

5. Social welfare and social assistance

Analysis of data regarding social welfare, social security and voluntary work, especially in times of economic crisis, interests a wide range of subjects (individuals, families, the worlds of education and vocational training, the labour market, pension schemes); it consents an adequate and pertinent assessment of economic and social policies as well as the quality of social welfare in Italy.

The data with regard to the hours authorized by the Redundancy Fund (Cassa Integrazione Guadagni) for salary integration in the industry sector in Sicily, confirmed, in 2012, a rising trend previously recorded in 2010. In fact, the hours authorized by the Redundancy Fund amounted to 17,036,217 (+22.2%), representing the highest figures recorded in the last five years. From 2008 the total number of hours authorized by the Redundancy Fund had been continually increasing, above all between 2008 and 2009. The final balance for the last year shows an increase in extraordinary interventions (+68.5%), whereas ordinary interventions show a fall of -23.8%, being linked to problems of a short-term nature. Because of a greater industrial presence, 38.3% of the hours authorized and recorded in 2012 regarded the Province of Palermo, followed by Catania and Messina, with figures of 26.5% and 10.8% respectively. During the five-year period 2008-2012 the number of hours granted in the industrial sector rose overall by 265.6%, and more specifically, by 215.7% for manual workers and by 736.1% for white-collar workers.

In the year 2012, there were all together 28,805 accidents officially reported, a fall of -10.1% over the figures for 2011. As a corollary of population size and the respective economic sectors, data showed Ragusa (670) to have had the highest number of accidents in the agricultural sector, whilst in Palermo and Catania had the highest incidence of reported accidents in industry (5,348 and 5,656 cases respectively); in the State-linked sector, Messina recorded the highest number of reported accidents (573), followed by Palermo (549), in 2012. Between 2008 and 2012 the number of reported accidents in industry fell by 21.2%, by 12.6% in the primary sector and by 3.5% in the State-linked sectors.

In 2011 there was a slight increase in the number of pensions paid out in Sicily when compared to 2010. These totaled a little over 1,725,000 units, for an overall expenditure of a little over 17,000 million Euros (+3.8% over 2010). The number of IVS (invalidity, old-age, survivors) pensions totaled 1,170,000, a fall in number (4,508 units; -0.4%), when compared to 2010, but not in value (a rise of 554 million Euros; +3.9%).

The number of social assistance, civil and social disability pensions also

increased (+2.2%), whilst there was a slight drop in both the number (-3.4% over 2010) of so-called indemnity allowances (resulting, above all, from accidents at work, occupational illnesses and war pensions etc.), and in terms of financial expenditure (-1.1%). Between 2007 and 2011 the number of pensions paid out in Sicily rose by 1.3%, accompanied by a much greater rise of 15.2% in actual expenditure.

Examination of the data by type for the five-year period reveals a marked increase in social welfare pensions (both in number and total outlay), and a drop in IVS pensions and indemnity allowances. With reference to the resident population in 2010, 58.3% of pensions paid out in Sicily regarded the Provinces of Palermo (24.2%), Catania (18.7%) and Messina (15.4%).

At the end of 2010 (last available data), in Sicily there were 914 residential-care homes, with a total of 26,150 beds and 22,737 residents (more than 55.4% of whom were elderly). The residential structures in the Region represent almost 7.1% of the total in the country as a whole, which, with 424,705 beds, provided accommodation in 2010 for 394,374 persons.

Glossary

IVS pension – pension for invalids, old-age and war-veterans

Pension: a periodic and continuous benefit paid out individually by public and private companies after: reaching a specific age; one's annuity maturing following payment of contributions for a set period of time; failed or reduced working capacity due to congenital and subsequent infirmities; death of a protected person; special merit for services to the nation.

Provincial administrations: local bodies whose functions consist in looking after the interests and promoting development over a large inter-municipal area or the whole Province.

Redundancy fund: an instrument through which the Government can intervene in support of businesses, which, finding themselves in difficult straits, have been forced to cut down or temporarily suspend their operations. This intervention consists in INPS allocating benefits (as substitute for salary) to workers suspended from work, or subject to a reduced work-load in terms of hours. The Redundancy Fund interventions are of two kinds:

1) Ordinary management

- ordinary interventions, i.e. those linked to a company's temporary difficulties

- extra-ordinary interventions, i.e. those arising from the temporary suspension of business activity owing to re-structuring, re-organisation or re-conversion of the company or when there is a state of crisis, which might be of social relevance for the employment situation;

2) Special management

- special management for the building sector, pertaining to construction and stone-working enterprises (including craftsmen). Extra-ordinary interventions include the number of hours authorised to those working in commercial outlets of industrial companies in a state of difficulty.

Social assistance: sector in which social benefits are linked to inadequacy of economic resources or to situations of hardship (disability, neglect) and are financed through general taxation.

Social benefits (European system of accounts, SEC 95): current transfers, in money or in kind, allocated to households to provide benefits covering costs of unexpected, specific events (illness, old-age, death, invalidity, unemployment).

Further reading

Publications

Italian Statistical Yearbook 2013- ISTAT

Social security and social assistance statistics – Pension payments – 2010 – ISTAT

Final balances of Social Security companies– 2011 - ISTAT

Internet

www.istat.it

Residential welfare and social security in Italy - 2006

Italian Statistical Yearbook 2013 – Chapter 4 “Social security and social assistance”

Second census and survey on social operations and services in town councils – 2004

Work, social security and social welfare causes – 2000-2004

Social-assistance and social welfare residential homes

www.inps.it

Statistics data-banks– Pensions: general statistics

www.fivol.it

Data-banks about voluntary organizations in Sicily

www.lavoro.gov.it

Longitudinal sample of activities and pensioners (CLAP): updating of data-base and future developments

www.disabilitaincifre.it

System of computerized statistics regarding disabilities