

12 – CONSTRUCTION

The data regarding building construction, presented in this chapter, comes from ISTAT sources; the Ministry for the Interior has supplied data regarding the procedure for allocating buildings for residential purposes; the research centre “Centro di Ricerche Economiche e Sociali di Mercato per l’Edilizia e il Territorio” has provided data-banks regarding all public works open to tenders in the Sicilian Provinces during the year.

For the latter, in previous yearbooks, the source had always been “Collegio Regionale dei Costruttori Edili” (at the Palermo Chamber of Commerce), which only includes public works open to tenders published in the *Gazzetta Ufficiale* (official newspaper). Each term ISTAT collects data regarding building licences issued by local town councils for the construction of new buildings (residential and non-), or for extension-work on existing buildings. The tables in this chapter show figures for all the new dwellings and buildings constructed in the Sicilian Provinces in the year 2007 (the last year available).

The data shows that 3,730 new residential buildings were built in Sicily in 2007, a total representing over 70% of all new constructions (5.098). Analysing the extension-work on buildings intended to be used principally as dwellings, it could be observed that these were concentrated in the Provinces of Catania, Messina and Trapani, which together accounted for 51.4% of the Regional total (638,000 m³, including leave-out). At the same time 68.2% of the volume of work carried out in the Provinces of Catania, Messina and Agrigento related to extension-work on non-residential buildings.

When compared to 2007, the number of newly-constructed residential buildings in 2008 fell slightly (-0.4%), whereas at the same time there was a 26.3% increase in extension-work on existing buildings, which was at variance with the negative trend of the two previous years (-11% in 2006, -17% in 2005). The situation with regard to non-residential buildings was different, where the fall in numbers (-14.9%) and volume (-4.3%) was accompanied by a substantial -60.5% reduction in extension-work (from 1,588,000 to 628,000 m³, including leave-out); up to 2006 the latter had always registered increases.

According to data for the last available year, there were 14,761 new dwellings in Sicily, representing a 2.4% increase over 2006, due largely to dwellings built in new residential buildings (+3%). On the other hand, the number of habitations built in newly constructed non-residential buildings fell by 19.8% (from 364 to 292). At the Provincial level the highest figure was recorded for Catania (3,213, and 21.8% of the Regional total); the Province of Trapani also registered impressive figures (2,264, representing 15.3%), followed by the Province of Palermo (2,078 and 14.1% of the total).

The overall number of rooms built increased in 2007, there being a 3.9% rise in the number of rooms and a 1.1% increase in accessory rooms (e.g. bathroom, store-room etc), rebutting the negative trend of 2006. 51% of accessory rooms constructed in Sicily were built in the Provinces of Catania, Trapani and Palermo, with the same provinces accounting for about 50% of all rooms built in Sicily.

With regard to eviction procedures from residential buildings, the data published by the Ministry for the Interior showed that over 80% of the writs issued in 2008 were as a result of non-payment of rent on the part of the tenant. In only 18.8% of the cases had the lease-period actually terminated. There was a 12% rise (over the previous year) in the overall number of legal actions undertaken (from 3,343 in 2007 to 3,744 in 2008). At the Provincial level the greatest percentage of legal actions was concentrated in the Province of Palermo (44.9%), which along with Catania (26.2%) accounted for 71.1% of the Regional total.

In 2008, there were 6,770 eviction orders presented to bailiffs, which represented a 12.9% increase over the preceding year. There was also a rise in the number of actual evictions compared to 2007 (+7.1%), although this represented only a small percentage (24.2%) of all eviction orders requested in 2008.

From data regarding public works, taken from the research centre Centro di Ricerche Economiche e Sociali di Mercato per l'Edilizia e il Territorio (CRESME), it can be seen that in 2008 in Sicily, there were 1,894 public works open to tenders, representing a 20.4% drop when compared to 2007. This figure is accompanied by an analogous trend in the overall financial picture, with a 6.7% monetary decrease, in contrast to the previous year, when an increase in the number of public works open to tenders (+11.5%) was countered by a 57.9% reduction in the total amounts allocated. In the Province of Enna there was a 120% rise (last data available) in the total amount allocated for public works open to tender .

In 2008, Palermo and Messina were again the two Provinces with the greatest number of public works open to tender (22% and 18% of the total, respectively), whilst the greatest amounts of money were concentrated in Palermo (583,000,000 Euros) and Catania (447,000,000 Euros).

Glossary

Building: roofed structure, skirted by roads or open spaces, or separated from other constructions by main walls (that rise uninterrupted from foundation to roof); it should have free access to the road and one or two autonomous staircases.

Building licence: onerous authorisation to construct or convert buildings, issued by the Mayor on presentation of a project.

Dwelling: one or more rooms for dwelling purposes, with a separate entrance from the road, and a landing, courtyard, terrace, balcony or similar.

Extension work (to a building): further construction, horizontally or vertically, of rooms in an already existing building, with an increase in the volume of the building.

New building: building constructed from scratch, from foundations to roof; this includes those structures that have been completely re-built.

Non-residential building: building, or part of building, intended mainly or exclusively for uses other than residential.

Public works (category): types of work among which public works (road, airport) are classified.

Residential building: building or part of building, intended mainly or exclusively for residential use.

Room (for dwelling): covered area, enclosed on all sides by walls (in brick, wood, glass etc.), which do not necessarily have to reach the ceiling. Walls that include a considerable open space (arches or similar) are to be considered as dividing walls, except where one of the two divided rooms, because of its small size, is practically an integral part of the other.

Volume of a building (including leave-out: estimated volume of extended areas): total volume of the space included between the external walls, the lowest floor and the roofing measured from the outside.

Work (for public works): part of a technically distinct work-operation contributing to the construction of new public works, structural improvements or special repairs to an existing building or part of it.

Further reading

Publications

Italian Statistics Yearbook– 2009 – ISTAT

Concession procedures for buildings to be used for habitation – 2008 – Ministry for the Interior

Internet

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

Building permission Statistics– 2007 – ISTAT

Italian Statistical Yearbook– 2009 – Chapter 15: “Construction”

<http://dait.interno.it/dcds/index>

Concession procedures for buildings to be used for habitation – Various years – Ministry for the Interior