

## *Introduction*

Once again, for the fourth edition (2005) of the Statistical Yearbook we are presenting a synthetic update of publicly available statistical data regarding Sicily, providing the most relevant territorial comparisons wherever possible. This work makes up part of a broader framework; as a result of the numerous links in the web-pages of the Sistema Statistico Nazionale ([www.sistan.it](http://www.sistan.it)), analogous publishing initiatives are attracting ever more space and attention on the national scene.

It is widely recognised that the Regions form a crucial point of reference in the network of public government structures belonging to SISTAN (national statistics system), since they represent an intermediate level of activity between national-level survey planning, mainly in the hands of ISTAT, and the local ramifications of the System, set up either in the Communes or in the actual survey units themselves. This state of affairs is ideal for bringing statistics closer to the far-flung enclaves, but is not the most straightforward way of securing a fully autonomous role. In fact, due to structural diversity and under pressure from national dead-lines, because of inadequate organisation and financing, it is often not easy, at the Regional offices, to carry out a small-scale local programme aiming to satisfy the specific informational requirements of the superior institution.

In this overall picture, putting together a yearbook helps one to test out the existing informational situation at a Regional level and to focus on the possible lines of development, bearing in mind the scarcity of available resources, that this autonomous survey and data-elaboration activity might follow in singling out intervention priorities and promoting the utilisation (for statistical purposes) of the administrative and managerial archives. At the same time the intrinsic effects produced by this instrument must not be disregarded: to improve the quality level of statistical data, to produce a compendium of useful data for local planning, to give citizens the opportunity to find out about administrative activity and relate it to the existing situation; these are merely a few of the goals that might be achieved through this initiative.

The Statistical Department of the Regione Siciliana is moving in this direction, selecting for the yearbook data that is periodically made available, whilst adding the necessary modifications. With regard to the 2005 edition (adjourned up to December 15) particular attention might be drawn to the elaboration of a new section (Chapter 19) entitled "European comparisons", which, in its 43 tables and equal number of indicators, illustrates the position of Sicily in comparison to all the regions of the European Union in which the same survey was carried out (NUTS-2 level).

The data was obtained directly from "Eurostat", and constitutes a new source for the yearbook, betokening a trans-national scenario for Sicily; the aim being to provide an initial service for anybody who might like to find out more about the Regional identity and juxtapose it with the fresh contexts arising out of globalisation. In addition, not only can the usual version in electronic format be consulted, as in previous years, on the internet web-site [www.regione.sicilia.it/bilancio/statistica/index.htm](http://www.regione.sicilia.it/bilancio/statistica/index.htm)), but, for 2005, it is also available in English, as ulterior confirmation of our efforts to bestow on the publication ever more far-reaching appeal.

The overall mass of data in 19 chapters and 316 tables obviously apportions most importance to Regional-level and, wherever possible, Provincial-level disaggregation, whilst in many cases there is a comparison with the corresponding data at national level. Great attention has also been devoted, in this edition, to back-up material to make consultation of the text easier and to guide the reader around the sources of information and towards further research.

*Giuseppe Nobile  
Head of Statistics Department  
Regione Siciliana*