

### **3 – WORK**

Once again, in 2008, the data regarding the labour market is somewhat discouraging. In fact, compared to the previous year, a further slight fall of 0.6% was registered in the number of employed persons, and a much greater increase in the number of persons seeking employment (+6.9%).

There were appreciable losses in the sectors of agriculture (10,500 units, equal to a decrease of 8.7%) and in industry in the strict sense (-4.2%). On the other hand employment in the building trade rose (over 4,000 units, amounting to a 2.7% increase), whilst the level of employment in the service industry remained stable.

As already amply documented, distribution by branch of economic activity in 2008, confirmed the sizable gap between the number of people employed in industry in the strict sense in Sicily (9.3%) and the corresponding number in Italy as a whole (21.3%), as well as the percentage of workers in the primary sector (7.5%) in Sicily, as against the 3.8% in the country as a whole, confirming a failure to industrialise and an abiding agricultural vocation. Furthermore, the data highlights, both in Sicily and Italy, the solid concentration of employed persons in the private and public services, accounting for 73% and 66.5% of the total respectively. In the same period, so-called part-time employment applied to 13.1% of existing work contracts in Sicily (14.3% being the corresponding national figure) and principally to women (67 out of 100 employed part-time), almost all of whom were employed in the service industries.

Relatively few time contracts were stipulated in Sicily in 2008, (about 20 out of every 100 contracts were of this type, as against a figure of 13 for the whole of Italy). A large percentage of the overall number of those employed in the agricultural sector possessed a time contract (64%), whereas the corresponding figures for construction (15.2%), service industry (16.7%) and industry in the strict sense (10.7%) were decidedly lower.

A further demonstration of the difficulties encountered in Sicily was provided in 2008 by the number of persons seeking employment (236,775), corresponding to 14% of the national figure and on the rise (+6.9%) since 2007. The unemployment-rate also rose (from 13% to 13.8% in the last year) and the number of unemployed aged between 15 and 64, amounted to almost 1,620,000 (representing 11.2% of the national total). The rise in the number of persons looking for work affected both young people (who delayed joining the labour market in order to complete their studies) and adults (especially women) who were not actively seeking work, but would be available to work if the opportunity presented itself.

Mid-period analysis highlights a rise in employment from 2004 to 2006 and a fall in the subsequent 2 years, with different trends for the two components. With regard to women the last year showed a recovery in employment levels of almost 1% compared to 2007 and 8.6% compared to 2004. As for men, on the other hand, a loss of 13.2% was registered in the last year, although the figures were more or less the same as for the initial period. For the former the employment figures went from 31.7% in 2004 to 33.5% by the end of the period. At the same time there was a significant drop (in spite of a slight rise in the last year) in the number of persons seeking work. In four years numbers fell by over 63,000 units, with a consequent effect on the unemployment-rate, which dropped by over 3.4% (standing at 17.2% in 2004). On the other hand the participation-rate fell from 52.3% in the first year to 51.2% in 2008.

In the report on population, the Provinces of Palermo (359,607 workers), Catania (312,959) and Messina (200,638) alone accounted for 59% of the total number of employed persons in Sicily. The highest participation-rate was to be found in Ragusa (56.8%) and Messina (53.1%), whereas Siracusa, Caltanissetta and Catania were again the least “active” provinces, with indicator figures of around 48%. On the Provincial scale, analysis of employment-rates highlights gender-related imbalances. The figures for females are decidedly lower than the high figures registered for males. For example, in the Provinces of Ragusa (72.9%), Agrigento (72.4%) and Enna (70.3%), where the indicator’s highest levels are recorded, the percentages for women are 40.7%, 30.5% and 34.5% respectively. The lowest figures for men were registered in Siracusa (63.9%) and Caltanissetta (64.2%). The greatest difficulty in finding work seems to be encountered above all in the provinces of Palermo, where the unemployment-rate stands at 17.1%, Agrigento (16.8%) and Enna (16%), whereas residents of Trapani (10.7%) seem to have greater opportunity, along with Siracusa (11.6%) and especially Ragusa, where figures (8.4%) stand at levels close to those in the north and centre.

## *Glossary*

**Employed, The:** all persons aged over 15, who, in the week of reference,:

- have carried out an hour of work in any activity providing remuneration in cash or in kind;
- have carried out at least an hour of unpaid work in the business of an acquaintance, where they have often helped out;
- are off work (e.g. holiday, illness). Those off work are considered employed if the absence does not exceed 3 months, or if, during their absence, they continue to receive at least 50% of their pay.

Non-permanent workers who are off work, except for family-collaborators, are

considered employed if, during their period of absence, they still keep their jobs. Family-collaborators are considered employed if their absence does not exceed 3 months.

**Employed, The (permanent and full-time):** employed persons tied to a business enterprise by a direct contract, on the basis of which they receive a salary.

**Employment-rate:** percentage ratio of the employed (aged 15 to 64) to the corresponding contextual population .

**Job-seekers:** include unemployed persons (aged between 15 and 74) who:  
– have tried to look for employment in the thirty days prior to the interview and are available for work (or to launch an autonomous activity) within the two weeks following the interview;  
-or will start a job within three months of the date of the interview and are available for work (or to launch an autonomous activity) within the two weeks following the interview, whenever it is possible to bring forward the starting date for the job.

**Labour force:** the total number of employed persons and persons seeking employment.

**Non-work force:** person who declare themselves to be of a non-professional status and not to have carried out any working activity, nor to have sought work in the period in question. Included in this group are those doing their military, or substitutive civil service, invalids and persons under the age of 14 years.

**Participation-rate:** ratio of people in the work-force aged 15 to 64 years to the entire corresponding population.

**Unemployment-rate:** is the percentage ratio between those seeking employment and the total work-force.

### *Further reading*

Publications

Italian statistical Yearbook 2009 – ISTAT

SVIMEZ report on the economy in the South –2009 – SVIMEZ

Immigration Statistics Dossier 2009 – CARITAS

Pensions – 2005 – ISTAT

Work and pay – 2005-2006 – ISTAT

The Labour-force – 2008 Averages – ISTAT

## Internet

<http://www.istat.it>

Factor Productivity Measures – 1980-2006

Added value and internal employees per local work system - 2003-2004

Employment and added value in the Provinces – 1995-2003

System of territorial indicators – *Labour market area*

Statistics for development policies – Key context indicators – Axis III *Human resources*

Italian statistical Yearbook 2009 – Chapter 9: “Work”

<http://www.inps.it>

Statistics data-banks

Observatory on businesses, permanent employees in non-agricultural private sector and average annual pay for workers and employees

Observatory on permanent employees

Observatory on employment and labour policies

Observatory on self-employed workers

Observatory on domestic workers

Observatory on the agricultural world

[www.lavoro.gov.it](http://www.lavoro.gov.it)

Sector studies and statistics

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

Annual report

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

Statistics data-banks

Data-banks of the disabled

Employment observatory

Historical statistics

[www.lavoro.minori.it](http://www.lavoro.minori.it)

National investigation into juvenile labour: “Children and work” – 2000

Children and injuries at work: reports and indemnity – 2002

Inspections of companies employing minors – 2003-2004

[www.alef-fvg.it](http://www.alef-fvg.it)

Data regarding immigration and emigration

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

Towards work, organisation and functioning of public services for citizens and  
business enterprises in the labour-market – Monitoring 2003  
Labour quality in Italy

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

Labour-market data-base