

6. Politics and institutions¹

Most of the indicators were already at critical levels in the pre-pandemic years, although slowly improving.

In the two years of the pandemic crisis, and then in 2022, the pre-existing critical issues did not escalate, but the latest updates available for the indicators of this domain still point to a need for improvement (Table 1).

Key issues remain the low level of trust in democratic institutions, the limited participation of women in politics and top institutions, the low presence of young people in Parliament, the efficiency of the civil justice system and prisons overcrowding.

In 2020 and 2021 there has been a slight improvement in trust in institutions, which nevertheless remains low, and in some indicators of gender balance, which are still far from the goal of parity, the share of women on the boards of listed companies being the only exception. This was already the least critical measure of gender balance.

The COVID-19 emergency affected the functioning of the Courts, leading to a very slight deterioration in the duration of civil trials, which has not yet been recovered. The health crisis also required emergency measures to reduce prison overcrowding. However, the problem was not solved, as the prisons density rose again in 2021, and more rapidly in 2022, although without returning to its critical pre-pandemic level.

Furthermore, the renewal of the Italian Parliament in September 2022, led to a decline in the two indicators related to the inclusion of women and young people in the national political representation.

Table 1. Politics and institutions 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
Voter turnout	2009	2019	56.1	●	-	-	-
Trust in the parliament	2011	2022	4.5	●	●	●	●
Trust in judicial system	2011	2022	4.8	●	●	●	●
Trust in political parties	2011	2022	3.3	●	●	●	●
Trust in police and fire brigade	2012	2022	7.4	●	●	●	●
Women and political representation in national Parliament (a)	2008	2022	33.7	●	-	-	●
Women and political representation at regional level	2012	2022	22.3	●	●	●	●
Women in decision-making bodies	2013	2023	21.0	●	●	●	●
Women in the boards of companies listed in stock exchange	2010	2022	42.9	●	●	●	●
Mean age of members of national Parliament (a)	2014	2022	51.4	●	-	-	●
Length of civil proceedings	2012	2022	433.0	●	●	●	●
Prison density	2010	2022	109.5	●	●	●	●

(a) Year 2019 not available. Changes referred to the year 2018.

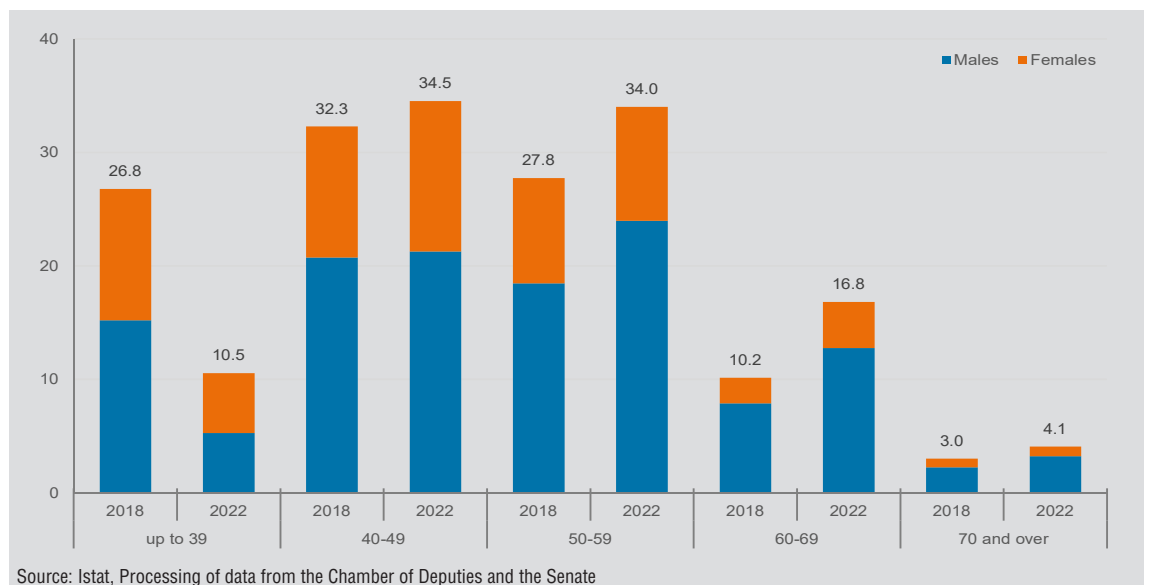
Note: If the relative change between the two years exceeds 1% it is considered positive (green), if it is lower than -1% it is considered negative (red). In the range -1 and +1% the change is considered stable (yellow). The polarity of the indicator was taken into account when calculating the changes to consider the improvement or worsening in terms of well-being.

¹ This chapter was edited by Stefania Taralli, with contributions from Francesca Dota and Franco Turetta. Stefania Taralli, Alessandra Tinto and Paola Conigliaro collaborated in the implementation of the box “The sentiment of democracy and tolerance”.

In the Italian Parliament elected in 2022, less members, fewer young people and women

The renewal of the Italian Parliament in September 2022 reversed the positive trend observed in previous elections in terms of inclusion of women and young people (Figure 1). 600 deputies were elected (345 seats less than in the previous election): their average age has risen to 51.4 years (+3.8 years) compared with 47.6 years at the beginning of the 18th legislature and the percentage of women has fallen to 33.7% (it was 35.4%).

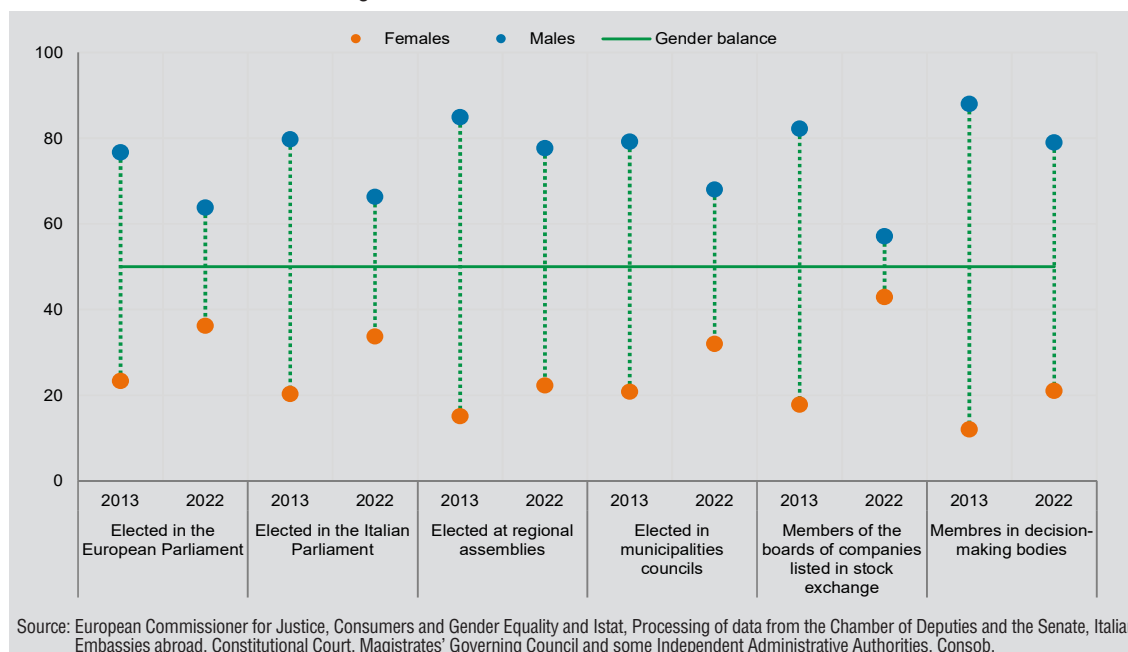
Figure 1. Members of Italian Parliament by gender and age group. Years 2018 and 2022. Percentage values



Italy is still far from gender balance in national politics and top institutional positions

Over the last decade, the presence of women in positions of political representation and at the top of institutions has increased, but gender gaps remain wide (Figure 2). The greatest progress can be observed in the composition of the boards of directors of large listed companies (42.9% in 2022; +25.1 percentage points since 2013), which shows a rapid and significant reduction in the gender gap (from 64.4 percentage points in 2013 to 14.2 in 2022).

Figure 2. Gender composition of those elected to European and national parliaments, regional assemblies and Municipal Councils, of members of Boards of Directors of listed companies and of decision-making Bodies. Years 2013; 2022. Percentage values

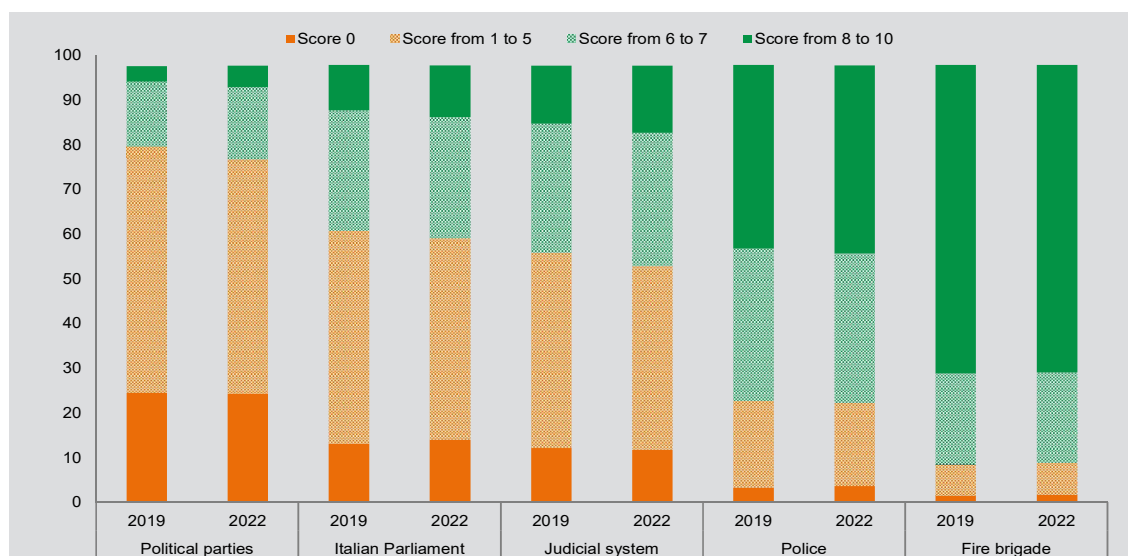


Source: European Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality and Istat. Processing of data from the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, Italian Embassies abroad, Constitutional Court, Magistrates' Governing Council and some Independent Administrative Authorities, Consob.

Public trust in Parliament, political parties and the judiciary is still insufficient

The level of trust in political and judicial institutions (unchanged between 2021 and 2022) remains well below the sufficiency level (Figure 3). On a scale of 0 to 10, trust in political parties has an average score of 3.3, with insufficient (<6) scores for almost eight out of ten citizens; the average scores for Parliament and the Judiciary are 4.5 and 4.8, with insufficient trust scores for more than half of the population aged 14 and over (59.0% and 52.8% respectively).

Figure 3. Population aged 14 and over by vote of trust in different institutions. Year 2022. Percentage values (a)

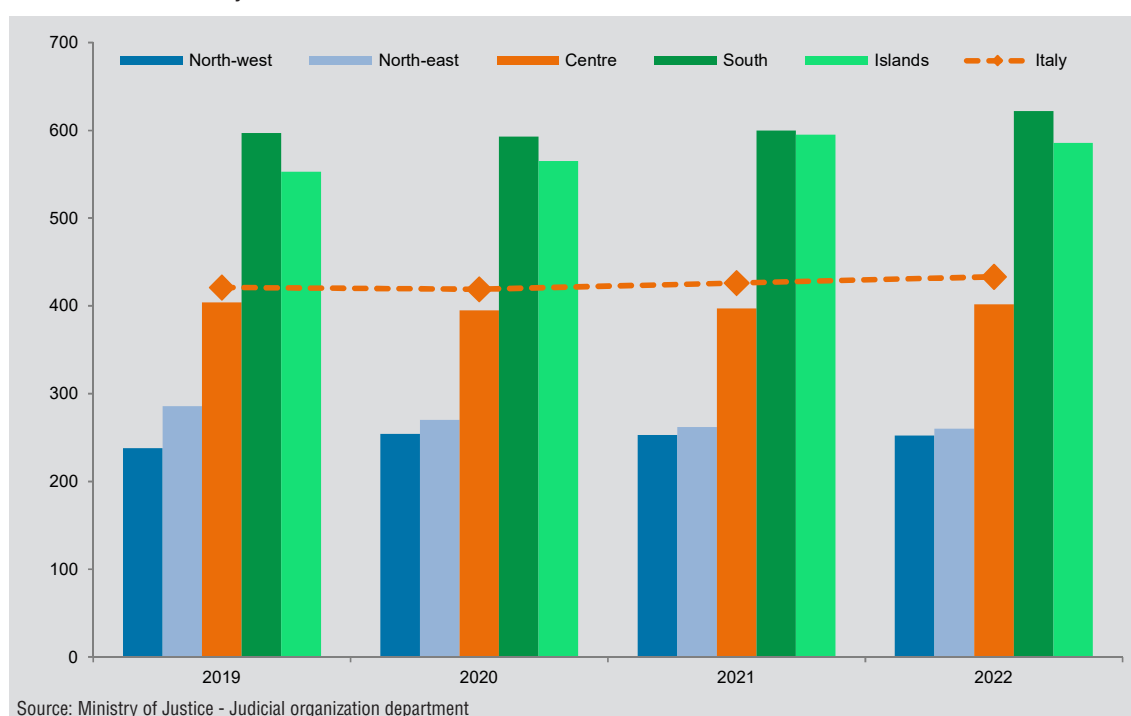


Source: Istat, Survey on Aspects of daily life
 (a) The sum of the percentages does not add up to 100 because a proportion of respondents did not indicate their vote of trust.

Civil proceedings in ordinary Courts still too long

The duration of civil trials in ordinary Courts remains long: the indicator rises to 433 days in 2022 (it was 421 in 2019), consolidating the very slight deterioration observed during the health emergency (Figure 4). The delay in the South remains considerable, with times that are more than double those in the North-west (622 and 253 days respectively). On the other hand, the trend towards the reduction of the backlog resumes (-6.4% of pending cases at the end of 2021 compared to 2019).

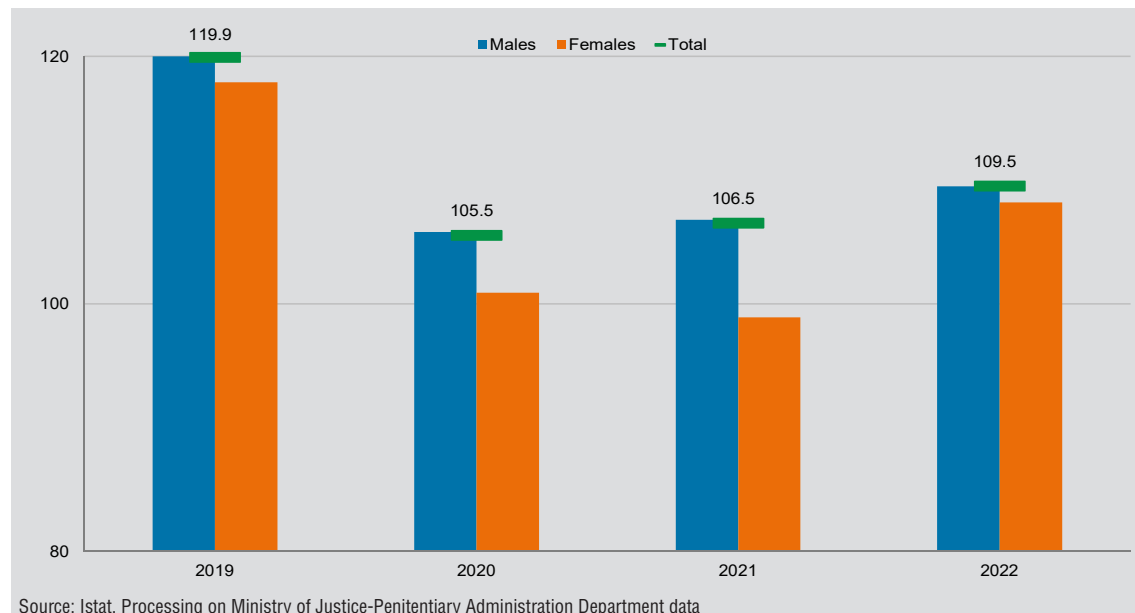
Figure 4. Effective duration of proceedings defined in ordinary courts by geographic area. Years 2019-2022. Average duration in days



Prison crowding is set to get worse, especially for women

The increase in prisons overcrowding, started in 2021 and accelerated over the past year (Figure 5). As at 31 December 2022, the indicator rose to 109.5 inmates per 100 regulatory capacity places (3 percentage points higher than in 2021, 4 points higher than in 2020). Prisons density exceeds 150% in 17 of the 189 country's prisons. Although the prison population is almost exclusively male (95.8% in 2022), the sharpest and most rapid deterioration concerns women (108.2%; +7.3 percentage points compared to 2020 versus +3.7 percentage points for men).

Figure 5. Prison population density by sex. Years 2019 and 2022. Percentage on the total capacity of penal institutions



SENTIMENT OF DEMOCRACY AND TOLERANCE

For the first time in 2022, Istat included in the annual survey Aspects of daily life a 10-item set of questions on the sense of democracy and tolerance. Items were related to freedom of thought, religion, civil rights, gender equality, and the absence of discrimination on the grounds of race or sexual orientation, political rights, freedom of the press and media (Table A). Respondents (people aged 14 and over living in Italy) were asked to rate each item on a 4-point scale ranging from 'very important' to 'not at all important'.

Table A. Items related to the sense of democracy and tolerance proposed in the rating scale. Istat, Survey on Aspects of daily life. Year 2022

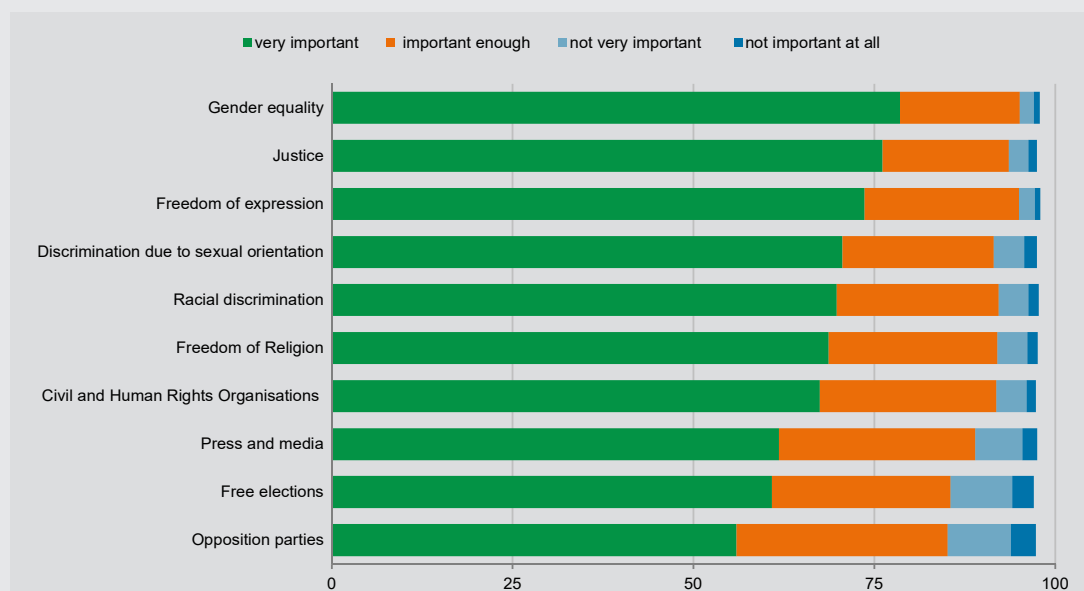
Item	In your opinion, how important is it in Italy
Gender equality	That men and women have equal rights and can enter all jobs with the same salary if they perform the same tasks
Justice	That the judicial system is fair
Freedom of expression	That everyone may freely say what they think
Discrimination due to sexual orientation	That all people have the same rights regardless of sexual orientation
Racial discrimination	That all people have the same rights regardless of their country of origin, skin colour and ethnicity
Freedom of Religion	That everyone may freely profess their religion
Civil and Human Rights Organisations	That civil, social and human rights organisations operate freely
Press and media	That newspapers and mass media can express different points of view without being censored
Free elections	that free elections are held periodically
Opposition parties	That opposition parties can operate freely

40.9% of people rated all items as "very important", and a further 32.1% showed a positive orientation, rating all items as "very important" or "important enough". A further 20.7% had mixed ratings, with a number of items being "not very important" or "not important at all", although positive ratings predominated. At the extreme end of the scale, 3.7% of individuals rated most (2.9%) or all (0.8%) items as "not very important" or "not important at all".

Sense of democracy varies widely according to the region of residence and the level of education. More than three out of four people consider it very important that in Italy "men and women have the same rights and can have access to the same jobs with the same pay for the same work" (78.5% on average in Italy; 82.2% in the North and 72.7% in the South). In any case this was the item with the highest level of importance.

At the bottom of the list and at a distance from all the others items are those concerning political participation and freedom of the press and media (Figure A).

Figure A. People aged 14 and over by vote of importance given to the items of the scale. Year 2022. Percentage values

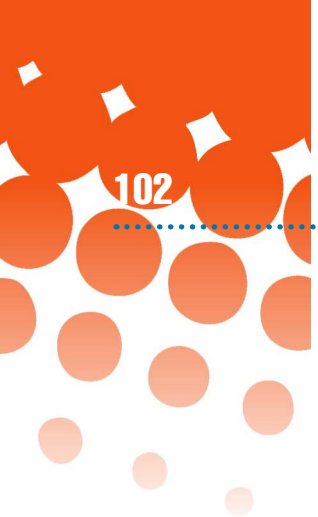


Source: Istat, Survey on Aspects of daily life

(a) The sum of the percentages does not add up to 100 because a proportion of respondents did not indicate their vote.

The greatest differences emerge particularly for three items that collect the lowest percentages of “very important”: that “opposition parties can operate freely” (56.0% of “very important”); that “free elections are held regularly” (60.8% on average in Italy; 63.8% in the North, 55.0% in the South), that “newspapers and mass media can express different points of view without being censored” (61.8%). For these three items, the share of “very important” among those with tertiary education is about 20 percentage points higher than that of those with at most a high school diploma.

Around 70% of individuals aged 14 and over consider it “very important” that in Italy “all people have the same rights regardless of their sexual orientation” or regardless of their “country of origin, skin colour and ethnicity”; among young people (aged 14 to 24) this rises to 76-77%.



Indicators

- 1. Voter turnout:** Percentage of eligible voter who cast a ballot in the last election for the European Parliament (excluding voting abroad).
Source: Ministry of the Interior.
- 2. Trust in the Parliament:** Average score of trust in the Italian Parliament (on a scale from 0 to 10) expressed by people aged 14 and over.
Source: Istat - Survey on Aspects of daily life.
- 3. Trust in Judicial system:** Average score of trust in the Judicial system (on a scale from 0 to 10) expressed by people aged 14 and over.
Source: Istat - Survey on Aspects of daily life.
- 4. Trust in political parties:** Average score of trust in political parties (on a scale from 0 to 10) expressed by people aged 14 and over.
Source: Istat - Survey on Aspects of daily life.
- 5. Trust in police and fire brigade:** Average score of trust in the police and the fire brigade (on a scale from 0 to 10) expressed by people aged 14 and over.
Source: Istat - Survey on Aspects of daily life.
- 6. Women and political representation in national Parliament:** Percentage of women on total members of Parliament (excluding senators and deputies elected in foreign constituencies and senators for life).
Source: Istat - Processing of data from the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate.
- 7. Women and political representation at regional level:** Percentage of women elected in regional councils on total number of elected people.
Source: Istat - Processing of data from Regional councils.
- 8. Women in decision-making bodies:** Percentage of women in position of high responsibility within the following bodies: Italian embassies abroad, Constitutional court, Magistrates' Governing Council (including magistrates who participate in the functioning of the Body), and some Independent Administrative Authorities (for Communications, Antitrust, Data protection, Consob - Italian Securities and Investments Board).
Source: Istat - Processing of data from Italian Embassies abroad, Constitutional Court, Magistrates' Governing Council and some Independent Administrative Authorities.
- 9. Women in the boards of companies listed in stock exchange:** Percentage of women in the board of companies listed in stock exchange.
Source: Consob.
- 10. Mean age of members of national Parliament:** Average age of members of national Parliament. Senators and deputies elected in foreign constituencies and senators for life are excluded.
Source: Istat - Processing of data from the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate..
- 11. Length of civil proceedings:** Effective average duration in days of proceedings set up in ordinary courts.
Source: Ministry of Justice - Judicial organization department.
- 12. Prison density:** Percentage of prisoners in penal institutions on the total capacity of penal institutions.
Source: Istat - Processing of data from Ministry of Justice, Penitentiary Administration Department.

Indicators by region and geographic area

REGIONS GEOGRAPHIC AREAS	Voter turnout (a)	Trust in the Italian parliament (b)	Trust in judicial system (b)	Trust in political parties (b)	Trust in police and fire brigade (b)	Women and political representation in Parliament (c)
	2019	2021	2021	2021	2021	2018
Piemonte	64.7	4.2	4.8	3.1	7.5	27.9
Valle d'Aosta/Vallée d'Aoste	51.9	4.0	4.2	3.0	7.3	50.0
Liguria	58.5	4.6	4.9	3.4	7.6	26.7
Lombardia	64.1	4.3	4.5	3.1	7.5	28.9
Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtirol	59.9	4.3	4.9	3.3	7.7	53.8
<i>Bolzano/Bozen</i>	<i>62.8</i>	<i>4.3</i>	<i>5.0</i>	<i>3.6</i>	<i>7.6</i>
<i>Trento</i>	<i>57.3</i>	<i>4.2</i>	<i>4.7</i>	<i>3.1</i>	<i>7.7</i>
Veneto	63.7	4.2	4.5	3.1	7.6	40.4
Friuli-Venezia Giulia	57.0	4.4	4.6	3.1	7.6	50.0
Emilia-Romagna	67.3	4.7	4.8	3.5	7.7	48.8
Toscana	65.8	4.7	4.8	3.4	7.4	36.1
Umbria	67.7	4.5	4.8	3.1	7.7	33.3
Marche	62.1	4.4	4.7	3.2	7.4	26.7
Lazio	53.3	4.9	5.1	3.6	7.5	27.3
Abruzzo	52.6	4.7	4.8	3.4	7.4	38.5
Molise	53.3	4.6	4.7	3.3	7.3	25.0
Campania	47.6	4.9	5.3	3.7	7.0	29.6
Puglia	49.8	4.8	4.9	3.7	7.2	25.0
Basilicata	47.3	4.6	5.1	3.4	7.3	14.3
Calabria	44.0	4.7	5.1	3.4	7.2	42.1
Sicilia	37.5	4.6	5.2	3.2	7.5	39.6
Sardegna	36.3	4.0	4.7	2.8	7.4	31.3
North	63.7	4.3	4.7	3.2	7.5	36.0
North-west	63.6	4.3	4.6	3.1	7.5	28.7
North-east	63.9	4.4	4.7	3.2	7.6	46.1
Centre	59.3	4.8	4.9	3.5	7.5	30.4
South and islands	44.7	4.7	5.1	3.5	7.3	32.3
South	48.3	4.8	5.1	3.6	7.2	29.9
Islands	37.2	4.5	5.0	3.1	7.5	37.5
Italy	56.1	4.5	4.8	3.3	7.4	33.7

(a) Per 100 eligible voters;

(b) Average trust on a 0-10 scale expressed by persons 14 and over;

(c) Per 100 elected persons;

(d) Percentage of women in the total membership;

(e) Excluding senators and deputies elected in foreign constituencies and senators for life;

(f) Average duration in days;

(g) Number of prisoners per 100 available places as defined by the regulatory capacity.

6. Politics and institutions

Women and political representation at regional level (c)	Women in decision-making bodies (d)	Women in the boards of companies listed in stock exchange (d)	Mean age of members of Parliament (e)	Length of civil proceedings (f)	Prison density (g)
2021	2022	2021	2018	2021	2021
15.7	50.6	218	101.5
11.4	55.0	522	56.4
19.4	53.4	267	119.6
24.7	52.4	262	132.0
25.7	52.8	232	90.0
25.7	175	119.3
25.7	275	82.1
35.3	52.4	284	127.5
14.3	50.3	216	121.4
32.0	51.9	258	112.8
35.0	48.5	385	93.5
38.1	53.7	441	106.4
29.0	50.5	306	102.0
31.4	52.6	421	112.2
16.1	47.4	363	112.5
28.6	56.5	425	120.1
15.7	49.9	627	108.7
13.7	51.2	606	135.7
4.8	57.3	861	114.0
19.4	51.1	751	107.4
21.4	49.6	600	94.3
13.3	52.6	520	79.4
23.2	52.0	256	118.0
19.4	52.0	253	119.0
26.8	52.0	260	116.3
32.9	51.1	402	105.1
16.7	50.6	611	105.1
16.0	50.8	622	114.8
17.7	50.3	586	90.0
22.3	21.0	42.9	51.4	433	109.5

