now also an essential part of the network of care services for families and juveniles. A recent study by Censis⁴⁴ shows that 62.7% of those interviewed provide support for their children and/or grandchildren. This figure is equally split between men and women, and is highest in the north-west and in the south/islands, particularly amongst aged people with lower levels of education and, naturally, among those who enjoy better health.

Local employment strategies also have an important role to play in promoting voluntary work and intergenerational exchange. A number of examples are given below.

“A Friend for the City” Project – Municipality of Rome. The data made available by the council in the capital shows that a great number of aged people are involved in this project: in 2006, 2500 people over 65 (compared to 750 in 2001, when the initial trial-run was carried out) escorted children to and from 300 nursery and primary schools, helping them cross the street, looking after them until their parents came home and generally assisting in all kinds of practical problems. In 2003, “A Friend for the City” was complemented by the project named “Park Sentinels”, where aged volunteers supervise 22 city parks and historic properties. While many of these projects have followed standard procedures, in certain cases it was the aged people themselves who come up with innovative activities, such as the construction of protected routes within the parks.

Municipality of Milan Local Employment Action Plan, 2002. This plan set out a dedicated initiative to make the most of aged volunteers through the implementation of intergenerational exchanges. Specifically, aged volunteers carry out their activities in public libraries (personal help to users; liaison between libraries, nursing homes, prisons and hospitals; reception of requests and lending of books; delivery of loaned books to the homes of the aged and the disabled).

“Silver Years” Project – Milan. This project, which targets people aged over 60, is articulated in different meetings between visitors and operators from the public and private sector, and also provides a rich entertainment programme. The initiative, which is free, was conceived and carried out by the ITBA Association, which plans to extend the project to Bologna, Florence and Rome, and also to southern Italy, with a view of becoming truly nationwide. In confirmation of the positive response given to the proposal by the various bodies, “Silver Years” has received the patronage of the European Parliament, the Region of Lombardy, the Province and the Municipality of Milan.

“Solidarity Ponies” Project. This project was launched in 1999 at Ausser centre of the Province of Turin thanks to funding from the Compagnia di San Paolo non-profit group and to the commitment of the association. The project’s main objective is to help aged people remain in their homes thanks to the visits and the contacts with young “ponies” (young people aged from 14 to 28 who make themselves available to provide assistance at home to needy aged citizens) in order to oppose the distress caused by loneliness, abandonment or critical family and/or economic situations. The ponies visit their aged contacts once a week in order to give them company or, when requested, to help the aged persons go to shops, therapies or medical visits.

The project serves two purposes: on one hand, it provides aged people with useful, versatile, “human” assistance at home, on the other, it allows young people to engage directly with

others, enrich their skills and contribute to the community in which he or she lives. It currently counts 270,000 members and 40,000 active volunteers in 1412 sites throughout Italy.

⁴⁴ CENSIS, *Il tempo (di lavoro e di svago) nell’era della longevità attiva – Dossier anziani (Time, for work and play, in the era of active longevity – Dossier on the Aged)*, in *Note e Commenti (Notes and Comments)*, No. 4, April 2007.

approaches to social issues, enriching their understanding with the experiences of previous generations.

“Silver Thread” – Auser. The “Silver Thread” project is Auser’s “social call centre” initiative, which aims oppose the loneliness and marginalisation felt by aged people. In 2007, Silver Thread volunteers made more than 453.000 interventions in favour of approximately 89.000 needy aged people, thus meeting a social demand that is not generally covered by local public institutions. These services are provided as part of the effort of local bodies to promote the horizontal subsidiarity⁴⁵ that is implicit in voluntary action. In the context of the new Article 118 of the Constitution, Silver Thread has provided a tangible response to the needs expressed by the aged population, through the signature of 424 agreements with local bodies, aimed at the implementation of home visits and assistance (29%); social transportation in order to escort aged people to the places that house the public and private facilities they wish to access (24%); the development of social relations and cultural and recreational interventions (22%); the promotion of housing policies (3%); other interventions and services (21%). 30% of the requests of help that Silver Thread received in 2007 came from public institutions: municipal social service departments, local health authorities and other public bodies. The remaining requests came from those directly requesting the service (57%), from their relatives (10%), from voluntary associations and Silver Thread partners (approximately 4%).

A few additional comments in relation to the initiatives (particularly those of the local bodies) which aim to use aged people’s spare time as constructively as possible, are also worth making. In recent years, education in general – and especially courses such as cooking, painting, etc. have become increasingly popular among aged people. In this regard, a number of initiatives promoted by Municipality of Rome are particularly noteworthy: free access to public museums; painting, pottery and gardening courses organised by numerous municipal districts; summer trips to the Tivoli spa and cultural excursions almost exclusively paid by the single municipal authorities.

Naturally, next to such activities, there are more traditional training options, which allow aged people to complete courses they had begun earlier in life or simply to increase their level of education. In order to achieve this objective, a large number of “Universities for the Third Age” have been established throughout Italy, where courses on Italian and foreign literature, history, scientific subjects (especially IT and internet) and languages are held.

The proposed Framework Law on active ageing drafted by Auser, the Ministry for Public Administration and the Employment Services is also worth mentioning, since it aims at redesigning the approach to ageing. Active ageing is viewed as the only possible way to ensure the well-being and the social inclusion of aged people.

Transport and housing policies

Decree No. 308, 21 May 2001 on the “Minimum structural and organisational requirements for the authorisation of residential and semi-residential services and facilities” is an important piece of legislation on housing and social assistance policies in favour of the aged. The decree, which is accordance with Article 11 of Law no. 328 of 2000, identifies 4 types of social assistance facilities and defines their minimum shared and specific requirements.

As far as the supply of new housing solutions is concerned, several important initiatives have been undertaken through the direct involvement of local bodies and operators, although the implementation of the most high-profile and interesting experiment – launched as a result of the ministerial document entitled “Rented housing for the aged of the 21st century” – has been postponed. This project foresaw that municipal bodies would have access, either directly or via Public Residential Construction (PRC) organisations, to specific experimental innovation proposals, which they would subsequently submit, through their respective regional authorities, to a ministerial commission for evaluation, which would go on to select the most appropriate ones.

⁴⁵ i.e. coordinating public-sector, private-sector and voluntary-sector interventions.

The Ministry selected 114 initiatives throughout the country, which were subsequently listed in the Official Gazette. However, these projects have remained on paper, since funds have not yet been set aside for them.

A number of recent provisions have been aimed at the safeguard of the social categories that are most exposed in terms of increasing property prices. To this end, after the introduction of Law no. 9, 8 February 2007, “Interventions for the reduction of housing problems for specific social categories”, and pending the implementation of the measures and interventions foreseen by the national house building plan (set out by Article 11 of Decree-Law no. 112, 25 June 2008, converted with modifications by Law no. 133, 6 August 2008), the legislature has again intervened through the issuing of Decree-Law no. 158, 20 October 2008, extending the deadline from 15 October 2008 to 30 June 2009 for the leases of tenants with a gross annual household income of less than 27.000 Euros and who have aged, terminally ill or disabled people (with an over 66% level of invalidity) within the household, provided that they are not in possession of another home suitable for the entire household in the region of residence.

On November 2008, the Senate has approved the Decree-Law no. 185 in which are included measures to sustain families (family bonus), employees and pensioners with an annual income from 15,000 to 22,000. This bonus varies from 200 to 1,000 Euros and will be funded only in 2009.

Also in relation to housing, it should be stated that since 1971 there have been national regulations on the removal of architectural barriers in public buildings and on public transport, with financial contributions being offered to those who qualify. These national measures have been reinforced over time by similar measures implemented by regional authorities.

In relation to transport, the Italian State Railway Company, through Trenitalia, has been promoting the “Silver Card”, a special annual ticket for people over 60, which entitles the holder to percentage discounts on the price of tickets.

Many municipal authorities also offer discounts on the cost of public transport to resident citizens who meet specific certification criteria. In Rome, for example, resident citizens aged over 65 are offered a substantial discount on the monthly ticket price, while the trial which gives free public transport to people over 70 – provided that they reside in the municipal area and have a taxable income under 15.000 Euros per year – will continue until the end of 2008. Disabled civilians, the victims of industrial injury, and people who have the right to receive the services of a care worker, are entitled to a monthly pass (at the cost of €4.00), which is also available for those who are of pensionable age and for those who receive a non-contributory pension. In order to access these discounts, it is necessary to present a special card that confirms entitlement to the benefit. In the area of the Genoa Municipality, the public transportation system’s price scheme offers special discounts to the residents who fall into specific categories: disabled civilians, disabled ex-servicemen the victims of industrial injury, retirees with limited incomes and other categories of vulnerable citizens, such as the unemployed. Free, annual tickets are available, among other social groups, to non-contributory retirees. The Municipality of Turin also offers a monthly pass – the so-called “over 60 urban network ticket” – to residents who have reached the age of 60. The ticket is valid for one year.

4.3 Promotion of equitable and sustainable economic growth in response to population ageing

In relation to the policies aimed at growth, with the objective of strengthening the availability of funds to support the consequences of the demographic dynamics, please refer to the information given in Paragraph 1.5.

Poverty and social inclusion

The system as it was before the reform of Article 5 of the Constitution is clearly illustrated in the National Plan for Social Interventions and Services for 2001-2003 (which came into force in April 2001, in accordance with Paragraph 2 of Article 18 of Law no. 328, issued on 8 November 2000). The Plan defines the general outline of the process for the allocation of resources, complete with the relevant criteria and parameters, even though it acknowledges the non-binding nature of the division of individual areas of intervention. Subsequent planning documents – starting from the White Paper on Welfare and the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2003-2005 (including applicable integrations) – have gradually acknowledged the change of direction set out in the constitutional reform, pointing out the main responsibilities of the State (steering, monitoring and verification) and the more direct operational and decision-making tasks, which are the responsibility of regional and municipal authorities⁴⁶.

The first 2001-2003 National Social Plan defined five main priorities, including Priority 3 – *Strengthening interventions to oppose poverty* and Priority 4 – *Supporting those who are not self-sufficient through home assistance* (specifically, the aged and those with serious disabilities), which were mainly addressed to the same social categories considered in this report. In terms of interventions for the opposition of poverty, the Plan assigned the largest importance to active employment policies, along with local development and educational policies. A strategic role was also assigned to the introduction of the minimum entry-level wage (known as the *Reddito Minimo di Inserimento* or *RMI* in Italian), as set forth in Article 23 of Law 328/2000 and subsequently implemented in more than 300 Italian municipal areas⁴⁷.

With the passage to the 14th Legislature, the cornerstone of the inclusion strategy came to be the central importance assigned to the family as the crucial instrument with which to counterbalance the demographic crisis and the segmentation of the welfare system. In the context of the redefinition of social policies, family-centred policies were prioritised across the board in the period 2001-2006, and given precedence over sector-specific policies. In this context, the framework of interventions addressed towards the opposition of poverty and social exclusion implemented during the period can be reconstructed starting from the evaluation document requested by the European Commission in the 2003- 2005 National Action Plan for Social Inclusion (Outline 2)⁴⁸:

⁴⁶ Investigative commission on social exclusion, *Rapporto sulle politiche contro la povertà e l'esclusione sociale. Anno 2005 (Report on policies against poverty and social exclusion. Year 2005)*, July 2006.

⁴⁷ Ibid. During the course of the 14th Legislature, the “Income of Last Resort” or “*Reddito di ultima istanza* or *RUI* in Italian”, was intended to make the most of the information gathered from the trialling of the minimum entry-level wage. In line with the programme, Paragraph 101 of Article 3 of the 2004 Budget Law (Law 326/2003), set out the introduction of the RUI. The same legislation also confirmed the central government’s commitment to fund the Regions that would introduce this method of intervention. A number of the regional authorities, in light of the reform of Article 5 of the Constitution, raised issues of legitimacy with the Constitutional Court, specifically in relation to the legitimacy of the methods chosen for the management of the financial resources of the National Fund for Social Policies, deemed as damaging to the financial autonomy of Regions. Sentence 423/2004 of the Constitutional Court partially accepted such claims, deeming the plan for a specific co-financing scheme bound to the specific purpose of implementing the RUI as constitutionally illegitimate and, as a result, the related prescriptions in the budget were automatically lapsed (see also Ministry of labour and Social Policies, *Rapporto di monitoraggio del Piano d’azione nazionale per l’inclusione sociale 2003 – 2005 (Monitoring Report on the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion, 2003-2005)*, October 2005).

⁴⁸ Ibid.

Outline 2 – Strategy of the 2003 – 2005 National Action Plan for Social Inclusion.

NATIONAL PLAN 2003 – 2005	
<p>Entry into social life and into the world of work</p> <p><i>Implemented measures:</i> Policies and trials for a greater balance between work life, family life and social life, greater focus on school-family interaction, measures to organise the urban fabric with a view to enhancing quality of life, measures to promote the insertion of youngsters into the various phases of social life and special measures for the most vulnerable categories. Rendering the labour market more flexible.</p>	<p><i>Open issues:</i> Insufficient implementation of the local governance measures to enhance quality of life in large cities. Insufficient integration between public employment services and social services targeted at the most vulnerable categories of the population. Persistence of high levels of black-market labour.</p>
<p>The right to universal services through a new type of solidarity</p> <p><i>Implemented measures:</i> Launch of the tax reform to benefit family units. Reform of the social security system, beginning in 2008. Reforms of the school/education system. Trialling of vouchers and similar schemes in order to improve access to services and to improve and increase the family/household networks of solidarity and mutual assistance. Interventions for the prevention, opposition and care of dependency syndromes. Interventions for the reinsertion of prisoners into society and into the workplace.</p>	<p><i>Open issues:</i> Difficulty of integrating solidarity networks with public and private bodies already operating in the sector. Housing measures still insufficient to meet demand. Insufficient integration between interventions targeted at subjects affected by dependency syndromes, employment policies and housing policies. Insufficient interventions to guarantee access to justice on the part of the immigrant population.</p>
<p>Social inclusion</p> <p><i>Implemented measures:</i> Guidelines on accessibility to internet sites. Implementation of paths towards social inclusion, geared towards various vulnerable and marginalised groups at the greatest risk of exclusion. Regional trialling of the minimum entry level wage.</p>	<p><i>Open issues:</i> Establishment of networks capable of implementing intergenerational solidarity and promoting the inclusion of subjects and groups at risk of exclusion, making the most of the family.</p>
<p>Psycho-physical autonomy</p> <p><i>Implemented measures:</i> National and local programmes for the insertion of people with disabilities into the country's productive system. Support networks, with particular emphasis on initiatives organised by families. National and local measures and interventions targeted at the social inclusion of minors and at preventing young people from leaving school at an early age.</p>	<p><i>Open issues:</i> Insufficient interventions targeted at the integration of ethnic minorities (travellers) and migrants into society and the workplace. Difficulty of implementing integrated territorial interventions to combat social exclusion.</p>
<p>Horizontal measures</p> <p><i>Implemented measures:</i> Commencement of national and local social dialogue with industry associations. Use of negotiated planning tools, in partnership with the local autonomous bodies and social partners.</p>	<p><i>Open issues:</i> Insufficient development of services to meet the demand for information services by citizens. Requirement for greater integration between the various systems and levels of intervention management. Difficulty in developing and applying tools intended to ensure the active participation of citizens.</p>

Source: adapted from the Investigative Commission on Social Inclusion.

Through the 2007-2011 Document on Economic and Financial Planning (DFEP), the 14th Legislature made a specific commitment to ensure equality, social justice and higher levels of well-being for individuals and households, first and foremost by reducing poverty. As such, the government is committed to bring the poverty index in line with the European average by 2010. This objective has been pursued through the reform of tax policies and through policies in support of household income, interventions in the field of housing policy, the reduction of child poverty, the strengthening of the role of the tertiary sector, social economy and a new focus on the problem and instances of extreme poverty.

On 12 October 2007, the Council of Ministers implemented the Memorandum of Intent on social security, employment and competitiveness signed during the previous month of July by the government and the social partners. This Protocol covers six different types of intervention: social security, social shock absorbers, the labour market, competitiveness, young people and women.

The 2008 Budget Law included a series of fiscal measures in support of low-income taxpayers (the so-called “low-income bonus”), including the tax relief granted on properties used as main homes and the deductions on income tax (IRPEF) for the tenants. In this context, the legislation provided a lump-sum reimbursement of 150 Euros to people whose net taxable income for 2006 was zero. Moreover, the same individuals were granted a further sum of 150 Euros for each dependent member of the household; if a household member depends from more than one person, the bonus is shared proportionately. The beneficiaries of this bonus are both retirees and employees; the retiree category also includes people who, besides for an annual pension of 7.500 Euros, only own their homes. According to the ISAE estimate, the number of taxpaying beneficiaries was approximately 6.5 million, to which the family members for whom the taxpayer was responsible must be added. Overall, the bonus was granted to something more than 11 million individuals, at a total cost of approximately 1.7 billion Euros – slightly less than the sum earmarked by the Decree-Law (1.9 billion Euros)⁴⁹.

On November 2008, government has introduced the Social Card, a measure to help underprivileged citizens⁵⁰ to face recent raising of food prices, together with the increasing cost of electricity and gas. The Social card is a normal electronic cash card. The payments made using this card will not be charged to the user but to the State. The card will be charged by the Ministry of Economy every two months, according to available resources. It will allow users to shop in normal stores, making also use of discounts provided by donors supporting the initiative and complying with lowered electric charges.

It is also necessary to mention the contribution given by the voluntary sector to the effort to reduce poverty conditions. Each year, the National Observatory on the Voluntary Sector funds project aimed at the development and widespread implementation of methodologies intended to bolster social inclusion for the categories deemed to be at risk⁵¹. A further attempt to eradicate poverty and social exclusion was made by the organisations working on social promotion. In Italy, Law no. 383 of 2000 legally recognises the social value of the work carried out by freely constituted associations. The law sanctioned the funding of projects targeted at supporting and integrating vulnerable individuals. On the basis of the same legislation, every year the Ministry of labour funds trial projects prepared by the associations themselves⁵².

Macroeconomic policies

The aforementioned DPEF 2007-2011 underlined the primary objective of combining economic growth with the reorganisation of public finances and with social equality as the basis for sustainable long-term development. The aim of this process is to ensure adequate protection for the most vulnerable sections of society and for future generations.

⁴⁹ ISAE (Istituto di Studi e Analisi Economica / Institute of Economic Studies and Analysis), *Politiche pubbliche e redistribuzione (Public policies and redistribution)*, November 2007.

⁵⁰ Beneficiaries of the measure are families with children up to 3 years old and +65 elderly persons.

⁵¹ The trial projects submitted by the voluntary organizations (registered in the regional registers of voluntary organizations, as set forth in Article 6 of Law 266/1991) were foreseen by the Outline Law on the Voluntary Sector (Art. 12, Paragraph 1, Letter d)) and approved by the National Observatory on the Voluntary Sector (Art. 12, Letter i) of Law 266/1991), which annually drafts and approves the Directive, that is subsequently signed by Minister.

⁵² The projects, implemented in partnership with local bodies, are submitted by associations registered in the relevant registers (national, regional and those of the Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano), established in conformity with Law 383/2000, and are aimed at facing particular social emergencies and towards the application of highly advanced methodologies (Art. 12, Lett. f).

The planning document stated that, in order to build social equality, it is essential to begin with a reduction of the conditions of poverty and with greater interaction of economic, employment and social inclusion policies within the country. Greater equality and social inclusion make it possible to mobilise the available skills within society in order to produce resources that can be utilised for interventions targeted at boosting the competitiveness of the national economic system, generating high-quality employment and ensuring fairness and equal opportunities for all citizens.

A great deal of attention was focused on the labour market's most "vulnerable" subjects: women, young people and workers over the age of 50. Female employment has been stimulated not only by the doubling of efforts to implement the principles of equal opportunities but also by the development of better services for infants and the aged, with a view to enhancing the balance between work and family life. For aged workers, professional re-qualification programmes have been designed and, for youngsters, the focus was to provide more stable types of employment and new social security prospects⁵³.

The European Council, on the basis of the analysis contained in the Commission's 2007 report on the progress of works, acknowledged the steps that Italy has taken in order to implement the Lisbon Strategy. Specifically, the Council underlines the adequateness of the strategies and provisions proposed on the macroeconomic front (it was recognized that Italy had implemented clearer strategies that embraced all sectors of intervention with their respective synergies). On the basis of these considerations, the DPEF for 2008-2011 stresses the need to deliver tangible action in terms of fiscal sustainability by fully implementing the reform of pensions in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of the public accounting; enhancing competition in the goods and services markets; boosting regular employment and "flexicurity" in the labour market and improving education and life-long learning⁵⁴.

The current government, which has been in power since 2008, has unified the departments of employment, health and inclusion into a single Ministry dedicated to social development, thereby acknowledging the close links between health and economic prosperity, as emphasised in the recent European Commission White Paper on health.⁵⁵

The issue on which the government intends to launch a public debate is that of an opportunity-based welfare system: a system based heavily on community involvement and relationships that acts throughout the entire life cycle of citizens in order to reinforce personal self-sufficiency and to prevent the formation of need. The new logic is based on combining governmental obligations, in terms of the provision of opportunities and services, with precise responsibilities on those who benefit from the opportunities and services.

The DPEF for the years 2009-2013 delineates the objectives for the new economic/financial strategy, which is to be adopted in order to fulfil the budgetary obligations taken on by the previous legislature. The strategy is based on the subsequent four points:

- reduction of the overall cost of the State (tax equalisation), including the implementation of a fund for the most disadvantaged people in order to allow them to buy food and pay their bills
- making the functioning of government departments more effective by redesigning it within the context of a new tax scheme (Industrial Plan for Public-Sector Administrative Bodies)
- reduction of the amount of red tape that citizens are required to deal with (simplification)
- steering of the economic apparatus towards the promotion of development by removing constraints and using public levers in combination with corporate actions (interventions for development).

⁵³ *Protocollo su previdenza, lavoro e competitività per l'equità e la crescita sostenibili, (Protocol on social security, labour and competition for equality and sustainable growth)*, 23 July 2007.

⁵⁴ Council Recommendation of 27 March 2007 on the 2007 up-date of the broad guidelines for the economic policies of the Member States and the EU and on the implementation of Member States' employment policies (2007/209/CE), <http://Eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2007:092:0023:0042:EN:PDF>

⁵⁵ European Commission, *Together for Health; A Strategic Approach for the EU 2008-2013*, Com 2007, 630 def., Brussels, 23 October 2007.

4.4 Adjustment of social protection systems in response to demographic changes and their social and economic consequences

The Italian State offers people with disabilities a system of benefits and other concessions on the basis of their level and type of disability. Next to specific benefits (for invalidity, incapacity, blindness, deaf-mutism) that have different parameters in relation to the income ceilings as far as access and amounts are concerned, the State also provides people who are classified as 100% disabled and are unable to walk, with a care allowance, a measure of universal character which lasts twelve months at a time.

Table 10 - Disability pensions by age and sex. 2006 (total amounts in thousands of Euros, average in Euros)

Beneficiaries from disability pensions without accompanying grant.									
Age	Men			Women			Total		
	Number	Total amount	Average amount	Number	Total amount	Average amount	Number	Total amount	Average amount
0-19	2,734	9,725	3,557	1,961	7,029	3,584	4,695	16,754	3,569
20-34	60,069	207,500	3,454	32,526	109,402	3,364	92,595	316,902	3,422
35-49	210,872	930,769	4,414	117,127	486,103	4,150	327,999	1,416,872	4,320
50-64	467,904	4,812,788	10,286	284,260	1,703,838	5,994	752,164	6,516,627	8,664
65+	829,714	11,235,630	13,542	849,218	7,830,387	9,221	1,678,932	19,066,017	11,356
Not divisible	80	1,462	18,275	49	667	13,614	129	2,129	16,504
Total	1,571,373	17,197,874	10,944	1,285,141	10,137,427	7,888	2,856,514	27,335,301	9,569
Beneficiaries from disability pensions with accompanying grant.									
0-19	53,860	183,206	3,402	39,530	133,831	3,386	93,390	317,037	3,395
20-34	38,735	361,715	9,338	29,129	262,422	9,009	67,864	624,138	9,197
35-49	56,728	654,742	11,542	49,930	516,185	10,338	106,658	1,170,927	10,978
50-64	64,964	1,050,505	16,171	72,166	918,637	12,730	137,130	1,969,142	14,360
65+	196,091	3,545,107	18,079	415,384	6,400,824	15,409	611,475	9,945,931	16,265
Not divisible	68	1,707	25,108	46	963	20,942	114	2,671	23,427
Total	410,446	5,796,983	14,124	606,185	8,232,863	13,581	1,016,631	14,029,846	13,800
Beneficiaries only from accompanying grant,									
0-19	33,334	183,157	5,495	23,444	127,981	5,459	56,778	311,138	5,480
20-34	4,075	20,705	5,081	2,698	14,311	5,304	6,773	35,016	5,170
35-49	9,560	63,580	6,651	6,835	49,303	7,213	16,395	112,882	6,885
50-64	18,177	345,883	19,029	12,158	211,889	17,428	30,335	557,772	18,387
65+	205,556	4,173,384	20,303	527,793	8,653,592	16,396	733,349	12,826,976	17,491
Not divisible	53	1,615	30,473	52	961	18,484	105	2,576	24,536
Total	270,755	4,788,324	17,685	572,980	9,058,037	15,809	843,735	13,846,361	16,411

Source: ISFOL, based on ISTAT data, 2006

The care allowance package includes not only the benefits for fully disabled citizens but also the school attendance allowance for those aged under 18, the communication allowances for the deaf, the special allowances for the partially sighted, the care allowances for the fully blinded and the assistance and care allowances for seriously affected war invalids.

As shown in Table 10, the impact of these measures on the age groups covered by this report is considerable. In the year in question, 14.5% of the population aged 65 and over received a *disability pension without care allowance*. The same figure for the population aged between 50 and 64 was approximately 7%. This percentage was higher amongst the male population in both age groups (8.9% against 5.1% in the 50-64 age group; 17.2% against 12.5% for those aged over 65).

Lower percentages of the population received *disability pensions with allowances* (5.3% of people over 65 and 1.3% of people aged 50 and 64) and *care allowance without pension* (6.3% of the people over 65 and only 0.3% of those aged between 50 and 64). In both cases, the female population was more heavily represented in the over 65 age group. In all three categories of benefits considered here, the average annual pro capita income was higher for men.

The social security system: reform and sustainability

The current economic context has led, in Italy as elsewhere, to the introduction of elements of flexibility in the pension system, both in order to provide the individual worker with margins of choice and to meet the need for budgetary adequacy and sustainability. The adjustment of the timescales and methods of the pensions system and the raising of the age of retirement are viewed as tools that can prolong the working life of workers and modify the excessive use of early retirement.

From the 1990s to the present day the Italian pension system has undergone a multitude of alterations; it is, therefore, necessary to give a brief overview of the changes.

The right to social security is deemed as fundamental (Article 38 of the Italian Constitution confers the responsibility of supporting workers upon the relevant State bodies and institutions) and is made tangible through the transfer of wealth to, partially or fully, replace lost income or income that has not been earned.

What determines the levels of allowance, due to the model implemented as a result of Law no. 153 of 1969, is the income-related pension – i.e. an allowance calculated in relation to the received income and not on the basis of carried out contributions. This method of calculation, whose balance is based on the ratio between active employees and retirees, is neither financially nor socially sustainable, due to the progressive increase in the population's lifespan.

The pension reform (Law no. 335 of 1995) introduced the contributory model for the calculation of allowances, according to which the accumulated contributions are converted into income through the use of transformation coefficients calculated on the basis of the pensionable age and the consequent life expectancy. It was anticipated that the passage between the two models (income-related to contributory) would occur gradually and that certain workers would receive a mixed type of allowance.

On 6 October 2004, Delegated Law no. 243, 23 August 2004, came into force. The aim of this reform was to limit increases to social security spending. Based on two cornerstones (the raising of the pensionable age and the development of occupational pensions), it contained measures intended to mainly:

- render the pensionable age more flexible by seeking the prior agreement of workers who have reached the pensionable age in order for them to continue working (through the offer of incentives)
- increase “progressive pensions” through the use of part-time contracts for workers who have fulfilled the requirements for access to pensions

- gradually eliminate the ban on accumulation between pensions and income from employment, on the basis of the contribution period and the age of individuals
- support and promote the development of types of occupational pension.

In addition, Article 1, Paragraph 12, of the same Law contains a provision aimed at stimulating those who meet the pension-qualification requirements to stay on at work: those fulfilling the retirement criteria who decide to postpone their pension entitlement are granted an increase corresponding to the amount of contributions not paid into the pension system (33% of gross remuneration). Slightly more than 80.000 people have chosen this option up to now⁵⁶.

24 December 2007, marked the entry into force of Law 247, which altered the modes of postponement of the pensionable age set out in Law 243 of 2004. Specifically, after the first “small” increment of 2008 (58 years of age and 35 years of contributions), a new transition will come into force based on the criteria of “quotas” (the sum between age and contribution period). One positive aspect of this change is the definition of a minimum pensionable age that is consistently rising, although through small increments. The quotas refer to income-related pensions that contain an “excess” of income for the beneficiaries: indeed, for those with the same contribution period, the “excess” income increases as the pensionable age is reduced. The transformation through the use of increments does not alter the finish line: for example, whereas for 2013 the requirements set out by Law 243 were 61 years of age (62 for the self-employed) and 35 years of contributions (giving a total quota of 96), the new law sets the quota at 97 (98 for the self-employed), which can be reached with the combinations of 61 years of age + 36 years of contributions (62 + 36 for the self-employed) or 62 years of age + 35 years of contributions (63 + 35 for the self-employed) (Table 11). The age difference between men and women as far as access to the old-age pension is concerned has not been altered by the new legislation (i.e. 65 years for men and 60 for women).

Table 11 – Retirement requirements

Year	Age + years of pension contributions	Minimum age
Employee		
2008	-	58
From 01-01-2009 to 30-06-2009	-	58
From 01-07-2009 to 31-12-2009	95	59
2010	95	59
2011	96	60
2012	96	60
From 2013	97	61
Self-employed		
2008	-	59
From 01-01-2009 to 30-06-2009	-	59
From 01-07-2009 to 31-12-2009	96	60
2010	96	60
2011	97	61
2012	97	61
From 2013	98	62

Source: INPS

⁵⁶ ISFOL, *Rapporto 2007 (2007 Report)*, op. cit.

The financial impact of the social security measures has been estimated at 10 billion Euros for the ten-year period 2008-2017⁵⁷. These financial resources will be provided through: increased contributions on the part of contract workers (3.6 billion Euros) and professionals without compulsory pension funds (0.8 billion Euros); the harmonisation of the former special social-security funds and the implementation of four “exit windows” for old-age pensions (2.1 billion Euro); and the reorganisation of the social-security bodies (3.5 billion Euro). The provisions also include⁵⁸ an increase in the frequency of updates (from every 10 years to every 3 years) in the calculation of pension re-evaluations in view of the increase of life expectancy; setting the pension replacement rate at no less than 60% of the final salary (excluding occupational pensions).

Law no. 112, which is dated 25 June 2008, abolishes the ban on income/pension accumulation: from 1 January 2009, direct old-age pensions, paid for by compulsory national insurance contributions, are fully combinable with income from employment or self-employment. In relation to pensions fully paid for through the contribution system, early old-age pensions paid for with contribution periods lasting 40 or more years and old-age pensions paid to citizens aged over 65 (for men) and over 60 (for women) are fully combinable with income from employment or self-employment.

The social security system: occupational pensions

In economic and regulatory terms, occupational pension schemes were introduced in Italy as part of a more general reform of the pension system⁵⁹. Delegated Law no. 421 of 1992 set out the guidelines for the revision of social security regulations – i.e. the passage from a system based on a single compulsory public scheme to a system based on the following three cornerstones:

- *public pensions* (first cornerstone)
- *company – or industry-based supplementary pension* (second cornerstone), accumulated through payments into group pension funds
- the *individual supplementary pension* (third cornerstone), whereby individual workers are free to choose the most appropriate savings method.

A second reform of the occupational pension system was introduced by Delegated Law no. 243 of 2004 and by the associated Implementation Decree No. 252 of 2005, which set forth the move from Severance Pay of the Retirement System (known as *Trattamento di Fine Rapporto* or “TFR”) towards complementary pension schemes (unless the worker expressly denies his or her consent).

In Italy, therefore, complementary pension schemes can be collective or individual. Collective schemes (second cornerstone) take on the form of syndicated pension funds or contracts or collective agreements (including company agreements) that identify the beneficiaries of the fund on the basis of their belonging to a given group (company or group of companies) or to a given area. The activity of syndicated pension funds consists mainly in the collection of subscriptions and contributions, in the definition of policies for the investment of the resources (whose implementation is outsourced to third parties specialising in fund management) and in the dispensing of funds.

Individual supplementary schemes (third cornerstone) can take on one of two forms: open pension funds and individual pension policies. The former are established directly by banks, property mediators, insurance companies and asset-management companies. In relation to the assets of the company that sets them up, open pension funds are funds that are ring-fenced and used exclusively for the payment of social security allowances. The latter, in contrast, are individual pension

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ R. Cesari, G. Grande, F. Panetta, *La previdenza complementare in Italia: caratteristiche, sviluppo e opportunità per i lavoratori (Supplementary welfare in Italy: characteristics, development and opportunities for workers)*, Centre for research on pensions and Welfare Policies (CERP), Working Paper 60/07, May 2007.

schemes set up through the signature of life insurance contracts intended to provide social security⁶⁰.

Social/healthcare services and support

The Italian National Health Service, known as the *Servizio Sanitario Nazionale* or “SSN” in short, is a universal public-sector support system that guarantees health services to all citizens, ensuring access to the services available in compliance with the principles of dignity of individuals, the need for health, equality, the quality and appropriateness of treatment and the economic effectiveness in the use of resources.

The SSN encompasses a range of different levels of responsibility and governance:

- *the central government level* (Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies): the central government is responsible for ensuring that all citizens enjoy the right to health through a robust system of guarantees, the definition of the Essential Service Levels (ESLs), the definition of the budget for the SSN and careful monitoring of the dispensing of allowances
- *the regional level*: the 21 governments of the Regions and of the Autonomous Provinces are directly responsible for governance and expenditure in pursuit of the country’s health objectives
- *the local level*: the ASLs (*Aziende Sanitarie Locali* or “local health centres”) provide healthcare services either at their facilities or by purchasing services for their patients from public-sector healthcare infrastructures (healthcare trusts, university trusts, care and research institutes) or accredited private-sector facilities (health centres, surgery centres and laboratories).

The services covered by the ESLs must satisfy the criteria of essentiality, effectiveness and clinical appropriateness and must assume the following forms:

- collective health support within living and working environments
- district support, which includes basic medical assistance (including home visits), pharmaceutical assistance, specialist surgery-based support, residential and semi-residential support (health and social/healthcare support for the aged, the disabled, psychiatric patients, AIDS sufferers, etc.), the provision of prosthetics and medical aids, dietary products for patients suffering from specific conditions and thermal treatments
- hospital treatment.

Within the context of the ESLs, the following services are specifically targeted at aged people affected by invalidity and at patients who require long-term treatment:

- integrated home assistance, provided by the district nurse service of the local health centre and intended for aged people or those with psycho/physical conditions that render them invalid. Alongside regular visits from the GP, this service offers home visits by specialists, nursing and rehabilitation services, social support and, if necessary, domestic help provided by the municipal authorities
- support for aged people who are not fully or not at all self-sufficient in residential or semi-residential set ups, within sheltered facilities that provide various levels of rehabilitation and assistance, as well as treatment, recovery and functional maintenance services, including relief services.

In Italy, with the reform of Article 5 of the Constitution, the Regions have been granted exclusive responsibility over the management of healthcare, while the central government has retained a strategic function for the governance of the national welfare system through the definition of the

⁶⁰ <http://www.tfr.gov.it/TFR/FormeComplementari/>

ESLs on civil and social rights. Thus far, however, shared plans have not yet been drafted between the central administrative bodies or between the central government and the regional/autonomous governments to define the relevant national priorities⁶¹.

In the context of a social protection system that is highly heterogeneous throughout the country and which displays features of local inequality (particularly in terms of quantity and quality of the provided services), the ESLs could serve an important system-cohesion function because they could be a tool to guarantee citizens' entitlement to the fulfilment of their social and support requirements. In this sense, the ESLs display similarities to the system-convergence model used for municipal-level interventions⁶².

In 2006, a "National Observatory" was set up to monitor the impact of Law 328/2000. Since its establishment, this body has conducted research geared towards the evaluation of the priority areas of intervention⁶³. According to the observatories, the definition of the ESLs is essential and must concentrate, first and foremost, on a programme of services for early infancy, a complete programme of insurance against the risk of non-self-sufficiency for the aged and a programme to combat poverty, starting with the minimum wage scheme as implemented in other European countries and already tested in Italy.

The current government is also aiming to define the essential service levels and is working on an agreement between the central government and regional governments on the respective roles and responsibilities in this regard. Among the various points of discussion in the new Green Paper, there is the issue of the development of a new model of governance that should be able to:

*"ensure financial sustainability and to attribute the responsibilities of governance and strategic direction to a new and highly authoritative level of central government, while delegating – in line with the principles of subsidiarity, responsibility and differentiation – the delivery of services (in line with quality standards and essential service levels) to local institutions and intermediate bodies"*⁶⁴.

In specific relation to the protection and promotion of the rights of the aged, the policies implemented by the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies – with a view to ensure that the aged remain active parts of the community's social fabric and to guarantee the protection of their dignity and quality of life – intend to⁶⁵:

- support and coordinate social and cultural promotion projects and initiatives to encourage the full inclusion of aged people and to ensure their active participation in the development of society and in community networks, as well as to consolidate a positive image for the aged in the social and civil contexts
- encourage and monitor the maintenance of a minimum standard of quality and usability for social-support services
- nurture relationships with associations, voluntary organisations, groups of retirees, non-profit bodies and citizens' groups
- promote solidarity towards aged people and between generations
- support and promote the fundamental rights of aged people facing difficulties
- develop policies and projects in order to provide care to people who are not self-sufficient through, among other measures, the definition of Essential Service Levels (ESLs) and the management of the fund for the non-self-sufficient

⁶¹ Ministry for Social Solidarity, *Rapporto nazionale sulle strategie per la protezione sociale e l'inclusione sociale 2006-2008 (National report on the strategies for social protection and social inclusion 2006-2008)*, p.13, op. cit.

⁶² see also: <http://www.solidarietasociale.gov.it/SolidarietaSociale/tematiche/Livelli/>

⁶³ The Observatory is constituted by Legaautonomie (League of Autonomies), Associazione Nazionale dei Comuni Italiani (National Association of Italian Municipalities) (ANCI), Unione delle Province Italiana (Italian Union of Provinces) (UPI), Forum Nazionale del Terzo Settore (National Forum of the Third Sector) and the CGIL, CISL and UIL labour unions.

⁶⁴ Refer also to Point 4.7 (below).

⁶⁵ see also: <http://www.solidarietasociale.gov.it/SolidarietaSociale/tematiche/PersoneAnziane/>

- support activities targeted at the planning of administrative and legislative initiatives and of studies, analyses and reports on the condition of the aged throughout the country
- participating in the activities promoted by the European Union, the European Council, the United Nations and other international bodies and institutions in other countries that deal with policies for the aged.

Gender approach

Given that the link between age and gender is one of the clearest manifestations of the existence of a form of so-called *double discrimination* within the labour market, the adoption of a gender-based approach in the policies targeted at active ageing is key to understand the phenomenon. Indeed, since 1996, the European Union has been recommending that all Member States carry out “ex ante and ex post” evaluations of the policies they implement, since these policies are aimed at men and women, and as such, cannot be deemed “neutral”. In his way, the gender-based approach can be analysed in regulatory, institutional and policy terms.

At the regulatory level, the existing set of provisions on the issue is to be found in the Equal Opportunities Code, which was drafted following the issue of Legislative Decree No. 198 of 2006. The Code contains eleven laws and fifty-nine articles intended to promote measures aimed at “*the eradication of all distinctions, exclusions or limitations based on gender that compromise or impede (whether deliberately or inadvertently) the recognition, entitlement or exercising of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural and civil fields*”.

At institutional level, the Italian system has a multitude of bodies whose roles include the promotion and supervision of the application of the principle of equal opportunity (which in itself, and in line with the European “dual approach”, covers issues of equal treatment at the workplace and specific positive actions directed to the most disadvantaged gender). At institutional level, there is a specific department of the Ministry of Labour that deals with the female labour market and there is also a Ministry for Equal Opportunities which supports initiatives to benefit women and other disadvantaged groups outside the workplace. At the regional and municipal levels, there are Equal Opportunities Commissions within the executive and decision-making bodies, which make proposals aimed at bridging the gender gap.

The guarantee of equal gender opportunities is being tangibly monitored as part of the supervision of the implementation of the ban on gender-based discrimination at the workplace. At institutional level, this function is exercised nationally, regionally and provincially by the Equal Opportunities Advisor. This public official is appointed through the issue of a decree by the Minister of Labour in partnership with the Minister for Equal Opportunities, and the advisor is responsible for its supervision and promotion (see below). For each advisor, a substitute is also appointed. Those appointed have specific skills and longstanding experience in dealing with issues of fairness, equal opportunities and the labour market. The mandate of the advisors lasts for four years and can be renewed only once. The sphere of activity of the advisors was sanctioned by Law no. 125 of 1991 and subsequently by Legislative Decree No. 196 of 2000, which defined the advisors’ roles and responsibilities in greater detail, assigned a salary to guarantee their active input, created the possibility for Positive Action Plans within the public-sector administrative bodies and formalised the existence of an official group organisation, the “Network of Equal Opportunities Advisors”.

There is no hierarchical relationship between the national, regional and provincial levels; rather, there are different levels of responsibility and different geographical areas of reference. Specifically, the national advisor intervenes on general questions of national relevance and coordinates and oversees the national network of advisors. By the 31st of March of each year, the national advisor drafts a report to the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Equal Opportunities on the work he or she has carried out and on the work carried out by the national network. The regional advisors deal with questions of regional relevance. In addition, every two years, in accordance to Article 9 of Law 125/1991, they prepare the data for the report on the situation of personnel, which

is necessary in order to highlight situations of gender imbalance. By the 31st of December of each year, the regional advisors submit a report on the work they have carried out to the bodies that appointed them. The provincial advisors carry out their functions at local level. By the 31st of December of each year, the provincial advisors submit a report on the work they have implemented to the bodies that appointed them.

The main functions of the equal opportunities advisors cover two principal areas: supervision and promotion. The supervision function is executed in terms of:

- possibility to instigate judicial proceedings, before the relevant court, on behalf of the interested party (who claims that it was discriminated at work for reasons of gender) or collective claims (set forth on the same basis)
- monitoring of the implementation of the principle of non-discrimination, particularly through the acquisition of information on the status of recruitment and salaries and, more generally, on working conditions, with a view to highlighting situations of gender imbalance.

Specifically, Article 9 of Law 125/91 makes it compulsory for companies with more than 100 employees to submit a gender report on their personnel twice a year. This tool makes it possible to spotlight imbalances, since the report clearly shows the situation with reference to male and female employees in the over 45 age group.

The advisors' spheres of activity in terms of their promotional function involve:

- promoting Positive Action projects
- contributing to the preparation of Positive Action Plans to be drafted by the government bodies
- verifying the results of the Positive Action projects that have been implemented
- supporting active policies on employment and training
- implementing equal opportunities policies by public and private organisations operating in the labour market
- providing information and training on issues of equal opportunity and on the various forms of discrimination
- providing input to ensure that the policies of territorial development are coherent with EU, national and regional guidelines on equal opportunities
- collaborating with the employment assessors of the local bodies and the various equal opportunities bodies.

As such, advisors must undertake all useful initiatives to guarantee the respect of the principle of non-discrimination, including:

- promoting the implementation of equal opportunities policies by public and private organisations that operate in the labour market
- raising awareness and exchanging information on good practices in line with the territorial development policies and with the EU, national and regional guidelines
- supporting positive action projects and monitoring project progress
- identifying priorities and intervention approaches to roll out the culture of mainstreaming
- taking part in regular meetings with trade unions, equal opportunities commissions and similar bodies, industry associations and local women groups
- conducting research with a view to identifying targets such as long-term unemployed females, at whom vocational training programmes should be aimed
- verifying the results of projects that have been implemented
- promoting informative campaigns to encourage the culture of equal opportunities at the workplace, at schools, within women groups, in organisations, etc.

In terms of policy, the approval of the protocol on “social security, employment and competitiveness” and the 2008 Budget Law witnessed the introduction of a number of provisions that are set to have a significant impact on gender issues. Certain measures are geared towards limiting the negative effect of discontinuous employment in terms of social security. For example, the reform of the system of totalization of security contributions; the enhanced conditions for the redemption of higher education for social security contribution purposes; coverage during periods of non-employment for employees with fixed term contracts; and the gradual increase of the rate for contract workers. The protocol also considers the issue of the balance between work and family life. The new regulations on part-time work, which are deemed to be an important tool for facilitating female employment, include the possibility for employees with specific duties of care for others to adjust their working times, subsequent to the prior consent of the employer⁶⁶.

4.5. Enabling labour markets to respond to the economic and social consequences of population ageing

In 2005, 8,190,000 people aged between 50 and 64 were estimated to be employed, retired or seeking work⁶⁷; out of those 8,190,000, 37.7% were women. Women are, therefore, under-represented in the labour market, particularly those in the 50-64 age group; women actually constitute 47.5% of the working-age population as a whole, and there are more women than men aged 15-49 in employment (13,410,000 women as opposed to 13,172,000 men). It is, therefore, particularly among the most senior age group, where the female presence within the workforce is limited, since it falls to its lowest levels in the 55-59 group.

Among the older workforce, 55.3% declare themselves to be employed, 38.7% to be retired and 6.1% to be in search of employment. The figures for retirement and job-seeking are higher for women than men. In terms of geographical distribution, the over 50 population in northern and central Italy includes more retirees, whereas the rate of unemployment is higher in the south. The more qualifications candidates aged 50-64 have, the more likely they are to be employed; in contrast, it is highly unlikely that those with a university degree or a higher education degree will find themselves unemployed – a category into which only one in a hundred falls – while 4.2% of people over 50 with only a high school diploma and 7.5% of people with only a secondary school diploma are looking for jobs.

The difference of the number of employees with the number of self-employed people is one of the features that most clearly embodies the differences between age groups. Among people over 50, 65.3% are employees (a status that is more common for women and for those who are qualified beyond the level of the secondary school diploma). Self-employment is most common in the north of Italy, where 39.6% of people over 50 are self-employed, whereas the figure in the south of the country falls to 28.1%. In comparison to the occupational status of the working-age population, it is clear that self-employment becomes a more popular option as people get older, with the highest frequency of self-employment being found in the 60-64 age group; within this group, one out of two people is self-employed, whereas the overall figure, for those aged 15-64 is only 27.2%. Another difference worth commenting concerns the “authenticity” of self-employment from one phase to another during a person’s life cycle: while self-employment is often required from workers in younger age groups (i.e. under 29 years of age) by their employers or from the clients they deal with (47.3% of cases), this phenomenon is far rarer among people over 50 (9.5%). The requirement to

⁶⁶ Presidency of the Council of Ministers, *Nota aggiuntiva al Rapporto sullo stato di attuazione del Programma Nazionale di Riforma 2006-2008 (Additional note regarding the Report on the state of Implementation of the National Reform Programme, 2006-2008)*.

⁶⁷ ISFOL, *PLUS – Indagine campionaria nazionale sulle caratteristiche e le aspettative degli individui sul lavoro (PLUS – National sampling survey on the characteristics and expectations of individuals at work)*, ISFOL, The Books of the European Social Fund, Rome, 2006.

work during fixed hours is also more common for younger workers (48.6% of those aged under 30 but only 19.8% for people over 50), as is the requirement use the employer’s equipment. In addition, the fact that a very low percentage of more mature workers would like to change their status to become permanent employees (17.3% of cases, compared to 54.5% of people belonging to the youngest age group) makes it possible to state that people over 50 who are self-employed are more “genuinely” so than those who are only self-employed because they are in the process of their first employment experiences. In confirmation of this assertion there is the fact that 71.2% of self-employed people over 50 would consider it “impossible” to become employees, whereas only 41.1% of those under 30 are of the same opinion.

As far as sectors of activity are concerned, the sector of services is the most prominent among more mature workers, representing 63.7%. With respect to the working-age population as a whole, people over 50 are more highly represented in schools, healthcare and the government departments. Moreover, in these fields, more jobs are taken by women than by men (Tab. 12). Those with secondary school certificates or with higher degrees are more likely to work in these fields, and almost 85% of all graduates over 50 are employed or self-employed in the sector of services, with peaks in the fields of education, health and public-sector administration. In the manufacturing sector, which is the second most important for people over 50, more men are employed than women: industrial work tends to be carried out by people living in the north of the country and who have lower levels of education. Agriculture – which employs 7.6% of workers in the mature and old age groups, a higher percentage than the one of younger age groups – is a more common occupation in the south, accounting for 11.1% of the overall working population; in this case also, the workers generally have low educational levels. In the construction sector, a male-dominated industry, mature employees are evenly spread across the country, albeit more in the south and less in the centre. In contrast, only 13.8% of people over 50 are employed in commerce.

Tab. 12 - Employed population over 50 years of age by sector, sex and level of qualification (%)

	Sex			Qualification level		
	Men	Women	Total	Isced 2	Isced 3	Isced 5
Agriculture	7.5	7.7	7.6	11.2	2.4	1.2
Industry	3	0.2	2	1.8	3.1	0.5
Manufacturing	21.3	15.2	19.2	23.7	14.3	7.2
Building	9.7	0.2	6.3	7.8	3.6	5.1
Services	57.1	75.8	63.7	54.2	75.5	84.9
Not specified	1.4	0.9	1.2	1.3	1.1	1.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: ISFOL PLUS 2005

The professional position of those reaching the end of their careers is markedly different from the position of those who have only recently entered the world of employment or are in the process of consolidating their career. Entrepreneurs and company directors are more commonly found among people over 50 (15.9% compared to the overall average of 10.2%), and the same applies to academic, scientific and highly specialised professions (11.6% compared to 10.9%), to artisans and specialized workers (21.9% compared to 19.7%). People over 50 are less well-represented in technical positions and administrative jobs (-3.2% compared to the overall average) but are above average in terms of number of non-qualified workers (+2.1% more people over 50 employed compared to the other age groups).

In terms of *employment contracts*, there are no clearly discernible differences between the figures for people over 50 and the overall averages, albeit people over 50 are less likely to have temporary

or part-time jobs. Indeed, these two categories respectively represent only 6.1% and 12.8% of the overall population and respectively only 2.3% and 8.3% of people over 50.

Temporary work is more common among women (including those of the older age group), particularly in the southern regions and especially among those with low educational levels; in many cases (53.8%) temporary work is seasonal or depends on manufacturing peaks with employers offering only temporary contacts which are reviewed on a regular basis (82.5% of cases). 8 out of 10 workers aged over 50 would wish to be taken on permanently, but that prospect is considered unlikely or impossible by a very high percentage of people over 50 (85.7%), compared to 54.6% in the younger age groups.

Support of employability

In Italy, there is currently a wide range of different types of measures to support the active ageing of the workforce within the specific regional programmes, in which employment services play an important role.

The old Employment Offices were no longer able to provide adequate responses to the needs of the labour market and have been substituted by the Public Employment Services (*Servizi pubblici per l'impiego* or *SPIs* in Italian), which are under the responsibility of provincial authorities. In this way, the former Employment Offices have been redesigned to become providers of employment support services that work in order for supply and demand to meet. The Public Employment Centres (*Centri Pubblici per l'impiego* (CPI) in Italian) offer guidance to people in search of employment by providing them with information on the world of work, employment regulations and opportunities, as well as training paths directed towards entry or re-entry into employment. At the same time, new intermediary bodies have been identified: private employment agencies, universities, educational institutes, chambers of commerce, employment consultants, bilateral bodies, etc. As such, the concept of the public monopoly over employment services has been replaced by a culture of service provision whereby the user has the possibility to choose the most appropriate forms of support to employment.

In specific relation to public-sector services, a number of “disadvantaged” target users have been identified, including the aged, workers who have become redundant, women and disabled people, who are the objectives of policies on employment inclusion.

At present, there are 538 Employment Centres located throughout Italian provinces, while a little less than half of them offer specific services and support to mature and aged workers who are at risk of losing their jobs or are already unemployed.

Tab. 13 – Public Employment Centres providing services addressed to workers aged over 50 (%). 2006

Geographic area	
North-West	58
North-East	46.6
Center	51.7
South	37.5
Islands	8.6
Italy	41.1

Source, ISFOL, SPI monitoring 2006

The first significant interventions for the promotion and entry into work on the part of vulnerable categories started to be implemented in 2001. The annual monitoring of employment services’ activities, conducted by ISFOL (the Institute for the Vocational training of Workers) for the first

time in 2002, was the first of the projects specifically aimed at mature workers. Other projects have since followed, including the “Over 40” initiative, in support of people whose jobs have become redundant and their return to work, a project which ended successfully in May 2004. The initiative, managed by the Employment Centres of the province of Savona, involved the balancing of skills, the drafting of individual projects, training courses, placements and apprenticeships. The project entitled “Networks of Integrated Guidance Actions for Unemployed Adults and Adults at Risk of Social Exclusion” (RAIO) was also launched in 2002. It was promoted by the Municipality of Verona, with the involvement of Employment Centres throughout the province. Here as elsewhere, the interventions involved guidance meetings, skills balancing, training, apprenticeships and placements. In 2003, interventions for mature workers were concentrated above all in the central and northern regions of Italy; the Trento provincial authority offered this target group the opportunity of a temporary job at cooperatives in receipt of funds for the implementation of projects of public-usefulness (urban and rural embellishment, the safeguard of cultural and artistic assets, the reorganisation of archives).

Over subsequent years, other important projects were implemented, including the Investing in People project (within the context of the Equal initiative), promoted by the Macerata provincial authority. The project was implemented in three phases between July 2005 and June 2007: the first phase focused on identifying the skills and capacities of workers aged over 45; the second concentrated on the implementation of the intervention plan, as agreed with companies, through courses on the management of human resources; and the third saw the organisation of an international conference on the results of the project.

The issue of the employment of mature workers is strictly linked to that of the interventions to be made in situations of employment crisis, which most often occur because aged workers become redundant. Since 2003, there have been a series of structured actions aimed at tackling company crises. Alongside traditional activities of mediation between the parties and the provision of allowances, there has been exponential growth in terms of outplacement operations and in terms of the definition – at regional level and in accordance with the Ministry of Labour – of new social shock absorbers to counter the effects of crisis situations. The regional authorities located along Italy’s Adriatic coast are the most active in this regard: one of the most interesting cases is that of the Veneto region, which used the employment fund to finance urgent interventions on employment policy for specific cases of company collapse. These interventions focused on re-qualification and the outplacement of workers through entitlement to the extraordinary earnings supplement (CIGS) or redundancy payment. The projects involved medium-sized and large companies in the mechanical engineering, textiles and agro-industrial sectors, while the Employment Centres offered technical support in filling the information on the characteristics of the user base and the local employment situation.

It is also important to take into account the active presence of outplacement and other private agencies working on behalf of companies in many areas – the agencies have considerable experience in dealing with specific interventions, many of which are organised in partnership with the local SPIs. According to a recent survey by business newspaper *Il Sole 24 Ore*⁶⁸, private employment agencies in Italy hold around one million CVs of people aged over 40, 200,000 of whom are aged over 55. These are people who are looking for work through private intermediaries; in many cases they are already in employment but are seeking a different job. Those who appear most often are men with limited educational levels and with experience of working as manual labourers, clerks, in the retail sector or in warehouses. Many of them sign up for training courses provided by the agencies themselves in order to become more competitive.

The *modus operandi* of certain provincial authorities is aimed more towards prevention – an approach that has seen them implement actions before situations of crisis have been given a chance to emerge. In these cases, the support process involves a crucial phase of local networking and the acceptance of mutual commitments between the agencies, the companies, the social partners and the other local operators. This, for example, is what occurred in the province of Catanzaro, where a

⁶⁸ Barbieri F., *Un milione di over 40 cerca lavoro in Agenzia (1 million over 40 searching for work through employment agencies)*, *Il Sole 24 ore*, 26 March 2007.

round table was set up comprising a number of companies that intended to reduce their workforces. A highly structured type of preventative partnership policy, called “Anteverto” was implemented in the province of Reggio Emilia⁶⁹.

As stated above, the widest array of innovative interventions was made available by decentralised administrations at the benefit of people whose jobs were becoming redundant: in certain cases, such as in Perugia, the public service dealt with facilitating the transfer of employees from large companies to small companies by placing the companies in contact with each other. In other cases, the focus was to identify the staff members whose jobs were at risk of becoming redundant in advance. In this context, the experience of the provincial authority of Sassari was particularly interesting: workers from four producers of cables and electronic components were reinserted into work in other companies where the skills of the newly hired staff will be tailored to match the new productive requirements.

Concerning recent active ageing measures adopted by regions under new ESF programmes (2007-2013), it is possible to differentiate policies that are (strictly) “training-based” from those “of territory-wide importance” (where there is a mix of interventions that involves not only “vocational training” but also other active employment policy, such as guidance, care worker services and re-motivation).

Last, amongst the national employment initiatives, the so-called “Progetto Quadri” is noteworthy. Promoted by the Ministry of labour in collaboration with its Italia Lavoro agency, and coordinated by regional authorities, this trial project, aimed at 900 unemployed people aged over 40, involved guidance sessions, the analysis of training requirements, consultancy sessions and support for self-employment.

Raising participation rates

Participation rates can be raised both by creating new employment and by reintegrating those who are temporarily out of work or at risk of redundancy. Two illustrative initiatives are highlighted below.

- The funding of projects for the trialling of new types of flexible work (part-time, “flexi-time” arrangements), in accordance with Article 9 of Law no. 53 of 2000, requested of a company in order to meet the specific requirements of its staff. This project led to experiment innovative management and organisation within single companies or within the area as a whole. Based on the same legislation, workers have also been able to utilise training programmes aimed at their reinsertion into the labour market after having taken parental leave. This measure is geared towards preventing redundancies or, if they were to be unavoidable, towards ameliorating job competences. Amongst women, maternity leave and the difficulty of finding a suitable personal/professional balance are the main reasons for the abandonment of work⁷⁰.
- “Pari”, a national programme funded by the Ministry of Labour and implemented on a regional basis, is specifically targeted at encouraging workers (benefiting or not social supports) re-entry into the workplace. Men and women over 50 are both considered specific target groups. After in-depth competencies evaluation, the programme leverages territorial networks (through the Employment Service system) to support and facilitate the coupling of companies and workers.

⁶⁹ Gilli D. and Landi R., *Indagine campionaria sul funzionamento dei Centri per l'impiego 2005-2006 (Sampling survey on the functioning of Employment Centres 2005-2006)*, ISFOL, Monografie sul mercato del lavoro e le politiche per l'impiego (Monographs on the labour market and employment policies), No. 1, 2007.

⁷⁰ Plus – *Indagine campionaria nazionale sulle caratteristiche e le aspettative degli individui sul lavoro (PLUS – National sampling survey on the characteristics and expectations of individuals at work)*, op. cit.

The desire of companies to maintain and improve employment has been expressed since 2006 through the so-called “Programme/Objective” that is intended “to promote female workers in levels/roles/positions of responsibility within organisations, to consolidate female-run businesses and to create integrated networking projects”. This approach has involved activities and experiments of good practices in the creation of training paths aimed at the acquisition of management skills. These actions are aimed at helping to balance work and family life, to eliminate gender discrimination and to eliminate wage gaps between men and women within organisations.

In the wake of these experiments has come the project entitled “Bollino Rosa – SONO: Stesse Opportunità, Nuove Opportunità” (which roughly translates as “Pink Stamp – Same Opportunities, New Opportunities”), a system for the “gender certification” of companies that adopt non-discriminatory organisational regulation and practices.

Similarly, the policy programme of Public Employment Services⁷¹, at both the regional and provincial levels, endeavours to achieve full gender integration. The different types of interventions – as defined by the regular monitoring exercises conducted by ISFOL on the progress of the service reform projects – can be summarised as follows:

- measures directed towards the *balancing of work and family life* (aimed both at women and at employers), consisting essentially in the alteration of working times and on support services for female workers during critical times (convalescence, maternity, etc.)
- measures aimed at *returning to employment after a period of inactivity*, consisting of guidance and training projects and re-entry through placements and apprenticeships
- measures geared towards the promotion of a *culture of gender equality*, which often see the active involvement of Equal Opportunities Advisors and aim to bolster the participation of women in the economic and social life of the area
- measures targeted at encouraging *female entrepreneurship*
- the so-called “Women’s Desks” (*Sportello donna* in Italian), which (under a variety of names) serve as information points and also as hubs within the services network at the benefit of women, making use of multimedia contact channels with the user base (website, call centre, etc.).

Given the variety of the types of intervention, in most cases Italian Employment Centres adopt a multi-faceted approach that takes multiple categories of interventions into consideration (half of the provincial authorities, through the Employment Centres, offer a substantial set of services targeted at women), as well as the implementation of multi-objective projects, whose aims are relevant to many of the intervention categories cited above.

The objective of retaining a greater number of “aged” workers within the labour market is another feature of regional planning initiatives. In the past, this group was not targeted by specific initiatives. Subsequently, the ongoing demographic changes have forced the regional authorities to place increased importance on their active-ageing policies – to the point, in fact, that the issue of mature workers has been set as a priority in the latest European Social Fund plans.

In line with the decisions of the European Social Fund 2007-2013, the Regional Operating Programmes (ROPs) foresee provisions, within the Adaptability Axis or the Employment Axis, for specific measures aimed at promoting increases in the activity and employment rates, with a particular focus on interventions for aged workers. The analysis of the ROPs, makes it clear that they contain numerous interesting initiatives targeted at promoting preventive measures as well as a number of customised measures aimed at reducing unemployment amongst redundant older workers and in industrial crisis contexts. In this regard, it is important to underline the fact that most of regional authorities consider it essential to pursue the full integration between employment and training policies and to reinforce their Employment Centres to enable them to deliver a wide range of customised and integrated services aimed at people and companies.

⁷¹ V. Cardinali (Ed.), *Maternità, lavoro, discriminazioni (Maternity, Employment and Discrimination)*, ISFOL, Rome, 2006.

Resources of approximately 298 million Euros have been earmarked for the entire period covered by the programme. To pursue the programme's objectives, an extensive array of measures has been conceived for companies engaged in continuous training initiatives and/or that retain mature workers, as well as for life-long learning paths for aged workers, which are intended to allow them to upgrade and refresh their skills.

Forms of flexible employment and gradual retirement

Over recent years, a number of legislative initiatives have encouraged aged workers to remain at work; most of them promote flexible types of work and step-by-step retirement processes.

In the "regulatory glossary" contained within Legislative Decree No. 276 of 2003, which implements Law no. 30 of 2003, the definition given of the "disadvantaged worker" refers to the EU regulations, which place "any person aged 50 or over, who is out of work or about to lose their job" in the category of those in need of assistance in the labour market⁷². Specifically, it is worth highlighting the functions of the following aspects of the aforementioned legislation.

The work-entry contract: this contract aims at providing opportunities for entry or re-entry into employment for certain categories of individuals – including unemployed over 50 – through an individual project that tailors the individual's skills to the given working environment that he or she is about to enter. This is a temporary contract (with a maximum duration of 18 months and no option to renew) that includes specific training objectives.

Intermittent work: a contract through which the worker makes himself or herself available to the employer to carry out non-continuous work. This type of contract is aimed at, among others, people aged over 45 whose jobs have become redundant or whose names have been added to redundancy or job-seekers' lists.

The promotion of employment through Social Cooperatives: in this regard, the legislation envisages the incentivisation of the employment of disadvantaged or disabled workers through the placement of orders to the same social cooperatives where the workers have been inserted.

*Additional work (lavoro accessorio)*⁷³: this special type of occasional activity is intended above all to oppose black-market labour and to insert the most vulnerable groups into the world of labour ("vulnerable groups" are considered those who have been out of work for more than a year, housewives, students, retirees, disabled people and those who are in rehabilitation)⁷⁴. Workers who intend to take this option must make themselves available at the relevant Employment Centre or at the regional authority's accredited bodies. Employers and families intending to use additional workers or short-time family services (as in gardening, domestic assistance for schoolchildren) must acquire "vouchers" (whose current fixed value is 10 Euros) at authorised vendors. To cash in the voucher, the worker must return it to one of the authorised centres.

Delegated Law no. 243, 23 August 2004, which reformed the pension system, provides a mechanism to encourage workers to remain at work, even after they have fulfilled pension requirements. Private-sector employees who met pension requirements by the 31st of December 2007, were given the option to postpone their pensions and, instead, to receive the amount equivalent to the employer's social security contributions (i.e. 32.7% of their gross remuneration) in their paycheques, without any increase of their paid contributions.

Law no. 127, 24 March 2006: in order to guarantee the employability of adult workers who reached the age of 50 on or before the 31st of December 2006, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

⁷² EU Regulation No. 2204/2002, 12 December 2002.

⁷³ Legislative Decree 276/2003 (Articles 70-74) and subsequent modifications in Legislative Decrees 251/2004 and 35/2005.

⁷⁴ The sectors and activities to which this type of contract can apply include: small, infrequent domestic jobs, including childcare and care for aged people with illnesses or disabilities; private supplementary tutoring; small jobs such as gardening, cleaning and maintenance of buildings and monuments; staging of social, sporting, cultural or charity events; collaboration with public-sector bodies and voluntary associations in order to carry out works that promote solidarity or to implement emergency actions, such as those required due to unforeseen incidents or natural disasters; brief, occasional harvesting work, carried out by students and retirees.

promoted – in partnership with its own technical agency, called Italia Lavoro – an experimental income-support programme intended to find re-employment for 3.000 workers on the basis of the agreements signed on 31 March 2006, by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the most representative organisations of workers and businesses.

In order to promote the “*creation of new employment and the reduction of the number of people over 55 leaving the world of work*”, the 2007 Budget Law provided the opportunity for a “youth/elderly changeover, in the form of agreements that would promote “solidarity between generations”, thanks to which it would be possible to transform the contracts of workers aged over 55 to a part-time status and, at the same time, to recruit unemployed young people aged under 25 (or 29 if graduates) to cover the hours no longer worked by the older employee⁷⁵ .

Last of all, mention must be made of the use, by mature and aged workers, of types of part-time employment that facilitate the gradual passage from full-time work to full retirement. In Italy, especially over recent years, there has been a growth in *part-time work*: to the point, in fact, that in 2007 it accounted for 13.6% of total employment. In 2007, there were 3,163,000 part-time workers in Italy, 109,000 more than in the previous year; the fact that the majority of these workers are female is aligned with the situation in other European countries. In terms of trends, the growth of part-time contracts has been increasing faster than employment as a whole – a phenomenon that has been consolidated over the course of the last ten years or more⁷⁶ .

Looking at the distribution in the use of part-time employment by age group, it emerges that the percentage of part-time + 45 men is the same as that of the overall male working-age population, whereas the number of women occupying part-time jobs tends to decrease with age.

Table 14 - Part-time employment in Italy by age and sex. 2007 (absolute values and %)

Age	Men		Women	
	A.V: (.000)	% of employed	A.V: (.000)	% of employed
15-24	102	11.1	178	30.7
25-34	176	5.2	626	26.1
35-44	155	3.5	945	31.8
45-W	267	5	715	22.2
Total	699	5	2,464	26.9

Source: ISFOL elaboration based on ISTAT data

If, on the other hand, we look at the distribution by age of part-time workers who chose to work fewer hours *on their own free will*, it emerges that older people are more likely to go down this road. It can be safely assumed that there is ample scope for greater numbers of mature and aged workers to transfer to part-time contracts.

⁷⁵ The relevant implementation decrees need to be drafted before the regulation can be applied.

⁷⁶ ISFOL Report 2008.

Table 15 - Part-time employment in Italy on voluntary basis by age and sex. 2007

Age	Men		Women		Total	
	A. V. (.000)	% on total part-time	A. V. (.000)	% on total part-time	A. V. (.000)	% on total part-time
15-24	53	51.9	82	46.3	135	48.3
25-34	66	37.8	312	49.9	379	47.2
35-44	54	34.7	592	62.6	646	58.7
45-W	180	67.2	477	66.7	656	66.8
Total	352	50.4	1,463	59.4	1,815	57.4

Source: ISFOL elaboration on ISTAT Labour force survey, average 2007

4.6 Promotion of life-long learning and adaptation of the educational system in order to meet the changing economic, social and demographic conditions

Promotion of life-long learning

Despite the fact that the Lisbon Strategy has been adopted as a key element in the drafting of policies and strategies on development, as well as the fact that at national level the reforms of the education and training system are pressing ahead, there is a clear discrepancy between the figures on the ageing of the population and the figures on participation in life-long learning.

In relation to the participation of adults in educational and training courses, it should be stressed that there is a delay in Italy with respect to the Lisbon objective for 2010 (12.5% of adults in the 25-65 age group participating in life-long learning courses); in fact, in the year 2006 Italy only reached 6.1%, compared to the European average of 9.6%.

According to ISTAT data, the number of people on educational and training courses in the 15-75+ age group is approximately 5,800,000, of whom: 61.1% are in the 15-24 age group; 1.8% are aged 55-64; 0.6% are aged 65-74 and 0.2% are 75 or older. The adults and aged people who participate in life-long learning tend to be those with degrees and diplomas, whereas those with low levels of scholastic education continue to be under-represented.

The life-long learning initiatives targeted at adult user bases include: those within the regional training programmes, especially those co-funded by the European Social Fund; those run by Local Life-Long Centres for Adult Education, which are delivered through educational establishments of all types and include night classes; university courses; courses run by the so-called Popular Universities and the Universities for the Third Age.

The data that has been drafted makes it possible to gain an overview of participation in education on the part of people over 50, but the data does not provide information on the participants who are retired.

In relation to the initiatives co-funded by the ESF, a survey⁷⁷ revealed that participation of people over 50 in life-long learning courses stands at approximately 9.8%. This national figure hides some important regional variations: in certain regions, especially in southern Italy, there are policies that focus more on providing training opportunities to younger people rather than on the needs of the more mature members of the population.

The data supplied by the Ministry of Education shows that, in 2005-2006, Local Life-Long Centres for Adult Education provided almost 21,000 courses across the entire country, involving a total of 425,000 people. 67% of these were short, modular courses on basic literacy (52% of participants), 19.6% were courses for foreigners aimed at their linguistic and social integration (17% of

⁷⁷ ISFOL, *Politiche regionali per la formazione permanente – Primo rapporto nazionale (Regional policies for life-long learning – First national report)*, The Books of the European Social Fund, ISFOL, 2003.

participants), and 13.4% were courses which offered qualifications upon completion (31% of participants).

Lastly, there are the Popular Universities and the Universities of the Third Age, which are located throughout the country and provide services that are enthusiastically received by participants across all age groups.

No data is available on the methodology adopted in the IT literacy courses for aged people, although it is interesting to note that participation in these courses is relatively high amongst the target group we are examining, particularly when policies promoting active involvement have been implemented. An interesting regional case study was conducted on the experience of the Liguria regional authority, which promoted participation on the part of adult and aged people in IT literacy courses by implementing the “IT for the Third Age” project, run in partnership with the local social services associations. The data that profiles the users of all of the courses across the region indicates that 54.9% of the participants were aged over 51 – much higher than the national average of 9.8%.

In terms of training provided to professional trainers working in adult education, the tendency has been to reinforce their skills not only in teaching the course content but also in empowering the participants, making the most of their life experience and offering motivational support, with a special focus on those classed as “vulnerable” in social, professional or employment terms. The training projects tend to include a number of recurring themes: becoming familiar with the most widely used technical languages and technologies, being open to innovation and developing the capacity to manage group dynamics, to interact with other cultures, to refresh one’s own knowledge, to “learn how to learn”, to evaluate one’s own progress and to work within a network of local “actors” operating in the field of adult education, especially training centres, career-guidance agencies, employment centres, businesses, trade unions and associations.

In the period 2005-2008, the Ministry of Labour, in collaboration with the regional authorities, Italian universities, ISFOL and social partners, implemented the “Online Life-long Learning System” (*Sistema permanente di formazione on line* or *SPF on line* in Italian). SPF on line is a national project, accessible to all free of charge, which provides ongoing e-learning services over the internet (www.xformare.it). The purpose of the initiative is to promote the upgrading/re-qualification of those involved in the school system, the vocational training system and the labour market by creating a catalogue of more than 200 courses available online. At the end of July 2008, the project had more than 136,000 registered users, and an experimental three-year degree course in Training Sciences was commenced at a number of universities throughout the country, using online training methods based on the same training package.

Education and employability

The levels of education and skills possessed by the older age groups are clearly at odds with the levels for the younger groups – a fact that underlines the progress that has been made over previous decades to ensure higher standards of education across the board⁷⁸. Amongst those aged over 50, the most common educational qualification is the primary school leaving certificate (34%), closely followed by the secondary school leaving certificate. 64.8% of “aged” respondents had not attained any qualification above the secondary school leaving certificate, compared to the figure of 49.4% for those in working age and 45.7% of the under 30. Moreover, after the age of 39, the percentage of graduates begins to fall, dropping sharply for those aged over 50.

The reasons why aged people choose not to continue learning are radically different from those given by younger generations: for 65.7% of people over 50, family problems and responsibilities was the reason given (4 out of 10 stopped studying to take up a job and only 19 out of 100 left work due to poor performance). In contrast, less than 30% of younger people left education for family reasons, whereas more than 35% stated that poor academic performance was the main reason for their withdrawal. In terms of levels of education, the progress made by people over 50 with respect

⁷⁸ ISFOL, *PLUS – Indagine campionaria nazionale sulle caratteristiche e le aspettative degli individui sul lavoro*, (*PLUS – National sampling survey on the characteristics and expectations of individuals at work*) op. cit.

to the previous generations is remarkable. Other kinds of skills, which are not necessarily formalised through the award of certificates, include linguistic fluency in other languages and the use of computers and the internet. These skills are far more common among the younger generations than among their more senior counterparts. In particular, only 40% of people over 50 are able to compose texts and documents on a PC, even fewer (34.6%) are comfortable surfing the web, only 25.9% are able to read written English (half of the average of the population being examined here) and less than 10% are able to carry out a simple telephone conversation in English. One of the most important national channels for providing public support to life-long learning is Law no. 236 of 1993, which is now supported by the Joint Inter-professional Funds, which are private organisms – promoted by the social partners – that manage resources deriving by legal obligation and directly earmarked for training workers.

The same piece of legislation sets out a particular type of support for workers aged over 45, which also includes the provision of individual vouchers. This focus on people over 45 has led to increased levels of participation on the part of more mature workers, even if the results achieved thus far leave some room for improvement. For example, in what is one of Italy's most important regions in terms of the numbers of workers and businesses – the Veneto – around 28% of people over 45 were receiving vouchers in 2006-2007; while this figure is on the rise, still it can certainly be improved. To that end, a number of Joint Inter-professional Funds offer priority support to training plans that apply to a large proportion of workers aged over 50.

Since 2003, the regulations have stated explicitly that among the priority targets are workers with low educational levels who run the risk of being entirely shut out of the labour market. To this end, workers on income support, people whose jobs are becoming redundant and those who are unemployed can be placed on training programmes within companies that intend to take them on.

At regional level, there is a growing trend towards the integration of the various sources of funding (ESF, Joint Interprofessional Funds, Law 236/93, Law 53/00) with a view not only to optimising the resources relating to the needs of the different areas and economic sectors but also to plan support initiatives for workers who are generally not involved in education and who belong to the most vulnerable categories, both in social terms and as far as their educational and professional background is concerned. In addition to the above, in 2005 the Ministry of Labour launched the trail of the so-called *individual learning account*, which is a pre-paid Personal Training Credit card, in order to encourage individual participation in life-long learning. The trail was an inter-regional project with input from three regions (Tuscany, Umbria and Piedmont). In 2008, in the 5 provinces engaged in the project, 3,051 cards were issued for certain categories of unemployed people (those with diplomas/degrees, immigrants – with women given priority in both cases) and/or those with temporary employment contracts.

The trail required the Employment Centres to play a leading role, working in partnership with training bodies, provincial government departments and companies. The model allocated funding for a training programme aimed at the entry into the labour market: the beneficiary is given a Personal Training Credit card, pre-paid with 500 Euros, which the provincial authority, through the Employment Centres, tops up on the basis of the individual's participation in training initiatives, up to a total of 2,500 Euros over two years. Initial results indicate that more than 90% of the participants who completed their course went on to find employment. The possibility of rolling out this model for the integration of workers with low levels of education to other areas is currently being discussed.

Education and gender issues

In relation to education and the labour market, efforts to promote the principle of equal opportunity – which is enshrined in the policies aimed at the allocation of new structural funds – have made the most of the experiences accumulated through the implementation of the planning strategies for 2000-2006 and they have also consolidated the commitment to combat discrimination. A number of strategic guidelines have been set out to promote gender equality, including the requirements to:

- ensure full participation on the part of women in the education and training systems
- promote a culture of equal opportunities for all and respect for human rights
- support the objective of “Enhancing Human Resources” for future generations, through actions that involve women in the family environment.

4.7 Striving to ensure quality of life at all ages and maintain independent living including health and well-being

Integrating ageing issues into specific policies

Policy interventions in Italy have dealt with active ageing issues paying particular attention to the dimension of “extension of active life” or “active retirement”. This approach has considered the full exploitation of older people’s personal resources and competences as central and intersected it with the elevation of the age retirement.

The extension of active life is not only considered as a period in which older people, free from work or family duties, can engage in leisure or cultural activities. It is also viewed as an occasion to involve them as resources for the community by means of their participation in the life of civil society. In this regard the aim is *“to strengthen institutions and instruments for the offer of cultural and training opportunities to older people willing to participate in voluntary associations dealing with social, cultural or environmental issues. This kind of opportunity should be encouraged and supported also at the advantage of adult persons who, nearing the age of retirement, wish to engage in study programs (including those of higher educational level) in order to fulfil their cultural and professional curriculum, either to widen their knowledge and skills or in order to complete their personal growth”*⁷⁹.

In the 2006 – 2008 period the Ministry of Social Policies worked at providing a system of “social credits” to be obtained by older persons not properly as compensation for their activities addressed to the community, but rather as a social acknowledgement of it. Social credits should also include goods and services which older people would usually purchase (e.g. transportation, food etc.). For the planning and implementation of these activities, voluntary and charity associations, already relying on the social engagement of older people, should be involved, also by means of agreements with local authorities and public service providers. These interventions will be framed within the system of social services in accordance with the reform of social assistance (Law 328, 2000).

Supporting voluntary organizations will facilitate social aggregation as a tool to contrast the risk of social exclusion, while also society as a whole will benefit by the building of a public image of older persons as “producers and builders of social relations and goods within the local community”, thus overcoming the traditional concept of retired workers.

Access to health services

In Italy the State is exclusively responsible for the definition of essential levels of services (LEA) offered in relation to civil and social rights which must be guaranteed throughout the national territory; Regions are exclusively responsible for social policies, health service organization, education and training. Local Authorities are in charge of planning and providing social services, house and residential assistance.

Given the exclusive role of the State in defining essential levels of service offer in relation to civil and social rights (which represent a unifying factor of the social citizenship and a tool for counterbalance the diverging dynamics displayed by different geographic areas) the task of integrating social and health interventions at the citizen level belongs to the Health District, an organizational branch of Local Health Authorities, which provides base level assistance.

⁷⁹ C. Donaggio – Under-secretary of State of the Ministry of Social Policies, *“Focalisation sur les opportunit s: le vieillissement actif”*, speech at the UNECE Leon Conference, 7 November 2007.

Activities and services specifically addressed to older people, including household assistance, are part of this domain and are considered the key in order to ensure the connection between hospital treatment and territory.

Regions design social and health policies through annual or biennial plans. Policies and strategies expressly addressed to the elder population are described within these plans. The provision of a national level overview concerning the attention reserved to older people, based on objective indicators such as the amount of resources, is extremely difficult. Sometimes it is complicated to highlight financial resources specifically addressed to the elder population. Programming documents are numerous and different as far as their format is concerned, while the largest part of services is managed at the municipal or at the Health District level.

It can be stated that a number of regional policies are directed towards the elderly population that is considered a “fragile” group, while other ones identify households with older people as their main target group, aiming at facilitating assistance within the family. Given that almost all Regions affirm the central role of the family in providing assistance for non autonomous aged persons, some of them (notably North-western and Southern ones) strongly support the care provided within households, while others address the self-reliance of the aged as a major goal.

The goal of avoiding institutionalization is coupled with the redistribution of resources between hospital treatment and territorial services, in favour of the latter. From this point of view, the residence of older people within the family is pursued by integrating household assistance with domestic health treatment in many Regions. The overall picture includes regional cases showing a good integration of services, based on the case manager methodology, and others where the process of organizational networking is still developing.

In October 2008 the National Agency for Regional Health Services (AgeNas) presented the first outcomes of a research project concerning the “unified point of access” (PUA)⁸⁰. The research, realized in collaboration with a number of Regions, produced a shared document which contains the main organizational characteristics of a typical PUA as an innovative model for the integration of the managing and professional aspects of social and health services at the local level.

According to AgeNas, PUAs have been active for more than 180 days in 5 of the 8 Regions involved in the project. The reported catchment area was usually of 30,000 inhabitants and more, exceeding 50,000 in several cases. It is believed that PUAs can contribute to improve service performance in terms of greater equity in access, uniformity of LEA and of greater attention reserved to the growing number of fragile target groups, such as aged people.

Training of Care Workers and Social workers

The training offer for the personnel of local welfare systems dealing with aged people and/or the non autonomous population (notably care workers and social workers) is programmed and implemented on a regional basis.

Care workers, who provide assistance at the household level and often support the whole family, are trained through short courses (80 – 150 hours), resulting in regional certification and eventually official registration, where implemented by Local Authorities. Social workers, in general working in hospitals and residential institutions, attend annual courses (1,000 hours) after compulsory education, eventually followed by specialization courses on assistance and care support for aged and disabled people.

The training of personnel engaged in voluntary and charitable associations can be publicly funded both at national and regional level through public calls for tenders or specific agreements.

Many training initiatives promoted by associations of patients suffering invalidating or degenerative pathologies are addressed to households members and realized within self-help groups.

⁸⁰ Structured in a front office – providing counselling – and back office aimed at service networking and case management on a multidimensional basis, PUAs call for an organization based on the integration and sharing of assistance protocols and provisions among various services and professionals.

Training and professional development projects for social workers and care workers are predominantly funded within vocational and continuous training programs at regional level.

Awareness raising in elder persons with regard to self-care, health promotion and prevention of disease and disability

Several information campaigns have been promoted within the framework of the National Health Plans in relation to the prevention of disease and disability (e.g. campaigns against smoking, for diffusion of flu vaccinations, for the prevention of metabolic and cardiovascular diseases, for the prevention of climate related risks), health problems, diseases and behaviours that should be adopted in order to improve public health at the national level. The interventions included the use of flyers and booklets for citizens and health workers, media campaigns (involving national newspapers, periodicals and free press, radio and television) regarding specific diseases (e.g. diabetes or cardiovascular diseases), information desks and free screenings in public places.

These campaigns were realized bearing in mind that correct information on health problems and diseases helps adopt healthy behaviours, avoid risk factors and improve the quality of life. For example, the campaign “Health of the elderly and the correct use of drugs” was aimed at conveying the message that, even in advanced age, some self care behaviours such as correct nutrition, physical activity and specific ways of spending free time can help maintain good health conditions.

Table 16 - Persons who undertook preventive medical examinations during the last four weeks by age. 2005 (%).

Age	Total (a)			Med check-up (b)			Specific examinations (b)		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
45-54	5	6.6	5.8	37.6	26.4	31.1	52.5	62.7	58.4
55-64	6.3	6.9	6.6	43.3	39.6	41.3	45.6	50.7	48.4
65-69	8.3	7.1	7.7	49.5	50.9	50.2	39.2	34.4	36.8
70-74	7.8	7.6	7.7	48.9	49.5	49.3	43.1	39.3	41.1
75-79	8.5	7.8	8.1	53.6	58.5	56.4	38.9	32.4	35.2
80+	8.7	9.6	9.3	57.7	72.7	68	31.5	20.4	23.9
Italy	5.6	7.3	6.5	49.2	41.3	44.6	42.7	49.9	46.9

(a) on 100 persons with the same characteristics

(b) on 100 persons who undertook preventive medical examinations with the same characteristics

Source: ISFOL elaboration on ISTAT data

The campaign diffused its spots on national TV and networks, identifying the programs with a high proportion of people aged over 60 in their audience. The editorial work was centred on the good health of elderly people, dealing with the recurring issues of geriatric medicine (correct nutrition, degenerative diseases, correct use of drugs, potential of rehabilitation etc.), with an eye at conveying a vision based on the guidelines for a healthy life and the adoption of a good life style. The main objective was to raise awareness regarding the importance of delaying the process of ageing and of supporting the psychological and physical balance, of keeping the mind in activity, of participating in social, family and local community life (parish, neighbourhood etc.), of attending cultural activities and training courses, of hanging out with friends and of taking care of children and grandchildren.

Financing health and social services for persons of all ages

According to the available data, that was presented in point 1.4⁸¹ of this document, Municipal and other Local Authorities (i.e. public organizations with the best knowledge of the needs of citizens) spend⁸² 0.4% of the national GDP in order to provide social services, with large differences between the North and the South.

The amount of resources reserved to aged persons is 23.4% of local social assistance spending. 76% of these resources are spent by individual Municipalities; 17% by associations of Municipalities and 7% by Health Districts with Municipal proxy. Home assistance is the most diffused service and includes social relief services such as personal and home care, preparation of meals and telephone help lines.

Local Authorities undertake numerous initiatives aimed at the empowerment of the assistance network for aged persons, sponsored even by private organizations. For example, the project “Angeli di Roma” (Angels of Rome) in Rome, is aimed at providing assistance during the summer season, while the project “Nonna Roma” (Grandma Rome) provides assistance and socialization opportunities.

Local Authorities spend (all categories of users) approximately 11% of the social services budget for home services, 70% of which are destined to aged persons. Almost 457,000 aged persons (over 65) make use of these services, with an average per capita spending of 870 Euros. There are meaningful differences at regional level in this case also.

Local Authorities destine more than 21% of overall spending to residential care services. 59% of this budget is spent for the direct management of residential structures, also in collaboration with private or non profit organizations. The remaining 41% is destined to the payment of boarding charges of citizens hosted in private structures. At any rate, 44% of residential care service spending is destined to aged people, for the most part in northern and central Regions. Large differences are reported as far as the average per capita spending at regional and local level is concerned. The National Health Services also assigns part of its budget to older people living in residential institutions, with great differences to be found among the various geographical areas.

The National Fund for Social Policies supports the Regions in the implementation of essential levels of services aimed at overcoming economic and social inequalities and at facilitating the exercise of civil and social rights.

Table 17 – National Fund for Social Policies by Region. 2002 – 2007 (absolute values in Euros)

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Abruzzo	18,909,834	21,108,898	24,511,709	12,697,065	18,996,574	18,261,223
Basilicata	9,492,354	10,853,710	12,304,382	6,373,670	9,535,896	9,166,764
Calabria	31,724,898	41,301,496	41,123,125	21,301,779	31,870,422	30,636,728
Campania	77,014,313	103,772,555	99,829,137	51,711,493	77,367,581	74,372,707
Emilia Romagna	54,417,335	60,745,641	70,538,000	36,538,684	54,666,950	52,550,810
Friuli Ven. Giulia	16,921,620	18,889,470	21,934,503	11,362,073	16,999,240	16,341,205
Lazio	66,348,939	75,290,951	86,004,238	44,550,195	66,653,285	64,073,158
Liguria	23,291,912	26,387,239	30,191,940	15,639,425	23,398,753	22,492,995
Lombardy	109,159,547	122,178,458	141,497,120	73,295,508	109,660,268	105,415,354
Marche	20,639,815	23,040,062	26,754,182	13,858,666	20,734,491	19,931,865
Molise	6,153,673	7,335,331	7,976,645	4,131,902	6,181,900	5,942,601

⁸¹ ISTAT, *La terza indagine censuaria sugli interventi e i servizi sociali dei Comuni – Anno 2005 (The third census survey of social interventions and services of municipalities)*, cit.

⁸² According to ISTAT in this case “spending” means funds already allocated by individual or associated Municipalities for the year 2005. This spending includes personnel, leasing for buildings or equipment and the purchase of goods and services. In cases where services are provided by other organizations (e.g. non profit organizations) the spending is represented by the cost of outsourcing. The expenditure does not include the fees paid by users in their access to National Health Services.

P.A. di Bolzano	6,354,100	7,093,032	8,236,448	4,266,480	6,383,247	6,136,153
P.A. di Trento	6,512,509	7,269,863	8,441,784	4,372,844	6,542,382	6,289,129
Piedmont	55,399,871	61,842,439	71,811,604	37,198,411	55,653,993	53,499,645
Apulia	53,824,175	67,328,454	69,769,121	36,140,405	54,071,069	51,977,995
Sardinia	22,838,383	25,696,413	29,604,057	15,334,902	22,943,144	22,055,022
Sicily	70,862,100	80,953,332	91,854,385	47,580,571	71,187,148	68,431,517
Tuscany	50,566,167	56,446,613	65,545,957	33,952,805	50,798,116	48,831,738
Umbria	12,665,163	14,138,021	16,417,108	8,504,062	12,723,259	12,230,745
Valle d'Aosta	2,226,537	2,485,466	2,886,130	1,495,015	2,236,750	2,150,167
Veneto	56,138,023	62,666,432	72,768,427	37,694,045	56,395,531	54,212,478
Total	771,461,268	896,823,876	1,000,000,000	518,000,000	775,000,000	745,000,000

Source: ISFOL elaboration on Ministry of Labour data

Regions subsequently allocate such resources among Local Authorities for specific sectoral objectives and interventions and in order to co-finance their social services programs. However, from the year 2002 to the year 2007, the regional allotment of the Fund was discontinuous (see table 17), causing some problems in the planning activities of local policies. Therefore, there appears to be a need to ensure an improved equity in this funding procedure, through work on a shared set of social indicators, in order to allow equal opportunities in the access of services by local populations.

The contribution of the European Social Fund

In the 2007-2013 ESF programming period, great importance is given to ageing issues through incentives for accessing care and assistance services and specialized home care provider training. Besides, within the sphere of the “Progetto Obiettivi di Servizio” (Service Objectives Project), Southern Regions will develop care services for non autonomous aged persons and their household members, at the purpose of raising the percentage of aged people benefiting from home care services from 1.6% to 3.5% in 2013.

4.8 Mainstreaming a gender approach in an ageing society to support families that provide care for older persons and promote intergenerational and intra-generational solidarity among their members

Gender mainstreaming represents one of the two branches of the European *dual approach*: the first being the introduction of the gender view in all policies, included active ageing; the second being the promotion of actions specifically designed to bridge the gap of particular gender disadvantages. *Mainstreaming* is based on a national data collection and analysis system (ISTAT) broken down by gender, for every matter of interest, going from the labour market to demographic issues. Specifically, the link between gender and age is analysable within a five-year multipurpose sample survey which contains a specific module on the use of time by men and women.

With reference to the second area, of specific action, a structure of rules which refer to “positive action” such as Law n. 125/1991 and the law n. 215/1992 on female entrepreneurship must be pointed out. These measures are now included in the Act also known as “Code of Equal Opportunities”, i.e. Law n. 198/ 2006.

The Italian institutional system provides for CPO (Equal opportunities committees) in support of the adoption of the gender approach, along with a number of other structures in favour of equality. CPOs in companies are responsible for the transmission of gender instances within corporate bargaining. Instead, from a legislative point of view, regulations transposing EU Directives, such as the Pollastrini-Nicolais Directive of July 2007, which defines specific interventions/actions in Public Administration, are worth mentioning

The legislation on parental leave (Law no. 53/2000 and Act No 151/ 2001 improved by the interventions of Budget Law 2006 and 2007) is included in the social protection policies, aimed at ensuring the equal participation of men and women in social protection systems.

Since 2006, an extraordinary plan for childcare has been launched, an observatory of family issues has been established (at the Ministry of Family) and a Plan for Equal Opportunities has been implemented (at the Ministry of Equal Opportunities).

This plan has already funded many projects on different topics regarding the female segment of the population. This regulatory framework – along with the array of planning experience – have invested resources and actions on social and cultural organization, placing conciliation tools side by side with interventions in favour of awareness and social communication.

As far as the world of enterprises is concerned, the actions were aimed at financing women qualification, training of replacement staff, granting of vouchers for conciliation, which ensure the beneficiary women a higher qualitative and quantitative level of participation.

In the specific sphere of enterprises, the “Bollino Rosa” SONO (Pink Stamp – Same Opportunities, New Opportunities) experience of 2007, a system of gender certification of companies which typically display “virtuous” behaviours and do not adopt discriminatory practices as far as a number of indicators, such as policy schedules, personnel policy, pay policies, system of rewards, conciliation, support to care activities, information and communication activities for the promotion of gender, are concerned.

Among these areas, those most thoroughly analysed were the *conciliation between working life and extra professional life*, in order to highlight the variety of instruments and interventions which could “make a difference”; the used *contractual terms*, analyzing the gender impact determined by contractual flexibility and the presence of possible employment stabilization factors; the *Strategies for change*, intended as work organization analysis elements in a dynamic perspective; the *Trade Union relations*. This aspect is particularly important from a dual point of view: on one hand, the matters entrusted to bargaining which can lead to gender impact; on the other, the negotiation dynamics and their impact on working conditions; the *Safety and health* issues. Along with health and social policies they constitute a major theme in the description of work conditions. A topic which was addressed in order to highlight the specificity of gender; the *Value chain*: an aspect which aimed at extending the analysis beyond the company perspective and to highlight the influence of relations deriving from the membership in a production chain.

4.9 Support for families that provide care for older persons and promote intergenerational and intra-generational solidarity among their members

In reference to the assistance for aged persons, it is possible to affirm that a number of initiatives and laws are directed towards the promotion of conciliation forms which aim at improving the living and working conditions of women, through forms of support to the responsibilities of care. In this case, however, the problem of care is not related to specific age groups, but includes disabled persons, children and aged people.

With regard to intergenerational solidarity, there are some projects which intend to reach the purpose through the activation of places or services of encounter and exchange of views or through forms of company reorganization.

On the more specific matter of disability – in the sphere of the legislation of reference (Law n. 104/1992, amended by Law n. 53/2000 and Legislative Decree n.151/2001) – monthly 3 day permits are foreseen, provided that there is cohabitation, or that assistance is continuous and exclusive, in order to encourage assistance from parents or relatives of people with severe disabilities. These permits are paid and covered by figurative contribution, as well as biennial extraordinary leaves paid and covered by figurative contribution, for assistance to family members with serious disabilities.

In the 2003 – 2005 period, a fund of 15 million Euros was destined by the Ministry of Labour, from its resources, to Local Bodies – in the form of 50% co-financing – for the implementation of innovative and experimental projects regarding action plans with social and welfare value. Particular attention was reserved to facilities dedicated to people with severe disabilities lacking adequate family support; the initiative, named “Dopo di noi” (after us), was intended to promote conditions of greater autonomy and independent living of persons. At the end of the year 2004 the structures that were being funded were 38⁸³.

Finally, the “Fund for non self-sufficiency” – which has the goal of improving the assistance of non self-sufficient persons that require continuous support – allocated 100 million Euros for the year 2007, which were essentially shared by Regions and Autonomous Provinces⁸⁴, and respectively 300 and 400 million Euros for the years 2008-2009.

4.10 Promotion of the implementation and the follow-up of the Regional Implementation Strategy through regional cooperation

In order to support the implementation of the “Active ageing strategy”, as well as RIS monitoring, the *National focal point* intends to use the cooperation of many networks – regional, national and transnational – who work in Italy and are active on the topic. Some of them are subsequently described. As far as the Italian transnational and interregional networks of cooperation are concerned, the “*European Co-operation Network of ESF Managing Authorities, their Intermediate Bodies and Central Authorities*” (ESF Co.Net) created with the goal to concretely promote the European social Fund strategies – particularly social and welfare policies – and to deepen the benchmarking approach in the different Countries and Regions of the EU, deserves to be mentioned.

On 21 February 2008 a Memorandum of Intent which activated a network of cooperation that aims to sustain and support the realization of several European Social Fund Operational Programs (2007-2013), through the exchange of information and good practices, and the sharing of staff and projects, was signed in Vienna. The agreement was signed by the autonomous Province of Trento, leader of the network, by Alto Adige, Tuscany and Sicily (for Italy), and by other nine European countries: Austria, Finland, Germany, Northern Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Slovenia and Belgium.

The protocol foresees the establishment of a permanent dialogue among the managers of the different interventions, in order to exchange information, experiences and good practices, i.e. to activate positive processes of interaction. In particular, the nine European Countries intend to implement common and shared actions, as well as the exchange of personnel and users, in order to create a European model of reference.

Two international Seminars were recently held (June 2008) in cooperation with the *OECD LEED Centre for local development of Trento*, in the context of the six-month work program of the ESF Co.Net, as subsequently described.

- *New frontiers for social inclusion* (Trento), where the issues of social inclusion, poverty and immigration, as well as weak or disadvantaged target groups, including aged workers, were analyzed. In the same occasion meaningful, potentially transferable, experiences were also shared through the presentation of *best practices*.
- *Active ageing and the fight against age discrimination* (Rome), the second step of a discussion on active ageing, which had commenced the previous year during the international Seminar named “Active ageing: labour, lifelong learning, welfare. Exchange of ideas”. The conference, which among others was attended by ISFOL (Institute for the Professional Training of Workers) and by the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Milan, was focused on new knowledge in the development of local strategies related to

⁸³ Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, *Rapporto di monitoraggio del Piano d'azione nazionale per l'inclusione sociale 2003 -2005 (Monitoring report on the National action plan for social inclusion 2003-2005)*, op. cit.

⁸⁴ The Decree of allocation is of 16 August 2008.

population ageing, with a particular attention towards the European economic and social systems.

As far as the transfer and the diffusion of good practices as strategic tools of innovation, dissemination, enhancement and *mainstreaming* are concerned, the “*National Catalogue of Good practices of the European Social Fund and of the EU Programs and Initiatives implemented in Italy*” (2000-2006) deserves to be mentioned. The project, promoted by the General Direction for the Policies on Vocational Steering and Training” of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, was established as an answer to the need of disposing of a specific informative tool, at the national and regional level, regarding implemented good practices, with the objective of offering a useful aid to policy makers in the analysis and evaluation of what has been implemented and of what is being carried out, and, at the same time, a tool of support for future programming.

The area of reference for the analysis of the Good Practices inserted in the “National Catalogue” is represented by the European Social Fund, by the national and regional operational Programs, by the interventions realized through the EU Equal initiative, by the “Innovative Actions” under Art. 6 of Reg. CE 1784/99 and by the EU “Leonardo da Vinci Program”.

Among the criteria adopted to identify the Good Practices, the innovativeness and the completeness of the implementing logical framework, the degree of reproducibility and portability, the degree of sustainability over time, the presence of useful lessons and ideas in relation to the objectives of the 2007-2013 planning, can be found.

Among the projects of European territorial value specifically directed to active ageing, involving international partners, the following are noteworthy.

AWARDS - Ageing Women workers Aimed at Renewing Development towards to Sustainable life, promoted and managed by the Province of Piacenza with an area of intervention that, besides for Italy, also includes Spain. The project aims at developing innovative measures for aged workers, especially in the fields of occupational strategies, training, education and social inclusion, by integrating policies at regional level and improving vocational training, work organization and entrepreneurial culture.

TACITUS – Valorisation and transmission of non-formal learning, promoted and managed by Confindustria Veneto SIAV, with an area of intervention which, besides for Italy, includes Belgium, France, Germany, Iceland, Portugal and Romania. The objective is to improve the accessibility and the quality of life long learning. The project has created a transnational network at the European level, acting as a permanent centre for the dissemination of competences, aiming at the realization of specific training methodologies for selected target groups, as well as a model of intervention calibrated on small and medium enterprises (PMIs) for adjournment of the aged workforce’s skills and generational interchange. With such tools, entrepreneurs, manager, technicians and workers, of small and medium sized enterprises, can find the conditions to transmit the skills that can give continuity to the enterprise and to young colleagues, thus safeguarding production and employment.

SAM - Senior Age Management, promoted and managed by CEFORALP and Confindustria Veneto SIAV, with a area of intervention that includes France, Germany, Italy, United Kingdom, Spain and Hungary. The Project has the purpose of supporting the extension of active life, i.e. of encouraging the permanence of aged workers in enterprises, so as to make companies think and act in a logic of age management, offering them the opportunity of acquiring and making the most of competences and skills that would otherwise be lost with the retirement of the workers.

ACTING - Active ageing for Competences transfer and training, promoted by IFOA (Institute for training of business operators) which aims at improving and testing methodologies and practices at a transnational level, in order to preserve, develop and transfer the patrimony of professional skills of older workers; promote their adaptability and employability through the acquisition of innovative skills; make institutional partners more aware of the capabilities of aged workers and of policies for active ageing.

NO OUT “Conveying older workers’ experience into social work”, promoted from the Province of Mantova with an of intervention which, besides for Italy, also includes Greece and Holland. Since in the three nations concerned the Institutions in charge of Labour Policies display difficulties in

specializing the offer of support to the demand of labour for aged workers, the project aims at developing an innovative model, applicable to the different local realities of Europe.

This model consists of positive and promotional actions at the purpose of monitoring the occupational situation of aged workers, of answering to their needs through innovative services, of encouraging a cultural change in citizens, in the entrepreneurial world and in workers themselves in order to enhance age as an experience that should be used.

IPERTOOLS, Innovative Proposals for an Experience of Research Training for Over 50 Organization of Labour and Solidarity, promoted and managed by ENAIP (National Corporate Acli – vocational training) Friuli Venezia Giulia, with an area of intervention that includes Germany, Spain, Holland, Denmark, Lithuania, Hungary and Italy. The project intends to define an articulated model of intervention at the regional level, replicable at the European level, in order to face the problem of the “significant rate of inactivity of people over 50 years of age” in the Friuli region, to prevent and reduce the phenomenon through interventions in business organizational models, in employment services and in welfare systems, in order to adopt policies which are able to anticipate and avoid crises and their consequent human, economic and social costs.