

12 – CONSTRUCTION

ISTAT has provided all the data presented here with regard to building construction; the “Collegio Regionale dei Costruttori Edili”, (at the Palermo Chamber of Commerce) has provided data regarding public works open to tenders in the Sicilian Provinces; the Ministry for the Interior has supplied data regarding the procedure for allocating buildings for residential purposes.

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 2006 (the last year available).

The data shows that 5,354 new constructions went up in Sicily in 2006, corresponding to a total constructed volume of 11.700,000 m³ (including leave-out). Almost 70% of these were designed as residential buildings. Extension-work on buildings intended to be used principally as dwellings (totalling 505,000 m³, including leave-out) accounted for 55.4% of the work carried out in the Provinces of Catania, Messina and Palermo, whereas extension-work on buildings not intended to be used principally as dwellings were concentrated mainly in the Provinces of Ragusa (697,000, or 49.9% of the total), Catania (334) and Tapani (155). These three Provinces together accounted for 74.7% of the Regional total (1,588,000 m³, including leave-out).

Compared to the previous year, the number of newly-constructed residential buildings remained constant, whereas at the same time there was a 3.5% reduction in the total volume of constructions. There was a more marked reduction of 11.1% in total constructed volumes after extension-work on existing buildings; this decline followed the trend set in 2005 (-16.6%) At the same time, there was a 4.3% fall in the number of new constructions with regard to non-residential buildings, which meant that 200 fewer buildings went up. On the other hand there was a 24.9% increase in the volume of restructuring work, although this was lower than the corresponding figure for 2005 (+38.8%).

According to data for the last available year, there were 14,417 new dwellings in Sicily, which was a similar figure to 2005. At the Provincial level the highest figure was recorded in Catania (3,768, and 26.1% of the Regional total), followed by the Province of Messina (2,774, and 19.2%) and Palermo (2,338 and 16.2%).

In 2006, the number of homes built in newly constructed residential buildings remained the same, whereas the number of habitations built in newly constructed non-residential buildings rose by 27.7% (from 285 to 364). Compared to the previous year, there was a 1.2% decline in the overall number of rooms built, and a 1.9% fall in accessory rooms (e.g. bathroom, store-room etc), in direct contrast to the growth in 2005. In 2006, 60.2% of rooms and 61.3% of accessory rooms constructed in Sicily were built in the Provinces of Catania, Messina and Palermo (taken as a whole).

The data published by the Ministry for the Interior regarding eviction procedures from residential buildings, showed that, in both 2006 and the four preceding years, in Sicily, the major cause for this legal measure was the non-payment of rent on the part of the tenant. In only 20.6% of the cases had the lease-period actually terminated. What is striking, as regards the total number of legal actions undertaken (which amounted to

3,983) is the percentage in the Province of Palermo (43.4%), which along with Catania accounted for 68.5% of the Regional total.

In 2006, there was a 2% increase over the preceding year, in the number of eviction orders presented to the bailiffs. There was a fall in the number of actual evictions in both 2006 (-0.3%) and in 2005 (-9.2%), showing a reversal of the trend for previous years, in which the figures were positive, i.e. +43.8% in 2004 and +20.2% in 2003. From data regarding public works, taken from ANCE (the National Association of Building Constructors) in Sicily, it can be seen that in 2007 there were 1,225 public works open to tenders, representing a 10.3% drop when compared to 2006. This figure is accompanied by an analogous trend in the overall financial picture, with a +11% variation in contrast to the -21.2% of the previous year. This phenomenon was common to all the Provinces, except for Catania, Enna and Trapani, where there was a fall in the total amounts allocated for public works open to tender. Palermo and Messina were the two Provinces where the greatest number of public works were concentrated (21.6% and 17.9% of the total, respectively) and where the average sum for the works was the highest, with the highest of all being in Palermo (about 404,000,000 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

Building Activity Statistics – Year 2001
Italian Statistics Yearbook– 2008 – ISTAT

Internet

<http://www.istat.it/>
Building Activity Statistics– various years – ISTAT

<http://www.istat.it/>
Italian statistics Yearbook– 2008 – Chapter 15: “Construction”

www.aitecweb.com