Presentation

In the last few months the Regione Siciliana has launched sweeping internal changes that have affected the administrative structure, including the department of which I am the head. Together with the Istat Office for Sicily, the Statistical services have prepared several editions of the Yearbook, and have assumed (via legislation introducing due reform and a Regional law) the name of "Statistical Services and Economic Analysis". The Regional Department for the Economy has replaced the Budget and Finance Department, acquiring in this way a connotation more in keeping with general and specific facts which dictate the flow of public finance. The function of this volume, now in its 8th edition, thus becomes ever more congruous with regard to the goals of the branch of administration producing it, and the activity of statistical information becomes more relevant to its ultimate aim, Regional development programming.

In fact, ever since its first edition in 2002, the Yearbook has aimed to provide the informational basis for the conduct of state affairs at the Regional level, prompted by requirements emerging from the contextual conditions. It disseminates the instruments with which citizens may verify the effectiveness of the specific action in question, and aims to generate a concrete model for a potential "society of information" in public life in Sicily.

As in previous years, the yearbook again presents its 17 thematic sections, driven on by the need to provide updated documentation about this complex island, Sicily. One also has the possibility of carrying out comparisons with other areas in two further concluding sections devoted to "Healthcare Services in Sicily" and "Socio-economic differences in the Mediterranean area", enabling one to verify the relative position of Sicily with reference to a series of essential indicators.

Competition between local systems, innovation in the field of public communication and the season of reforms, in the federal sense, of the State, are processes we are experiencing, perhaps with uncertainty, accompanied by an awareness of their irreversibility. In this overall picture the quality of statistical information appears as a decisive instrument in many areas of public life; if there is a wish to be in the vanguard of events then this information needs to be increasingly exploited.

Palermo, December 2009

Councillor for the Economy
Regione Siciliana
The Honourable Michele Cimino

The VIII edition of the Regional Statistical Yearbook presents a flow of information that maintains the structure of previous editions, but which describes, with regard to specific subjects, a non- too-easy moment in national and international economic life. Apart from the need to assess the inevitable consequences of this situation on Sicily itself, the utility of the Yearbook derives from an awareness of the tasks demanded of the public administration.

The Regione Siciliana Accountancy General is in charge of the Statistical division (Regional law no. 15/93, art. 6) with the additional duties of inter-departmental co-ordination in this area. Over the years, there has been an increase not only in research activities in collaboration with ISTAT, but also in the products and services provided for verifying the growing amount of information requested by the public administration and by external subjects.

The aim is still to provide local administration and the ordinary citizen with better information and an informational base, as a back-up source in the decision-making process; the general public can verify this by leafing through the pages of this Yearbook.

Palermo, December 2009

Accountant General for the Region
Vincenzo Emanuele