

Urban environment quality

Year 2013

In 2013, motorisation rates have been declining for the second year in a row. In the provincial capitals as a whole there were 613.2 motor cars and 132.7 motorcycles every thousand inhabitants (-0.9 and -0.6% respectively, compared to 2012) - while the demand for local public transport has undergone a much stronger shrinking, dropping to 188.6 yearly passengers per capita (-4.3% in absolute values).

The share of less polluting vehicles kept growing: in 2013, 53.0% of the motor cars circulating in the provincial capitals (but 42.0% in Southern Italy) complied with the euro 4 or higher standard, and 37.8% of the motorcycles complied with the euro 3.

Initiatives to foster sustainable mobility were on the rise: car sharing services were available in 23 cities (most in Northern Italy), while bike sharing services were provided in 66 cities (more evenly distributed all over the country), and in 36 cities there were more than 34 km of cycle lanes. Infomobility systems (IT systems for the enhancement of urban mobility) were operating in 68 cities, mainly located in the Centre-North.

Compared to 2012, air quality improved with regard to the fine particulate matter. During 2013, the limit set for PM10 to the protection of human health has been exceeded for more than 35 days in 44 cities (they were 52 in 2012). This number decreased mostly in the North (from 37 to 32 cities) and in the Centre (from 9 to 6), whereas in the South a noticeable worsening was observed in Campania (from 2 to 4 provincial capitals).

In about two thirds of the cases, exceedances were recorded by monitoring units of traffic type, in about a quarter of cases by units of background type (that measure an average air quality), and 8% by units of industrial type.

Improvements could be observed also in relation to PM2,5, as the limits set by law for the annual average concentration were exceeded in 10 cities (there were 18 cases in 2012)

Restrictions of private traffic - either scheduled for preventive purposes, or adopted on an emergency basis due to exceedance of the limit set for a specific pollutant - were imposed in 17 provincial capitals, while other 28 cities adopted only traffic stops that were scheduled in advance.

During 2013, 88 municipalities - among the provincial capitals - carried out some activity of noise measurement, in order to verify compliance with the limits imposed by the law. They were 91 in 2012.

Altogether, 1,627 controls were carried out in 2013, equal to 9.1 every 100,000 inhabitants - less than in 2012, when 1,661 controls had been recorded. In both years, about 90% of the controls were carried out following citizens' complaints.

In a 47.9% of the cases, controls detected at least one exceedance of noise pollution limits (5.1 percentage points less than in 2012).

In 2013, urban green areas summed up to 2.7% of the provincial capitals' municipal territory, equalling about 577 million m² (+0.7% compared to the previous year), which corresponds to an average availability of 32.2 m² per capita.

More than 3,200 km² of the provincial capitals' municipal territory consisted of protected natural areas (15.8%). In 43 municipalities ecological networks have been identified, in order to preserve biodiversity in urban areas.

Altogether, the protected natural areas and the urban green public spaces equalled 18.2% of the provincial capitals' municipal territory: the higher values (between 60 and 70%) were recorded in Cagliari, Venezia and Messina.

In Italian cities, green historical areas - consisting of villas, gardens and parks, protected as part of the historical and cultural landscape - cover on average a quarter of the green public spaces, of which they represent the largest component.

57 municipalities planned urban gardens (small green areas of public property, made available to citizens for domestic horticulture and leisure gardening).

About 60% of provincial capitals' municipalities of Central and Northern Italy, and nearly 40% of those of Southern Italy promoted special initiatives on the first National Trees Day (November 21st): in 53 cases trees were planted in public green areas, in 36 cases public awareness campaigns were made and in 13 cases special training was provided to workers involved in the maintenance of green areas.

For more details please refer to the Italian version

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