

7 – LAW AND ORDER

This chapter contains data regarding the Sicilian judicial system, gathered from the main surveys of both criminal law (crimes and persons reported to the judicial authorities, inmates, convicted persons, suicides and attempted suicides) and civil law (appeals, protests, bankruptcy, separations). On the basis of the latest available data (relative to 2009) the number of lawsuits arriving at the Regional Administrative Courts (TAR) in Sicily totaled 5,343 (-2.9% over 2008), corresponding to 9.7% of the national figure. In Sicily the main areas of recourse were in “construction and town-planning” (25.6%), but “state employment” also accounted for a considerable percentage (12%). There was an analogous distribution on the national scale. In the period 2005-2009 the number of law-suits arriving fell by 19.7%, going from 6,659 to 5,343. A similar falling trend in the same period was to be observed with regard to pending law-suits, which went from 102,859 to 78,453 (-23.7%) and concluded law-suits, which fell by 5,143 going from 11,144 to 6,001.

There were 134,503 legal protests served in 2011, a fall of 2.3% over 2010, and representing 7.2% of the national figure (1,385,416). The total value of the protested bills of exchange amounted to 265,401,000 Euros, with a decrease of 5.4% when compared to 2010. Over the period 2007 to 2011 there was a fall of 7,849 units in the number of protests served, but there was an almost continuous falling trend in the overall number of protested bills of exchange over the same period, going from 314,010,000 Euros in 2007 to 265,401,000 Euros in 2011. A total of 72.5% of the protests served in Sicily were for IOUs, money orders and accepted drafts, 2.7% for non-accepted drafts and 24.8% for certified chèques.

The greatest number of protests served were concentrated in the Province of Palermo (33,547, amounting to a total of 55,812,000 Euros) followed by the Provinces of Catania (26,362 protests) and Messina (16,953 bills of exchange protested).

In 2010 (last available figures) there was a slight drop in the number of applications for separation granted in Sicily (-0.6%) when compared to the previous year. These totaled 6,656 and represented 7.5% of all applications for separation granted in the country as a whole (which amounted to 88,191 in 2010, an increase of 4.41% compared to 2009). The number of separations effected in Sicily between 2007 and 2010 rose by 15%. The analogous national figure showed a lesser increase of 8.4%.

With regard to penitentiary criminal law statistics, on the basis of the latest available data from 2010, there were 191,040 reported crimes for which the judicial authorities started criminal proceedings (+2.6% compared to 2009). This figure represents 7.3% of the corresponding national figure and 49.7% of

these cases involved robbery (totaling 94,966), an increase of 2.7% when compared to 2009. At the Regional level, the latest available figures show that, in 2010, 26.8% of the crimes reported took place in the province of Palermo (51,194 crimes reported), followed by Catania, where the number of crimes reported totaled 49,370.

Over the period 2006-2010, there was a rise (+2.9%) in the overall number of crimes reported to the forces of law and order in Sicily. Data regarding reform and penal establishments shows that on Dec 31, 2011, there had been a 3.7% fall (compared to the previous year) in the number of inmates (totaling 7,521) in Sicilian prisons. Of these 2.6% were women and 21.6% foreigners (of whom there were 1,624), representing a 12.4% fall over 2010.

During the year 2010 there were 208 recorded suicides in Sicily (+6.1% compared to 2009, representing 6.8% of the national figure) and 210 attempted suicides (with a 4.5% fall over the previous year). Ragusa was the province with the greatest number of reported suicides (13.3 per 100,000 inhabitants), whilst Trapani boasted the lowest number of suicides (0.5 per 100,000 inhabitants). However it was in the Regions of the Centre-north of Italy that the highest suicide- and attempted suicide-rates were recorded (73.9% and 74.7% of the corresponding national total respectively).

Glossary

Bankruptcy: judicial procedure through which the property of an insolvent entrepreneur is taken from him and, as far as possible, shared out equally among his creditors.

Convicted person: person tried, convicted and sentenced, for a crime.

Court of Appeal: collective body organised in civil and criminal sections. There is a seat in every chief city of the district. It has the civil and criminal authority to pass judgment on impugnations against those court sentences which can be appealed against.

Crime: an offence for which the principal penalties are imprisonment, fines and a series of lesser penalties.

Judicial authority: the authority administering penal, civil and administrative justice.

Offence: crime or violation provided for by Criminal law and by special

criminal laws.

Penal action: activity carried out by Public Prosecutor when there are no grounds for the request to have the offence dismissed (Criminal procedure code)

Protest: a formal declaration of refusal to accept a bill of exchange on the part of the drawee, or the failed payment of the bill of exchange or chèque.

Regional Administrative Court (TAR): first-degree administrative judicial body with its seat in the chief city of the Region.

Reported person (against whom a penal action has been instigated): is someone, against whom the Public Prosecutor formulates a formal charge or requests that the person (where the author of the crime is known) be indicted.

Further reading

Publications

Italian Statistical Yearbook– 2012 - ISTAT
Statistics for Civil judgments– 2004 - ISTAT
Statistics for Criminal judgments– 2004 – ISTAT

Internet:

<http://giustiziaincifre.istat.it/>
Informational territorial system regarding Justice

<http://www.giustizia.it/>
Justice statistics
Juvenile justice statistics
Penitentiary administration statistics

www.poliziadistato.it/
Statistical data about:
Criminality
Anti-drug services
Highway services
Post and communications

Railways

www.ristretti.it

Area of study– Statistical surveys– “Data about convicted persons and prisons”

<http://www.istat.it/>

Italian Statistical Yearbook - year 2012 – Chapter 6: “Law and Order”

Datawarehouse I.Stat