

## 12. Quality of services<sup>1</sup>

The indicators considered in this domain of well-being allow monitoring the situation in the country with regard to the provision of health, social care, utilities and mobility services, by means of an articulated information framework.

Between 2010 and 2019, most indicators of quality of services show an improvement. There is an increase in fast internet coverage, the prevalence of separate waste collection, the percentage of elderly treated in integrated home care, and the provision of healthcare staff. At the same time, there has been a reduction in difficulties in accessing utilities, irregularities in water distribution, and in unmet need for medical care.

However, a number of critical issues have persisted over the same period. Irregularities in the supply of electricity have worsened, as well as mobility services both on the supply side of local public transport (with a reduction of around 1,300 seat-km), and on the demand side (with a 4.5 percentage point reduction in frequent public transport users). In addition, some indicators in the health sector, are already showing signs of distress in the pre-pandemic period: there has been a reduction in the number of beds in high care facilities, an increase in the hospital patient emigration to a different region and a rise in the number of general practitioners with a patient load above the maximum threshold.

It is known that in 2020 and 2021, health and mobility services were among those most affected by the pandemic and by the measures taken to contain it.

The comparison of the most recent evolution of indicators with the pre-pandemic period shows a very mixed picture. In the health sector, integrated home assistance service continued to increase as did the number of physicians, while the number of nurses and midwives remained essentially unchanged (Table 1).

The indicator on unmet need for medical care, which had increased during the pandemic due to restrictions and closures of outpatient clinics combined with the decision to postpone medical examinations for fear of infection, almost returns to pre-pandemic levels in 2022, but critical issues on the reason for the unmet care persist.

Hospital patient emigrations, which declined in 2020, partly due to the pandemic-related inability to travel outside the area of residence, increase again in 2021, but not enough to return to pre-pandemic levels.

in terms of mobility, after the decline in 2020, the assiduous use of public transport increases but it is not yet back to pre-pandemic levels. Certainly, the increase in smart working has led to a reduction in the number of people who use public transport every day to commute between home and work, and people have changed their habits, preferring to walk for short distances, for example. Satisfaction with public transport has increased among those who use it regularly.

As far as utilities are concerned, the number of households reporting great difficulty in accessing essential services has also continued to fall in recent years, and the coverage of high-speed internet and separate waste collection continues to increase. In contrast, the evolution over time of discontinuities in water and electricity services is reversed, with the percentage of households reporting irregularities in water supply increasing, and interruptions in electricity service decreasing.

<sup>1</sup> This chapter was edited by Manuela Michelini, with contributions from Lidia Gargiulo, Alessandra Burgio, Alessia D'Errico and Valentina Joffre.

Table 1. Quality of services indicators: value for the latest available year and percentage changes for different periods

Indicators	Starting year	Latest available year	Latest available year value	Percentage changes			
				2019 compared with starting year	2021 compared with 2019	2022 compared with 2021	2022 compared with 2019
Beds in the residential social-healthcare and social-welfare facilities (b)	2010	2020	69.6	●	●	-	-
Integrated home assistance service	2015	2021	2.9	●	●	-	-
Composite index of service accessibility (a)	2010	2021	5.1	●	●	-	-
Irregularities in water supply	2010	2022	9.7	●	●	●	●
Irregularities in electric power distribution	2010	2021	2.1	●	●	-	-
Seat-Km of public transport networks (b)	2010	2020	3622	●	●	-	-
Satisfaction with means of transport	2010	2022	23.9	●	●	●	●
Frequent users of public transport	2010	2022	11.8	●	●	●	●
Overall Fixed Very High Capacity Network (VHCN) coverage	2018	2022	53.5	●	●	●	●
Separate collection service for municipal waste	2010	2021	58.7	●	●	-	-
Hospital beds in high-care wards (b)	2010	2020	3.0	●	●	-	-
Hospital patient emigration to a different region	2010	2021	7.8	●	●	-	-
Unmet need for medical examination	2017	2022	7.0	●	●	●	●
General practitioners with a number of patients above the maximum threshold (b)	2010	2020	38.2	●	●	-	-
Physicians	2012	2022	4.2	●	●	●	●
Nurses and midwives	2013	2021	6.5	●	●	-	-

● Better    ● Worse    ● Stable    - Not available

(a) Year 2019 not available. Changes referred to the year 2018.  
 (b) Year 2021 not available. Changes referred to the year 2020.  
 Note: If the relative change between the two years exceeds 1% it is considered positive (green), if it is lower than -1% it is considered negative (red). In the range -1 and +1% the change is considered stable (yellow). The polarity of the indicator was taken into account when calculating the changes to consider the improvement or worsening in terms of well-being.

The interventions foreseen in the NRP affect all three areas of which this domain of well-being is composed: health, mobility and public utilities. In fact, the plan envisages investments and reforms aimed at promoting the circular economy and improving waste management, renewing public transport (Mission 2), improving the health services provided in the territory and integrating more effectively social and health services (Mission 6), but also increasing the spread of fast Internet connections (Mission 1). The investments are accompanied by a plan of reforms, which are defined horizontal (public administration and justice) and enabling (simplification and competition), aimed at improving upstream efficiency and equity in the delivery of services to citizens. There are thus many objectives of the Plan which, if they are achieved, may have a spill-over effect on citizens' well-being, as measured by the domain indicators, in the coming years.

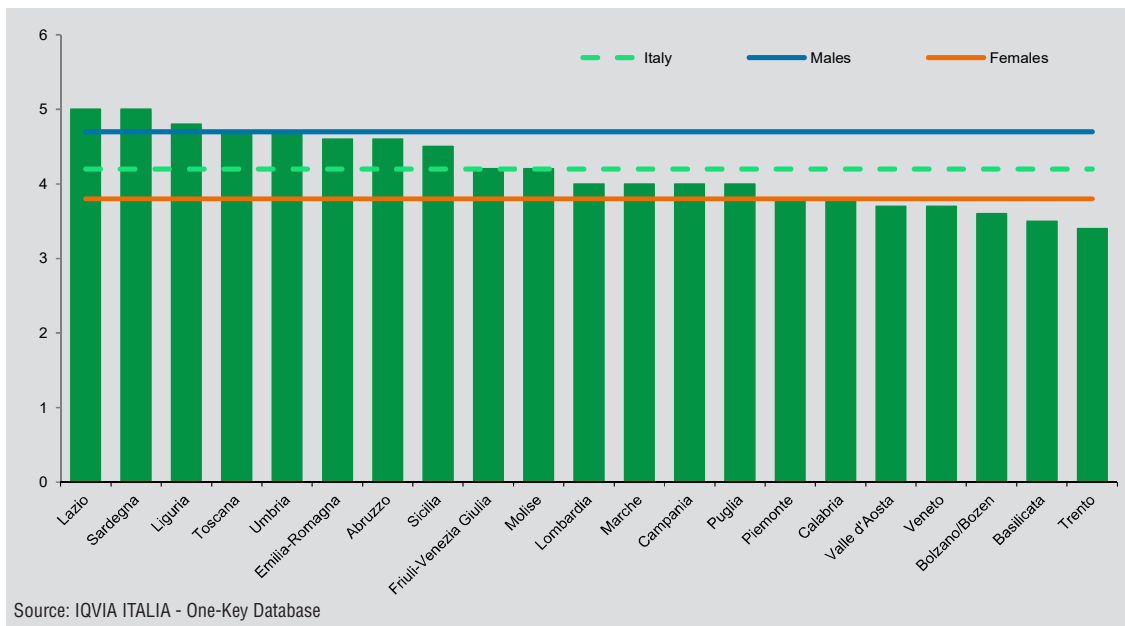
### Slight increase in the number of physicians in 2022

The number of physicians has increased over the last 3 years, from 4.0 per 1,000 inhabitants in 2020 to 4.2 in 2022 (Figure 1).

At the territorial level, the increase is general but clear regional differences are confirmed with greater availability of physicians in Lazio, Sardegna and Liguria, with almost 5 physicians per 1,000 inhabitants, and lower availability in the autonomous provinces of Trento and Bolzano and in Basilicata with around 3.5 physicians per 1,000 inhabitants.

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Figure 1. Physicians by sex and region. Year 2022. Per 1,000 inhabitants



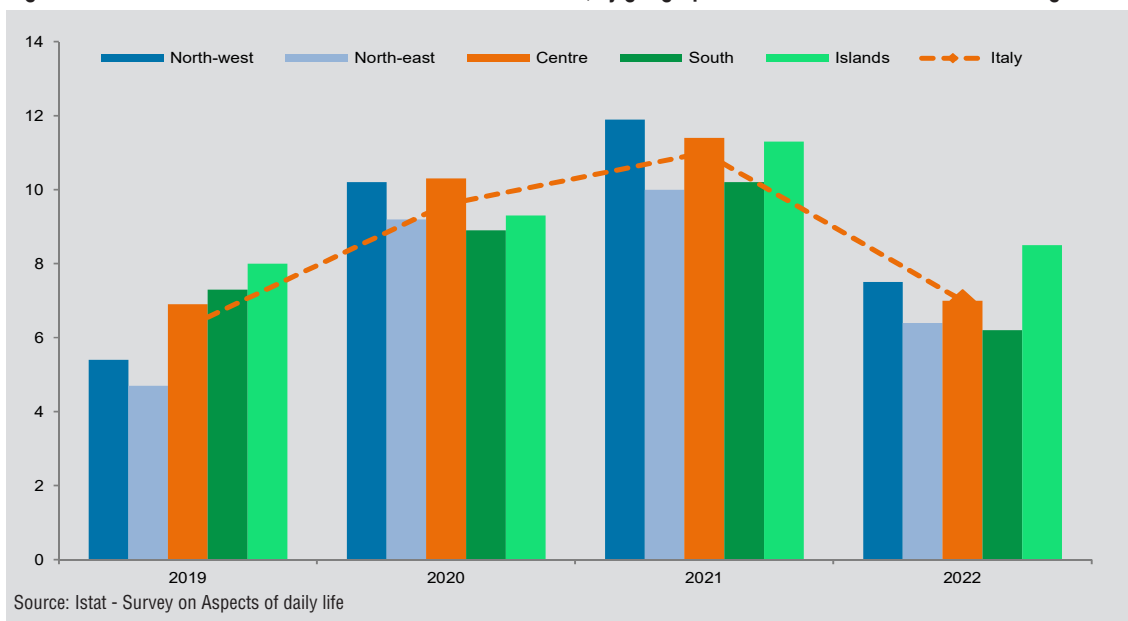
### Decrease in the number of general practitioners and increase in patient overload

In 2020, 38.2% of general practitioners exceeded the maximum threshold of 1,500 assistants set by law in Italy. This figure has been steadily increasing since 2010, when it was 25%, due to the decrease in the number of general practitioners (42,428 in 2019 and 41,707 in 2020). Although the problem of saturation affects the whole country, there is a North-South divide to the detriment of the North. The percentage of GPs exceeding the limit ranges from 53.4% in the North-west to 49.7% in the North-east, 34.2% in the Centre, 27.3% in the South and 20.1% in the Islands.

### Unmet need for medical examination returns to pre-pandemic levels

In 2022, after the increase observed in the two pandemic years, the percentage of the population reporting unmet needs for medical care drops to 7.0%, almost returning to 2019 level (6.3%, it was 7.2% in 2018) (Figure 2). However, criticalities persist, as we observe an increase in the share of those who do not seek care because of long waiting lists, which becomes the most frequently reported reason (4.2% of the population). At the same time the share of those who give up medical care for economic reasons decreases (it was 4.9% in 2019 and falls to 3.2% in 2022).

Figure 2. Unmet needs for medical care in the last 12 months, by geographic area. Years 2019 - 2022. Percentage values



### Persisting territorial disparities in integrated home care services

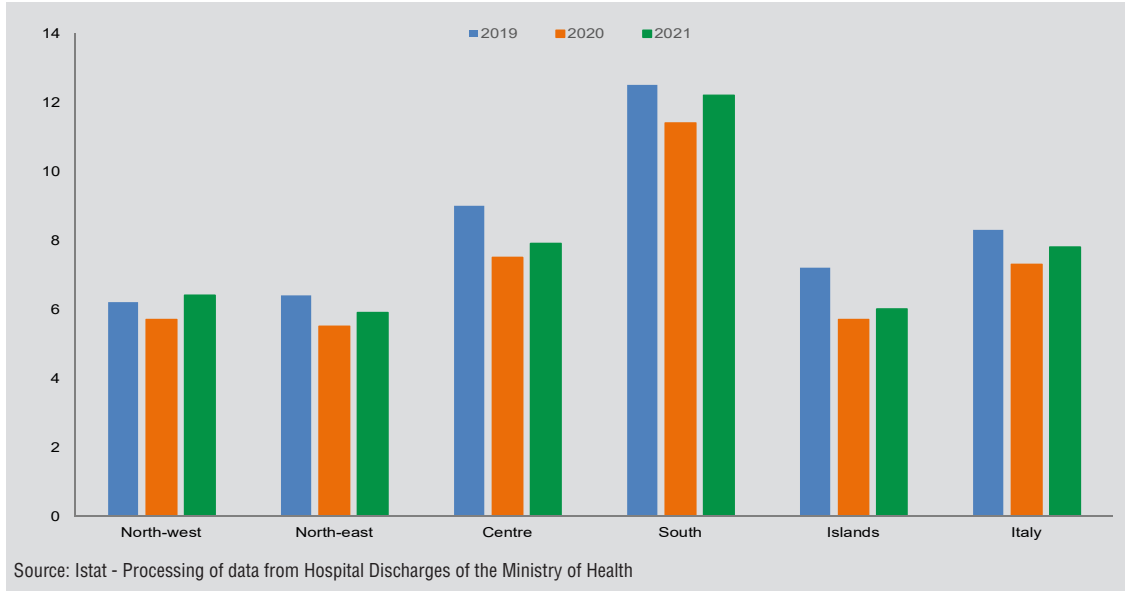
In 2021, 407,000 elderly people aged 65 and over, i.e. 2.9%, use integrated home assistance services, and the share rises to 4.8% when considering the population aged 75 and over. In some regions, such as Lazio, Veneto (+0.5 percentage points) and Abruzzo (+0.4 percentage points) the increase in the use of home-based care, which began in 2020, continues.

### Increase in hospital patient emigration to a different region after the halt due to the health emergency

In 2021, ordinary acute care hospital discharges in regions other than the region of residence are 7.8%, a figure that is higher than in 2020 (7.3%), the year in which hospital emigration had slowed down due to COVID-19 pandemic-related restrictions, but lower than the pre-pandemic figure (8.3% in 2019) (Figure 3).

Despite these changes, the geography remains largely unchanged, reflecting the wide inequalities in health care provision between regions and, in particular, between the North and South of the country, with more out of region hospital discharges in the South.

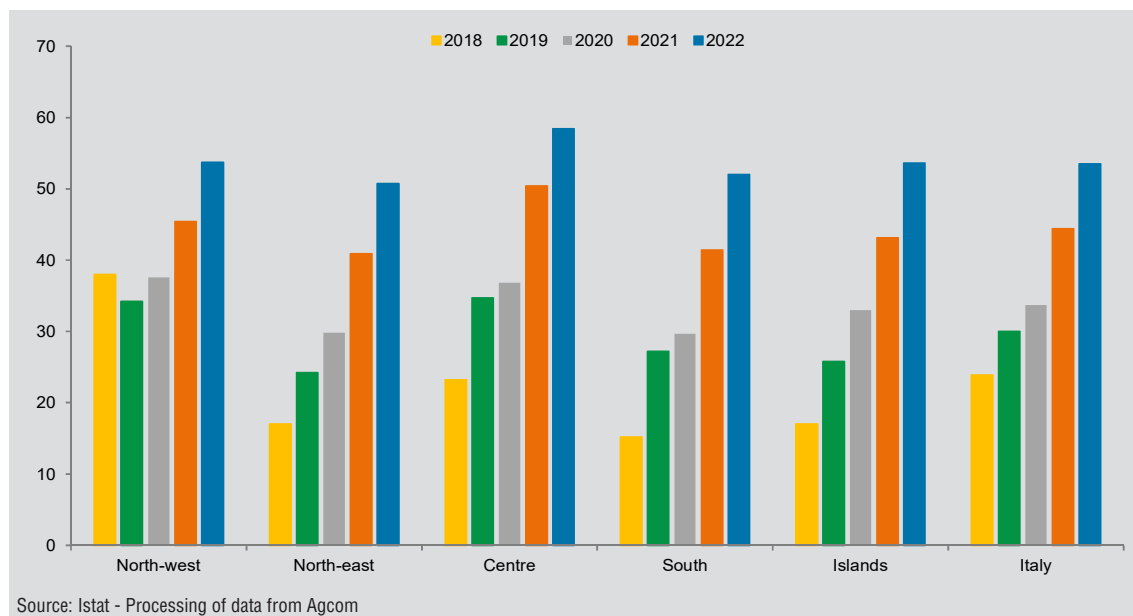
Figure 3. Hospital patient emigration to a different region, by geographic area. Years 2019 - 2021. Percentage values



### High speed connection more spread, but the distribution is uneven across the territory

The Strategic Agenda for the Digital Decade, which will drive Europe’s digital transformation, sets concrete goals and targets for 2030. Targets include achieving gigabit connectivity in all EU households and 5G coverage for all populated areas. Italy is still a long way from achieving these objectives, but it has taken a significant step forward: in 2022, the threshold of 50% of households living in an area served by high-speed Internet connection (VHCN) is exceeded. However, there are still significant territorial differences, ranging from 58.4% in the Centre to 50.7% in the North-east (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Households that are resident in municipalities with Overall Fixed Very High Capacity Network (VHCN) coverage, by geographic area. Years 2018 - 2022. Percentage values



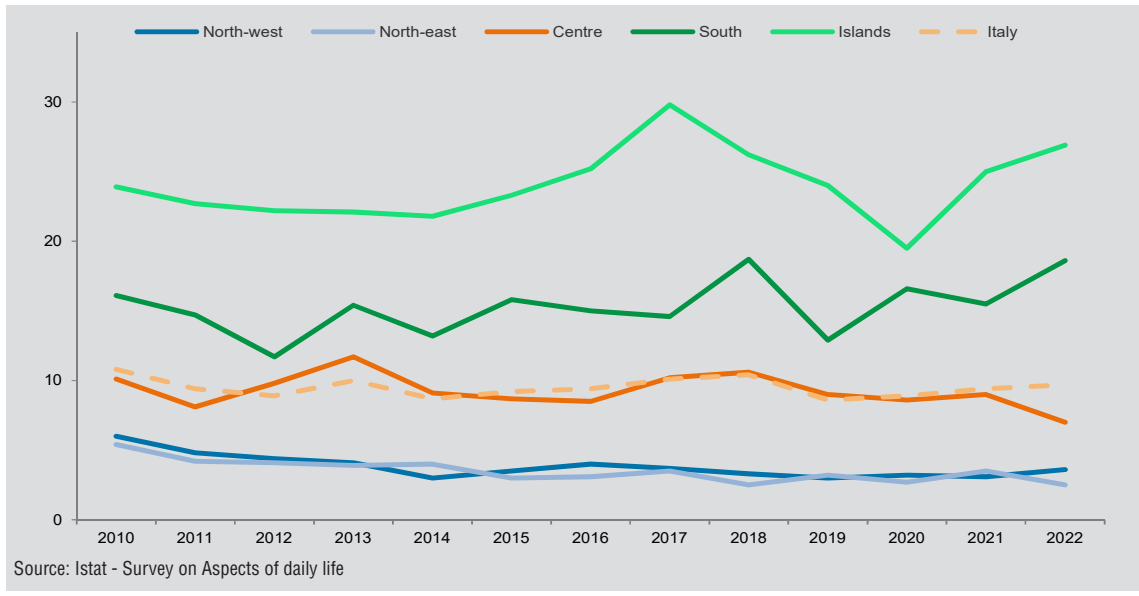
### Strong territorial disparities in access to services persist

In the three-year period 2020-2022, 5.1% of Italian households experienced great difficulty in reaching at least three essential services, including pharmacies, first aid, post or municipal offices, supermarkets, schools or police and carabinieri stations. The lack of access to public services complicates everyday life; the situation is particularly critical in the South of Italy, where 7.8% of households experience this difficulty.

### In Calabria and Sicilia more irregularities in water supply are reported

In 2022, 9.7% of households report irregularities in water supply, a figure that has remained almost stable over the last three years. There are still large territorial differences, ranging from 3.4% in the North to 7% in the Centre, 18.6% in the South and 26.7% in the Islands (Figure 5). The most critical situations are still reported by households in Calabria (45.1%) and Sicilia (32.6%), where there is a severe infrastructural problem in the water supply network, resulting in a constant poor quality of service.

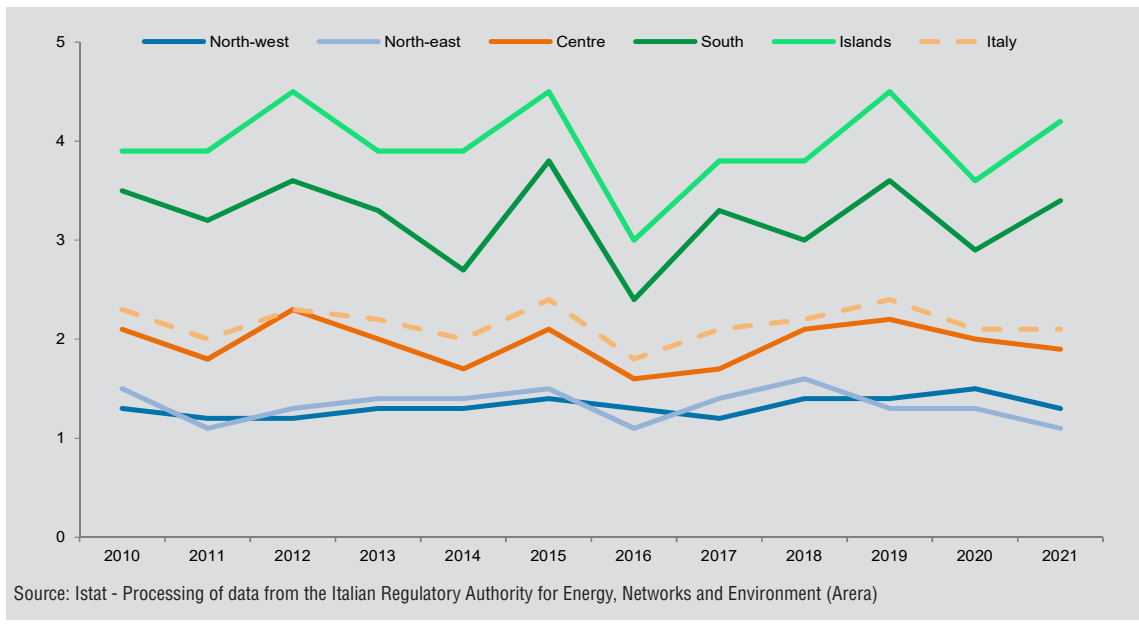
Figure 5. Households that reported irregularities in water supply by geographic area. Years 2010 - 2022. Percentage values



**Irregularities in electric power distribution remain stable**

In Italy, in 2021, the Energy Authority (ARERA) recorded 2.1 unintentionally long (more than 3 minutes) and unannounced power cuts per user (Figure 6). The irregularity of supply does not affect the entire Italian territory, in fact it is almost non-existent in Valle d’Aosta, Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano, and Friuli-Venezia Giulia, where the number of interruptions per user is less than one per year; it exceeds 3 interruptions per user per year in Campania, Calabria, and Puglia, while in Sicilia the situation is particularly serious, reaching 4.7 interruptions.

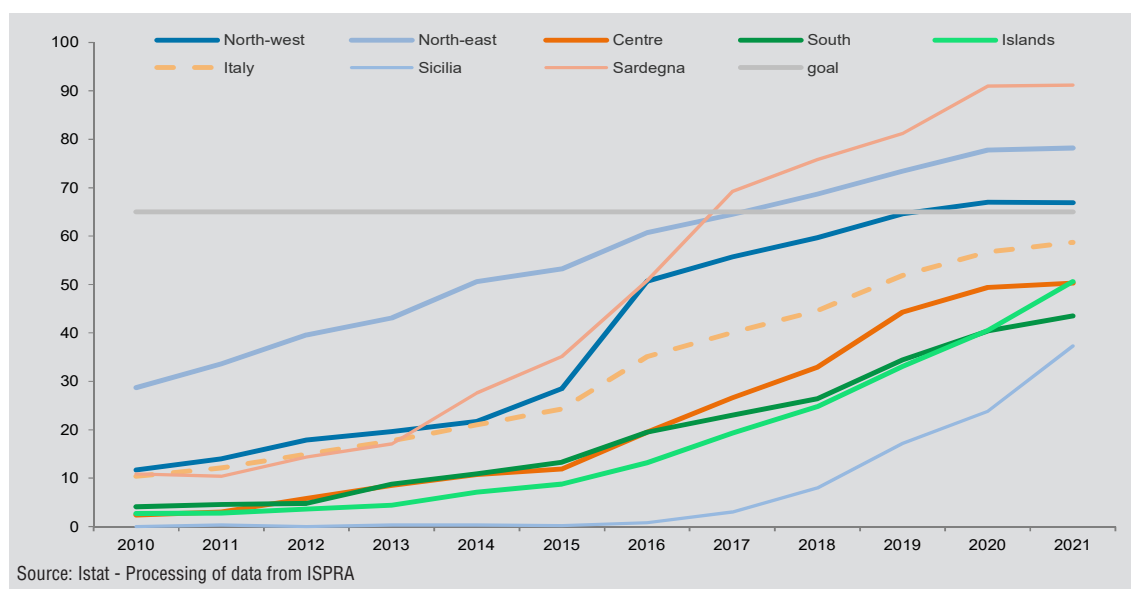
Figure 6. Irregularities in electric power distribution by geographic area. Years 2010 - 2021. Average number per user



## Separate waste collection steadily improving, however the target has not yet been reached

In 2021, 5,265 out of 7,903 municipalities reached the target of 65% for separate waste collection: 58.7% of the population lives in one of these municipalities, but the service is not uniform across the country (Figure 7). The northern regions are furthest ahead with 71.7% of the population residing in municipalities that have reached the target; followed by the central regions (50%), while the southern regions have the greatest difficulties, with 45.8% of the population living in municipalities that have reached the target. The situation in Southern Italy is critical in all regions, also because of the delay in starting separate collection; an exception is Sardegna, where 91.2% of the population live in a municipality that has reached the target.

Figure 7. Resident population in municipalities with separate waste collection greater than or equal to 65%, by geographic area. Years 2010 - 2021. Percentage values



## Frequent users of public transport on the rise again

After the decline observed in 2020, 11.8% of people aged 14 years and over used mobility services assiduously in 2022. The indicator has risen again, but has not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels. This is probably also due to the increase in working from home, which has led to a reduction in home-to-work travel and a change in habits in favour of, for example, walking for short distances.



## Indicators

1. **Beds in the residential social-healthcare and social-welfare facilities:** Beds in the public or private social-healthcare and social-welfare facilities that provide residential services (assisted hospitality with overnight stay) of a social welfare and/or social-healthcare type to people in need per 10,000 inhabitants.  
Source: Istat - Residential health and social care facilities.
2. **Integrated home assistance service:** Percentage of people aged 65 and over who benefited from integrated home assistance service.  
Source: Processing of data from Ministry of Health, Health information system.
3. **Composite index of service accessibility:** Percentage of households who find very difficult to reach some basic services (pharmacy, emergency room, post office, police, carabinieri, municipal offices, crèches, nursery, primary and secondary school, market and supermarket). The indicator is a three-year average.  
Source: Istat - Survey on Aspects of daily life.
4. **Irregularities in water supply:** Percentage of households who report irregularities in water supply.  
Source: Istat - Survey on Aspects of daily life.
5. **Irregularities in electric power distribution:** Frequency of accidental long lasting electric power cuts (cuts without notice longer than 3 minutes) (average number per consumer).  
Source: Processing of data from the Italian Regulatory Authority for Energy, Networks and Environment (Arera).
6. **Seat-Km of public transport networks:** Seat-Km of public transport networks per capita in provincial capital Municipalities.  
Source: Istat - Survey on urban environmental data.
7. **Satisfaction with means of transport:** Percentage of users aged 14 and over who rated 8 or more (over 10) for all means of transport used regularly (more than once a week).  
Source: Istat - Survey on Aspects of daily life.
8. **Frequent users of public transport:** Percentage of population aged 14 and over who use public transport several times a week (bus, trolley bus, tram within their own municipality; bus or coach connecting different municipalities; train).  
Source: Istat - Survey on Aspects of daily life.
9. **Overall Fixed Very High Capacity Network (VHCN) coverage:** Percentage of households which are resident in an area served by a very high capacity network (FTTH).  
Source: Processing of data from Agcom.
10. **Separate collection service for municipal waste:** Percentage of resident population in municipalities with separate collection greater than or equal to 65%.  
Source: Processing of data from Ispra.
11. **Hospital beds in high-care wards:** Hospital beds in high care wards in ordinary inpatient care in public and private health care institutions per 10,000 inhabitants.  
Source: Processing of data from Ministry of Health.
12. **Hospital patient emigration to a different region:** Percentage of hospital discharges carried out in regions other than that of residence on the total discharges of residents in the region. Data refer only to inpatient discharges for "acute" care (excluding hospitalizations of "spinal unit", "functional rehabilitation", "neuro-rehabilitation", "long-term care").  
Source: Processing of data from Hospital Discharges of the Ministry of Health.
13. **Unmet need for medical examination:** Percentage of the population reporting, in the last 12 months, unmet needs for medical care (specialist examination or diagnostic examination) due to one of the following reasons: he could not pay for it, it was too expensive; inconvenience (distant structure, lack of transportation, inconvenient hours); long waiting list.  
Source: Istat - Survey on Aspects of daily life.
14. **General practitioners with a number of patients above the maximum threshold:** Percentage of general practitioners with a number of patients above the maximum threshold of 1500 patients defined by the general practitioners' contract.  
Source: Processing of data from Ministry of Health.
15. **Physicians:** Practising physicians per 1,000 inhabitants.  
Source: IQVIA ITALIA One-Key Database.
16. **Nurses and midwives:** Practicing nurses and midwives per 1,000 inhabitants.  
Source: Co.Ge.A.P.S. (Consorzio Gestione Anagrafica Professioni Sanitarie) - National database of ECM credits (Continuing Medical Education).

## Indicators by regions and geographic areas

REGIONS GEOGRAPHIC AREAS	Beds in the residential social-healthcare and social-wel- fare facilities (a) 2020	Integrated home assistance service (b) 2021	Composite index of service accessibility (c) 2021	Irregularities in water supply (c) 2022	Irregularities in electric power distri- bution (d) 2021	Seat-Km of public transport networks (e) 2020	Satisfaction with means of transport (f) 2022
Piemonte	116.9	2.0	4.0	5.1	1.6	3634	14.9
Valle d'Aosta/Vallée d'Aoste	109.8	0.4	6.2	3.6	0.7	536	44.9
Liguria	112.6	2.9	4.9	3.6	1.1	3243	20.8
Lombardia	84.8	2.8	3.1	2.9	1.2	9109	26.2
Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtirol	131.6	1.8	3.1	1.4	0.8	3287	51.5
<i>Bolzano/Bozen</i>	<i>116.1</i>	<i>0.4</i>	<i>2.2</i>	<i>1.6</i>	<i>0.9</i>	<i>3083</i>	<i>58.7</i>
<i>Trento</i>	<i>147.0</i>	<i>3.1</i>	<i>3.9</i>	<i>1.3</i>	<i>0.8</i>	<i>3470</i>	<i>41.3</i>
Veneto	91.7	4.3	3.7	2.0	1.2	4367	27.3
Friuli-Venezia Giulia	117.9	3.1	4.6	2.2	0.9	3260	40.4
Emilia-Romagna	94.1	3.6	3.3	3.4	1.0	2280	26.7
Toscana	61.3	3.7	5.7	6.3	1.5	2181	25.0
Umbria	66.2	2.3	4.8	6.9	1.7	1376	22.1
Marche	81.1	3.6	3.9	5.2	1.5	1668	30.5
Lazio	44.8	2.7	5.5	7.9	2.2	4816	18.2
Abruzzo	43.1	4.7	4.8	22.6	2.3	1758	16.0
Molise	65.0	2.9	4.1	15.4	1.7	383	26.7
Campania	18.8	2.3	8.8	16.0	3.5	1426	10.7
Puglia	39.9	1.9	7.9	8.7	3.8	1518	21.7
Basilicata	75.1	3.9	6.2	13.4	2.0	801	30.4
Calabria	39.7	....	7.7	45.1	3.5	1249	37.0
Sicilia	51.4	4.3	7.0	32.6	4.7	1306	25.1
Sardegna	50.2	....	3.3	10.7	3.0	2424	37.5
North	97.4	2.9	3.6	3.1	1.2	5015	26.4
North-west	96.2	2.6	3.6	3.6	1.3	6408	22.9
North-east	99.1	3.1	3.6	2.5	1.1	3118	32.3
Centre	56.1	3.2	5.3	7.0	1.9	3737	21.0
South and Islands	39.1	2.5	7.2	21.4	3.6	1455	21.3
South	33.4	2.2	7.8	18.6	3.4	1417	18.2
Islands	51.1	3.1	6.0	26.9	4.2	1518	29.2
<b>Italy</b>	<b>69.6</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>9.7</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>3622</b>	<b>23.9</b>

(a) Per 10,000 inhabitants;

(b) Per 100 persons aged 65 and over;

(c) Per 100 households;

(d) Average number of interruptions per user;

(e) Seat-Km per inhabitant. Data measured in the capital cities of the Italian provinces;

(f) Per 100 frequent users of at least one type of transport;

(g) Per 100 persons aged 14 and over;

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Frequent users of public transport (g)	Overall Fixed Very High Capacity Network (VHCN) coverage (c) 2022***	Separate collection service for municipal waste (c) 2021	Hospital beds in high-care wards (a) 2020	Hospital patient emigration to a different region (h) 2021	Unmet need for medical examination (i) 2022	General practitioners with a number of patients above the maximum threshold (l) 2020	Physicians (m) 2022*	Nurses and midwives (m) 2021
12.7	45.8	55.2	3.1	6.3	9.6	38.8	3.8	6.5
12.7	29.8	80.6	4.0	15.4	6.4	50.0	3.7	7.1
19.7	47.6	38.2	3.5	13.7	5.8	36.3	4.8	7.7
13.9	45.1	76.2	3.3	4.9	6.8	63.7	4.0	5.7
19.0	....	83.7	2.4	8.5	5.3	60.5	3.5	7.6
22.6	12.3	69.4	2.3	4.6	4.7	63.7	3.6	7.1
15.5	52.2	97.8	2.5	13.1	5.9	57.8	3.4	8.1
10.3	38.9	88.8	3.9	5.9	6.4	57.3	3.7	6.6
13.5	44.2	68.2	2.5	6.7	7.7	38.0	4.2	7.2
10.9	36.1	68.0	3.0	5.1	6.4	42.5	4.6	6.6
10.1	43.1	59.7	3.1	5.9	6.8	40.6	4.7	7.0
7.1	42.0	72.9	2.3	12.0	8.1	21.1	4.7	7.7
8.9	30.8	85.6	2.6	12.9	7.0	34.6	4.0	6.8
18.1	61.3	31.7	2.7	7.1	6.9	32.5	5.0	7.1
7.7	40.7	67.2	3.0	14.9	7.6	21.5	4.6	7.0
6.5	40.4	46.4	4.6	29.2	5.6	15.0	4.2	8.6
11.1	55.1	32.0	2.5	9.2	4.7	42.6	4.0	6.0
8.5	34.4	53.3	3.2	8.4	7.5	18.3	4.0	7.0
8.8	26.9	58.0	2.6	26.9	7.5	19.7	3.5	7.4
8.3	22.8	36.9	2.6	20.8	7.2	17.1	3.8	5.6
7.1	47.5	37.3	3.2	6.2	7.2	17.7	4.5	5.9
10.2	30.4	91.2	2.4	5.5	12.3	28.1	5.0	6.3
13.1	....	71.7	3.2	6.2	7.0	51.8	4.0	6.4
14.1	53.7	66.9	3.2	6.4	7.5	53.4	4.0	6.1
11.7	50.7	78.2	3.2	5.9	6.4	49.7	4.1	6.8
13.6	58.4	50.3	2.8	7.9	7.0	34.2	4.8	7.1
8.9	....	45.8	2.9	10.2	7.0	24.9	4.2	6.3
9.4	52.0	43.5	2.8	12.2	6.2	27.3	4.0	6.5
7.9	53.6	50.6	3.0	6.0	8.5	20.1	4.7	6.0
<b>11.8</b>	<b>53.7</b>	<b>58.7</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>38.2</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>6.5</b>

(h) Per 100 discharges of inhabitants in the region;

(i) Per 100 persons;

(l) Per 100 physicians;

(m) Per 1,000 inhabitants;

(\*) Provisional data;

(\*\*) From 2020 data also contains the waiver for reasons related to COVID-19;

(\*\*\*) Regional data relates to 2021.

