The expenditure of municipalities for social services

Year 2016

In 2016, municipalities spent around 7 billion and 56 million euros for social services (0.4% of the national GDP; +2% over the previous year).

The social expenditure almost reached the pre-crisis level, thanks to a continuous recovery started in 2014, after the 2011-2013 decline.

In 2016, in terms of per capita expenditure, municipalities spent on average 116 euros for each resident (up from 114 in 2015).

As regards geographical differences, per capita expenditure ranged from from 22 euros in Calabria to 517 in the Autonomous Province of Bolzano, where more services were available to citizens. The South only benefited from 10% of the resources for social welfare services, in spite of its resident population that represented 23% of the total.

The main sources of funding for social services were municipalities' resources and financing from associations between neighbouring municipalities (61.8%).

Regional funds for social policies provided coverage for a further 17.8% of the national spending and represented the second most relevant source.

The expenditure financed by the Italian State or by the European Union funds only amounted to 16.4%.

In 2016, among these funds, the indistinct fund for social policies covered 9% of the expenditure (down from 13% in 2006).

Over the period observed, resources dedicated to services for the elderly decreased gradually, both in absolute terms and as a share of the total municipal social spending, from 25% in 2003 to 17% in 2016. At the same time, the increasing number of resident old people contributed to the decrease of per capita expenditure per year, down from €119 in 2003 to € 92 in 2016.

On the contrary, expenses for disabled people almost doubled, increasing from €1,478 per capita per year in 2003 to €2,854 in 2016. Resources for minors and families with children increased from €86 to €172 per person per year, and 40% was dedicated to socio-educational services for the early childhood.