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EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE WELL-BEING IN ITALY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Health
Education and training
Work and life balance
Economic well-being
Social relationships
Politics and institutions
Safety
Subjective well-being
Landscape and cultural heritage
Environment
Innovation, research and creativity
Quality of services

Introduction

Over the past 15 years, the Italian National Institute of Statistics (Istat) has been investing significant resources in measuring well-being, aiming to monitor improvements in people's quality of life, assess the sustainability of such progress, and examine how well-being varies across regions and population groups. Launched in 2010, the Bes project represents both a thematic and methodological challenge, being grounded in ongoing dialogue with the scientific community, civil society, and citizens.

Through the analysis of a wide set of 152 statistical indicators, the Report offers an in-depth overview of the levels, trends, and disparities in well-being across 12 domains: Health, Education and training, Work and life balance, Economic well-being, Social relationships, Politics and institutions, Safety, Subjective well-being, Landscape and cultural heritage, Environment, Innovation, research and creativity, and Quality of services.

The report is complemented by online tools, including an interactive dashboard for exploring indicators and their breakdowns, as well as a statistical Appendix with data disaggregated by region, gender, age group, and educational qualification, enabling combined analyses.

This twelfth edition of the Report places particular emphasis on both recent and longer-term trends (2014–2024) in well-being indicators. It also features analyses of intersectional social inequalities, disparities that significantly affect the quality of life of specific subgroups and emerge only when multiple factors, such as gender, age group, educational qualification, and geographic area, are analysed using an intersectional approach.

Equitable and Sustainable Well-being in Italy: An Overview

Of the 137 Bes indicators for which a comparison with the previous year is available, just over one-third (34.3%, 47 indicators) show a significant improvement; 26.3% of the indicators (36 in total) have worsened, and 39.4% (54 indicators) remain stable.

Looking at the long-term trends, the picture is more positive: more than half of the indicators improve (70 out of 128), only 16 deteriorate, and for one-third, no clear trend can be identified.

A combined analysis of long- and short-term trends reveals that over half of the 137 indicators, for which a recent comparison is available, have improved in the past year. Thirteen indicators show long-term improvement but recent signs of deterioration, while 17 remain stable. On the negative side, 33 indicators show signs of deterioration, and 3 have improved in the last year after previously exhibiting a negative long-term trend.

In the most recent year available, 60% or more of the 134 regional indicators analysed indicate that all regions in Northern and Central Italy (except Lazio) have well-being levels above the national average. The highest results, with peaks of 70% or more, are observed in the Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano/*Bozen*, as well as in Veneto and Friuli-Venezia Giulia. Conversely, in all Southern regions (except Abruzzo) and in the Islands, the majority of indicators indicate well-being below the national average; in Campania and Puglia, this is true of more than 7 out of 10 measures.

When comparing regional trends across well-being domains, a clear divide emerges: Central and Northern regions generally outperform the national average in at least half of the indicators, while Southern regions typically fall below the Italian average for at least half of the indicators. This is the case for the Health, Education and training, Work and life balance, Economic well-being, Social relationships, and Quality of services domains. In the domains of Landscape and cultural heritage, and of Innovation, research and creativity, a few regions of Northern and Central Italy achieve top results on half or more of the indicators. In contrast, other regions in the same geographic area fall below the national levels in most indicators.
A different geographical pattern emerges in the domains of Politics and institutions, Safety, and Subjective well-being, where both Central-Northern and Southern regions show mixed results.
In the Safety domain, a notable drawback is observed in regions hosting major metropolitan areas (Lazio, Toscana, Lombardia, Campania and Emilia-Romagna).
In the Environment domain, differences are relatively minor, with most regional indicators showing only slight deviations from the national average (positive or negative); however, some regions record wide gaps across multiple indicators.
Compared to the European Union, Italy faces notable disadvantages in the labour market. The employment rate stands at 67.1%, which is 8.7 percentage points below the EU27 average. The gap is even wider among women, with a rate of just 57.4% in Italy, compared to 70.8% in the EU27. An exceptionally high disparity is observed in involuntary part-time employment (8.5% in Italy; 3.2% in the EU27); among women, the figure rises to 13.7% in Italy, versus 4.8% in the EU27.
Italy also lags behind some indicators in the Education and training domain: only 31.6% of individuals aged 25-34 hold a tertiary degree, compared to 44.1% in the EU27, and just 66.7% of people aged 25-64 have completed upper secondary education (80.5% in the EU27).
In the area of Innovation and research, Italy invests less in research and development than the EU27 average (1.37% of GDP, compared to 2.22%). The share of workers with a university degree in scientific and technological professions is 7.4 percentage points lower than in Europe (26.7% in Italy vs. 34.1% in the EU27).
Italy also underperforms in several indicators within the Economic well-being domain. In 2024, the risk of poverty in Italy is 18.9%, higher than the EU27 average of 16.2%, and income inequality is also higher (5.5% in Italy vs. 4.7% in the EU27). However, Italy is in a better position in terms of housing costs' burden, 3.1 percentage points below the European average (8.2%).
Positive results are also observed in material and social deprivation, as well as difficulties in making ends meet. In the domains of Health and Safety, Italy performs well compared to the EU27 average in avoidable mortality (17.6 per 10,000 inhabitants in Italy, versus 25.8 in the EU27). Life expectancy reaches 84.1 years, higher than the EU27 average of 81.7 years; moreover, Italy's homicide rate is among the lowest in Europe (0.6 per 100,000 inhabitants, compared to 0.9 in the EU27).

1. Health

Over the past decade, health indicators in Italy have generally shown signs of improvement or stability, although some critical issues remain.
In 2024, life expectancy at birth reached a new historical high of 83.4 years, up from 2023 and even more so compared to 2014 (82.6 years). However, the expected years of life in good health are 58.1, down from 59.1 in 2023 but in line with the value recorded ten years earlier (58.2). At age 65, people can expect to live an additional 10.4 years without limitations, slightly below the 2023 value (10.6 years) but still an increase of about 10 months compared to 2014 (9.6 years).
The mental health index is stable at 68.7 points compared to 2023, showing a positive trend since 2016 with minor fluctuations. However, during the same period, mental health has worsened among adolescents aged 14-19, particularly among girls (from 70.8 to 68.5).
Chronic conditions and severe limitations among those aged 74 and over are stable compared to 2023, but in 2024, the value (48.9%) is slightly lower than in 2014 (51.9%).
In 2022, the avoidable mortality rate for individuals aged 0 to 74 was 17.6 deaths per 10,000 residents, an improvement from both 2021 (19.2 per 10,000) and 2014 (18.2 per 10,000). Infant mortality rate declined to 2.0 per 1,000 live births, both in the short- and long-term. Cancer mortality rate among adults aged 20-64 was 7.6 deaths per 10,000 residents, down from 7.8 in 2021 and matching the 7.6 of 2014. In contrast, mortality due to dementia and nervous system diseases among people aged 65 and over rose to 35.3 per 10,000 residents in 2022, up from 33.1 in 2021 and 28.2 in 2014.
In 2024, the mortality rate from traffic accidents among young people aged 15-34 remained unchanged from 2023 at 0.6 per 10,000 residents, with a significant gender gap, unfavourable to men (1.0 compared to 0.2 for women). Compared to 2014, there is a slight improvement (it was 0.7 per 10,000 residents).
In 2024, sedentary behaviour among people aged 14 and over decreased to 32.7%, down from 34.2% in 2023 and lower than in 2014 (40.4%). Adults who are overweight remain stable at 45.1%, unchanged since 2023 and consistent with 2014 levels. However, obesity within this group has increased over the long term (11.3% in 2024, compared to 10.0% in 2014).
Among individuals aged 3 and over, 16.2% consume at least four portions of fruit and/or vegetables per day, a figure stable compared to 2023 but lower than the peak observed between 2016 and 2018 (around 20%). Smoking affects 20.5% of people aged 14 and over, a value that has remained stable since 2023, but has decreased slightly among men (from 24.3% in 2014 to 23.8% in 2024), while increasing among women (from 15.2% to 17.4%).
Risky alcohol consumption behaviours are reported by 16.0% of people aged 14 and over. This value has fluctuated since 2014 but is stable compared to 2023.

2. Education and training

Over the past year, seven indicators have improved, two have worsened, and six have remained stable. Participation in the education and training system has increased: the share of people with at least an upper secondary education rose from 65.5% to 66.7%,

the proportion of 25-34-year-olds with a tertiary qualification increased from 30.6% to 31.6%, and the transition rate from upper secondary school to university grew from 51.7% to 52.4%. Cultural participation outside the home and library usage increased. The number of NEETs (Neither in Employment nor in Education and Training) and of early school leavers with at most a lower secondary education diploma decreased. On the other hand, students' literacy skills and participation in lifelong learning declined.
In the long term, most indicators (eight in total) have improved; three have worsened, and three show mixed trends. The trend is very positive for NEETs: the value dropped to 15.2% among 15-29-year-olds (23.2% in 2018); similarly, the share of 18-24-year-olds leaving school with at most a lower secondary diploma fell to 9.8%, compared to 14.3% in 2018. The percentage of upper secondary graduates enrolling in university the same year rose to 52.4%, up from 49.1% in 2014.
Positive developments are also evident in early childhood education: 35.2% of children aged 0-2 attended nursery school during the 2022-2024 period (they were 19.6% in 2013-2015). The share of upper secondary and young tertiary graduates has been steadily rising since 2018, with more students choosing STEM disciplines at university. In 2022, 18 out of 1,000 residents aged 20-29 graduated in STEM disciplines, up from 14 per 1,000 in 2014. The long-term trend is also positive for lifelong learning participation, despite a recent setback (10.4% in 2024, up 2.3 percentage points from 2018).
Book and newspaper reading declined to 35.3% in 2024 from 37.9% in 2014. Participation among children aged 4-5 in pre-primary school or the first year of primary school decreased over time, although it rose to 95.0% in the last year (compared to 97.4% in 2014 and 92.8% in 2021).
Some indicators were particularly affected by the pandemic. Cultural participation outside the home for those aged 6 and over, which had dropped to a minimum of 8.3% in 2021, rebounded to a maximum of 37.4% in 2024. The percentage of people aged 3 and over who visited a library at least once in the 12 months before the interview increased from 7.4% in 2021 to 14.5% in 2024.
Conversely, the shares of third-year lower secondary students with inadequate literacy and numeracy skills increased by several percentage points immediately after the pandemic (from 35.2% in 2019 to 38.5% in 2021 for literacy and from 39.6% to 44.5% for numeracy skills) and have yet to return to pre-pandemic levels, even in 2025.

3. Work and work-life balance

In the Work and life balance domain, of the indicators with available comparisons, seven improved over the last year, five worsened, and one remained unchanged.
Labour market participation continues to improve in 2024: the employment rate for persons aged 20–64 increases to 67.1% (+0.8 percentage points compared to 2023), and the non-participation rate decreases to 13.3% (-1.5 percentage points). For both indicators, these positive trends persist for the fourth consecutive year, although the pace of the employment rate has nearly halved compared to the 2022-2023 period.
At the national level, non-regular employment rises moderately (9.7% in 2022, 10.0% in 2023), halting the downward trend of recent years; the rate of fatal or permanently disabling injuries declines slightly (11.0 per 10,000 employees in 2022).

In terms of job quality, involuntary part-time employment — defined as working part-time due to the inability to find full-time work — has continued to decline for the fifth consecutive year (8.5% in 2024, 9.6% in 2023). However, the percentage of women is still three times that of men (13.7% vs. 4.6%, respectively). Fixed-term employment decreased in 2024 in favour of permanent jobs, nonetheless, the proportion of fixed-term workers who have remained in this status for at least five years increased (from 18.1% to 19.4%); which is related to the decline in conversions from fixed-term to permanent employment (16.6% between 2023 and 2024, 21.4% in the period 2022-2023).
Holding a tertiary qualification positively influences labour market participation and job quality, though it does not always guarantee employment in a role that requires it. In 2024, 20.7% of employed people aged 25 to 64 with a tertiary degree were overqualified, working in positions that did not require tertiary education. This figure has decreased by one percentage point compared to 2023.
From a work-life balance perspective, the employment rate ratio between women aged 25-49 with at least one child aged 0-5 and those without children is improving: 75.4 in 2024, compared to 73.0 in 2023.
The share of employees working from home is decreasing (10.3% in 2024, down from 12.0% in 2023), though it remains above pre-pandemic levels, following a peak in 2021.
The percentage of workers who are very satisfied with their job (rating 8–10 on a 0–10 scale) declines slightly to 51.1% in 2024 (51.7% in 2023). However, job insecurity — i.e., the share of workers concerned about losing their job and being unable to find a similar one — also decreased, to 3.2% from 4.1% in 2023.
In the long term, labour market participation — employment and non-participation rates — shows a positive trend; involuntary part-time, non-regular employment, and subjective indicators are also improving. Similarly, the household workload inequality index shows a positive trend over time. For other indicators, however, the temporal patterns are not univocal.

4. Economic well-being

In the long term, four indicators with available data show an upward trend; two also record improvements in the short term.
In 2024, the Italian economy grew by 0.7%, at the same pace as in 2023. This growth was driven by positive contributions from both domestic demand (net of inventories) and net external demand, while changes in inventories had a slightly negative impact. On the supply side, value added increased in agriculture and services, and to a lesser extent in the industrial sector. An increase in both labour input and income accompanied this growth in production activity. Gross disposable income per capita increased by 2.7% in nominal terms compared to the previous year. On the other hand, inflation slowed in 2024, leading to a 1.3% increase in household purchasing power, after a year of stagnation.
Over the past decade, gross disposable income per capita has steadily increased, rising from €17,744 in 2014 to €22,977 in 2024, despite a contraction in 2020, when it fell below €19,000.
Income inequality has also declined in the long term: the income ratio between the top 20% and the bottom 20% of the population decreased from 5.8 in 2014 to 5.5 in 2023.

The share of people within households with total housing costs exceeding 40% of net household income dropped from 8.5% in 2014 to 5.1% in 2024, despite some fluctuations. Notably, there was also an improvement in the last year (-0.8 percentage point) compared to the previous year. Indicators of risk of poverty, severe material and social deprivation, housing deprivation, and living in low-work-intensity households have shown no significant changes in either the short or long term.
The incidence of absolute poverty has worsened over the long term. Since 2014 (6.9%), the proportion of people with total consumption expenditure equal to or below the absolute poverty threshold has consistently increased, except in 2019, when the value decreased to 7.5% — though remaining at much higher levels than before the 2008-2009 crisis — likely due to the introduction of the Citizenship Income (which replaced the Inclusion Income).
In 2022, the incidence rose again (9.7%), driven mainly by surging inflation, which disproportionately affects low-income households. In the following years, the incidence remained stable: 9.7% in 2023 and 9.8% in 2024, corresponding to 5.7 million individuals living in absolute poverty.
Households' perception of their economic situation has varied over time. Between 2016 and 2019, the share of households reporting a worsening financial situation decreased steadily from 34.8% to 25.8%. However, the pandemic reversed this trend, with perceptions worsening until 2022, when they reached 35.1%. Since 2023, perceptions have improved: 33.9% in 2023 and 29.5% in 2024, though they remain above pre-pandemic levels. The only indicator worsening in the short term is the significant difficulty in making ends meet, with 5.8% of households reporting struggles in 2024 (+0.3 percentage points from 2023). However, this indicator has shown a long-term improvement: it has steadily declined since 2014, despite some fluctuations, reaching a third of its original value in 2024 (17.9% in 2014 vs. 5.8% in 2024).

5. Social relationships

In 2024, one-third of people (33.3%) aged 14 and over are very satisfied with their family relationships, and 22.5% express high satisfaction with their friendships. These figures are nearly unchanged from 2023. Since 2014, the trend in household relationships has been stable, while the trend in friendships has been slightly downward. 82.1% of people aged 14 and over can rely on the support from non-cohabiting relatives, friends or neighbours. The figure peaked in 2023 (83.9%) but has remained generally stable over the long term, despite a decline in the last year.
In 2024, almost three in ten people (28.9%) participated in social activities through recreational, cultural, political, civic, sports, religious, or spiritual associations. Continuing the recovery in recent years, the figure is up in 2023 (+2.8 percentage points), but has not yet returned to pre-COVID-19 levels and remains over 4 percentage points below 2014 (33.1%).
A total of 59.6% of people aged 14 and over participated in at least one civic or political activity, such as discussing politics, staying informed about Italian politics, reading or posting opinions online, and taking part in online consultations or votes. While the percentage does not show a clear long-term trend, it is more than 7 percentage points lower than in 2014.
In 2024, 22.5% of people aged 14 and over believe that most people are trustworthy;

this figure is down 2.3 percentage points from the previous year, although the long-term trend shows a slight improvement.
Participation in voluntary activities and financial support for associations have declined since 2014. However, the proportion of people who engaged in unpaid work for associations or volunteer groups in the last 12 months has been recovering over the previous year. It stands at 8.4% (up from 7.8% in 2023). On the other hand, the proportion of people aged 14 and over who financially support associations remains nearly unchanged as compared to 2023 (11.6% in 2024).
Non-profit organisations have increased over time and, in 2023, showed a further increase, reaching 62.5 institutions per 10,000 inhabitants, the highest level since 2015.

6. Politics and institutions

In the past year, half of the indicators in the domain have worsened. Improvements are observed only in women's and political representation in local politics, and in the average duration of civil court proceedings. In the long term (2014-2024), the overall trend is positive. Between 2014 and 2024, trust in institutions such as the Italian Parliament, political parties, the judiciary, law enforcement, and firefighters increased. Nevertheless, trust in several institutions remains far below satisfactory levels. The average trust score for political parties rose from 2.4 in 2014 to 3.5 in 2024 (on a scale of 0-10). Trust in the Italian Parliament increased from 3.5 in 2014 to 4.7 in 2024, while trust in the judiciary rose from 4.2 to 4.9 over the same period. Trust in police and fire brigade, already high at 7.0 in 2014, saw a more modest increase, remaining well above satisfactory levels, ending the period at 7.4.
Long-term improvement is also observed in most indicators of political representation and women's participation in leadership roles. The most significant progress has been in the percentage of women on the boards of publicly listed companies on the stock exchange: it has almost doubled between 2014 and 2024 (from 22.7% to 43.2%). It has consistently been above the 40% threshold since 2021. However, women remain a small minority in decision-making bodies, despite their share nearly doubling over the decade (from 10.1% to 19.0%).
The percentage of women elected to regional councils rose by over 10 percentage points since 2014, with an acceleration in 2024, reaching 26.4% (over three percentage points higher than in 2023). Compared to 2014, the share of women in the Italian Parliament in 2024 has increased (from 30.7% to 33.7%), although it decreased compared to the preceding legislature (35.4% in 2018). The mean age of the parliamentarians has risen by nearly four years since 2014, reaching 51.4 in 2022 (compared to 49.9 in 2014). The trends of the last two indicators also reflect the constitutional reform that reduced the number of parliamentarians between the previous two elections.
Among indicators without a clear long-term trend, the average duration of proceedings in ordinary courts decreased in 2024 to 447 days (from 505 days in 2014 and 460 days in 2023). Conversely, prison overcrowding worsened, reaching the peak of 120.6 inmates per 100 available places, up from 108.0% in 2014 and 117.6% in 2023. Voter turnout has declined sharply in recent years, falling just below 50% in 2024 — a loss of over 6 percentage points compared to 2019 (9 points compared to 2014).

7. Safety

Over the long term, all indicators with available comparisons are improving; many of them reached their best levels during the pandemic.
Short-term variations are more nuanced: objective security indicators for predatory crimes (burglaries, pickpocketing, and robberies) are stable, while homicides, especially among men, are increasing in the post-pandemic period. Subjective indicators of perceived safety and social decay in the neighbourhood have worsened.
Burglaries, pickpocketing, and robberies have been gradually declining since 2014, reaching their lowest levels in the first year of the pandemic, due to restrictions on movement and social interaction. Since 2021, these crimes have seen a slight increase, but are essentially stable in 2024.
Over the decade, the most notable progress have been in home burglaries, which in 2024 dropped to 8.5 per 1,000 households, better than the pre-pandemic period (10.4 in 2019), and approximately half the 2014 figure (16.3 per 1,000 households). The pickpocketing victimisation rate, at 5.1 per 1,000 inhabitants, is almost unchanged from 2023 (5.0) and lower than in 2014 (6.9). Robbery victimisation, at 1.1 per 1,000 inhabitants, also remained stable compared to the previous year, continuing a long-term downward trend (1.6 in 2014).
Between 2014 and 2020, homicide rates decreased steadily, reaching a low in 2020 (0.49 per 100,000 inhabitants). In 2023, the homicide rate stood at 0.58 per 100,000 inhabitants (344 homicides), up from 2022, when the rate was 0.56 per 100,000 inhabitants (332 homicides), confirming the slight growth that began in 2021. In the long term, however, the rate remains below the 2014 level (0.79).
In 2024, the share of people aged 14 and over feeling very or somewhat safe walking alone in the dark in their neighbourhood is 56.7%, a decline of 5.3 percentage points from 2023. This brings the figure close to its 2014 level (56.2%), still above the lowest point recorded in 2015 (49.0%). The share of people who notice signs of social and environmental decline in their neighbourhood increases to 7.7% (from 6.8% in 2023), though it is still lower than in 2014, when the figure was 9.7%. In 2024, the percentage of households reporting that their neighbourhood is at risk of crime also increases, reaching 26.6% (23.3% in 2023), yet still below the peak recorded in 2015 (41.1%).
The percentage of people aged 14 and over who are very or somewhat worried about becoming a victim of sexual violence, for themselves or someone in their family, increased from 28.7% in 2016 to 35.7% in 2023. In 2023, 2.9% of people aged 14 and over reported having actually feared becoming a crime victim in the three months before the interview, an improvement from 2016 (6.4%).

8. Subjective well-being

Overall life satisfaction is assessed on a scale from 0 to 10 and is analysed by considering three categories: those who are very satisfied with scores between 8 and 10 (this indicator is used to assess subjective well-being in the population); those who are moderately satisfied with scores between 6 and 7; those who are not very satisfied or not satisfied at all and give a score below 6. Satisfaction with leisure time is measured on a four-point scale, ranging from “not satisfied at all” to “very satisfied”; the well-being indicator represents the percentage of respondents who declare themselves “very” or “fairly” satisfied. The evaluation of one’s future personal situation is based on expectations for one’s life in five years, with four options: “it will improve”, “it will worsen”, “it will remain the same”, or “I do not know”.

Over the last year, three out of four subjective well-being indicators have shown substantial stability, continuing the positive trend from 2014 to 2024. The only exception is satisfaction with leisure time, which has decreased in percentage over the last year and does not show a clear long-term trend.

In 2024, 46.3% of people aged 14 and over reported being very satisfied with their lives. At the same time, 30.9% believed that their personal situation would improve over the next five years, while 12.2% expected it to worsen. These figures are very similar to those in 2023.

Overall, 14.3% of people aged 14 and over reported high life satisfaction, expressed satisfaction with their leisure time, and held a positive outlook on the future, an increase from 10.2% in 2014.

Satisfaction with leisure time is the only indicator to have shown a slight decline, with 66.4% of individuals being either very or fairly satisfied (-1.8 percentage points compared to the previous year). Since 2014, the indicator has not shown a consistent trend. The sharp drop observed in 2021, due to pandemic-related restrictions, was followed by an increase in 2023.

Between 2014 and 2024, the percentage of people who were very satisfied with their lives and optimistic about their future situation increased, while the share who believed their situation would worsen over the next five years declined.

9. Landscape and cultural heritage

The most recent variations, referring to the latest available year for each indicator, show stability for four indicators, while three are improving, and only one has significantly worsened compared to the previous year. Notable improvements are seen in the current expenditure of Municipalities on culture, which rose from €21.2 to €22.5 per capita, in the density and significance of museums’ heritage (from 1.42 to 1.46 facilities per km^2), and in the impact of forest fires, which fell from 2.9 to 1.8 per thousand of the national territory.

On the contrary, dissatisfaction with the landscape of one’s place of living worsened, rising from 21.8% to 22.8% among people aged 14 and over.

Over the long term, the overall picture is less favourable: positive developments are observed in the reduction of illegal building rate (15.2 unauthorised housing units per 100 authorised in 2022, after a peak of 19.9 in 2015) and the expansion of agritourism farms (from 7.2 per 100 km^2 in 2014 to 8.6 in 2023). However, the density and importance of the museum heritage declines (from 1.65 facilities per 100 km^2 in 2015 to 1.46 in 2022) and so does the concern about landscape deterioration, an indicator of public awareness about landscape protection (down from 17.1% of people aged 14 and over in 2014 to 12.9% in 2024). Dissatisfaction with the landscape of one’s place of living has been essentially stable over the past decade (20.1% in 2014, 22.2% in 2024 for people aged 14 and over), as is the impact of forest fires (from 1.2 to 1.8 per thousand of the national territory between

2014 and 2024). No clear trend emerges for municipal current expenditure on culture (despite an increase from €18.9 to €22.5 per capita between 2014 and 2023), nor for the environmental pressures from mining and quarrying activities (which also increased from 289 m^3 extracted per km^2 in 2014 to 308 in 2022).
The long-term overview is completed by two indicators of farmland erosion: one due to abandonment and the other to urban sprawl, updated only every 10 years using census data. Both indicators measure the loss of cultivated landscapes, either due to crop quitting/ depopulation in rural areas (abandonment) or to land consumption in the outskirts of urban areas (urban sprawl). Between 2011 and 2021, both forms of erosion worsened: land abandonment increased from 35.1% to 38.9% of the national territory, while urban sprawl rose from 22.5% to 24.1%.

10. Environment

Recent trends in the Environment domain show that 8 of the 19 updated indicators remain stable, 6 improve, and 5 worsen compared to the previous year. Indicators of sustainability and environmental impact reduction stand out for positive developments: air quality positively benefits from the decrease in $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations (from 76.2% of exceedances of the 10 µg/m^3 threshold in 2022 to 75.1% in 2023), CO_2 emissions (-4.2% compared to 2022), and internal material consumption (-6.7% compared to 2022). The amount of urban waste sent to landfills also decreases (from 17.8% in 2022 to 15.8% in 2023), while electricity from renewable sources increases (+6.1 percentage points from 2022 to 2023). Conversely, indicators showing signs of deterioration include citizens' perceptions of the environment in one's living rea and of climate change; indeed, concern about climate change has decreased, meaning a reduction in awareness of this issue (70.8% of people considering climate change among the main environmental problems in 2023, 69.2% in 2024); at the same time, satisfaction with the environmental quality of one's local area has also declined (69.1% in 2023, 68.0% in 2024). Nevertheless, the climate crisis is increasingly visible in daily life.
Specifically, the number of consecutive hot days (at least 6 straight days with the daily maximum temperature exceeding the 90th percentile for the base period 1981-2010) has increased from 40 in 2022 to 42 in 2023, and the number of consecutive dry days has risen from 27 to 29 over the same period.
In the longer term, municipal water losses have worsened (41.4% in 2015, 42.4% in 2022), artificial sealing of soil surface has increased (+2.4% from 2015 to 2024), and the number of hot days continues to rise. Furthermore, the number of consecutive dry days has increased from 23.5 days in the 1981-2010 period to 29 days in 2023. Other indicators do not show a clear trend over the considered period. These include internal material consumption (489.4 million tons in 2023), urban waste production (496 kg per capita in 2023), renewable electricity generation (36.9% in 2023) and satisfaction with the environmental situation. Others, however, show a consistent improvement; these include air quality — $PM_{2.5}$ (-13.4 percentage points of exceedances from 2014 to 2023), CO_2 and other greenhouse gas emissions (-8.1% from 2014 to 2023), protected areas (+0.5%), urban green space availability (+4.7%), and urban waste sent to landfills (31.5% in 2014, 15.8% in 2023). Concern about environmental issues has also increased (58.6% in 2014, 69.2% in 2024),

along with concern about biodiversity loss (17.2% in 2014, 22.7% in 2024).
It is important to emphasise that, in this domain, medium- and long-term analyses are more meaningful than short-term ones, as environmental events are often influenced by contingent meteorological and economic factors, which can cause short-term fluctuations.

11. Innovation, research and creativity

In the long term, seven indicators within Innovation, research and creativity domain show a consistent trend of improvement. In the last year, however, five indicators improved, three remained stable, and one worsened. The latter, brain circulation indicator (net migration rate of Italian graduates aged 25 to 39) continues to record a negative balance abroad, despite fluctuations in intensity. In 2023, it reached its lowest point since 2019 (-6.2 per 1,000).
All indicators related to the spread of ICT technologies among individuals, households, public administrations, and businesses have improved, confirming the positive trend observed in recent years.
In 2024, 80.6% of people aged 11 and over were regular Internet users, an increase of 26.5 percentage points since 2014 (when the figure was 54.1%). Growth has accelerated in recent years (+2.9 percentage points in the last year). Currently, two out of three households have at least one computer and an Internet connection at home (66.4%), up from 61.0% in 2014. Since 2021, there has been a slight decline, but it has not been statistically significant. The proportion of enterprises with at least 10 employees that sold to end customers online in the previous year has nearly tripled between 2014 (5.0%) and 2024 (14.2%), clearly accelerating from 2019 to 2021, after which the indicator has remained stable.
In 2022, 53.6% of Italian municipalities were able to manage the entire process for households or individuals to access at least one service online, including payment. This figure more than doubled from 2018 (25.1%) and more than tripled from 2015 (15.6%). Driven by the COVID-19 emergency and supported by sectoral policies, the digitisation of municipal services for households has progressively extended to a broader range of services and municipalities.
Research intensity, measured as the share of GDP allocated to research and development (R&D), remained unchanged at 1.37% in the last year, showing only a modest increase in the long term (1.33% in 2014). In contrast, investments in intellectual property products (IPP) show a more dynamic trend, growing by 33.1 percentage points over the decade (1.9 percentage points in the last year), with a consistent contribution of investments in software and databases, which never accounted for less than 50% of IPP investments throughout the period.
Patent propensity has also increased progressively up to and including 2021 (the last reference year for consolidated statistics[1]), rising from 72.4 patent applications filed to the European Patent Office (EPO) by Italian inventors per million inhabitants in 2014 to 90.1 in 2021 (+17.7 points, +2.1 in the last year). In 2024, knowledge workers accounted for 19.3% of total employees, up 1.9 percentage points from 2018 (+0.5 percentage points in the previous year). Conversely, employment in cultural and creative sectors remains stable at 3.6% in 2018 and 3.5% in 2024.

1 Patent applications filed with the EPO through the international procedure can be entered into the European procedure up to 31 months after filing.

12. Quality of services

The evolution of services has been highly heterogeneous over time, both in the short and long term. The supply of doctors and nursing staff grows over the long term, with a faster pace for nurses and midwives, increasing from 5.6 to 6.8 per 1,000 inhabitants between 2014 and 2022. Nevertheless, the number of nurses remains insufficient, also due to the growing demand driven by population ageing. Among general practitioners, the share of those responsible for more than 1,500 patients (the threshold set by national regulations) increased significantly: from 28.0% in 2014 to 51.7% in 2023.

Both the availability of hospital beds in high-care wards and hospital inpatient emigration continue to worsen: the number of beds per 10,000 inhabitants decreased from 3.2 in 2022 to 2.9 in 2023; during the same period, the share of hospitalisations in a different region rose from 8.3% to 8.6%. Accessibility issues also emerge in outpatient healthcare, as the proportion of people forgoing medical treatment increased from 7.6% in 2023 to 9.9% in 2024.

Services for older adults (over-65s) and people with disabilities are increasing, both in the long and short term. The number of beds in residential social-healthcare and social-welfare facilities rose from 65.7 per 10,000 inhabitants in 2014 to 72.2 in 2023. The percentage of older adults receiving integrated home healthcare has increased sharply, from 2.2% in 2015 to 3.8% in 2023 (out of people aged 65 and over). After years of improvement, the percentage of households reporting significant difficulty in reaching three or more services remained stable at 5.0% in 2022-2024, down from 7.0% in 2013-2015.

The proportion of households reporting irregularities in water supply has shown a discontinuous trend since 2014, exceeding 10% in 2017 and 2018, but returning to levels 11 years earlier in 2024 (8.7%). The quality of the electricity service fluctuated over time. However, in 2023, the lengthy accidental service interruptions per user increased to 2.5, up from 2.2 in 2022.

Urban waste separation and disposal continue to improve: the share of the population living in municipalities with a recycling collection rate exceeding 65% has tripled, rising from 21.0% in 2014 to 62.9% in 2023. A similar trend is observed for the proportion of households served by ultra-fast Internet, which has nearly tripled in just 6 years: from 23.9% in 2018 to 70.7% in 2024.

Regarding mobility, the availability of local public transport has decreased slightly over the last year, from 4,696 seat-kilometres in 2022 to 4,623 in 2023.

On the demand side, the percentage of people aged 14 and over who use public transport multiple times a week has decreased over the long term, reaching its lowest point in 2021 (9.4%); however, a slight recovery began in 2022, and by 2024 it stands at 13.5%.

Satisfaction with mobility services, after a period of steady improvement, has stalled and remains stable compared to the previous year. In 2024, regular public transport users were satisfied with the service, at 20.9% (23.3% in 2023 and 15.9% in 2014).