

## **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).

Since 1997 Istat has been monitoring lawsuits regarding the activity of the Regional Administrative Courts (TAR). In the year 2009 there was a move towards a New Computerized System of Administrative Justice (Nsga), which comprises a new and more extensive criterion for classification than the system used previously and applied in the previous editions of this yearbook. Therefore the data published here regarding the activity of the TAR cannot be compared with that of the previous editions.

In 2011 the number of lawsuits arriving at the Regional Administrative Courts (TAR) in Sicily totaled 6,600 (+8.3% over 2010), corresponding to 11.9% of the national figure. In Sicily the main areas of recourse were in “construction and town-planning” (18.6%), but “authorizations for concessions, on state and Regional property” also accounted for a considerable percentage (12.1%). There was an analogous distribution on the national scale.

In the period 2009-2011 the number of law-suits arriving rose by 14.7%, going from 5,754 to 6,600. A similar rising trend in the same period was to be observed with regard to concluded law-suits, which rose from 6,002 to 11,135 (+85.5%).

There were 136,169 legal protests served in 2012, a rise of 1.2% over 2011, and representing 9.7% of the national figure (1,408,071, +1.6% compared to 2011). The total value of the protested bills of exchange amounted to 275,077,000 Euros, with an increase of 3.6% when compared to 2010. Over the period 2008 to 2012 there was a fall of 3,895 units in the number of protests served, but there was, generally speaking, a downward trend in the overall amounts regarding protested bills of exchange over the same period, falling from 31,010,000 Euros in 2008 to 275,077,000 Euros in 2012. A total of 75.3% of the protests served in Sicily were for IOUs, money orders and accepted drafts, 2.7% for non-accepted drafts and 22.1% for certified chèques.

The greatest number of protests served were concentrated in the Province of Palermo (33,683, amounting to a total of 61,561,000 Euros) followed by the Provinces of Catania (26,017 protests) and Messina (17,662 bills of exchange protested).

In 2011 (last available figures) there was a rise in the number of applications for separation in Sicily (+4%) when compared to the previous year. These totaled 6,921 and represented 7.8% of all applications for separation in the country as a whole (which amounted to 88,797 in 2011, an increase of 0.7%

compared to 2010). The number of separations effected in Sicily between 2007 and 2010 rose by 19.6%. The analogous national figure showed a much lesser increase of 9.1%. The number of children being granted in custody increased both in Sicily and throughout Italy.

With regard to penitentiary criminal law statistics, on the basis of the latest available data from 2011, there were 201,808 reported crimes for which the judicial authorities started criminal proceedings (+5.6% compared to 2010). This figure represents 7.3% of the corresponding national figure and 49.5% of these cases involved robbery (totaling 104,305), an increase of 9.8% when compared to 2010. At the Regional level, the latest available figures show that, in 2011, 26.5% of the crimes reported took place in the province of Catania (53,556 crimes reported), followed by Palermo, where the number of crimes reported totaled 53,277.

Over the period 2007-2011, there was a slight rise (+0.2%) in the overall number of crimes reported to the forces of law and order in Sicily, which does highlight a resurgence of criminal activity over the last five-year period.

Data regarding reform and penal establishments shows that on Dec 31, 2012, there had been a 5.6% fall (compared to the previous year) in the number of inmates (totaling 7,098) in Sicilian prisons. Of these 2.4% were women and 19.3% foreigners (of whom there were 1,372), representing a 15.5% fall over 2011.

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– 2013 - 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/](http://www.poliziadistato.it/)

Statistical data about:

Criminality

Anti-drug services

Highway services

Post and communications

Railways

[www.ristretti.it](http://www.ristretti.it)

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

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

Italian Statistical Yearbook - year 2013 – Chapter 6: “Law and Order”

Datawarehouse I.Stat