

## *18 – EUROPEAN COMPARISONS \**

The data contained in this chapter comes from EUROSTAT sources. The aim is to build up an appreciable information base that will enable one to make comparisons between Sicily and other states in the European Union. To this end, numerous statistical indicators have been elaborated along with information regarding themes such as the Regional territory, population and family, work, healthcare, the economy, tourism, transport and communication, agriculture, education/training and research, industry.

The indicators used were calculated for all the administrative divisions that the European Commission includes in NUTS-2 ((Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics), corresponding to the administrative Regions in Italy. The nomenclature of the territorial units for statistics was elaborated by EUROSTAT in order to provide a single uniform division of the territorial units for the compilation of regional statistics for the European Union.

For each indicator a table was created for the most recent year available; in each table there is a list showing the European regions with the highest rating, those with the lowest rating and those with an average rating. The tables also include data for Sicily, Italy and, wherever possible, the European Union as a whole. Each region is assigned its corresponding rank, i.e. its position in the overall classification (in descending order). In accordance with the guidelines for the methodology adopted by EUROSTAT for European regional statistics, this classification enumerates the NUTS-2 of the 27 member states of the EU, those of the 3 countries that have applied to join the EU and the EFTA countries, making a total of 34 states (the full list can be seen in the glossary for this chapter).

The overall number of survey units, deducible from the ranking of the lowest value, fluctuates according to the variable being considered; each variable is the object of a specific study and with different degrees of coverage.

Sicily (year 2005), with its 5,015,100 inhabitants, is among the most populous European regions (12° place - Tab. 18.2); a density of 195.1 residents per Sq Km, places it 102th (Tab. 18.3) with a surface area of 25,771 Sq Km (71° place - Tab. 18.1). In terms of wealth produced (year 2005), with the EU27 average standing at 100, Sicily finds itself in 216<sup>th</sup> place in the classification for GNP value per inhabitant (67.4% - Tab. 18.12), delivering a poor performance when compared to other regions. With regard to industry (year 2005) there were 50.3 business activities per 1,000 inhabitants (89° place out of 236 - Tab. 18.21). As regards the indicators for the labour market (year 2007 - Tabs. 18.4-18.10), Sicily again finds itself in a none-too-comfortable position: activity rate 51.3% (272° place out of 274) and employment-rate 44.6% (271° place out of 274). Similarly the unemployment-rate is rather high (13.0% - 20° place) and the situation is even worse if the same indicators are applied to the female element.

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\* This chapter was put together by Sergio Passannanti in collaboration with the Servizio Statistica della Regione.

The situation in the agricultural sector is certainly better, with Sicily confirming its productive vocation (years 2004-2005 – Tabs. 18.13-18.20). Sicily finds itself in 15th place among European regions in terms of the overall number of farms (249,030) and in 18th place as regards Agricultural Surface Utilised (1,646,400 hectares). The results for production are good, Sicily being second with regard to fruit-cultivation (2,071,500 tonnes) and third for both durum wheat cultivation (947,500 tonnes) and viticulture (1,265,300 tonnes). The figures for olive-growing are also good, with an overall production of 302,400 tonnes, which places Sicily 8th in the table.

Healthcare in Sicily (year 2006 - Tabs. 18.34-18.35) is rather poor, there being a shortage of beds in hospitals, with a mere 329.4 per 100,000 inhabitants (122° place out of 139). The figures for medical personnel were better, with 434.7 doctors per 100,000 inhabitants (16° place).

Fair performances were recorded in the tourism sector (year 2007 - Tabs. 18.22-18.27), with 16,881,223 overnight stays in Sicily's hotel-type accommodation (43° place) and 12,300,221 overnight stays restricted to the hotel sector (26° place).

With regard to transport (years 2005-2006, Tabs. 18.28-18.33), Sicily is behind schedule with its infrastructural operations, but positions itself around the half-way mark among European regions for both the motorway network (79° place out of 174) and roads in general (105° place out of 216). However as regards accident data the results are relatively good when compared with European figures, since Sicily is in 185th place out of 237 in terms of the number of deaths in road accidents, per 1,000 vehicles in circulation.

Air-transport is also relevant to the Regional economy; 4,951,400 passengers landed at Sicilian air-ports (33rd place) and 4,979,100 passengers took off (11°).

Figures for education are not too bad (year 2006 – Tabs. 18.39-18.41). Sicily occupies 47th place as regards the number of students enrolled at school or university, 61.8% of the population in the 0-29 year age-bracket. Adult education is much worse (year 2007 – Tab. 18.42). The participation-rate in permanent learning stands at 4.9% of the population in the 25-64 year age-bracket (205° place out of 274).

Data for Research and Development (year 2005 – Tabs. 18.43-18.45) is not very promising for Sicily. Total spending on intra-muros R&D activity, as a percentage of the GNP, stands at 0.8% (94° place out of 180) and the figure is worse if the indicator is limited to R&D expenditure financed by the business world (0.21% - 150° place out of 208). In terms of numbers of persons working in this sector, the result is the same as that for spending. Persons engaged in R&D in Sicily account for a mere 1.08% of the total number of persons engaged in the economy (96° place out of 186).

With the development and spread on a world scale of information and communication technology (ICT) data regarding the information society is becoming more and more relevant. Therefore, at the end of the chapter, there is data regarding the computerisation of European families (year 2007 – Tabs. 18.47-18.51). The figures for Sicily are not reassuring, since it is positioned in 8th place with regard to people who have never used a personal computer (59% of the total population) and in 122nd place (out of 124) as regards the regularity of use of Internet (a mere 23% of the population use Internet at least once a week). Lastly it appears that only 20% of Sicilian families have access to a broadband connection at home (108th place out of 118).

## *Glossary*

**PPS (Purchasing Power Standards):** a theoretical currency that takes into account the differences in national price-levels and exchange-rates. The PPS is used in order to render purchasing power uniform with regard to the various national currencies via PPP (Purchasing Power Parities), so as to permit comparisons between the economic indicators of the various countries (net of the relative inflation rates). It is based on volume or units of goods rather than values.

*Note: For terms used in this chapter you should refer to the definitions listed in the glossaries of the relative thematic sections in the yearbook.*

### *Key to European states*

#### **European Union (27 member states)**

<b>AT</b>	<i>Austria</i>	<b>LV</b>	<i>Latvia</i>
<b>BE</b>	<i>Belgium</i>	<b>LT</b>	<i>Lithuania</i>
<b>BG</b>	<i>Bulgaria</i>	<b>LU</b>	<i>Luxembourg</i>
<b>CY</b>	<i>Cyprus</i>	<b>MT</b>	<i>Malta</i>
<b>CZ</b>	<i>Czech Republic</i>	<b>NL</b>	<i>Netherlands</i>
<b>DK</b>	<i>Denmark</i>	<b>PL</b>	<i>Poland</i>
<b>EE</b>	<i>Estonia</i>	<b>PT</b>	<i>Portugal</i>
<b>FI</b>	<i>Finland</i>	<b>RO</b>	<i>Romania</i>
<b>FR</b>	<i>France</i>	<b>SK</b>	<i>Slovak Republic</i>
<b>DE</b>	<i>Germany</i>	<b>SI</b>	<i>Slovenia</i>
<b>GR</b>	<i>Greece</i>	<b>ES</b>	<i>Spain</i>
<b>HU</b>	<i>Hungary</i>	<b>SE</b>	<i>Sweden</i>
<b>IE</b>	<i>Ireland</i>	<b>UK</b>	<i>United Kingdom</i>
<b>IT</b>	<i>Italy</i>		

#### **Candidate states for entry into E**

<b>HR</b>	<i>Croatia</i>
<b>MK</b>	<i>Macedonia</i>
<b>TR</b>	<i>Turkey</i>

#### **States belonging to European F**

<b>IS</b>	<i>Iceland</i>
<b>LI</b>	<i>Liechtenstein</i>

## *Further reading*

### Internet

European Commission Statistics Institute

[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?\\_pageid=1090,30070682,1090\\_33076576  
&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=1090,30070682,1090_33076576&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL)

General and regional statistics – EUROSTAT