

3 – WORK

After several years characterised by a rise in employment levels (+4.5% over 2003), the labour market in Sicily in 2007 saw a downturn in the number of employed (-1%) and a further downturn in the unemployment rate. The most appreciable losses, by sector, were in agriculture (12,500 units, equal to a decrease of 9.4%) and in the service-industry (16,600 workers). Employment in the building trade rose (15,300 units, amounting to +11.7%), whereas in industry in the strict sense the number of workers remained at more or less the same levels as in the previous year. Distribution by branch of activity in 2007 confirmed the clear majority of those employed in private and public services, who, alone, accounted for 72.4% of the total, as against the 65.9% at the national level. Figures for the building trade were an impressive 9.8%, whereas industry in the strict sense maintained its modest (when compared to Italy as a whole) figure of 9.7%. The figure for those employed in agriculture was a little over 8%. It should be noted that industry in the strict sense in Italy accounts for 21.7% of all employment (more than double the figure for Sicily), whereas Italian agriculture shows figures that are half the corresponding total in Sicily (40%).

The proliferation of part-time work is a little below the national figure: in 2007 this type of contract impinged on overall employment to the extent of 12.3% in Sicily (as against 13.6% in Italy). In Sicily, women accounted for 67 out of every 100 employed persons working with a part-time contract, and were employed almost entirely in the service industries (93%); in the nation as a whole the figure was 78 registered females. Compared with the national average, in Sicily there was a greater utilisation of time contracts; in 2007, about 20 out of every 100 contracts were of this type, as against a figure of 13 for the whole of Italy. Over 67% of the overall number of those employed in the agricultural sector possessed a time contract, whereas the corresponding figures for construction (16.1%), services (16.9%) and industry in the strict sense (8.7%) were decidedly lower.

Women accounted for 43% of 220,611 time contracts and 82.6% of these were stipulated in the service industries, 13.9% in agriculture and 3.5% in industry in the strict sense. No contracts were stipulated in the construction industry.

There were 221,547 persons seeking employment in 2006, a figure down by 5.5% compared to the year 2006, and corresponding to 14.7% of the national figure. The unemployment-rate fell once again, to 13%. At the same time the number of those looking for work (1,609,894) and aged between 15 and 64, rose by over 30,000, representing 11% 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 2003 to 2006 and a fall in 2007, due in large measure to the female component, which initially grew by over 40,000 in the four-year period (the figure for men was a little less than 25,000 units), whereas figures for 2007 showed a decrease of over 7,500 units (over 6,000 for men).

The employment figures for women went from 31.9% in 2003 to 33% by the end of the period. At the same time there was a significant drop in the number of persons seeking work. In four years numbers fell by over 139,000 units, with a

consequent effect on the unemployment-rate, which dropped by over 7% (standing at 20.1% in 2003). On the other hand the participation-rate fell from 54.6% in 2003 to 51.3% in 2007.

The Provinces of Palermo (365,936 workers), Catania (309,303) and Messina (209,182) accounted for 59.4% of the total number of employed in Sicily. The highest participation-rate was to be found in Ragusa (59.1%), immediately followed by Messina (53.8%). Siracusa, Caltanissetta and Catania are again the least “active” provinces, with indicator figures below 50%. On the Provincial scale, analysis of employment-rates sheds light on imbalances regarding gender. Compared with the high figures for males in the Provinces of Ragusa (78.3%) and Trapani (68.7%), the figures for females are decidedly lower (59.1%, 51.5% and 51.2% respectively). The lowest figures for men were registered in Siracusa (62.3%) and Catania (65.2%) and for women, Caltanissetta (31%) and Agrigento (32%). The greatest difficulty in finding work seems to be encountered above all in the province of Agrigento, where the unemployment-rate stands at 16.7%, Enna (16.3%) and Caltanissetta (15.7%), whereas residents of Messina (10.4%) seem to have greater opportunities, along with Trapani (11%) and especially Ragusa, where figures (8.3%) stand at levels similar 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 2008 – ISTAT

SVIMEZ report on the economy in the South –2008 – SVIMEZ

Immigration Statistics Dossier 2008 – CARITAS

Pensions – 2005 – ISTAT

Work and pay – 2001-2004 – ISTAT

The Labour-force – 2007 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 – 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

Sector studies and statistics

www.isfol.it

Annual report

www.inail.it

Statistics data-banks

Data-banks of the disabled

Employment observatory

Historical statistics

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

Data regarding immigration and emigration

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

Labour-market data-base