



***Response of the Italian Government to the
UNECE Questionnaire on the implementation of the
Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)
and the outcomes of the 23rd Special Session of the
General Assembly (2000)***

The present report was drafted by the Department for Equal Opportunities of the Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers with the contribution of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Agricultural Policies, Ministry of Economic Development, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Defense, Department of Family Policies. Also the main Italian NGOs and trade union confederations have been consulted.

Table of contents

Section One: Overview analysis of achievements and challenges since 1995	3
Main achievements on gender equality since 1995	3
Main challenges on gender equality since 1995	10
Section Two: Progress in the implementation of the critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action since 2009	14
A. Women and poverty	14
B. Education and training of women	16
C. Women and health	20
D. Violence against women	23
E. Women and armed conflict	34
F. Women and the economy	37
G. Women in power and decision-making	44
H. Institutional mechanism for the advancement of women	46
I. Human rights of women	46
J. Women and the media	47
K. Women and the environment	48
L. The girl-child	50
Section Three: Data and statistics	56
Section Four: Emerging priorities	58

Section one

Overview analysis of achievements and challenges since 1995

Since their adoption in 1995, the Italian Government has firmly supported the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) and, over the years, has reaffirmed its commitment to the full and effective implementation of these important tools through the promotion of policies and actions at the national, European and international levels.

Italy has also committed to the implementation of other internationally agreed tools such as the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocols thereto, the Millennium Declaration, the Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), UNSC Resolution 1325, as well as other conventions and treaties promoting gender equality and protecting the rights of women and girls adopted at the European level such as, *inter alia*, the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, the Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, the Council Directive 2000/43/EC implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, Council Directive 2004/113/EC implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services and many others.

To this end, the activities of the Italian Government have been focused on a wider concept of equal opportunities with the main aim of removing any form of discrimination and developing gender-sensitive policies in many different areas such as gender-based violence, employment, equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, childcare policies, education and the fight against stereotypes, health, women's participation in the political and economic decision-making and immigration.

Main achievements on gender equality since 1995

A democratic country's main goal should be to ensure equal opportunities and equal treatment for men and women and to combat all forms of discrimination on the grounds of gender.

With a view to achieving this fundamental goal, Italy has put in place different measures having constitutional, legislative, and administrative nature on the elimination of gender discrimination and the respect for the principle of gender equality in the economic, social, cultural, and political life of the country.

From the legislative point of view, Italy has been particularly committed to developing an effective anti-discrimination framework, by amending specific provisions and adopting new ones with the aim of dramatically reducing *de jure* discrimination against women and girls.

In particular, the general principle of equality between women and men is enshrined in Article 3 of the Italian Constitution providing for that "All citizens have equal social dignity and are equal

before the law, without distinction of sex, race, language, religion, political opinion, personal and social conditions”.

The Italian Constitution also regulates gender equality in the main spheres of women’s and men’s life. To be more specific, Article 51, which was amended in 2001, through its new wording envisages that “ Any citizen of either sex is eligible for public offices and elected positions on equal terms, according to the conditions established by law. To this end, the Republic shall adopt specific measures to promote equal opportunities between women and men”.

In addition, Article 27 sets forth that “Working women are entitled to equal rights and, for comparable jobs, equal pay as men. Working conditions must allow women to fulfil their essential role in the family and ensure appropriate protection for the mother and child.

The fact that the Italian legislator has decided to include the principle of gender equality in its Constitution, thus making it become a constitutional principle, clearly shows the importance of this topic for the Italian Government and legal system.

Beside the Italian Constitution, the National Code of Equal Opportunities between Women and Men¹, which has been established by Legislative Decree No 198 of 2006, is considered as the Italian legal framework on gender equality and women’s empowerment. The Code gathers 11 laws on equal opportunities in a single text and is composed of 59 articles, with a view to rationalising and harmonising the currently in force legislative provisions on gender equality and having a more effective knowledge and dissemination of these rules. It regulates the promotion of equal opportunities between women and men in the areas of ethical, social and economic relations and in civil and political rights. Its main goal is to promote women’s empowerment, recognise and ensure freedom of choice and a better quality of life for both women and men. The Code has introduced the principle of gender mainstreaming requiring the Italian Government to take into account gender perspective from a more binding point of view, in the drafting of laws, regulations and administrative acts, and in all policies and activities. The Code is mainly aimed at standardizing the national legislation on gender equality in order to better implement and achieve both *de iure* and *de facto* equality between men and women. Besides providing for general provisions, the Code focuses on the organisation of facilities and bodies established for the promotion of equal opportunities as well as on the relationships between men and women in ethic-social, economic (work and enterprise), political and civil relationships.

Italy has attached particular importance to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action from the very beginning. In 1997, in fact, the Italian Government adopted the first Plan of Action for the implementation of the BPfA, which represented a milestone in the promotion of gender equality between women and men. The Plan of Action took the form of a Prime Minister’s Directive, which was addressed to all members of the Italian Government. Its aim was to promote women’s empowerment and to recognise and guarantee freedom of choice and enhanced quality of life for women and men. The text of the Directive, and the practical objectives that were set out therein, focused on the key concepts of the Beijing Conference: empowerment and mainstreaming. The “building of a mainstreaming culture” as stated in the Directive, “implies the need to overcome a sectorial notion of women’s issues or a conventional idea of equal opportunities, consisting in a set of actions to overcome disadvantages”. The most innovative aspects of mainstreaming consisted in the need for initiatives which cut across all government actions. Based on this, the Directive identified for the first time priorities for actions in Italy. The targeted areas for political and institutional action included, *inter alia*:

- The promotion of women in decision-making;

¹ “Codice delle pari opportunità tra uomo e donna, a norma dell’articolo 6 della legge 28 novembre 2005, n. 246” (Legislative Decree No 198 of 11 April 2006)

- Gender-impact analysis;
- Coordination and reform of institutional action;
- International cooperation;
- Education and training;
- Promotion of female entrepreneurship and employment;
- Gender policies on time use, work organisation and working time;
- Healthcare;
- Violence against women.

The 1997 Plan of Action was particularly relevant as, for the first time in our country, the importance of the link between gender mainstreaming in government policies and the process of women's empowerment at all levels was strongly emphasized.

With a view to strengthening the implementation of *de jure* and *de facto* gender equality between women and men, the Italian Government adopted several provisions, laws and regulations concerning many different sectors. Some of them have represented a turning point in the path to achieve gender equality in our country and are still considered as best practices for other countries in the world.

Among these provisions, particularly worth mentioning is the adoption of Law No 196/2007 "Implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services" by which it has been introduced and regulated the prohibition of all direct and indirect forms of discrimination grounded on gender. The relevant legislation "applies to all persons who provide goods and services — that are available to the public, irrespective of the person concerned, as regards both the public and private sectors, including public bodies — offered outside the private and family life, as well as the other transactions carried out in this area".

With a view to concretely putting in place and monitoring the implementation of the abovementioned laws and provisions, a number of national institutional mechanisms on gender equality have been established over the years. In particular, the institutional position of the Minister for Equal Opportunities was created in 1996 with the task of promoting the culture of equal rights and equal opportunities in the information and communication sector, with particular reference to all specific rights of women; promoting and coordinating the Government actions aimed at ensuring the full implementation of gender equality policies in entrepreneurship and the labour market; coordinating, in collaboration with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Government policies for the protection of human rights of women at both national and international level, with specific regard to the objectives included in all the twelve critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action; ensuring the implementation of rights and equal opportunities policies related to health, research, education and training, environment, family, employment, elected positions and gender representation; supporting the respect for personal rights and the human rights of women; preventing and eradicating all forms of discrimination.

In 1997, with a view to supporting the Minister for Equal Opportunities in the abovementioned activities, the Department for Equal Opportunities was set up within the Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers. Within the framework of its competences, the Department for Equal Opportunities promotes and coordinates the Government actions to support women's human rights and personal rights in general, prevent and eliminate all forms of discrimination, combat violence against women, exploitation and trafficking in human beings, as well as all violations of the fundamental rights to the integrity of the person and the health of women and girls.

The Department also coordinates the activities carried out by all other Public Administrations for the prevention, assistance and protection of children against sexual abuse and exploitation, as well

as all actions concerning the fight against paedophilia and child pornography. Furthermore, the Department for Equal Opportunities is responsible for the guidance, proposal and coordination of regulatory and administrative initiatives in all fields relating to the development and implementation of equal opportunity policies, the collection and organization of information, also through the creation of specific databases, the promotion and coordination of survey, verification, monitoring, training and information activities on equality and equal opportunities, the adoption of the necessary initiatives for the programming, guidance, coordination and monitoring of European Structural Funds for gender equality policies. The Department also coordinates all relations with State, regional and local authorities, as well as with bodies operating in the field of equality and equal opportunities both in Italy and abroad, particularly with the European Union, the United Nations, the Council of Europe, OSCE and the OECD, and adopts all the necessary measures to ensure the representation of the Italian Government in international relations and within national and international agencies working in this sector also through the appointment of representatives.

Another fundamental institutional mechanism established in 2000 for the promotion of equal opportunities and gender equality in the workplace, is the National Equality Councillor (who actually is a woman), working at the national, regional and provincial level.

The National Equality Councillor undertakes initiatives to ensure respect for the non-discrimination principle and the promotion of equal opportunities in the work environment, promotes and monitors gender discrimination. Over the last years, the role and functions of the National Equality Councillor have been significantly enhanced by the establishment of the National Network of Equality Advisors consisting of 220 regional and provincial equality advisors.

With a view to strengthening the collaboration between the Government and civil society organizations, in 2003 the already existing National Commission for Equal Opportunities between men and women of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers was transformed into an advisory and guidance body. The Commission had a three-year mandate and was composed of 25 members: the Minister for Equal Opportunity, who presided over the 11 members chosen from within the most representative women's associations and movements at the national level; three women who had carried out outstanding activities and awarded in scientific, literary and "social entrepreneurship" fields; three regional representatives appointed by the Permanent Conference for relations between the State, Regions and Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano; four representatives of trade unions with particular experience in the field of gender-related policies; and three members selected from the business organizations and from the relevant cooperation sector, working at the national level. For many years, the Commission has represented a central point of reference for the regular dialogue between public institutions and civil society organizations working on gender equality issues and allowed the collection of opinions and comments on the most topical issues in this field.

The Commission's mandate expired in 2012. However, other mechanisms have been set up with the aim of bringing forward the regular dialogue and cooperation with civil society such as, *inter alia*: the organization of meetings with the main national NGOs and trade unions immediately before the participation of the Italian Government's delegation in the yearly session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women; meetings on specific topics before the development and implementation of specific interventions such as the National Action Plan on Violence against Women and the National Action Plan on Trafficking in Human Beings; the issuance of specific Call for Proposals addressing NGOs for the financing of actions to promote equal opportunities; their involvement in European projects; as well as the organization of a National Conference on gender-based violence, which took place in 2013 in Rome in which over 40 associations' and trade unions' representatives participated and expressed their concerns on the subject to the then Italian Minister for Equal Opportunities.

Among the relevant bodies, it is also worth recalling the significant activities carried out by the National Office against Racial Discrimination (more commonly known by the acronym UNAR) as set by Decree Law No 215/2003 implementing EEC Directive 43 of 2000, within the Department for Equal Opportunities, with a specific mandate to deal with any form of discrimination and harassment on the ground of race, ethnicity, culture or religion.

Besides the abovementioned human capital used for the promotion of gender equality in our country, Italy has also been investing concrete economic resources through many different funding channels.

Since 1995, the Italian government has allocated specific resources to finance equal opportunities policies by using both the national budget and funds coming from the European Union.

As for the national budget, over the years the Government has provided for sectorial allocations of resources through the annual Budget Laws. The aim was to finance actions on the political priorities in the period of reference, covering a large number of sectors and having a significant impact on the national system, not only for the present but also with the idea to build a solid basis for the future.

Among the interventions funded under some Budget Laws, the following are worth mentioning: the introduction of maternity checks in 1999; the establishment of a specific fund to create nurseries and micro-nurseries in workplaces in 2001; in 2007, significant funds were allocated for the implementation of an Extraordinary Plan of intervention at regional level for the development of a socio-educational services system on the ground, including kindergartens and new relevant services at the workplace with the aim of providing kindergartens for 33% of the Italian territory and reducing the current unbalances among various areas of the country.

The 2007 Budget Law established the “Fund for family policies” supporting motherhood and fatherhood and the “Fund for the social inclusion of immigrants”. Within the framework of the latter, the protection of women immigrants suffering from social marginalization was one of the priority areas of the intervention. In 2008, a fund to finance the “Protocol on welfare” introducing incentives to promote female employment through tax breaks for those enterprises that employed women was set up together with a special fund for the National Action Plan on Violence against women (2008) and a fund to promote gender statistics and the collection of gender disaggregated data. Furthermore, a special fund was established by Law No 215/1992 for the promotion of women’s entrepreneurship. The special fund for women’s entrepreneurship is currently still in force and represents a national good practice. All over the years, it has significantly contributed to re-launching the already existing companies run by women in difficulties and supported the setting up of new female businesses all over the country.

The Italian government has also provided for an ad-hoc fund established by Decree Law No 223 of 4 July 2006, article 19, paragraph 3, as converted with amendments by Law No 248/2006, namely the “Fund for policies relating to the rights and equal opportunities”. The fund was established at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and is managed by the Department for Equal Opportunities. It finances the promotion of actions on reconciliation between work and private life, trafficking in human beings, awareness campaigns and equal opportunities in general.

Since 2000, the Italian Government has been strongly committed to the management of EU Structural Funds, ERDF and ESF. The framework established for the 2000-2006 Structural Funds planning cycle adopted a dual approach: the differentiating and endorsing of equal opportunities (direct policies) and gender mainstreaming policies (indirect policies). The Programmes, co-funded by the EU Structural Funds, played an important role in Italy in the promotion of women’s employment growth and reconciliation between work and family responsibilities. In particular, during the 2000-2006 planning period a share of 10% of the European Social Fund for every operational Programme coming from the Italian Regions has been reserved to actions aimed at the implementing the equality principles. This has been the highest percentage among all European

countries. In the 2000–2007 period, through the European Social Fund, several projects were co-financed in Italy affecting over 6 million people, 52.2% of whom were women.

Also during the just concluded 2007-2013 planning period, the Italian Government has promoted a high number of actions aimed at encouraging women's employment and reconciliation between work and family life, as well as innovative tools and transferable methodologies in order to improve access to credit for female enterprises in Southern Italy. The abovementioned planning period has been also focused on the implementation of specific actions aimed at promoting diversity management tools for women's career advancement, as well as for the improvement of their conditions in the workplace and particular attention has been paid to immigrant women.

Moreover, the Italian Government has implemented actions aimed at fighting discrimination based on sex, which were financed by the most important EU thematic funds, such as the 6th and 7th Framework Programme for Research, the Progress Programme, the Specific Programme on "Fundamental rights and citizenship" (2007-2013) and the Prevention of and Fight against Crime Programme for 2007-2013.

Certainly, on the one hand the economic crisis, which is still having profound effects in Italy, has negatively influenced the annual and multi-annual national allocations for the promotion of gender equality policies in Italy but, on the other hand, the use of European Structural Funds and the thematic programmes has increased. This is due to improved regional expertise on gender equality issues, as well as to a more widespread gender mainstreaming approach, both supported by the Italian Government.

Notwithstanding the numerous obstacles and setbacks encountered from 1995 to 2014, the Italian Government has made significant progress in the promotion of women's empowerment, an area in which much more needs to be done and which remains one the main challenges in the field of gender equality in our country.

Another central objective set by Italy over the years has been the achievement of gender equality in education. To this aim, the Italian Government has taken several measures each having a different nature.

Italy has achieved full literacy for girls, so this is no longer a matter of concern. In basic education, schooling rates for girls and boys are now equivalent and, in most levels of secondary schools, girls actually do better than boys. Over the past decades, in fact, there has been a marked tendency of Italian women continuing their studies, especially at higher levels. Over the years, the Italian Government has taken considerable measures to ensure equal opportunities in access to education and training for women and girls such as: updating the school personnel on the issues of gender and equal opportunities, which has for several years been part of the National Plan of training courses for teachers, promoting the specific role that teachers play with regards to gender and equal opportunities; supporting innovative strategies in secondary and high schools aimed at orienting a greater number of female students towards business, as well as scientific and technological subjects; providing lifelong learning for adult women aimed at giving them working skills. Furthermore, the Italian Government has promoted a project for the formulation of a Code of Self-regulation for Schoolbooks Publishers to ensure the equal representation of women and men in schoolbooks by showing both sexes as protagonists of cultural paths and experiences that characterize the contemporary world and the accumulation of knowledge.

Over the last few years, Italy has particularly focused on the access to and participation of women in STEM. The number of women who take up a career in the scientific sector, in fact, has remarkably increased in the past 25 years, although only a minimal share of them achieve leadership positions in this sector. This will continue to be a key challenge to be tackled in the near future, not only because increasing the proportion of women in STEM top positions is a pre-

requisite for economic growth at national, regional and international level, but also because only through women's full participation in these strategic sectors an actual knowledge-based society can be achieved.

The goal on which Italy has focused the most over the last 20 years both in terms of actions taken and allocated resources is the fight against all forms of gender-based violence.

In line with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, since 1995 Italy has devoted special attention to the issue of violence against women and girls, an alarmingly widespread phenomenon in our country. Violence against women remains a significant problem in Italy despite efforts to combat it, and there is an urgent need to address the underlying structural causes of inequality and discrimination. As already mentioned by Ms. Rashida Manjoo, UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, in her report on Italy, most of the violence is underreported in the context of a patriarchal society where domestic violence is not always perceived as a crime; where victims are largely economically dependent on the perpetrators of violence. However, many were the actions taken at different levels by local and national public institutions in collaboration with women's associations and NGOs.

From the legislative point of view, it is worth recalling that in 1996, when Law No 66 was adopted, violence against women was qualified for the first time as a crime against personal liberty, and not against public morality (as previously regulated) anymore. A further milestone for the protection of victims was the passing of Law No 154 of 2001 establishing the removal of the violent family member from the household by means of civil or criminal court decision. In 2009, the Italian Parliament adopted Law No 38 on "Urgent measures in the field of public security and the fight against sexual violence and stalking", which recognized stalking as a crime for the first time in Italy. As extensively explained in Section II of this report, since 1995 significant progress has been made in the prevention and fight against all forms of violence against women and girls, and the protection of its victims. Legislative and many other measures have been taken also to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings, female genital mutilation, paedophilia and child pornography. In particular, Italy has further enhanced its legal system also by ratifying international instruments, such as the Council of Europe Conventions on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (Warsaw Convention), on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention), on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), and by adopting many other national policies and tools, such as a specific law prohibiting female genital mutilation, a National Action Plan on violence against women, the setting up of several mechanisms for the protection of victims of different forms of violence against women and girls, as well as the establishment of national observatories and the carrying out of annual and multi-annual surveys on violence against women and girls.

Although Italy is a country where, due to various and interconnected reasons, the percentage of women in decision-making positions is low, a positive development has been recorded over the years in democracy and political representation. Unlike men, women in politics are under-represented in most countries worldwide, and also Italy makes no exception.

In 2000, the Italian percentage of women in parliament was one of the lowest in the world: in the Chamber of Deputies they accounted for 11.3%; in Senate 8%² and female representation within the Government was far from being acceptable: it amounted to only 14.1%. The shortage of female representatives in the Italian political world was mainly due to two factors which are deeply rooted in the Italian culture. The first is linked to the fact that women are generally victims of stereotypes which show them as weak and needing protection, a representation which causes disaffection among women themselves and makes them feel unfit for the environment where power is exercised.

² European database – Women in Decision Making

The second factor has strong political connotations. Today, there are still numerous obstacles for women wishing to take part in political life, due to the difficulties of reconciling the role of women in professional (hence politics and work) and family life.

In this context and in line with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Italy has set the objective to improve the situation of women in politics and decision-making by committing to increasing women's participation in politics. Significant progress has been made over the years, although much more needs to be done in order to achieve full balance of women and men in this important sector for citizens' life. In 2008 in Italy, the percentage of women in ministerial positions increased (24%) and also the percentage of women in Parliament reached 17.3% .

Among the measures undertaken by Italy in this field, Law No 90 of 2004 concerning the election of members of the European Parliament is particularly important. This central law establishes that neither of the two sexes may be represented in the lists of candidates in numbers exceeding two thirds of all the candidates included in the list. Following the entry into force of the abovementioned law, the number of Italian women members of the European Parliament has risen significantly. In fact, if in the previous legislature the Italian women elected were 15 out of a total number of 73 women, after the last European elections held in May 2014, there will be twice as many Italian women in the EP.

Another significant step towards the achievement of the full participation of women in the national institutional life is the adoption of Law No. 215/2012 establishing "Provisions to promote gender balance in local governments' and regional councils. Provisions on equal opportunities in the composition of selection boards for competitions in the public administrations". It provides for that Municipal Constitutions shall include provisions aimed at ensuring equal opportunities between women and men within councils and non-elective collective bodies of municipalities and provinces, as well as of agencies, businesses and institutions depending from them.

Furthermore, as a consequence of the adoption of several internal regulations by the various political parties, the number of women in politics has significantly risen over the last years.

As previously said, the underrepresentation of women is mainly a cultural problem. Therefore, multi-annual training projects entitled "Women, politics and institutions - educational processes for a gender and equal opportunities culture" have been developed with a view to disseminating a gender-sensitive culture and allowing women, of every age, workers or not, to approach politics and promote their success and their participation in the national political and social life.

The last 2014 data on women's participation in politics in Italy shows that the percentage of women elected to the Parliament increased from 20% to 30% and that the elected MPs are also younger than ever before. As for the political top level positions (ministers), the current Government is full gender-balanced³.

Main challenges on gender equality since 1995

Since 1995, Italy has particularly committed to tackling the challenges of improving the situation of women in the labour market, decreasing the percentage of unemployed women in the country, combating horizontal and vertical labour segregation, removing all barriers preventing women from entering and/or re-entering the labour market, fighting all forms of discrimination at work and improving reconciliation policies for working women. In 2000, Italy had also officially committed to achieving 60% of women employed by 2010, as established by the EU Lisbon Strategy, without success.

³ <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

In Italy, women's employment opportunities are limited by structural problems. However, nowadays women reach the same percentages or even outnumber men in both primary and secondary education and higher education. Therefore, the existing barriers for women trying to enter the labour market constitute a form of discrimination which must be eradicated. At the same time, it is fundamental to face the existing differences, including the gender pay gap between women and men. The current economic crisis had tremendous effects on women, especially those living in Southern Italy, who, in order to solve their families' economic problems decide to take up also unskilled jobs. Furthermore, involuntary part-time work, especially the kind established by companies and not linked to reconciliation policies, is increasingly widespread among women workers. Improving reconciliation between work and family life is one of the main objectives and pre-requisites to fully use women's untapped potential in employment and increase the productivity of both public and private companies.

Over the last twenty years, the employment gap between women and men has decreased, although Italy has one of the lowest female employment rate in Europe. Generally speaking, as a consequence of the global economic and financial crisis, the percentage of working women has even increased in 2012. However, this was not due to strong Government labour market and welfare reforms, but it was linked to four specific factors: 1. The increase in the employment rate of elderly women; 2. The increase in retirement age in the public sector (as a consequence of the adoption of Law No 214/2011 – the so-called “Fornero” pension reform); 3. The increase in the use of involuntary part-time work; 4. The increase in the number of foreign women employed in Italy.

Another aspect related to the situation of women in the labour market is the persistent horizontal segregation, which is typical of Italy and must be addressed. In fact, women's participation is mainly concentrated in the services sector much more than their male counterpart. Women's presence is still concentrated in typically “female” sectors, such as public, social, and personal services and education. In sectors with strong male prevalence such as IT, transportation, building and construction the percentage of women is still particularly low, and even in those sectors where the presence of women is higher than average, their access to top level positions is extremely difficult (vertical segregation).

Notwithstanding the existing regulatory provisions against discrimination on the grounds of sex at the workplace adopted by the Italian Government over the last 20 years, women continue to be paid less than men for equal work of equal value. According to the 2013 ISTAT report, gender pay gap in Italy is equal to 11.5%, which means that the average hour wage of women is 11.5% lower than that of men.

The issue of reconciliation between work and private life is a fundamental step toward supporting and improving employment for women and a big challenge for our country. Despite the fact that the Italian Government passed Legislative Decree No 151/2001 establishing “Consolidated text on the protection of and support to maternity and paternity” with a view to encouraging the equal sharing of family responsibilities between women and men, the burden shared by the two sexes in Italy is not equal yet, as women bear the heaviest burden of domestic work and care for children and the elderly and, as underlined above, work many more hours than men.

Starting with the assumption that the lack of reconciliation tools is one of the main causes of the low birth and employment rates for women in Italy, and that women's employment has a beneficial effect on the production of wealth in the nation, the Italian Government has implemented and is still carrying out several actions to promote reconciliation between work and family life for both women and men (see Section II of this report). However, this is an area in which full gender equality has not been achieved yet and on which Italy continues to work to facilitate the equal sharing of responsibilities within the family.

In particular, over the past years, Italy has tried to achieve the objective of 33% of children in formal childcare by 2010, as required by the Lisbon Strategy, by promoting several actions aimed at

supporting both private and public childcare services, but achieving only 12.7%. It is therefore clear Italy needs to develop and put in place new and innovative strategies to comply with the abovementioned objective.

Another undeniable challenge for Italy has been and still is the promotion of gender budgeting initiatives at the national level. Since 2000, in fact, Italy has been experimenting measures just at local and regional levels, involving some municipalities, provinces, and regions. Such local experiences have contributed to creating a Network of provinces and municipalities for the dissemination of gender balance and good practices on equal opportunities with the main aim of disseminating gender budgeting and all other initiatives to achieve equal opportunities and equality between women and men. Some of these experiences have been related to the promotion of a gender perspective analysis of the budget documents; others, in addition to this kind of analysis, have proposed new measures to develop the distribution of resources to women. Some institutions have implemented these initiatives with some regularity over the years, whereas some others have drawn up guidelines and training modules on the topic addressed to town councillors, managers and officials. In some other cases, they have defined gender-sensitive expenditure indicators. All of them have increased awareness and involvement of key players on the issue. However, as previously underlined, considering that the abovementioned actions have been carried out only at the local level, the future challenge for the Italian Government will be to learn from regional and local experiences and develop and implement gender budgeting initiatives throughout the national territory.

Last but not least, Italy lacks a specific national strategy on gender mainstreaming. Italy basically relies only on good practices implemented in specific sectors. Since 2000, gender mainstreaming policies have been mainly implemented through ESF and ERDF and by creating a systematic collaboration with the Italian regions. In particular, the so-called VISPO guidelines (*Valutazione Impatto Strategico Pari Opportunità*, Equal Opportunities Strategic Impact Assessment) were drafted in 1999. These guidelines were laid down with the aim of assessing the *ex-ante* situation, as well as the *in-itinere* and *ex-post* impact of the programmes in terms of improving women's living conditions to better fulfill their needs, their access to the labour market and training services; female conditions in the workplace and redistributing care work; as well as of promoting female participation for the creation of social and economic activities. Through the VISPO Guidelines, the Government has provided a valuable tool for regions and local Administrations responsible for Structural Funds Programming activities. The VISPO guidelines have been adopted by local decision-makers in charge of operational programming for strategy planning purposes and for drafting the relevant programming documents.

Italy has always attached great importance to the sharing of knowledge and experiences in the monitoring and implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. To this end, every year the Italian Government and the main NGOs participate in the session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. Furthermore, Italy replies to all the surveys carried out by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) for the drafting of the biannual Reports on the implementation of each area of the Beijing Platform for Action chosen by each Presidency of the Council of the EU. In 2014, the Italian Presidency of the EU will carry out, in collaboration with EIGE, a thorough assessment of the implementation of the objectives included in all 12 critical areas of concern defined by the BPfA (Beijing +20) since 2010 in the context of EU policy priorities and targets, presenting the most recent situation and identifying achievements, gaps and future challenges in each area at both EU and national level.

As far as the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals is concerned, it is worth recalling that in formulating strategies and policies in the field of development assistance, due consideration

must be given to the changes occurring in the global economic and financial situation, which has been shaken by systemic crises that are having a direct impact on the feasibility of meeting the Millennium Goals by 2015. Italy has a special responsibility and is particularly committed in the field of international aid. As a country that has historically been a crossroads of cultures and peoples, a land of emigration but also for many years now one of high immigration, and given its geopolitical status, the constitutional principles that regulate its institutions and its large industrial economy open to the outside world, it has traditionally been committed to promoting a more stable and just international system. Access to basic services such as water, healthcare, education and public housing, environmental sustainability, women's empowerment and access to political and economic opportunities, are all critical components at the core of the MDGs. In order to help accelerate progress towards the MDGs, over the years Italy has intended to concentrate its Official Development Aid in fewer countries and emphasized specific MDG targets in specific sector guidelines. Italy has elaborated guidelines on: poverty reduction, democratic ownership, communication, evaluation, decentralized cooperation, health, persons with disabilities and gender and other guidelines in areas like education, minors, capacity development, agriculture, general/sector budget support, programme-based approaches and use of country systems, and International organizations.

Italy, regardless of its level of economic and social development or international influence, is also working to strengthen and improve the quality of life of its citizens and broaden access to resources, especially for the most vulnerable and marginalized. To this end, the Expo Milano 2015 will serve as a forum for exchange of good practices. The 2015 target date for achievement of the Millennium Development Goals coincides with Milan's Universal Exhibition. For Expo Milano 2015 this date is not a mere coincidence, but rather an opportunity to let Italy fully align itself with the themes of the MDGs.

Section Two

Progress in the implementation of the critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action since 2009

A.WOMEN AND POVERTY

Italy is one of the top ten countries in the GDP world ranking. However, over the last years both relative and absolute poverty have alarmingly increased. The main characteristic of poverty in Italy is the territorial aspect: the gap between North and South is particularly large and more drastic than in any other country in the European Union. Italy is also the State with the lowest female employment rate and the country which invests the least in family welfare policies. With a view to reversing this trend, since 2009 the Italian Government has been taking numerous measures to reduce poverty in general through both strategies directly addressing families in our country and having a specific impact on women, and special development cooperation actions in those countries where women's poverty rate is higher. Moreover, the Italian Government has been implementing several actions aimed at increasing the participation of women in employment and promoting reconciliation between work and family life, which will be described in detail in Paragraph "F. Women and the Economy" of this Report.

In this context, the reform of ' *ISEE - Equivalent Economic Situation Indicator* is particularly worth mentioning. This problem has recently had a solution through the reform of Equivalent Economic Situation Indicator (ISEE), that will start in 2014 and that will be useful to improve social equity. The ISEE adopts a new concept of disposable income more suited to the purposes of the instrument, it improves the targeting ability of the indicator through overvaluation of the equity component, considering the characteristics of families with particularly heavy loads, such as large families (with three or more children) and those with people with disabilities, allowing a differentiation marker in reference to the type of service requested, reduces the area of self-declaration and allow to strengthen controls and reduce situations of undue access to benefits. Very important is also *SIA - Support for Active Inclusion* (which will be tested in 2014 before being introduced from 2015), which provides not only income support, but also many of other measures and a commitment by the beneficiary to seek work, ensure the education of children, as well as periodic monitoring of the actual state of poverty. In 2014, testing of the SIA will involve a total of approximately 400,000 people, with a financial commitment for the 2014-2015 period of more than 600 million euro; it joins the traditional *social card* (with a budget for 2014 of 250 million euro). Moreover, with the so-called "Stability law", funds affecting various chapters of social policies were refinanced with about one billion Euros for 2014. In addition, still in the testing step is *Charter for social inclusion*, support measure for poor people throughout the provision of benefits by local social services.

Concerning the goal of revising laws and administrative practices to ensure women's equal rights and access to economic resources, it is very important to consider Law 2011/214 "Conversion into law, with amendments, of Decree-Law 2011/201, containing urgent measures for growth, equity and consolidation of the public finances" that includes the pension reform with specific provisions for women and which provides the institution of a Fund for women and youth employment initiatives, that had a financial support of 200 million euro for the year 2012, of 300 million euro for 2013 and 2014 and of 240 million euro for 2015. The Ministry of Labour has also supported the Institutional campaign "Restart from you! Beautiful business to be a woman" aimed at promoting the project "Microcredit woman" and to raise awareness in women about funding opportunities.

As far as the feminization of poverty is concerned a EU study was carried out revealing that one of the factors that make women more vulnerable to poverty is that responsibility to care children and old people (added to the care of the house) falls mainly on women and these factors explain the reasons why women have shorter careers or periods of interruptions from work. Other factors are that women have unequal position in the labour market. Another obstacle to the emergence of reality in study data concerning the feminization of poverty are related to the fact that the income poverty continues to be measured in terms of family income and non-income related to each individual. In this regard, very important is also the Convention between Ministry of Labour and ISTAT, which involves conducting statistical surveys of information about people who live in conditions of poverty and social exclusion; from the results of this survey, in 2009, as a result of a separation, mainly women worsen their economic status (50.9% vs. 40.1%). A survey about homeless people, done in 2011, it appears that women represent 13.1% of homeless people. Among women, 86, 3% had experienced at least one of the events considered relevant to the path that leads to homelessness: 70.2% experienced separation from spouse and / or children (40% of the children), 55.0% loss of a stable job, 26.7% experienced them both, as much as 25.6% say they feel bad or very bad.

Furthermore, Italy adopted the European Food Aid Program towards very vulnerable people approved by the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). This is an excellent example of how to meet people's basic needs in society through a combined action between public Institutions and private sectors. The measure has two main purposes: a social goal (significantly reduce the vulnerable conditions of poor people) and a market target (to stabilize the markets of agricultural products through the reduction of intervention stocks). The adoption of this Program testifies the capacity of our country to face the dramatic social crisis affecting Europe today, due to the financial and economic crisis of the recent years

The strategic approach of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on poverty is to gather, in a systematic way, the views and experiences of women from Institutions and civil society, in order to enhance opportunities at the grass-root level for advancing women's economic and political empowerment. The Ministry deems as well that funds in the fight against poverty to be effective cannot be shifted from the care economy and social protection programs as long as both of them are economically empowering and socially transformative especially if one considers the role of women in survival economy.

At the operational level, the most important gender-related initiatives are taking place in Afghanistan and Senegal. In Afghanistan two vocational training centres have been built in Kabul: the Kalei Fatullah training Centre specialized in delivering both basic education and vocational training and the Women Garden (managed by the Afghan Ministry of Women Affairs), focused on activities of micro entrepreneurship. Vocational training courses have also been organized in the Province of Baghlan, and they are coordinated by the Department of Women Affairs.

In Senegal an example of the application of the approach of the Italian Development Cooperation is the new program PIDES which aims to contribute to the Social Protection system of Senegal through the economic development of women and vulnerable groups in partnership with the Ministry of Family. The program is based on expanding social dialogue and civic engagement, with the active participation of the local stakeholders, and particularly women's groups, in order to enhance political legitimacy and institutional sustainability of the social protection policies, as part of coherent and balanced approaches to improving the lives of people. The feature of this program is to bring to the fore the submerged individual and collective agency of women; to focus on women's economic and political empowerment at local level to enhance individual and collective

agency of women in negotiating with local and national institutions; to forge strategic cross-national and inter-regional partnerships among local women's groups from the North and the South so as to respond to regional and global commitments and frameworks for women's rights.

Rural development and Food security have been targeted since 2010 when Ministry of Foreign Affairs launched a specific initiative for mainstreaming gender in rural development (food security, climate change and green growth). The initiative was carried with the aim to develop a mainstreaming approach in rural development initiatives which constitutes the main sector of the Italian ODA. The conceptual framework of the IAO/ Gender program was an analysis of how key issues such as "land", "food", "resources", "markets", "value chains", "association", could allow a broader outlook on changing gender relationships and on the situation of rural women in the context of new patterns and trends. This shift allowed re-thinking "vulnerability", which seems at odds with the active roles women perform as supporters of whole families and communities, as a specific status attached to women's situation due to a lack of legal and political entitlements often recorded in the field. The results of the programme have been presented during the final international seminar organized in October 2012 with national and international (FAO, IFAD, WFP) stakeholders engaged in agricultural and rural development. Lessons learned from the IAO/ Program have fostered the implementation of pilot initiatives with improved gender indicators within rural development programs in Senegal, Ethiopia and Mozambique.

B. EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF WOMEN

Spending on education and training, measured in relation to gross domestic product (GDP) is also for Italy one of the key indicators to assess the policy in terms of growth and development of human capital. With this indicator it is possible to actually quantify the expenses of each country for an improvement of school facilities as well as incentives for teachers and students to facilitate participation in training courses. Education and training are in fact, as is widely recognized, the foundation on which the full and informed exercise of the rights of citizenship and the optimization of human capital rest. In Italy, according to the latest data available from the Italian Institute of Statistics (ISTAT), in 2011, the incidence of public spending in education and training on gross domestic product was up 4.2% and places our country in a low position if compared to other EU countries. Despite the further containment of expenditure recorded in 2012, Italy has nevertheless improved its results without sacrificing the principle of equity in the education system.

Italy is characterized, in fact, by having achieved high rates of schooling of the population: the level of education related to primary and secondary school stands at around 100%, the rate of schooling of 14 -18 year-old youth, calculated considering only those enrolled in upper secondary school grade II, reaches 93%. Among these data, the percentage of women amounts to 48.1% in kindergarten, 48.4% in primary school, 47.9% in first grade secondary school degree and 48.8% in the second grade of the secondary school. These percentages are influenced by two external factors that affect the figure for women: every year an average of 106 men is born every 100 women, and the prevalence is recorded alike up to adulthood. Men also have a greater irregularity in schooling and consequently the annual number of members of the male gender is increased by those who repeat a year more frequently than what occurs among female students. The data relating to early school leaving also show a higher proportion of male dropouts. The increase in schooling since World War II, has produced a steady rise in the level of education of the Italian population. The distribution of the population by level of education, gender and age, in 2012, shows how the proportion of people with qualification or diploma of higher secondary education has grown to 34.9% while the share relative to those who have a university degree reached 11,8%. The percentage of individuals who have at most a primary school degree - even, in the overall population, 21.7% - is now extremely low among the younger classes (2% among 15-19 year-old

youth) while it is still significant among the population of advanced age (63.4% among the over sixty). Gender differences in education levels are relevant in all generations. In particular, a higher education of women is noted among young people aged 20-24: a proportion of graduates reaching 60.8% for men and 66.9% for women. Young Italian women are showing a greater propensity than men of the same age to continue their studies beyond secondary school: high school female graduates who enrol in a university course are about 64 out of 100, while male graduates who do are only 52 out of 100, a lower figure than their female counterparts. Among young people aged 25-29, the percentage of those who have obtained an academic degree is 17.6% among men compared to 28.2% among women. However it should be noted that the percentage of women is lowest among enrolments in courses such as engineering – or other degrees oriented towards mathematics, and highest in academic courses related to teaching, education and languages. By contrast, statistics for the over-sixties seem to differ greatly from the outline above, as men over sixty who have earned a secondary school diploma or a university degree are, respectively, 14.1% and 7.2%, while women of the same age cover solely the 8.7% and 3.6% respectively.

The role of the National Operational Programmes (NOPs) administered by the Ministry of Education have been implemented to promote equal opportunities. Both the School programming for 2000 – 2006, titled "School for Development", and the NDP "Learning Environments" and "Skills for Development" 2007 - 2013 programming, ensured full compliance with the principle of equality between men and women in all the programming course (preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of actions), through the appropriate involvement of all the components of partnership, as well as building monitoring systems and data collections in order to be able to explain how the programs contribute to the principle of equal opportunities. It should be emphasized that attention to gender equality is present from the earliest stages of the project.

In particular, through the NOP, a cross-cutting application of the principle of mainstreaming cross-paralleled concrete actions to promote equal opportunities for access to interventions and to remove obstacles often faced by the female target, including economic incentives, reconciliation services (a flexibility in the schedule, granting childcare during the hours of training of young mothers) information campaigns and awareness raising, etc. Gender-specific features were also enhanced by promoting, for example, a greater connection of women-targeted training to the needs of women in the labor market, or tackling issues that determine higher levels of dropouts and delayed school graduation in male students. Therefore, equality between men and women has been pursued as one of the fundamental principles of Community law; the EU's objectives in this area in fact have the double aim of ensuring equal opportunities and equal treatment between women and men, but also fighting against gender discrimination.

As far as the good practices 's standard is concerned, it should be noted that interventions financed through the Structural Funds in the period 2000-2006 were mapped through a classification of projects with characteristics of good practice, publications such as "Living Gender in School", "Mapping gender equality in the school of self-decision", " Equal opportunities in school: a comparison and evaluation"⁴.

With regard to the 2007-2013 programming, the principle of equal opportunities being regarded as a key goal across all interventions, there are no projects eligible as a good practice, but the data on the percentage of women (among students, teachers, school personnel, and adult mothers) who took part in the actions of the programs and the emphasis on gender equality in the process of implementation of the initiatives, confirms the attention paid to the issue and the absolute equality of gender in the vocational education and training carried out.

⁴ <http://srvapl.istruzione.it/fondistrutturali/pubblicazioni/pubblicazioni.shtml>

Overcoming total illiteracy, an issue that recently ISTAT in 2012 stated to be, in percentage, close to 0%, involves analysing the so-called functional illiteracy.

In Italy the girls, more numerous in the educational system, they have not changed the traditional attitude toward the faculty of a technical scientific, wherein the number of female graduates is still low. The orientation is the strategic hub to be addressed and, in the university sector, the commitment is to overcome the separation between the culture of science and the humanities, proposing methodologies and languages not strangers to the knowledge of women. The process of radical renewal of the methods of science teaching was started with training initiatives undertaken under the Plan scientific degrees, since 2004, made by the Ministry of Education, in cooperation with 34 universities, the USR and Confindustria.

The line of action of the Ministry of Education has been built, together with the Department for Equal Opportunities through a series of agreements and protocols. Last in order of time the Policy Document on gender diversity (June 2011) and the Memorandum of Understanding (January 2013). The perspective is that of the mainstream, starting with the need to adopt a gender pedagogy and practice of education to gender differences, as well as the keystone of which can lead to a more general education and the recognition of diversity. At the school the task of "integrating gender perspectives in all educational activities with a tangible growth in terms of equity and efficiency" is recognized. The training of teachers is central to achieve a "gender-sensitive teaching" (Law October 15, 2013, n. 119 conversion, with amendments, of Decree-Law of 14 August 2013, n. 93, art. 5, paragraph 2, letter c), the "Action Plan overtime against sexual violence and gender" that seeks, among other things, the purpose of "promoting proper training of school personnel ..."

The Decree sets as objective 1 the increase in skills related to education to affectivity, respect for diversity and gender equality and the elimination of gender stereotypes. A concrete action on the curriculum of the primary school and secondary school, through pilot actions, has currently being carried out.

As previously mentioned the situation of women in science in Italy is quite similar to the European trend. There is a positive evolution in the number of women students and graduates, but the gender gap is still present during the career evolution and is particularly striking at the top level. In this time of global economic crisis, eliminating disparities between women and men in access to science and technologies must become a fundamental priority for all the countries.

In this scenario, the Department for Equal Opportunities over the past years has carried out several actions to improve the role of women in the scientific field and fight against the discrimination that women suffer in this strategic sector. The projects financed by the European Commission within the 7th Framework programme for research and coordinated and co-funded by the Italian Government are:

The project PRA.G.E.S. (2009) - "PRActising Gender Equality in Science"- This was a coordination action aimed at comparing the various strategies implemented for promoting the presence of women in decision-making positions relating to scientific research in public institutions. All the outcomes of the project have been collected in the Guidelines for Gender Equality Programmes in Science.

The project WHIST (2009) - "Women Careers Hitting the Target" was devised with the aim of better understanding the problem of the under-representation of women in science, through the implementation of experimental activities concerning gender diversity management policies in the organisations involved in the project.

The project STAGES (2012) - "Structural Changes to achieve gender equality in science" has been designed with the general aim launching structural change strategies addressing the many and interconnected layers of the problem of gender inequality in science from an integrated perspective, deeply involving human resources management in research institutions, modifying and gendering

its basic tenets. More specifically, the main objective of the project is concretely applying different self-tailored action plans geared at introducing gender-aware management at all levels in each of the participating organisations, representing different kinds of research institutions. Besides, a second objective is to produce a deeper understanding of the dynamics surrounding structural change efforts by constantly analysing, monitoring and assessing the process activated in each institution, so as to start mutual learning practices among partners. The third objective is to launch a very practical type of dissemination which is not just aimed at informing on programmes activated and their results, but also at spreading, among European universities and research institutes, successful negotiation strategies implemented to build consensus and commitment around structural-level gender-equality initiatives, addressing different leadership levels and the many stakeholders directly or indirectly affected by change.

The project TRIGGER (2013) – “TRansforming Institutions by Gendering contents and Gaining Equality in Research” - aims at promoting systemic interventions designed to have deep, long-lasting and widespread impacts at all the different levels in 5 research organisations. The project is carried out with the assistance of an institute specialised in gender and science and involves as co-funders 5 universities from different EU countries (Czech Republic, France, Italy, UK, and Spain). Building on the results of previous projects, integrated actions are being implemented at each university addressing different sides of gender inequality in science, i.e.:

1) Working environment, formal/informal culture and explicit/tacit rules (awareness-raising; collection of gender-sensitive data; support in the early stages of scientific careers; promotion of work-life balance, etc.).

2) Content and methods of scientific research, to acknowledge its gender dimension and impact (updating of teaching curricula; gendering the design of research and technological innovation; allocation of funds for gendered research; contrasting stereotypes about women in science, etc.).

3) Scientific leadership at different levels (selection procedures and criteria for the evaluation of scientific merit; introduction of equality targets in decision making bodies; enhancement of women researchers' visibility, etc.).

Following these projects the pro-tempore Minister for Equal Opportunities signed, in September 2010, a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Education, University and Scientific Research aimed at promoting equal opportunities in science, thus creating for the first time in Italy, a national strategy to increase the participation of women and girls in science and technology education, training, research and employment. It has provided the institution with a Consultation Panel composed of experts coming from public administrations, Universities and the civil society, with a view to elaborate concrete measures to achieve gender equality in science, fighting the under-representation of women in the scientific fields, facilitating the advancement of female careers, and improving the presence of women in the labour market and, in particular, in decision making positions.

C. WOMEN AND HEALTH

The Ministry of Health encourages and supports all actions whose aim is to improve the quality and appropriateness of health care actions so as to attain the goal of guaranteeing to each and every woman an appropriate process that allows the same to access without difficulty the most appropriate level of health care at each stage of her life, within the framework of different regional health care systems.

As regards maternity protection and the promotion of an appropriate birth process, the State-Regions Agreement “Guidelines for promoting and improving the quality, safety and appropriateness of health care actions during the birth process and reduce caesarean births” was signed on 16 December 2010. The National Programme, which has 10 lines of action, considers birth as the culminating event of a "birth process " which starts with the adoption of general health care policy measures for adolescents and women of reproductive age and continues with the organisation of hospital and territorial health care structures, for the maternal and child sector, and the definition of highly scientific guidelines for operators. A National Committee, in liaison with Regional Committees, is currently implementing actions to coordinate, promote and verify the implementation of the Agreement. The National Guidelines on physiological childbirth and caesarean birth, prepared by the National Guidelines System, were published in November 2010⁵. This survey is the richest source of national health care, epidemiological and social-demographic information on childbirth and is an essential tool for national health care planning (one of the lowest stillbirth rates in Europe, as is the percentage of women who undergo the first examination after the 12th week of pregnancy; caesarean births are still above the European average, but are decreasing).

Ministerial Decree dated 12 December 2012 introduced the “Operative interdisciplinary committee for the promotion of breastfeeding” - CPB, in collaboration with members of the MIUR (Ministry of Education, University and Research), Equal Opportunities, ISS (National Health Institute), Regions and Scientific Organisations, to protect, promote and support the practice of maternal breastfeeding, which is considered to be a public health priority in view of the many benefits for the child, and mother, in terms of health, growth and psychological development.

The Annual Reports of the Ministry of Health to the Parliament on Medically-Assisted Human Reproduction (Section 15 Law 40/2004) and abortion (Section 16 Law 194/78) allow to monitor the effects of the relevant legislation in these two fields. Monitoring of the implementation of Law 194/72 by the Ministry, in collaboration with the ISS, shows a substantial reduction of illegal abortions and the elimination of maternal mortality and morbidity associated to the same, together with lower rate in the voluntary termination of pregnancy (VTP), thanks above all to the promotion of greater and more efficient family planning methods, as an alternative to abortion, in line with aspirations of the law.

The Ministry of Health has for some time now promoted, under the programme “Guadagnare salute – rendere facili le scelte salutari” (Gain Health - making healthy choices easy), appropriate life styles to protect health in general, and in particular, women’s health, that focus on the prevention of eating disorders, mental diseases, the prevention of cardiovascular diseases, all of which largely affect the female population⁶.

The “Plan for breast, cervical and colorectal cancer screening for the three-year period 2007-2009” was approved in order to promote the prevention, screening, diagnosis, treatment and post-care of tumours; this plan establishes the methods and principles for the introduction of programmes to combat criticalities in the Southern and Island regions, and distribution to these Regions of

⁵For more childbirth information in Italy, please see the ninth CeDAP Report (http://www.salute.gov.it/portale/documentazione/p6_2_2_1.jsp?lingua=italiano&id=2024) which gives an analysis of the data for the year 2010 based on data of the certificate of childbirth care (CeDAP).

⁶ www.guadagnaresalute.it

financing for the years 2007-2008-2009. This Plan was then followed by the 2010-2012 National Prevention Plan, which was extended to 2013.

In March 2008 a free vaccination campaign against HPV infection, for the prevention of cervical cancer, was introduced throughout Italy for girls aged 11 to 12. Italy is the first country in Europe to plan a free public vaccination strategy against HPV which, in future years, will produce a gradual immunisation of the young adult population exposed to the risk of infection.

Finally, a sector of great importance is primary preconception prevention, promoted and supported by the CNMR (National Rare Disease Centre)/ISS as well as the specific Project “Pensiamoci prima” (think first)⁷, which helps young people by providing accurate sexual and reproductive information, right from adolescence.

The rate of HIV infection reached a peak in 1987, and then gradually decreased through to 1998 after which it progressively stabilised. The infection rate has been stable since 2007 and in 2012 corresponded to 6.5 new cases per 100,000 residents. The percentage of women infected increased in early 2000, but has decreased in recent years: the M/F ratio passed from 3.5 (653 M/187 F) in 1985, to 2 in 2001 (945 M/481 F); this tendency later changed and the M/F ratio increased again to 3.8 in 2012 (3.041 M/810 F).

The National AIDS Commission (NAC) works to act as a point of reference, evaluation and support for the requests and needs of HIV seropositive persons, including individuals and Associations, and focuses on the protection of civil rights, above all in the fields of education, health care, employment and confidentiality, working in liaison with the Council of Associations for the prevention of AIDS (CAA).

From 2009 to date, many technical, scientific and social-health care issues have been faced; many of these were extremely complex issues, requiring further analysis through research work and/or studies and projects financed by this Ministry, which called in, whenever necessary, experts and other Institutions/Administrations; a number of reference documents such as the following were also produced:

- “Italian Guidelines on the use of antiretroviral drugs and the diagnostic-clinical management of persons infected by HIV-1 (LG-HIV)”, whose scope is to provide guidelines for the prescription of antiretroviral therapy in HIV infected patients, for infectious disease specialists and other specialists involved in the multidisciplinary treatment of patients, and to act as a solid reference point for associations of patients, administrators and policy makers and in any case for all the stakeholders involved in any way in this problem. These guidelines include sections dedicated to women and information on how to face treatment in particular physiological periods of life (pregnancy, pre-post menopause). About 50% of persons infected by HIV are women and the main form of HIV transmission is heterosexual infection. Despite this, this population is penalised with respect to the male population both socially and economically and with respect to aspects related specifically to HIV infection (prevention and counselling, delayed diagnosis and access to treatment, lack of gender-related studies). It is therefore necessary to create, wherever possible, an integrated management network on health care problems related to women infected by HIV, which includes not only treatment for the infection itself, but also specific screening and prevention programmes for women in general.

- the guidelines for strategies for the prompt diagnosis of HIV infection: “Access to the HIV test”, which is today a possible solution to the need to modify the strategies on access to the Test. The guidelines contain a paragraph which examines the efficiency of the prevention actions of the vertical transmission of the HIV virus and the consequences of failure to diagnose the infection in pregnant women.

⁷ www.pensiamociprima.net

- The project: “Experimental social-health study to facilitate prevention, diagnosis and therapeutic continuity in the case of HIV/AIDS infection and co-infections in socially and economically disadvantaged groups”, financed by the Ministry of Health was started in 2009 and completed in October 2010. The population studied consisted of socially disadvantaged persons, the homeless, immigrants, above all illegal immigrants, and other groups at risk of poverty such as women who are victims of trafficking, prostitutes, transsexuals and drug abusers. A number of the characteristics specific to these populations continue to prevent a real analysis of the phenomenon, obstruct the definition of specific programmes for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of HIV/AIDS infection and often do not allow the necessary therapeutic continuity.

The project “Study for the determination of ECDC indicators (European Centre for Disease Control) for the prevention of HIV infection in the immigrant population”, financed by the Ministry of Health was started in 2010 and completed in September 2012. The aims of the project include promoting and offering HIV lab tests to the immigrant population. Early diagnosis of HIV infection and the study of recent infections permit prompt treatment and, above all in the case of pregnant women, safe prevention actions with respect to the vertical transmission of the infection.

In 2011 the “Experimentation of an intervention to support the prompt diagnosis of HIV infection by offering a fast saliva test” was conducted by the National Institute of Infectious Diseases, L. Spallanzani IRCCS (INMI), in collaboration with the Associations of the Council for the prevention of AIDS of the Ministry of Health. The project targeted the more vulnerable populations, namely those who experience difficulty and/or delay in accessing health services and the test, above all the poor, marginalised persons or persons at risk of marginalisation (such as the homeless, Roma people, immigrants, above all illegal immigrants), women who are victims of trafficking, prostitutes, drug abusers, MSM).

The “Esther 2.0. women’s and children’s health” project which started in 2013 involves all the Italian Operative Units which participate in the Esther-Italy project and is extended locally to various sub-Saharan African countries such as Ethiopia, South Africa, Tanzania, Kenya and Congo. The project is subdivided into two separate but integrated sections:

A) a longitudinal study to evaluate the impact of gender differences on determining health factors and the efficiency of HIV/AIDS infection treatments, conducted in the countries in which the Esther-Italy Project works;

B) a study to define the most efficient strategies for the prevention of vertical transmission.

The aim of project A) is to contribute knowledge to improve care for women and children with HIV/AIDS through a holistic approach which includes an evaluation of both the outcomes of efficacy and toxicity and the identification of the determining social-economic factors responsible for the inequalities to access to care by African women and children.

The aim of study B) is to evaluate the safety of treatment with Tenofovir, Lamivudine and Efavirenz, used for the prevention of mother-child transmission, comparing it with a reference treatment.

In 2008, the Italian Government, through its Department for Equal Opportunities, also set up a specific “Study Commission on Health” chaired by the Minister for Equal Opportunities, with the aim of identifying measures to promote positive actions and to remove existing obstacles to the affirmation of equal rights and opportunities of individuals with regard to health.

The pro-tempore Minister for Equal Opportunities signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Social Welfare Institution (INPS), the National Institution for Insurance against Accidents at Work (INAIL), the Institute for Social Affairs (IAS) and the Italian Endometriosis Foundation, aimed at combating endometriosis - a disease affecting 3 million women in Italy. The MoU provided for the conduction of information campaigns to increase women’s awareness and promote early diagnosis, as well as the establishment of a technical panel at the Ministry, the support to scientific research and specific assistance programmes to help women patients, who are

too often victims of discrimination, re-enter the labour market. The information campaign, led in 2011 and disseminated by the main national media, raised great interest.

Moreover, the Department for Equal Opportunities allocated 2 million Euros to fund projects and training for physicians working in paediatric departments, through the Public Call for Proposals published in the Official Journal No. 300 of 24 December 2008 for the financing of experimental actions aimed at supporting third sector bodies dealing with clown care. Through this Call, the Department for Equal Opportunities intended to promote measures for children experiencing hospitalization.

D. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

According to the “Violence against women: an EU-wide survey” developed by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights and presented in March 2014:

- 19% of women in Italy have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a current or previous partner since the age of 15;
- 17% by a non-partner;
- 38% by any partner (past or present);
- The prevalence of stalking since the age of 15 is 18%;
- The prevalence of sexual harassment since the age of 15 is 51%;

The national policies on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence are based on the idea of a necessary integration of prevention, protection and punishment measures, to be implemented jointly by the public and the private sector and with a multidisciplinary approach, involving coordinated actions in all relevant fields (social, educational, informational and legal).

Following this approach, in November 2010 the Ministry for Equal Opportunities adopted the “National Plan against gender-based violence and stalking”, the first attempt to elaborate an organic response to address policies in this field, in synergy with the main stakeholders at the local level.

The Plan was developed through a participatory process - starting from the national up to the local level. The most relevant NGOs and civil society organizations involved in the fight against gender-based violence and domestic violence and holding victims’ support services, were invited to make proposals and suggestions at different stages of the Plan’s drafting, in order to increase the understanding of the specific needs in terms of services to be offered and implemented.

Within the framework of the measures laid down in the first National Plan against Gender-based Violence and Stalking, the Department for Equal Opportunities has:

- signed a Convention with ISTAT (Italian National Statistical Institute), with a view to conducting a new national survey on “Women’s safety” (also in line with the CEDAW Committee’s recommendation to Italy). The survey’s objective is to provide, after five years from the publication of the findings of the first survey on the subject, updated estimates on physical and sexual violence, the way violence is perpetrated, consequences and risk factors with a particular focus on violence perpetrated by partners. Within this last type of violence, also psychological, economic, physical and sexual violence will be examined.
- Entrusted the management of the 1522 helpline number supporting victims of gender-based violence and stalking. In particular, it is worth mentioning that the 1522 helpline is a toll-free number, which is active 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and can be contacted from both fixed and mobile phones with reception available in many languages (Italian, English,

French, Russian, Arabic). Over six years of activity, the 1522 helpline has provided assistance and guidance for more than 80,000 women victims of violence, 10% of whom coming from a foreign country.

- Issued three Calls for proposals aimed at granting funds to anti-violence centres, shelters and other public and private services providing support and assistance for women victims of violence.
- In particular, through the first Call for proposals, the Department for Equal Opportunities has granted up to 140,000 Euros for each of the 24 selected projects, for a total amount of 3 million Euros. More specifically, the projects have been selected according to strict merit criteria and submitted by Municipalities in partnership with public entities and third-sector organizations for the creation and strengthening of local anti-violence networks.
- By means of the second Call for proposals, a total amount of 10 million Euros was granted directly to anti-violence centres housing women victims of abuse and their children. In particular, 6 million Euros were totally allocated (200,000 Euros for each project) for the implementation of measures to support the already operating anti-violence centres and public and private facilities, with the aim of increasing the number of services offered to victims, as well as to facilitate the re-opening of some facilities which, over the last few months, had been closed due to lacking economic resources. The remaining 4 million Euro fund (400,000 Euros for each project) was allocated to support the establishment of new shelters in those regions of the country where a larger gap between demand and supply of such services still exists. 46 is the total number of projects selected for funding.
- Through the third Call for proposals, a total amount of 1.7 million Euros was allocated for the implementation of training initiatives for health professionals providing first aid to victims of sexual and domestic violence. The provision of such training courses will make it possible to set up 27 new Emergency Rooms throughout the country, which will be equipped to provide specialized assistance for women victims of violence, in addition to the 15 specialized Emergency Rooms already operating throughout the national territory.
- Carried out training activities within the framework of a project for the homogeneous and specific training of law enforcement agencies rescuing victims of gender-based violence.
- Organized a multidisciplinary training path for 80 young lawyers residing in the Convergence Regions (Calabria, Campania, Apulia and Sicily) who were interested in attaining a specific professional qualification in the subjects relating to all forms of violence against women.
- Signed a new Convention with the *Arma dei Carabinieri* (Carabinieri Corps), which will allow the regular collection of official statistical data on crimes committed against vulnerable people and the setting up of a database enabling the Department for Equal Opportunities to accurately monitor the services provided by all facilities taking part in the 1522 network and those having received funds from the Department.
- Started the monitoring of the implementation of the National Plan against Gender-based Violence and Stalking. In fact, on 27 November 2012, the meeting for the installation in office of the Monitoring Committee on the implementation of the Plan's activities took place. The Committee is composed of representatives of the state administrations involved, Regions and local authorities.
- Concluded the Memorandum of Understanding between the Italian Minister of Labour and Social Policies in charge of Equal Opportunities and the Minister of Education, University

and Research on 30 January 2013, which is aimed at confirming the organization of the “Week against Violence and Discrimination”, taking place every year in October.

- Concluded the Memorandum of Understanding between the Minister of Labour and Social Policies and the President of the Advertising Self-Regulation Institute (*Istituto di Autodisciplina Pubblicitaria – IAP*) on 31 January 2013, with a view to enhancing their cooperation in the monitoring and removal of offensive and indecent ads. In compliance with this MoU, the Department for Equal Opportunities will be entitled to ask for the removal of advertisements showing degrading images of women, containing images of violent acts perpetrated against women or inciting violence against women, also upon report from other entities.

- Carried out several communication campaigns on violence against women. In particular, the Department for Equal Opportunities has:
 - been conducting, from 17 December 2012, an information and awareness-raising campaign to promote and make the 1522 helpline more widely known –Based on the slogan “Difendi la tua libertà. Inizia a riscrivere la tua vita” (“Defend your freedom. Rewrite your life”), the campaign highlights that each and every form of violence against women is a crime, which is often committed within their households, and calls upon victims of violence to take control of their lives again by contacting the 1522 helpline to start a specific pathway to break the spiral of violence.
 - produced a short film entitled “Giulia ha picchiato Filippo”. It is a documentary film about violence against women, which is told by victims themselves living in anti-violence centres after being abused by their own partners. Women who have been humiliated, beaten, belittled and, although they have suffered deep pain and trauma, they also had the courage to report perpetrators to the police and react to violence, starting a new life with strength and determination. The short film ends with a fictional scene set in a nursery school, where a violent act perpetrated by a boy against a girl child is tolerated, thus representing the prevailing attitude towards women in modern society.

In 2009, the crime of stalking (art. 612 *bis* of the Italian Criminal Code) was introduced in the Italian legal system through Decree Law No 11 of 23 February 2009 (the so-called *Decreto Sicurezza – Security Decree*), converted with Law No 38 of 23 April 2009 and included in the section dedicated to the crimes against moral freedom. Such a law, whose adoption was strongly supported by the then Minister for Equal Opportunities, gives a concrete response to persistent harassment, by introducing the crime of stalking in the Italian legal system. With the aim of preventing and further protecting victims of stalking, a new administrative measure has been introduced – the “warning” (*ammonimento*) – which can be requested by the victim to the *Questore*⁸, in case the victim does not want to take action against the offender, thus initiating the criminal prosecution. According to the abovementioned law, stalkers shall be punished by imprisonment from six months to four years. Penalty is increased if the offence is committed by a spouse, who is legally separated or divorced, or by a person previously engaged in an emotional relationship with the victim. Penalty is also increased if the crime is perpetrated against a minor, a pregnant woman or a person with disabilities.

In order to enhance the fight against stalking, the Minister for Equal Opportunities and the Minister of Defence signed, in January 2009, a specific Memorandum of Understanding. Following the signature of the Memorandum in the *Carabinieri* Corps a specific Unit was established and entitled

⁸ In the Italian legal system, an officer in charge of police force, public order and related administrative services.

“Sezione Atti Persecutori” (Stalking Unit), with the aim of monitoring the phenomenon of stalking and to improve action to prevent and combat it.

Following the adoption of Law No 38 of 23 April 2009, the national helpline 1522 has been reorganised to assist victims of stalking also in cases of request for help coming from male victims. From the legislative point of view, the following legislative provisions are worth mentioning:

- Law No. 172 of 1 October 2012 ratifying the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (the so-called Lanzarote Convention). The Law amended Art. 572 of the Italian Penal Code regulating the crime of “Maltreatment against family members and cohabitants” and provided for harsher penalties (from two to six years’ imprisonment, instead of the previous term of imprisonment ranging from one to five years). Furthermore, Law No.172/2012 doubled the limitation periods (from ten to twenty years) within which the victim is entitled to report sexual abuse to the police. This innovation introduced by the Law is closely linked to domestic violence since, in most cases, child sexual abuse is perpetrated within the family. The doubling of the limitation periods will allow the child victim to give rise to criminal proceedings against the offender even after reaching the age of majority, in order for the perpetrator to be convicted.
- Law No 77/2013 establishing “Ratification and implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, done at Istanbul on 11 May 2011”.
- Law No 119 of 15 October 2013 converting Decree Law No 93 of 14 August 2013 establishing “Urgent provisions on safety and for the fight against gender-based violence, as well as on civil protection and compulsory administration of provinces” (*Disposizioni urgenti in materia di sicurezza e per il contrasto alla violenza di genere nonché in tema di protezione civile e di commissariamento delle province*) was published in the Official Journal of 15 October 2013. The law addresses both stalking and gender-based violence, which had been already regulated, through three conceptual pillars based on prevention, punishment and protection and by taking into consideration the references to the Istanbul Convention ratified by Italy by Law No 77 of 19 June 2013.

As for prevention, the law strengthened the so-called “warning” (*ammonimento*), namely the already in force administrative measure which can be requested by the victim to the *Questore*, by providing for the mandatory removal of the violent man from the family house, as well as the gun ban and driving disqualification and the possibility to use electronic tools for the surveillance of perpetrators (electronic tagging).

Concerning the punishment of perpetrators, the law introduced new aggravating circumstances. In particular, penalty is increased if children under 18 years of age witness violence as well as if the victim is in a particularly vulnerable situation (if pregnant). Moreover, the idea of femicide is further strengthened by the introduction of the particularly close relationship between the victim and the perpetrator as an aggravating circumstance (e.g. if the perpetrator is the victim’s spouse or partner, also non-cohabiting partner).

In line with the guiding principles established by the Istanbul Convention, the Italian law is aimed at ensuring greater protection for victims both in relation to hearings, which will be protected for vulnerable people, and through a system guaranteeing transparency during ongoing investigations and legal proceedings and envisaging the obligation to inform victims about support services existing at the local level.

Furthermore, in compliance with the Istanbul Convention, the law provided for the granting of legal aid also for women victims of domestic violence whose income exceeds the income limits fixed by the national legislation.

Protection is also extended to foreign victims, for whom the law introduced the possibility to obtain a humanitarian residence permit, established by Legislative Decree No 286/1998 consolidating the provisions regulating immigration and the rules relating to the status of foreign national. In synergy with the European Union and the Council of Europe policies, the law underlines the value of the Extraordinary Action Plan against Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, which cuts across the prevention and protection sectors and is considered as the phenomenon's governance system among the different governmental levels in the country.

The Action Plan will be developed in collaboration with civil society associations working to eliminate violence against women as well as with the contribution of shelters, with a view to ensuring the implementation of homogenous actions all over the country. The Plan shall be adopted by the Minister for Equal Opportunities by agreement with the Joint Conference and will be implemented through several actions in different areas: public information and awareness-raising campaigns; promotion of respectful relationships between women and men within schools and of the anti-violence and anti-discrimination issues in textbooks; strengthening of shelters and services for the assistance and protection of victims of gender-based violence and stalking; specialized training for operators also in the health sector; cooperation between different institutions; data collection and processing.

The public body responsible for the implementation of the Plan is the Inter-ministerial Task Force on Violence against Women, established on 22 July 2013 at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. The Task Force is a technical panel aimed at identifying institutional synergies and concrete measures to combat this phenomenon, which is divided into 7 Thematic Subgroups gathering sector-specific experts.

Among the different measures recently taken by the Italian Government to combat gender-based violence, on 18 November 2013, the Department for Equal Opportunities of the Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers launched the “Riconosci la Violenza” (Recognize Violence) Campaign⁹. The Campaign was also officially translated into English and Spanish.

The Ministry of Justice has provided for the monitoring of criminal proceedings initiated in Italy for offences concerning violence against women. The relevant data covering the last five years are reported in Table 1.

⁹ <http://www.pariopportunita.gov.it/index.php/primo-piano/2406-griconosci-la-violenzaq>

Registered, defined and pending proceedings and main methods of definition in the Courts (hearing) relating to some offences against the family and the person											
Chapter	Part	Heading	Law	Year	Registered	Defined	of which by judgment of conviction	of which by judgment of acquittal	of which by a promiscuous judgment	of which otherwise defined	Final
Against the family											
	Against family assistance	Maltreatment in the family or of children	572 of CC 572 (2) of CC	2009	3.410	2.523	1.466	492	102	463	4.787
				2010	4.445	3.451	1.856	682	178	735	6.593
				2011	3.990	3.616	1.856	773	162	825	7.988
				2012	4.141	3.339	1.671	714	318	636	8.981
Against the person											
	Against individual liberty	Sexual acts with a child	609 quater of CC	2009	262	234	160	44	3	27	403
				2010	256	238	148	54	2	34	421
				2011	215	239	156	45	7	31	428
				2012	211	190	127	46	6	11	453
		Sexual acts with a child in exchange for money	600 bis (2) of CC	2009	11	8	4	3		1	14
				2010	10	9	5	2	2	0	15
				2011	11	14	5	5		4	12
				2012	18	13	4	3		6	18
		Possession of pornographic material	600 quater of CC	2009	170	168	105	37	3	23	175
				2010	196	192	122	32	4	34	204
				2011	164	163	80	35	6	42	224
				2012	216	179	110	35	9	25	266
		Facilitation of prostitution	L. 75 of 1958, art. 3	2009	694	652	355	125	32	140	1.064
				2010	672	692	357	162	37	136	1.088
				2011	618	592	336	126	17	113	1.225
				2012	575	513	272	138	23	80	1.303
		Aggravated facilitation of prostitution	L. 75 of 1958, art. 4	2009	378	392	220	68	23	81	632
				2010	352	355	187	87	21	60	622
				2011	313	292	155	64	10	63	658
				2012	298	297	163	67	24	43	669
		Child pornography	600 ter of CC	2009	71	62	35	15	3	9	90
				2010	72	50	28	11	1	10	113
				2011	72	78	42	16	4	16	121
				2012	87	83	45	18	8	12	127
		Child prostitution	600 bis of CC	2009	84	71	54	6	3	8	124
				2010	60	78	46	14	4	14	117
				2011	62	57	30	16	4	7	125
				2012	53	65	36	17		12	114
		Stalking	612 bis of CC	2009	468	205	133	5	8	59	263
				2010	2.036	783	449	39	24	271	1.338
				2011	3.065	1.547	821	121	40	565	3.098
				2012	3.715	2.055	981	184	138	752	4.888
		Rape	609 bis of CC	2009	1.821	1.591	1.092	286	50	163	2.269
				2010	1.852	1.648	1.087	313	59	189	2.470
				2011	1.662	1.670	1.017	383	57	213	2.704
				2012	1.605	1.503	946	345	95	117	2.859
		Aggravated rape	609 ter of CC	2009	438	385	274	73	5	33	719
				2010	468	427	295	79	8	45	768
				2011	397	435	277	93	15	50	747
				2012	401	390	269	80	15	26	764
		Group rape	609 octies of CC	2009	68	74	43	20	5	6	106
				2010	82	61	36	16	3	6	124
				2011	61	66	47	12	3	4	122
				2012	87	75	43	21	7	4	140

(Table 1)

The phenomena of violence against women and gender-based violence have been faced and addressed for a long time also by the Italian State Police through some special units carrying out prevention and prosecution activities, both at a central and at a local level.

Police personnel of the State Police Special Units attend special multidisciplinary training courses focusing on victims and on the more effective ways to prevent reiterated violence against them and on recognizing the insurgency of violence. Several initiatives have been implemented by the Italian State Police in order to improve police training programs. In particular, training and qualifying

courses on the “Investigation Techniques” related to crimes against children and sexual crimes were included and intended for the “*Squadre Mobili*” personnel; furthermore, the issues of domestic violence, stalking, violence against women, fight against discriminatory acts, were included in the annual training refresher courses for police personnel. As provided for by the “Convention on training for law enforcement to uniform their approach to the victims of gender-based violence”, signed on May 30, 2011 by the Department for Equal Opportunities of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and by the Department of Public Security of the Ministry of the Interior¹⁰, several seminars and courses were organized on the specific issue “How to approach victims of sexual violence and of violence-related crimes”: they were attended by senior officers of the Italian State Police, who, in turn, organized further refresher courses in their own places of work. According to this Convention, special training sections on gender-based violence have been included in the training courses for State Police cadet officers. In 2013, training and refresher courses for senior officers, working at the *Squadre Mobili* and *Questure*, were organized on gender-based violence and on the police interventions in case of domestic violence.

Several initiatives at European level should be mentioned as relevant part of the European Daphne Programme, mainly aimed at fighting any kind of violence and abuse against women and children.

In this context, the State Police on the basis of its co-operation with the Association “Differenza Donna” – ONLUS and with the Psychology Faculty of the Naples II University, CESVIS Centre, introduced in the training courses the SARA “Spousal Assault Risk Assessment” method, focused on the early recidivism risk assessment with regard to family abuses. Furthermore, a project denominated SILVIA – Stalking Inventory List for Victims and Authors, was initiated in 2007 with a view to monitoring the “stalking” phenomenon, before its official criminalization was provided for by law 38/2009.

Other important training initiatives: the project “A.Vi.Cri. (Attention for Victims of Crime), training bases on good practices for police forces, and the project “Mu.T.A.Vi. - Multimedia Tools Against Violence”, multimedia training (e-learning) for police officers intervening and supporting victims of domestic violence.

The afore-mentioned prevention initiatives through personnel training are all the more effective as wider and more representative network of other institutional and private actors is involved. The cooperation with external bodies and private associations is crucial in this field since they provide logistic, legal and psychological support in case of police interventions.

Such a cooperation has been strengthened by some recent provisions with regard to some criminal offenses (Law 38, dated April 23, 2009, on the crime of stalking, establishing the legal obligation to communicate to the victim any information concerning the presence of local Anti-Violence Centers, especially in her place of residence – this obligation has been extended by Law 119/2013 to other crimes such as domestic violence, slavery, trafficking in human beings, child prostitution, paedo-pornography, sexual crimes) and has proved to be much more effective when it has been supported by previous joined training courses attended by police and private associations operators, in compliance with their own specific competences.

Inter-institutional cooperation is aimed, on the one hand, at preventing domestic violence, on the other hand it enables the police operators to acquire info-investigative data useful to contextualize single cases.

The important institutional partnership between the “1522” anti-violence national call center phone number and the Police Forces – in compliance with the “Convention aimed at connecting the 1522 call centre with the Police Services, with regard to sexual and gender-based violence” (January 12, 2011), signed in the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding entered by the Ministry of the Interior and the Department for Equal Opportunities in July 2012, establishes specific

¹⁰ Within the Memorandum of Understanding between Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Equal Opportunities for prevention and combating gender violence (3 July 2009).

procedures of communication in case the 1522 call center number receives calls about cases to be reported to the police.

In light of the above, the cooperation is strengthened also by joint training programs provided for by some Memoranda of Understanding, signed by public and private institutions dealing with gender-based violence and promoting inter-institutional network to support female victims of violence.

As proven by the actions undertaken by the Italian Government underlined above, Italy attaches great importance to the prevention, punishment and eradication of violence against women and girls and the protection of its victims. This is particularly true not only at the national, but also at the international level.

Development cooperation initiatives against violence against women have been carried out in various partner priority countries. The commitment to recognise violence against women as a human rights issue, to challenge *de jure* and *de facto* discrimination against women, and to end impunity for the widespread use of sexual violence in war and armed conflict has been strengthened after 2009 when Italy launched the First G8 initiative against VAW. Since then the support against trafficking of women, Female Genital Mutilations (FGM) and gender based violence (GBV) has been strengthened both at the political and financial level. Furthermore, the mainstreaming of a gender perspective throughout emergency and development interventions and the financing for women's economic, social and political empowerment became two pivotal axes of the Italian programmes in Afghanistan, Palestine and Sudan.

In Palestine since 2009, Italy in partnership with UNWOMEN, supported the Mehwar Centre in Bethlehem. Mehwar is the first Palestinian centre providing integrative answers to gender based violence. At the centre they not only protect physically and sexually abused women, they seek "to empower" them to play a defining role in society. The Centre's use of a woman-centred approach, and it has indeed assisted some women in obtaining justice, helped some women successfully reintegrate with their families, and found alternative ways to enable women to live free and independent lives. Furthermore, the Italian commitment against sexual crimes in Afghanistan is at the core of the country strategy.

In Afghanistan the fight against violence against women is one of the main focus of the Italian country strategy.. In this framework the initiatives against sexual crimes and gender based violence have been developed with twin track approach through multilateral and bilateral programs. The multilateral support was channelled through trust funds managed by UNWOMEN and UNFPA. Bilateral initiatives funded programs for supporting the Afghan Ngo HAWCA for the management of the shelter for women victims of violence in Kabul and in Herat where Ministry of Foreign Affairs supports ACTIONAID and Humanitarian Assistance for the Women and Children of Afghanistan (HAWCA).

Trafficking in human beings

Another widespread form of gender-based violence in Italy is trafficking in women and girls, a phenomenon which is addressed by the Italian Government in all its main aspects.

The Italian model was built on the principle that an effective anti-trafficking strategy should be based on a victim's rights-centred approach. The main legal provisions regulating the national response to trafficking in persons were drafted in accordance with this principle and are:

1. Article 18 of the National Law on Migration (Legislative Decree No 286 of 1998);
2. Article 13 of the National Law against Trafficking in Human Beings (Law No 228 of 2003);

In compliance with the abovementioned national laws, the Italian system envisages two different types of assistance and protection programmes for victims of trafficking in human beings, namely:

- Short-term programmes (the so-called “Art. 13 Projects”) provide presumed or already identified victims of human trafficking with assistance for a minimum duration of three months which, when applicable, can be extended for a further three months. Victims assisted by public bodies or associations are entitled to receive adequate board and lodging, as well as health and legal assistance. In many cases, victims continue to be assisted under Art. 18 Projects, once the Art. 13 Project is over;

- Long-term programmes (the so-called “Art. 18 Projects”) envisaging the possibility of granting a special residence permit for social protection grounds to the victims of human trafficking, violence and exploitation who want to escape the conditioning of criminal organizations. The long-term programmes’ main aim is to ensure social and employment integration for victims of human trafficking participating in the projects. Art. 18 Projects have an established duration of 12 months and provide trafficked persons with access to a wide range of services and activities, in line with an individual assistance plan which is developed taking into account their specific needs. Some of the services and activities include: residential care facilities, psychological counselling, legal assistance, linguistic and cultural mediation, referral to social and health services, vocational training, internships in enterprises, job-seeking support, employment integration.

Another central element of the national system against trafficking in human beings is the National Anti-Trafficking Toll-Free Helpline (800-290-290), which can be called 24 hours a day, anonymously and free of charge. It enables victims of trafficking in human beings to get in touch with specialized multilingual staff. The Helpline operators provide detailed information on legislation and services for trafficked or exploited persons in Italy and, upon their request, refer them to the social and assistance services funded under Art. 13 and Art. 18 Projects.

From the legislative point of view, on 28 March 2014, Legislative Decree No 24 of 4 March 2014 establishing the “Implementation of Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA” entered into force.

In line with the holistic approach adopted by the European Union including the aspects of prevention, protection and punishment, the Italian legislator amended articles 600 (Placing or holding a person in conditions of slavery or servitude) and 601 (Trafficking in persons) of the Italian Penal Code with the aim of strengthening the punishment of perpetrators by ensuring that all forms of trafficking in human beings are punished under the Criminal Code, and with a view to providing a comprehensive definition of such crimes in compliance with the European directive. As far as minors are concerned, the conduct is punished as trafficking in persons even if the crime is not committed by fraud, deceit, threat or by promising or giving money.

As for the protection of victims of human trafficking, in accordance with the European directive, the Legislative Decree also amended the Italian Code of Criminal Procedure in order to extend the existing protection already envisaged for child victims or mentally ill adult victims concerned with the hearing of evidence to all adult victims in particularly vulnerable conditions. More specifically, art. 1 of the Decree specifies the subjects that can be considered as vulnerable persons, namely minors, unaccompanied minors, elderly persons, disabled persons, women, especially if pregnant, single parents with underage children, persons with mental disorders, as well as persons who suffered rape or other serious forms of physical, psychological, sexual or gender-based violence. With the aim of further strengthening the protection of victims, the Legislative Decree provides for the obligation to adequately inform them, especially unaccompanied minors who are victims of human trafficking, of their rights and establishes that a further decree will be adopted to define specific mechanisms for the determination of their age and their identification. In addition, Legislative Decree No 24/2014 lays down that the training pathways provided by the competent Administrations shall include, for the concerned public officials, specific training modules on issues concerning trafficking in human beings.

One of the main innovations introduced by the Decree in compliance with Directive 2011/36/EU is the recognition of the victims' right to compensation. Such a compensation, which amounts to 1,500 Euros for each victim, shall be paid in accordance with the terms established by the Decree under the Annual Fund for Anti-Trafficking Measures. The fund already exists and, according to the relevant law, it should be fed with the proceeds derived from the confiscation of assets following a judgment of conviction.

The Department for Equal Opportunities of the Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers is the authority responsible for guidance, coordination and monitoring of interventions related to trafficking in human beings. Besides these tasks, the Legislative Decree officially recognizes the role of the Department as the equivalent mechanism and national contact point for the EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator. It also aims at making the prevention and fight against this phenomenon, as well as the assistance and social integration of victims, more effective and coordinated. To this end and with a view to avoiding duplication of efforts and thus improving the protection of victims, it provides for the unification of short-term and long-term assistance programmes ("art.13" and "art. 18" projects), which have been in place until the entry into force of the Legislative Decree, into one single programme of emergence, assistance and social integration guaranteeing victims adequate board, lodging and health care on a transitional basis and, subsequently, the continuation of assistance and social integration.

A further novelty introduced by Legislative Decree No 24/2014 is the obligation to adopt, within three months from the date of its entry into force, the first National Action Plan against Trafficking in and Serious Exploitation of Human Beings, with a view to identifying multiannual intervention strategies for the prevention and fight against these phenomena, as well as measures aimed at increasing public awareness, social prevention, emergence and social integration of victims. Legislative Decree No 24/2014 finally introduces further innovative measures, the so-called rules of reference, according to which the Administrations dealing with the protection and assistance of the victims of trafficking and those competent for asylum shall identify coordinating measures among the institutional activities for which they are respectively competent, also for the purpose of establishing mechanisms of reference between the two systems of protection.

The dimensions and developments of trafficking in human beings, as well as the high interests of transnational criminal organizations in controlling and managing trafficking in human beings, have forced the police authorities to make strategic decisions and to re-organize the departmental and local State Police offices. As to the Italian State Police, on 12 January 2001, the Chief of the Police ordered the re-organization of the Aliens' Offices and *Squadre Mobili*, by establishing the "ad hoc prostitution and non-EU crime sections"; the Immigration Offices were tasked with "all administrative police practices and activities concerning entry, stay, refusal, repatriation, refugee status, citizenship and any other related issues".

The Central Operational Service has always played a very stimulating role in professional training of State Police personnel assigned to the local police offices: the SCO has engaged in promoting and organizing meetings and seminars within ad hoc European projects, in cooperation with International Organizations and NGOs (OIM, Save the Children-Italy). Some specific seminars on trafficking in human beings have been organized to be attended by the "Special Units" of *Squadre Mobili*.

With a view to promoting multiagency cooperation and the coordination of judicial authority, police forces and NGOs engaged in this specific sector, and on 28 April 2010, the Department of Public Security and the Anti-mafia National Directorate signed the "Memorandum of Understanding on the guidelines for coordinating the fight against trafficking in human beings". According to this Memorandum of Understanding, it is possible to carry out a deep analysis mainly with regard to the "trafficking indicators", the operators' training, the exchange of good practices, the activity of joint working groups (district and ordinary prosecutor's offices), the identification of one or more

reference points – the *Squadre Mobili* as to the investigative issues and the Immigration Offices as to the administrative aspects concerning aliens – for a better coordination with the actors involved. As to the international cooperation, some positive cooperation agreements have been enforced with Romania, Albania, Libya. Very important investigative results have been achieved thanks to a bilateral cooperation project with the Romanian Police authorities, denominated “ITA.RO.”, still in progress. The Romanian police operators were directly involved in some investigations aimed at fighting against Romanian crime organizations’ activities, such as exploitation of prostitution, child prostitution and other crimes. Successful operations were carried out thanks to the cooperation between police forces of the countries involved in transnational crime phenomena, through Interpol and Europol channels. As from 2012 also the monitoring relating to the proceedings initiated for the offence of trafficking in human beings has been carried out by the Ministry of Justice. Such data, available only for 2012. (Table 2)

SURVEY ON THE PHENOMENON OF TRAFFIC IN HUMAN BEINGS - COURT DATA * - YEAR 2012										
Offences		PROCEEDINGS RELATING TO THE REGISTER OF KNOWN PERSONS					ACCUSED			
		registered proceedings	defined proceedings	of which:			of which:			
				judgments of conviction	judgments of acquittal	promiscuous judgments	persons committed for trial	sentenced persons	acquitted persons	Persons in whose respect a judgment of non-lieu or of nolle prosequere has been rendered
Reduction to slavery (art. 600 of CC)	Court JPI/JPH	125	86	12	4	2	39	23	8	6
	Assizes Hearing Court	24	12	6	5	1		8	8	
Traffic in human beings (art. 601 of CC)	Court JPI/JPH	34	27	8	2	0	8	23	2	10
	Assizes Hearing Court	5	5	3	2	0		3	7	
Transfer and purchase of slaves (art. 602 of CC)	Court JPI/JPH	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Assizes Hearing Court	2	0	0	0	0		0	0	
Exploitation of child prostitution (art. 600 bis of CC) in connection with the conducts provided for by art. 12 (3) and (3 ter) of Leg. Decree 286/98	Court JPI/JPH	69	34	17	9	1	7	43	10	15
	Hearing Court	30	24	17	4	2		35	13	
Exploitation and facilitation of child prostitution (art. 3 of Law 75/58) in connection with the conducts provided for by art. 12 (3) and (3 ter) of Leg. Decree 286/98	Court JPI/JPH	91	72	19	2	1	72	44	3	21
	Hearing Court	85	73	42	18	5		73	34	
total		469	334	124	46	12	126	252	85	52

(Table 2)

E. WOMEN AND ARMED CONFLICT

Last February 27, 2014, Italy adopted a revised bi-annual NAP on Women, Peace and Security in accordance with UNSCR1325.

Through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, an Inter-ministerial Working Group, led by the inter-ministerial Committee for Human Rights, was set up to draft the above National Action Plan. The above Working Group consists of representatives from: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Inter-Ministerial Committee for Human Rights, General Directorate for Development Cooperation, General Directorate on Political Affairs and Security - Human Rights Unit, OSCE Unit, NATO Unit); the Ministry of Interior (Department of Public Security); the Ministry of Defence; the Ministry of Health (and INMP); the General Command of the *Carabinieri* Corps; the Revenue Guard Corps; the Ministry of Justice; the Department for Equal Opportunities; the National Office of Statistics. Relevant CSOs were also involved and closely cooperated with, throughout the drafting process.

In drafting the Italian NAP, neither the UN nor other Organizations have been involved, but Italy took note and did comply with all relevant standards. Along these lines, Italy has confirmed and/or enhanced its commitments and support for existing and to-be-launched initiatives besides envisaging the involvement of the UNHCR with regard to the situation of women asylum-seekers and refugees in Italy. More generally, as reported and acknowledged in the NAP, at both the multilateral and bilateral levels, Italy firmly supports all the relevant initiatives on women's human rights – though such a support is not of an immediate measurement owing to its inner political nature.

To NAP has been inspired by: existing NAPs especially at the EU level; specific technical cooperation projects undertaken by the Italian Development Cooperation in key geographic areas, such as Iraq, Afghanistan and Lebanon; and, inter alia, by newly introduced standards, such as CEDAW GR No. 30 (October 2013).

In connection with the promotion and protection of women's human rights, the Italian Armed Forces have launched a number of actions aimed at enhancing the implementation of:

- The UN Security Council Resolution n. 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions;
- The National Action Plan (NAP) on *Women, Peace and Security*;
- The *Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women* (CEDAW) in our country.

These actions have given rise to:

- The establishment of an Organizational Unit called *Pari opportunità e prospettiva di genere* (Equal Opportunities and Gender Perspective) within the IT Defence General Staff. This unit stems from the former Section *Personale militare femminile* (Female Military Personnel) – which had been set up in 2000 when, for the first time, women enrolled in the Armed Forces – that aimed at integrating women in the traditionally mono-gender military instrument. The Unit's primary task is the implementation of gender perspective and UN Security Council Resolution 1325(2000) within the Armed Forces and *Carabinieri* Force, also through our continuative relationship established with the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives. This Unit represents a point of reference for the development of gender politics within the Defence General Staff and is tasked with the supervision of Armed Forces and *Carabinieri* training programs, in order to integrate gender perspective and issues related to interpersonal relationships. In this context, it has been also tasked with the conduct of statistical research, the organization of training and information programs on specific issues and the planning of events, also with a media content, aimed at disseminating gender culture. It is, therefore,

responsible for the planning of actions to be taken for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 provisions in a joint environment and it is the point of contact for NATO and other national and supranational Organizations on this specific issue.

- A legislative initiative - submitted under legislative decree n. 7/2014 deriving from Law No 244/2012 providing for the review of the military instrument – aimed at setting up a new forum called *Consiglio interforze sulla prospettiva di genere* (Joint Committee on Gender Perspective) which shall take on the tasks of the *Comitato consultivo per l'inserimento del personale volontario femminile nelle Forze Armate e nel Corpo della Guardia di Finanza* (Advisory Committee for the Enlistment of Female Voluntary Personnel in the Armed Forces and Customs Guards) – whose mandate terminated on 13 July 2012 as a consequence of spending review measures (Legislative Decree No 95/2012). This Joint Committee would also carry out tasks related to gender issues. At the national level, this evolution would replicate the reorganization that occurred within NATO, with the transformation of the preexisting Committee on Women in the Armed Forces into the Committee on Gender Perspectives. This new forum, moreover, would act in line with the content of the previous National Action Plan as for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 (2000), taking into account that the Plan provided for an increase in scope and scale of the tasks entrusted to the Committee.

This new body will be tasked with enhancing organization of the military instrument in terms of:

- providing assistance to the Chief of Defence Staff in guiding, coordinating and evaluating male and female personnel integration into the Armed Forces and *Carabinieri* Force;
- providing advice on measures that can be taken to support military family members, primarily for personnel deployed in international operations and in connection with the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions, as for the adoption of gender perspective;
- cooperating in drafting and monitoring the effectiveness of directives – also for statistical analysis – on gender perspective, personnel integration, equal opportunities, ban of discrimination, military welfare and protection of family and parenthood;
- providing assistance on communication activities of DGS as for specific issues of interest and the organization of events aimed at disseminating gender culture, equal opportunities and integration within the Armed Forces and *Carabinieri* Force;
- analysing specific issues of interest, in conjunction with national and international bodies at the same level, in order to provide the Chief of Defence Staff with suggestions on the initiatives to be adopted for enhancing the organization.

In addition, the Committee's third part status will be guaranteed by the cooperation, free of charge, with other departments of the Public Administration (primarily the Department for Equal Opportunities, Presidency of the Council of Ministers) and experts in this specific field.

As for the composition of the Committee, equal representation of both genders is ensured.

- The drafting of the joint Directive (issued on December 2012) *Linee guida in materia di parità di trattamento, rapporti interpersonali, tutela della famiglia e della genitorialità* (Guidelines on Equality of Treatment, Interpersonal Relationships, Family and Parenthood Protection) aimed at harmonizing, among the Armed Forces and the *Carabinieri* Force, the approach to issues of common interest and specific sensitivity, and enhance internal communication on the commitments undertaken by the country at the international level on the matter. That document addresses, among others, the following issues:
 - gender mainstreaming and gender perspective;
 - the legal framework of reference (national legislation, current international situation and National Action Plan);
 - training and education on gender perspective;

- the professional role of Gender Advisor;
 - personnel integration and interpersonal relationships;
 - fight against the discrimination of women in the Armed Forces, namely by countering deviant behaviour and conducts (harassment, sexual harassment, bullying and stalking).
- Courses to be provided to military personnel at all levels, as well as courses for those who will take part in international peace operations, will address an analysis of the Action Plan, the CEDAW convention and related additional protocol, legislation in the field of equal opportunities, gender perspective and human rights, in particular aspects connected to the protection of women and children. Before being deployed to any theatre of operations, all personnel receive a specific education on UNSCR 1325 (2000) and the integration of gender perspective into any kind of military activities; some ad hoc teams, the so-called “Female Engagement Teams”, are set up in order to establish a direct relationship with the local population. These teams are provided with all necessary instruments, including linguistic tools, for cultural interaction and cooperation with the female local population. In addition, NATO received the candidacy of CoESPU (Centre of Excellence for Stability Police Units) as Centre of Excellence to provide training in the field of sexual-gender based violence (SGBV) to Allied countries’ gendarmerie forces. In the future, this kind of training could increase the deployment of police forces to integrate the primary role played by the Armed Forces.
 - The 2013 Defence Communication Plan includes an initiative aiming to disseminate a gender culture among the Armed Forces and the *Carabinieri* Force and to project externally an image of the Ministry of Defence as an institution having a progressive vision and a special sensitivity as regards issues related to the enhancement of gender diversity. Among others, scheduled activities are the following:
 - creation of mobile teaching units at joint and single-service training institutes to provide “house-to-house” specific knowledge and to raise personnel’s awareness;
 - organization of conferences and symposiums on UNSCR 1325 (2000) and adoption of a gender perspective.
 - In enforcing the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of the Interior and the Department of Equal Opportunities, the *Carabinieri* Force has conducted specific training seminars to uniform operators’ behaviour in approaching victims of gender-based violence (approximately 1650 servicemen have been trained);

Regarding female personnel in the Armed Forces, as of 1 January 2014:

- it amounted to roughly 4% of total personnel (11,200 units out of a total of 274,800 units female and male personnel);
- it amounted to 5% within theatres of operations;
- within international organizations there are:
 - a Captain of the Army serving as Staff Officer (Development) and Gender Advisor at the Allied Command Operation Land Command Headquarters IZMIR (TUR);
 - a Captain of the Air Force serving as an astronaut at the European Space Agency (ESA);
 - a Captain of the *Carabinieri* Force serving as AIDE to Deputy Supreme Allied Command Transformation Norfolk;
 - a Lieutenant of the Army serving as Staff Officer Legal & Policy at the Centre Of Excellence Cooperative Cyber Defence in Tallin (Estonia);
 - a Corporal of the Army seconded to the NATO Rapid Deployable Corps UK;
 - a Lieutenant Commander of the Navy serving as national delegate at the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives (NCGP).

Moreover, it should be noted that, given the recent admission of female personnel to the Italian Armed Forces (since 2000), thus far the highest rank achieved by a woman recruited through standard selection procedure is Major. In roughly 11 years the Armed Forces will have their first female Colonel.

F. WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY

The Global Gender Gap Report 2013, which benchmarks national gender gaps of 136 countries on economic, political, education- and health-based criteria, places Italy in the 71st place. This position results from a set of indicators revealing that the equal participation and opportunities of women and men in the Italian economy are particularly scarce.

According to the Bank of Italy's paper "*Questioni di economia e finanza – Le donne e l'economia italiana*"¹¹, in 2012 the gender gap in the national employment rate was still very wide (19% in 15-64 age bracket, 10% less than 1993), though over the last few years it has narrowed, as the participation of women has increased due to the pension reforms having postponed their retirement and their increased participation in labour sectors which have been less affected by the economic crisis. In the same year, female employment rate was equal to 55.5% in central and northern Italy and 31.4% in the South. Women's presence in the labour market was more concentrated in less stable jobs and sectors providing lower remuneration (the so-called horizontal segregation).

In this context, the Italian Government has committed to implementing various legislative actions and projects and adopted a multi-disciplinary approach to address all the mechanisms preventing women from gaining equal access to the economy. More specifically, Italy has developed and implemented specific interventions to promote women's employment, reconciliation between work and family life and support female entrepreneurship.

Women's employment

With reference to measures undertaken to increase women's involvement in the labour market, the following strategies enacted by the national Government can be pointed out:

The "Italy 2020 – Action Programme for the inclusion of women into the labour market", promoted by the Ministries of Labour and Equal Opportunities in 2009, identified the strategic action lines to foster work life balance and to promote Equal Opportunities in access to work; the programme envisaged the following five action lines for which 40 million euros were allocated: 1) the strengthening of care services for children; 2) the revision of the criteria and procedures for the granting of aid according to the Law No 53/2000; 3) new industrial relations for the diffusion of part-time work and other flexible form of work; 4) promotion of green jobs involving women ; 5) opening with Brussels for negotiations on further steps to support and encourage the employment of women in the South of Italy.

The Plan encouraged the presence of women also in training and in employment related to the environment (green jobs) and in promising environmental-friendly techniques including in sectors where women are traditionally less represented.

On 30 July 2010, the Council of Ministers approved the three-year Plan for the work entitled *Liberare il lavoro per liberare i lavori* ("freer labour for freer jobs"), developed by the Ministry of Labour to promote economic growth and employment through the development of skills in demand on the labour market, with particular attention to youths and women. Actions in favour of women's employment focus on implementing a reconciliation policy through re-modulation of work

¹¹ Le donne e l'economia italiana - Banca d'Italia, 2013

schedules, for which a common opinion was requested from the social partners, and the promotion of childcare services, with particular regard to day care.

It is also worth mentioning that through Law No. 92/2012 on the reform of the labour market, new specific provisions have been introduced with a view to promoting women's access and retention in the labour market, especially in those sectors characterized by their limited participation compared to men, in order to reduce the particularly large gap currently existing in the southern regions of the country. In particular, the Law provides for reductions in social security contributions for employers who, starting from 1 January 2013, hire women of any age who have not had a regularly paid job for at least six months and live in one of the Regions eligible for funding from the EU Structural Funds, or in different areas identified in Commission Regulation (EC) No. 800/2008 (the so-called disadvantaged workers), and for those employers who hire women of any age who have not had a regularly paid job for at least twenty-four months and live in any region of the country. Women can be hired with both a fixed-term contract and a staff leasing contract.

With a view to raising awareness and informing women about the phenomenon of the retribution gap between men and women for equal work and level a brief guide entitled "Equal pay for men and women: how and why" has been elaborated.

The Office of the National Equality Councillor has promoted many initiatives regarding the professional training for women. Among them: a) training sessions for unemployed women (for a total of 750 participants) in some geographical areas of North, Central and South of Italy , b) training sessions for students of technical institutes to promote work and equal opportunities for a total of 4130 students, c) radio and television campaign "Sicuramente noi", dedicated to the issues of health and safety of women's work in view of a risk assessment and the preparation of the safety measures that take into account gender differences, d) Internal initiatives aimed to spread the theme of gender equality, which was attended by 180 officials, e) Activities aimed to update regional and provincial equality offices.

The Italian Government has issued a series of legislative measures to achieve the goal of eliminating occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination, in particular: a) Decree Law No 5/2010, which updated the Code of equal opportunities between men and women, strengthening the principle of anti-discrimination and that in general widen and extend at all levels and in various areas the concepts of equality, b) Law No 193/2010 which dealt with gender equality and the well-being of those who work in Public Administration, c) Law No 92/2012, which has widen the period of protection against the so-called " Blank resignations ", not only against women, but both parents and workers has strengthened legislation for the protection of working mothers and working fathers, by the requirement for reinstatement of the worker in the workplace whenever the Court finds a violation of the prohibition of dismissal of the beginning of pregnancy until one year of age and of both parents, whether the dismissal is caused by the application or taking parental leave or child's illness, d) Law No 228/2012 (that updated the Code of Equal Opportunities), introduced at the expense of equality bodies the obligation of the exchange of information available with the other European bodies and extends the prohibition of discrimination between men and women as regards access to employment also at start-up and expansion of a business or expansion of an autonomous activity.

Pursuant to article 21 of Law No. 183/2010, on 11 June 2011 the Minister for the Public Administration and Innovation and the Minister for Equal Opportunities have issued the Guidelines on the functioning of the "Committees for the Protection of Gender Equality (*Comitati Unici di Garanzia*, the so-called **CUGs**), the improvement of workers' well-being and the fight against discrimination". From the simplification and administrative rationalization points of view, the Committees for the Protection of Gender Equality took over the functions that had been previously

entrusted to the Equal Opportunities Committees and the Joint Committees on mobbing by the above mentioned Law and the Collective Bargaining. Their areas of concern were extended to discrimination based on gender, age, sexual orientation, race, ethnic origin, disability, religion and language. Therefore, they represent a unique, more complete and efficient point of contact workers can turn to if they become victims of discrimination and are determined to receive protection. The Committees provide an effective and comprehensive tool against discrimination in the workplace. The protection covers the areas of economic treatment, career advancement, security and access to work. Thus, the Public Administration is obliged to guarantee a suitable working environment for achieving organizational well-being, in which all forms of moral and psychological violence are carefully prohibited. The so-called CUGs perform advisory, propositional and surveillance tasks.

Reconciliation between work and family life

Regarding the measures taken by Italy and aimed at increasing women's participation in the labour market by promoting actions related to the reconciliation between work and family life and with a view to reaching the Lisbon objective of childcare for 33% of children, on 17 December 2009 the Department For Equal Opportunities has published a Public call for proposals aimed at financing new childcare services in the workplaces of Public Administrations. The Public call for proposals has been put in place together with the Department for Family Policies allocating a total amount of €18,000,000,00. After the evaluation of the several proposals arrived from all the Italian territory 9 projects have been financed .

On 29 April 2010, the Italian Government has also adopted the National Plan for interventions to promote reconciliation between work and private life which allocated 40 million Euros. The Plan's main aim was the inclusion of women in the labour market through the implementation of new concrete measures such as: the creation of childcare services, the empowerment of existing care services, the creation of registers for care services operators and baby sitters who have attended specific training, the economic support for teleworking- workers and fiscal discount for women in Southern of Italy. The plan was elaborated together with the Minister of Labour and Social Policies. The Italian Government had allocated 40 million euros were distributed to the Italian regions by public call for proposals. As for reconciliation, the Plan was mainly aimed at introducing and developing new professions such as the *tagesmutter*, or the condominium based baby sitters, re-entering of women in the labour market after a period of maternity leave through training courses.

In compliance with Directive 2010/18/EU and in line with the provisions already in force in other European countries, also the compulsory paternal leave has been introduced in the Italian legal system. Such a leave shall be granted to working fathers within 5 months from the child's birth and includes 3 days' leave, one of which is compulsory and the remaining 2 are alternative to maternity leave.

Starting from 2010, within the framework of the "Italia 2020" Plan and by means of a coordination between State and Regions, the Department for Equal Opportunities has been promoting the "Agreement on reconciliation between private life and work", among the Government, Regions, Autonomous Provinces and Local Authorities, undersigned by all the Italian Regions on 29 April 2010, during a Joint Conference. The Agreement allowed the implementation at the regional level of initiatives for working women and men which, at the same time take care of children or adults in difficult situations.

Experience gained with the implementation of the first Agreement, whose total allocation was equal to 40 million euros, has been at the basis of the second Agreement with the Regions, whose strategic aim is to promote female employment, with a total budget of 15 million euros.

On the 25 October 2012, the Italian Minister of Labour and Social Policies in charge of Equal Opportunities undersigned the new Agreement on Reconciliation between Work and Family Life with the Italian Regions. The Agreement is aimed at increasing female employment through specific measures such as: the improvement of care services, the introduction of flexible and family-friendly contracts and forms of work, the promotion of parental leaves for working fathers as well as the adoption of innovative and experimental initiatives promoted and coordinated by the Department for Equal Opportunities.

The Department for Equal Opportunities, within the framework of the European Social Fund, has been responsible also for the system actions aimed at supporting the Regions of the so-called "Convergence Objective" (Sicily, Puglia, Calabria, Campania) on the subjects of reconciliation and employment for women through the use of European resources, such as, for example, harmonization between professional and private life by promoting teleworking, part-time job, the organization of city schedules, job sharing and supporting the company best practices on gender issues.

As far as reconciliation policy is concerned, the Department for family policies is in charge of the implementation of positive actions in the workplaces provided for in Article 9 of Law No 53/2000. Law No 53/2000, while implementing the Directive 96/34/CE on parental leaves, develop an effective system of measures for working fathers and mothers who constantly strive to achieve a balance between work and family responsibilities.

Article 9, in particular, offers to companies the possibility to experiment within their workplace, for a definite period of time, new organizational solutions able to combine business production requirements with the need of working men and women to have an adequate amount of time to meet their family care responsibilities. Such initiatives are undertaken by pilot projects, carried out by private employers and financed by the Fund for family policies by means of a Notice of funding, issued by the Department for family.

Projects financed take the connotation of positive actions, since they tend to balance the well-known disadvantaged condition experienced by those who play the double role of caregiver and breadwinner. Moreover, article 9 allows entrepreneurs, self-employed workers and independent professionals to identify and employ a substitute with suitable professional requirements for working part-time or full-time on his/her business. In these cases, the reconciliation measure takes the form of income support for a maximum period of one year. This intervention was created because of the lack of a suitable social protection available to self-employed women, such as maternity and parental leaves. Precisely because it integrates the regulation of leaves, the measure ends up to be mostly used by women on the occasion of childbirth, even if it can also be used by fathers, to avoid the risk of losing their business because of the long absence from work.

On the occasion of the last Notice issued by the Department for Family, in 2011, 710 applications for funding were submitted, and 465 is the number of those who were considered suitable and obtained the funding. To date, companies have adopted a large range of measures pro reconciliation, such as working time and work organization flexibility, part-time, tele-work, concentrated work time, flexible working hours, hour bank, as well as services tailored to the specific needs of working men and women. It is important to highlight that Article 9 does not mean to meet all the demands nor to give permanent solution to a lasting social need, but it is aimed to detect needs and test what are the most appropriate tools of reconciliation, those that have proved to be most effective in the course of the trial, with the ultimate goal to give them structural form.

Moreover, the measure aims to face the gender stereotypes and to encourage the spread in the labour market of a culture of reconciliation, involving trade unions and employers.

The Italian Government has also adopted a series of legislative initiatives finalized to increase the flexibility in a perspective of a harmonization between life and work. Among them: a) Law No

92/2012 which introduce the experimental measurements for the years 2013, 2014 and 2015, regarding: 1) one day of permission for fathers to be taken on the occasion of the birth of the child, within the child fifth month of life, 2) the funding of specific initiatives for working mothers through the distribution of vouchers, to be used as an alternative to months of parental leave of his mother, to pay the baby-sitting services or charges of public nurseries, b) Law No 228/2012 which provided for that both working parents can take parental leave on an hourly basis. In this area a working group was established with the task of formulating proposals for amendments to the legislation on harmonization between life and work, with particular reference to the flexibility of working hours. The ministerial Agency "Italia Lavoro" has realized a project called "Lafemme" to provide training and consulting services designed to promote reconciliation and facilitate the participation of women in the labour market. The initiative is part of the European policies that have designated 2014 as the European Year of Reconciliation.

Women's entrepreneurship

The issue of credit represents a priority for Governments. In this field, it must be mentioned the launch of the Central Guarantee Fund at the Ministry of Economy Development, an instrument for mitigating operational credit risk, thus supporting SMEs. The Fund was established in 1996 by Law No 662/96 and it is an industrial policy tool that promotes access to financing for SMEs through the issuing of a public Guarantee. It works through direct guarantee, counter-guarantee and co-guarantee interventions on financings to SMEs granted by a network of 320 operators that include banks, credit guarantee consortiums, regional guarantee Funds, leasing companies and other entities. The SMEs guarantee Fund has always paid particular attention to women-owned firms, by including them among the categories with more favourable eligibility conditions. This choice was also confirmed by the recent reform of the Central Guarantee Fund enacted by the "Salva Italia" Decree Law No 201 /2011, converted into Law No 214/2011. On the basis of the needs found in the field of women businesses, as confirmed by the available data, it has been envisaged the possibility of supporting this field with specific initiatives, in order to further increase access to the Fund by women-owned firms. The initiatives entail efficiency-oriented, additional and aimed resources, envisaging ad hoc interventions for recently established firms too. A special Section of the Fund for women-owned businesses was created with the Decree¹² of the Minister of the Economy and Finance of 26 January 2012 in agreement with the Minister of Economy Development that allows other public bodies and entities, also in an associated form, to contribute to increase the SMEs Central Guarantee Fund. On 14 March 2013 the interim Ministers of Economy Development and of Equal Opportunities signed the Convention for establishing within the above-mentioned Fund a Special Section "Prime Minister's Office- Department for Equal Opportunities" restricted to women-owned firms. Following the co-partnership between the Ministry of Economy Development and the Department of Equal Opportunities, the resources available to the Fund amount to 20 million Euros (half of which are for women-owned start-ups), thus enabling women SMEs an easier and more favourable access to a credit amounting to 300 million Euros.

Simplified access procedures were also introduced by the Decree of the Minister of Economy Development of 27 December 2013. Basically, the Special Section is an industrial policy tool that promotes access to finance for SMEs by means of a public guarantee. Indeed, women-owned firms turning to the Special Section do not receive a cash contribution, but rather the possibility to obtain financing without additional guarantees on the amounts guaranteed by the Fund. The eligible operations under the Special Section "Prime Minister's Office - Department of Equal Opportunities" are subject to the coverage percentages provided for in the applicable "Operational provisions of the Fund". Therefore, firms with a predominant female presence having the operating and/or legal

¹² Published on the Official Gazette of the Italian Republic of 24.04.2012, No. 916, on "Ways to increase the endowment of the SMEs guarantee Fund").

office located in the national territory can access to the Special Section. In particular, SMEs referred to in Art 2(1)(a) of Law 25 February 1992 No. 215 and subsequent amendments and integrations; that is: cooperative companies and partnerships established by women to an extent of at least 60%; limited companies whose shares are at least two thirds owned by women and whose executive bodies are composed by women by at least two thirds; individual firms managed by women operating in the fields of manufacturing, handcraft, agriculture, trade, tourism and services.

To reach the goal strengthen women's economic capacity and commercial networks the Italian Government has adopted incentives for women entrepreneurs, with the provision of financing women entrepreneurs and services to promote women's entrepreneurship in the country. In this regard, the Ministry of Labour has approved for 2013 the "Programme aim to increase women's employment and qualification, through the integration and reintegration into the labour market, development and consolidation of women-owned businesses."

The Ministry for Labour has also established in 2012 the "Coordination Forum to support internationalisation of women-owned companies, with particular regard to SMEs", collecting and rationalising the contributions that can be given by internationalisation institutions.

A permanent Forum with the representatives of the main business associations on the relevant issues of women entrepreneurship was established at the Ministry by Decree of 29/03 /2013. Such Forum, chaired by the Minister of Economy Development, is made up of representatives of the same Ministry, by a representative of the Department of Equal Opportunities and of the women of the business associations from the main industries of the economy: Casartigiani, CIA, CAN, Coldiretti, Confagricoltura, Confapi, Confartigianato, Confcommercio, Confcooperative, Confesercenti, Confindustria, Legacoop, AGCI. Depending on to the specific issues and analysis needs, it can be complemented with other institutional representatives, with the representatives of other business associations as well as with other experts in the field.

In order to further strengthen women's role in the development policies of the Country and to catch up the Italian gap of female participation to the job market as compared to the OECD average, on 20/02/2013 the renewed Memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of Economic Development, the Department for Equal Opportunities of the Presidency of Council of Ministers and the Italian Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Crafts and Agriculture was signed.

Such Memorandum, while integrating the inputs from the European Commission in terms of industrial policy, redefines the "mission" of the 105 Female Entrepreneurship Committees (CIF) present at every Chamber of Commerce, with the role of: developing and nurturing the presence of women in the entrepreneurship world; participating in the Chambers of Commerce's activities, combining the promotion of gender-balanced local entrepreneurship; promoting surveys on the local situations in order to identify access opportunities for women to the job market and particularly to entrepreneurship; defining initiatives for the development of female enterprises; launching initiatives to facilitate access to credit; carrying out research and study activities; maintaining relationships with the education and training world.

Last but not least, the Memorandum of Understanding for the development and growth of female entrepreneurship and self-employment is particularly worth mentioning. The MoU was signed on 4 June 2014 by the Department for Equal Opportunities of the Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers, the Ministry of Economic Development, the Italian banking association (ABI), the General Confederation of Italian Industry (Confindustria), the Italian Confederation of Small and Medium-Sized Industry (Confapi), the Italian Enterprise Network (Rete Imprese Italia) and the Alliance of Italian Cooperatives (Alleanza delle Cooperative Italiane). It provides for a specific plan of interventions to support access to credit for over 1,400,000 SMEs having a prevalently female participation and for self-employed women. In particular, specific bank ceilings for new

investments and the start-up of new businesses will be set up, thus allowing them to benefit from the State guarantee.

Particular attention has been given also to the agricultural sector, since there are 532,000 active farms run by women (ISTAT, 2010), in all productive sectors. At the Ministry of agriculture, food and forestry policies, a Thematic Working Group (Equal Opportunities) has been instituted within the National Rural Network with the aim both of providing technical and methodological support and promoting informative actions. For example, thanks to the research work of this Group, the “Atlas of women in agriculture” has been realized, a document illustrating and analyzing the distribution of female-run farms all over the national territory¹³. The Ministry has also financed services supporting the entrepreneurs with a temporary replacement when he/she cannot be in the farm for specific reasons such as training, illness and maternity.

Regarding the European policies for Rural Development 2007-2013, Italy has been working to offer instruments in order to guarantee gender mainstreaming in Rural Development Programs. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the existence of various interventions, from the analysis of data (Annual Progress Report 2011) the level of implementation of gender strategies appears not to be adequate. For this reason Italy, in order to enhance the gender monitoring of co-financed interventions is planning to adopt, in the programming period for rural development 2014-2020, a gender perspective for the actions having natural persons as beneficiaries.

In this regard, the Ministry of agriculture, food and forestry policies is committed to promoting thematic meetings with the representatives of the female sections of professional organizations, of the main National Ministries (including the Department of Equal Opportunities) and of Regions in order to arrange synergic actions aimed to fostering gender-based interventions in future Rural Development Programs. Besides, every year the Ministry of agriculture, food and forestry policies organizes the Italian celebration of World Rural Women Day to emphasize the key role of rural women in food security and food production and their important contribution to the development of rural areas. In some Italian regions, thanks to the Rural Development Programs, it has been possible to allow the funding of rural nurseries and/or social farming actions. The Working Groups of Equal Opportunity and Youth of the National Rural Network have realized, on these specific themes, some documents analysing both the existing experiences and the critical aspects. Department for Equal Opportunities also have been made about excellences among young farmers.¹⁴

Besides, through the National Rural Network, it has been possible to give technical support to Italian Regions for the implementation of measures aiming to conciliation of work, private and family life. Taking into consideration the importance of technological innovations and ITC for the socio-economic development of farms, including women-run farms, and for rural territories, Italy has carried on national and regional policies for bridging the digital divide. The strategic priority for the diffusion of broadband has been linked to the interventions related to the measure “Basic services for economy and population in rural areas” in order to reduce the physical and geographical isolation in the most marginal areas.

For this reason both interventions for the creation of public infrastructure of broadband backhaul and actions to support the use of alternative technologies, like satellite, have been foreseen so that technologies are able to guarantee a fast connection in the places where infrastructures cannot be realized due to territorial constraints.

Other actions

The most important monitoring measures taken include : a) monitoring of the results of surveillance audit in relation to discrimination against women; b) Annual monitoring of measures and validation

¹³ <http://www.reterurale.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/4461>

¹⁴ <http://www.reterurale.it/videofarmers>

of resignation (starting from 2014) of the consensus resolutions of working mothers and working fathers the responsibility of the Territorial departments of labour, according the provision of Law No. 2001/151.

Among the measures taken by the Italian government to reduce the effects of the economic crisis there are a lot of legislative measures (referred above, for example the Law No 9272012).

In addition, one of the main measures put in place refers to the Charter for equal opportunities introduced in 2009 as a statement of intention for businesses, employers' associations, trade unions and organizations, with the aim of enhancing pluralism and inclusive practices in the world of labour. Another important initiative promoted by the Ministry of Labour is an institutional campaign for the promotion of the project "Microcredit woman", which we discussed previously. Among the objectives to be achieved in terms of female employment, there are a full wage equality, improving access to the labour market, the reconciliation of family and work, access to credit facilities. These are the main challenges for the future in order to maximize the potential of women in the labour market and improve the productivity of public and private companies, promoting their welfare through careful management of the organization of work.

The financial crisis of 2007/2008 had a great impact on employment, resulting in a drastic decrease and contraction in demand and production and therefore a decrease in jobs. In order to downsizing the public debt, the Italian Government has taken measures to reduce public spending and increasing tax revenue (the so called "Stability Laws" 2012, 2013 and 2014).

At the same period, in order to not exceed the EU's 3% (deficit-to-GDP ratio), Italy has been implemented further measures for the reduction and rationalization of public spending (Law No 94/2012 and Law No 135/2012). So, we had a further decrease of financial resources to be allocated to central and local governments. Decrease resources, available to the government, especially local, produced a decrease of services available to citizens. at the same time the re-introduction of house tax (IMU and then TASI) should be underlined. Other tax increases occurred with the rise of VAT tax rate (Value Added Tax - tax that affects all property and services) from 20% to 21% (Law No 148/2011) and after from 21% to 22% (Law No 76/2013). Public spending cuts and tax increases produced a simultaneous reduction of public services (health, welfare, transport etc.) for citizens and an objective income reduction that in some cases are dropped (stop of adjustment pay for certain categories of workers and fiscal tax increase), in addition to a purchasing power reduction.

Recent high rate return of Italian government bonds, the assets demand drop and the contemporary crisis of business sector, prompted some banks operating on Italian territory to prefer invest in government bonds than extending credit to businesses. All these events have had a negative impact, especially on the most vulnerable population sector, resulting in an increase in unemployment (an increase the percentage of the gap between men and women workers) and a significant loss of earnings and purchasing power of Italian families. This situation is particularly exacerbated in the South of the country, where the employment gap with the North grew. Unemployment does not affect only employees, but it also concerns the closing (or sale) of many small businesses that have characterized the negative employment trend from 2008.

G. WOMEN IN POWER AND DECISION-MAKING

Women are underrepresented in economic decision-making throughout Europe but Italy ranks among the worst performers with wide gender gaps in employment, wages, and careers.

For women in Italy's workforce the glass ceiling is still very real. Few women hold positions of management and leadership in Italian private and public companies. In 2010, Italy ranked among the lowest in terms of women on boards of major companies. Several elements combine to create this situation: (i) the labour market demands more men due to the perceived high cost of maternity,

especially in small- and medium-sized firms, which are the majority of employers; (ii) a culture adverse to the dual role women play as mothers and workers; (iii) unbalanced family arrangements, in which women are the main caregivers, and (iv) limited institutional settings and family policies that support the management of work and family activities.

Despite this not-very-optimistic situation, Italy is experiencing a significant revolution in female leadership. A recent law (the bi-partisan Law No 120/2011 also called Golfo-Mosca Law) mandates increased representation of females on boards of publicly-listed and state-owned companies. The Golfo-Mosca law requires that boards (executives and non-executives) of publicly-listed companies and state-owned companies have at least 33% of either gender by 2015 and sets a target of 20% for the transition period. In the event of non-compliance, a progressive warning system can culminate in the eventual dissolution of the board. This law provides a unique opportunity for Italy and makes for a very interesting case to analyse. While traditionally a poor performer on issues of gender equity, the new law has the potential to make Italy an example of policy-driven gender equality for the rest of Europe.

In case the gender quota criterion is not respected by the listed companies, CONSOB (the Italian Securities and Exchange Commission) serves a notice to ensure that within 4 months, the non-compliant company conforms to the principle indicated by the law. If the company continues not to comply, a fine is applied and a new 3-month-deadline is fixed for the company to adopt the criterion. If the company decides to ignore also this last warning, the law provides for that elected members shall lose their office.

Pursuant to Decree of the President of the Italian Republic No 251/2012, from 12 February 2013 the President of the Council of Ministers, or the Minister for Equal Opportunities, has the power to give warning to the companies under the control of the State, the Regions and the Local bodies and to establish if the elected members shall lose their office if the companies are non-compliant to the principles indicated by the decree, which are the same established by Law No 120 of 12 July 2011. Although it is still at an early stage, there are already tangible effects. The first is an increase, as expected, in female representation. By July 2012 the presence of females on boards of publicly-listed companies was 10%; by January 2013 it was equal to 11.2%.

A further significant step towards the achievement of women's full participation in the national institutional life is the adoption of Law No. 215/2012 establishing "Provisions to promote gender balance in local governments' and regional councils. Provisions on equal opportunities in the composition of selection boards for competitions in the public administrations" (see Section 1).

The Italian government has also promoted the project "Women Mean Business and Economic Growth - Promoting Gender Balance in Company Boards". The project is aimed at promoting balanced representation of women and men in economic decision making. The project envisages a set of actions, such as: setting the scene for women in economic decision-making, providing data on Italian female leadership, and on best practices to promote it, and reviewing the literature on the beneficial effects of female occupation and female leadership in economic decision-making for growth, development, and business; building a new dataset of women on boards of Italian companies; analysing the impact of the new Golfo-Mosca legislation on several outcomes, such as the number of women in top positions, the average quality of boards, the diversity and performance of the organisation, the feedback effects on aggregate measures such as female occupation, female presence in top management, female education, etc.

Also an important awareness-raising campaign on the topic is currently being carried out. It is entitled "*Quote di genere. Un paese più equilibrato ha un futuro migliore*" (Gender Quotas. A more Balanced Country has a Better Future) and is aimed at promoting gender balance in decision making also through the dissemination of the abovementioned provisions on equal access to Boards of Directors and Boards of Statutory Auditors of non-listed and publicly owned companies, pursuant to Law No 120/2011 and Decree of the President of the Italian Republic No 251/2012.

H. INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

As already mentioned in Section I of this Report, following the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995, Italy has set up a specific system composed of different institutional mechanisms for the promotion of equality between women and men. This system's main Administration is the Department for Equal Opportunities of the Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers, which has supported the Office of the Minister for Equal Opportunities since 1996. As a consequence of the economic crisis which affected the country and based on the reorganization of the Ministries' competences, in 2012 the then Prime Minister decided not to appoint a specific Minister for Equal Opportunities, but to entrust the Minister of Labour and Social Policies with the Equal Opportunities tasks. Today, the Italian Prime Minister is the political Authority directly in charge of gender equality and equal opportunities policies. Since 2009, the mandate of many different specific committees and commissions working on gender equality and the advancement of women has expired, but new institutional bodies have been established with special gender equality tasks. One of the most important of them, is the Inter-ministerial Task Force on Violence against Women, established on 22 July 2013 at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. The Task Force gathers all the relevant Ministries, such as the Ministries of Labour, Education, Justice, Economy, and Foreign Affairs, which shared the need of a coordinated action in order to prevent and combat the alarming phenomenon of violence against women.

I. HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN

Over the years, Italy has been at the forefront of the campaign for the abandonment of female genital mutilation worldwide. In this regard, Italy has worked forcefully and whole-heartedly at both the political and development cooperation levels for the elimination of this practice by devising a specific law on the prevention and prohibition of FGM at the national level, financing research initiatives, training, and awareness-raising on the issue and supporting the various programmes of the UN Agencies.

In particular, Italy has been a strong supporter of the adoption of a resolution of the UN General Assembly on FGM and facilitated the relevant negotiations and discussions among African countries, thus earning the role of privileged partner with the African Countries that presented the Resolution on the issue, adopted by the General Assembly in 2012. The adoption of UNGA Resolution 67/146 on "Intensifying global efforts for the elimination of female genital mutilations" was indeed achieved also as a result of Italy's firm commitment to this cause, which actively involved the Italian diplomacy, civil society, International Organizations and the countries most affected by this phenomenon, that kept the ownership of the initiative.

In 2009, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs presented to the OECD/DAC Peer Review the "Italian Gender Initiative". The initiative was directed to increase investments and improve the accountability of the Italian cooperation for gender equality and women's empowerment. The initiative was based on the following priorities:

- Support women in fragile states and conflict situations;
- Keep a focus on the implementation of international agreements as: CEDAW, Maputo Protocol, UNSC res. 1325/2000 and following;
- Advance women's economic empowerment at local level as well as support national-level policymaking and generate strategic cross-national and inter-regional partnerships.

The rationale of the initiative was to strengthen the impact of the Italian aid on the empowerment of women in order to achieve internationally agreed development goals. The approach chosen was the "dialogue" between the Italian development cooperation and women's national institutions and

NGOs in partner countries for increasing the development effectiveness through the principle of “mutual accountability”.

Notwithstanding the body of knowledge/methodology built, the specific results of the five years initiative, show that “gender equality” continue to be bypassed in the allocation of “mainstream” development resources and opportunities, especially at multilateral level. Lesson learned demonstrate that “gender equality”, to be effective as “cross-cutting issue”, must be taken in account within the broader policy framework of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and be prominent in Joint Assistance Strategies. Moreover Ministry of Foreign Affairs needs to improve the accountability on GEWE and the harmonisation with donors and partner governments to fund and support interventions to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment.

The need to pursue the path of "aid and development effectiveness" combined with the austerity in public accounts and the resulting decrease in available financial resources means an even stronger focus on a limited number of countries (reduced from 25 to 21).¹⁵ Not just the reduction of financial resources but also the commitments undertaken by Italy in the EU and more generally in the international context (UN and OECD), related to "aid and development effectiveness", require to continue with the identification process ("mainstreaming") of a limited but equally strategic number of areas of intervention¹⁶ for the next three years.

In 2010 Italy produced Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment and mainstreamed gender into its 2011-2013 Programming Guidelines. In 2011 the application of a Gender marker was introduced as fundamental part the Aid effectiveness Plan.

J. WOMEN AND THE MEDIA

Media play a particularly significant role in the fight against gender stereotypes. Therefore, their contribution is central to provide a realistic picture of the skills and potential of women and men in modern society as well as to avoid their degrading or offensive representation in everyday life.

To this end and with a view to carrying out community mobilization activities, a technical panel responsible for the drafting of a proposal for a “Code of self-regulation establishing guidelines to respect the image of women in the media” was set up at the Department for Equal Opportunities of the Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers. The initiative is in line with European Parliament resolution of 3 September 2008 on how marketing and advertising affect equality between women and men, through which the European Parliament calls on the Member States to intensify their efforts to enhance the image and the social role of women in advertising as well as to ensure, by appropriate means, that marketing and advertising guarantee respect for human dignity and the integrity of the person, are neither directly nor indirectly discriminatory, and do not contain material which, judged in its context, sanctions, promotes or glamorises violence against women.

Another important measure taken in this field is the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Department for Equal Opportunities and the Italian Advertising Self-Regulation Institute (*Istituto di Autodisciplina Pubblicitaria*) in January 2011 with the aim of correctly portraying the role of women in the society and requesting the removal of sexist or violent advertising from the press or

¹⁵ In BALKANS: Albania. In NORTH AFRICA: Egypt, Tunisia. In SUB SAHARAN AFRICA: Senegal, Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia, Mozambique. In MIDDLE-EAST: Palestinian Territories, Lebanon and Iraq. In LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEANS, Bolivia, Ecuador, El Salvador and Cuba. In ASIA AND OCEANIA: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Myanmar and Vietnam

¹⁶ Agriculture and food safety, Human development, with particular reference to health and education/training, Governance and Civil Society and The development of local skills and Humanitarian Aid

TV. According to the MoU, the Italian Department for Equal Opportunities was entitled to ask for the removal of all press and TV advertisements which showed degrading images of women or were explicitly violent or sexist.

On 31 January 2013, the Italian Minister of Labour and Social Policies in charge of Equal Opportunities and the Italian Advertising Self-Regulation Institute signed the second Memorandum of Understanding aimed at ensuring that commercial communication:

- does not use images representing violence against women or inciting violence against women;
- protects women's dignity, respects the principle of equal opportunities and spreads positive values on women's image;
- pays special attention to gender representation and respects the identity of women and men in line with the evolution of their respective roles in society;
- avoids using gender stereotypes.

The objective of the above mentioned MoU is to promote and further strengthen the enforcement of the prohibition to use offensive or discriminatory images of women or images encouraging violence against them. According to the Memorandum, the Department for Equal Opportunities of the Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers is entitled to ask for the removal of the press advertisements and posters which show degrading images of women or are explicitly violent or sexist. According to Article 2 of the MoU, a Joint Committee is established with the task of implementing it, monitoring its implementation, supporting and promoting the activities provided for by it. Within the framework of the above mentioned MoU, whose established duration is two years, the Department for Equal Opportunities commits to organizing a competition to award a non-pecuniary annual prize to the advertisement which best represented the image of women over the year. Furthermore, the Department for Equal Opportunities is currently coordinating the development of the Extraordinary Action Plan against Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, which will be aimed, inter alia, at increasing the awareness of media operators in order to ensure that information and (commercial) communication respects gender representation and, in particular, women's image.

Particularly important is also the constant effort made by the Ministry of Economy in the area of communications, particularly regarding the Service Contract with the public broadcasting company RAI for the 2010-2013 period, through the inclusion of some specific clauses on gender issues. The engagement continued also on the occasion of the renewal of the current Service Contract for the 2013- 2015 period, currently in a definition phase at the relevant parliamentary Bodies. Moreover, in terms of private broadcasting, the Ministry has been involved several times in the drafting of a proposal for a self-regulation Code, by creating institutional Forums and workgroups.

This is aimed at providing guidelines to the radio, TV, press and advertising systems, in order to pursue the highest respect in representing women, following the strategic objectives J.1 and 1.2.

Moreover, the Ministry of Economy edited the works of the subgroup "Communication and representation of the female image in the media" established within the specific Inter-ministerial Task Force implementing Law No. 119 of 15 October 2013, that converted Law Decree No. 93 of 14 August 2012 ("Urgent provisions relating to public security and countering gender violence").

K. WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The Rural Development Programs have financed diversification through Measure 3.1.1 "Diversification into non-agricultural activities." The number of women among the beneficiaries of the measure is quite positive (32% of the total number of beneficiaries).

Taking into account the relevance that more comfortable transfers indirectly have on women

participation at work life, the institutional representatives of rural areas have bet on the implementation of services for the improvement of transportation in rural areas. Measures for the mobility services have represented a challenge, particularly in some Regions (Puglia, Sardegna, Marche), that have included in their Rural Development Programs the attribution of a bonus for projects dealing with this theme.

In 2010, the Ministry of the Environment has started to fund the WOMENBIOP Project, which is carried out in collaboration with sanitary units on the territory from six Italian Regions.

The Project Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) are a group of pollutants of environmental origin characterized by a large range of toxic effects, high environmental and biological persistence, and ability to bioaccumulate in organisms. Because of their toxicity and ubiquitous diffusion, POPs have been identified as a hazard for the environment and human health at a global level. The main regulatory instruments activated to eliminate or decrease POP release into the environment are the Stockholm Convention on POPs (www.chem.unep.ch/pops) and the Protocol on POPs (CLRTAP-POP) of the Convention on Long Range Transboundary Air Pollution United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (www.unece.org/env/lrtap/pops). Despite the actions undertaken to reduce POP release into the environment, human exposure to these pollutants is continuative and occurs essentially through food. Characterization of human exposure to POPs represents a health priority and contributes to identify appropriate environmental policies. Human biomonitoring (i.e. the analysis of a pollutant and /or its metabolites in human tissues or fluids) is the most effective tool to assess human exposure to POPs, since it provides a real measure of the "internal dose" resulting from all possible ways and sources of exposure. In the last years there has been a considerable increase in the demand of human biomonitoring data on POPs to be used to define human exposure to these chemicals and related health effects. Unfortunately, biomonitoring data are generally scarce and mostly lack comparability, since obtained from studies based on different designs and in different times. Lack of data related to exposure of the general population makes it difficult to identify possible incremental exposure to POPs and to characterize temporal trends. Since 2008 human biomonitoring of POPs has been added to the list of national priorities of the Italian Ministry of Environment, and a series of monitoring programmes launched in collaboration with ISS (the National Institute of Health". This activities are in line with the European Environment and Health strategy 2004-2010 which included human biomonitoring of toxic pollutants of environmental origin among the priority actions to be undertaken in Europe. The Project focuses on women of reproductive age, a group of the general population for which exposure to POPs arouses the greatest concern, because: - Many POPs have characteristics of "endocrine disruptors" and may have adverse effects on the female reproductive system; - POPs are able to pass through the placenta. This passage, which for almost all of these pollutants appears to be a direct function of the maternal body burden, is responsible, together with breastfeeding, of POP body burden that is observed in children in the first years of life; - the time window from conception to two years of a child's life is considered the period of greatest susceptibility to the action of environmental pollutants, and some adverse effects (e.g. effects on the neurobehavioral development and on the reproductive system) that occur after the first years of life are deemed to be associated with exposure occurred in this time window. Six regions (representing North, Central, South and Islands) participate in the Project. Areas at presumed different exposure to POPs (belonging to the typology: rural/mountainous, urban and industrial) have been identified in these regions and included in the study. In each of the areas selected 30-50 women, including young mothers, will be enrolled. In order to avoid the confounding factor of breastfeeding (known to significantly reduce POP body burden), only nulliparous women (or women who have never breastfed) of reproductive age (approximately, 20-40 years) will be included in the study. Women will be enrolled by the sanitary local authorities according to the defined and agreed criteria. Informed consent forms will be acquired prior to blood withdrawal. In each blood sample concentrations of the following POPs: polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) organochlorine pesticides (DDE, HCB, HCH) perfluorooctanesulfonate (PFOS) and

perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) "dioxins" (polychlorodibenzodioxins (PCDDs) and polychlorodibenzofurans (PCDFs) will be determined.

L. THE GIRL CHILD

Eradication of Female Genital Mutilation

One of the main areas related to the girl child the Italian Government has particularly committed to is the eradication of female genital mutilation and other traditional harmful practices.

The Italian Government has introduced several measures on the subject through the adoption of Law No 7 of 9 January 2006 establishing "Provisions concerning the prevention and prohibition of female genital mutilation", a practice to which about 35,000 women in Italy have been subjected.

Law No 7/2006 entrusts the Department for Equal Opportunities with the tasks of promoting and supporting the coordination of the activities carried out by the relevant Ministries in relation to the prevention, assistance to victims and eradication of FMG, as well as with the collection of data and information at national and international levels, particularly on implemented actions and planned strategies to combat this phenomenon.

The activity of the Department for Equal Opportunities has mainly been aimed at both ensuring the full implementation of Law No 7/2006 and identifying precise intervention models to combat and especially prevent this phenomenon at the national level.

On the basis of the experience gained through a Call for Proposals issued in 2007, through which 21 projects for the prevention and eradication of FGM were funded and whose activities were completed by beneficiaries in 2010, the Commission for the Prevention and Fight against Female Genital Mutilation drafted the second Strategic Plan on the national priority actions for the prevention of and fight against FGM, in accordance with Art. 2 of Law No 7/2006. During a specific meeting, the Plan was shared also with the main organizations and associations at the national level as well as with local authorities.

The actions provided for by the Plan have then been introduced in a specific act shared with the regional authorities (the Memorandum of Understanding concerning criteria for the allocation of resources, objectives, implementation and monitoring of the intervention system to be developed in order to prevent and combat female genital mutilation), which was adopted by the State-Regions Conference on 6 December 2012. The total amount of resources allocated under to regional authorities with a view to implementing prevention programmes is equal to 3 million Euros, which will be used in following areas of intervention:

- Development of experimental and innovative intervention models for the implementation of a national strategy aimed at facilitating the social integration of women and children victims or potential victims of female genital mutilation;
- Provision of specific training courses for professionals working in this field or in other related sectors, aimed at facilitating the relations between institutions and the African migrant population;
- Promotion of information and awareness-raising activities.

An expenditure of 2.5 million Euro per annum as from 2005 was authorised for training courses for healthcare and other professionals working with immigrant communities from countries FGM is customary. Over the years as from 2008, due to economic stabilisation laws, the amounts were later reduced significantly to the current 184,739.00 €. In the section "Women's Health" of the portal of the Ministry of Health¹⁷ there is a special database which indicates the services offered at a regional level to women and girls subjected to female genital mutilation practices. The funds provided by section 4 of Law No 7/2006, which refer to a special budget item of the Ministry of Health, were

¹⁷ www.salute.gov.it

distributed and transferred to the Regions and Autonomous Provinces, according to the criteria established during the State-Regions Conference.

Following the entry into force of Law No 7/2006, the Ministry of Health carries out periodic controls on the use of this fund.

Fight against paedophilia and child pornography

The Department for Equal Opportunities is actively engaged on issues relating to the protection of children, with particular reference to the fight against sexual abuse and exploitation, through the action of the Observatory for the fight against paedophilia and child pornography.

The Department for Equal Opportunities is firmly committed to preventing and combating child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, particularly through the action of the Observatory for the Fight against Paedophilia and Child Pornography, a strategic body established by Law No. 38/2006 with the aim of studying and monitoring this phenomenon and recently reconstituted. The Department also plays a key role in the coordination of policies on the subject through the Inter-ministerial Committee for the Coordination of the Fight against Paedophilia (C.I.C.Lo.Pe.), which has also been recently reconstituted. The Committee is composed of representatives of all the central Administrations involved in the elaboration and implementation of policies relating to the prevention and fight against child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

The first plenary meeting between the two newly reconstituted bodies took place on 20 November 2012, during the celebration of the International Day for the Rights of the Child. This was an important opportunity to start the preparation of the National Plan for the Prevention and Fight against Child Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, an essential policy paper which will integrate the framework already defined through the Two-year Plan on Childhood and Adolescence.

Among its several institutional tasks, the Observatory for the Fight against Paedophilia and Child Pornography has been entrusted with the implementation of a database, with a view to collecting all useful information to monitor this phenomenon, in cooperation with the central Administrations. Through the Observatory's database, the Department for Equal Opportunities intends to organize and systematically integrate all information and data collected by many different Administrations, thus allowing to give a general overview and deeper knowledge of the phenomenon, with a specific focus on child victims of sexual crimes. Over the last few months, the Department has established useful contacts with the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of the Interior and ISTAT, which are the main bodies having data on the sexual abuse and exploitation of children, with the aim of collecting and processing data coming from such sources as soon as possible.

Another initiative undertaken by the Department for Equal Opportunities is the website of the Observatory for the Fight against Paedophilia and Child Pornography, a significant web communication project supporting the prevention and contrast of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. The Observatory's website has been designed to be a cutting-edge tool, available both in Italian and English, and a direct communication channel for youth, adults, parents, academics, associations, private citizens and professionals working with children and adolescents, which illustrates the many topics related to the violation of children's rights, with particular reference to sexual crimes.

Also the 114 - Children Emergency Number is particularly worth mentioning. It is an emergency helpline which, from 2009, has been fully funded by the Department for Equal Opportunities. The service is active 24 hours a day and can be called free of charge from all over the country by anyone wanting to report dangerous situations involving children.

The Public Notice for the allocation of funds to support pilot projects for the treatment of child victims of sexual abuse and exploitation is a further crucial initiative carried out by the Department. Promoted in September 2011 with the aim of making all the procedures implemented in this field more homogenous and ensuring coordinated and multidisciplinary actions on the national territory, the Public Notice raised the interest and participation of many stakeholders, both public and private, and enabled the Department to finance 27 selected projects, which are currently being implemented, for a total amount of 2,800,000.00 Euros granted from the national funds for the activities to combat paedophilia.

On 22th June 2011 the Italian Parliament has adopted the law establishing the national Ombudsperson for childhood and adolescence (Law No 112 of 12th July 2011). This Authority, in line with the international principles known as Paris Principles is conceived as an entity characterized by a position of independence, which will operate in close relationship with the territory, with the associations, and with children and adolescents, through active consultation of them.

The mandate of this Authority will cover all the issues concerning children's rights as well as family and educational issues. It will have autonomous powers as regards its organization; it will be administratively independent without any hierarchical subordination constraints. The duration of the mandate will be of 4 years and can be renewed once.

As regards the functions assigned to the Ombudsperson, he is in charge of the promotion, the collaboration, the guarantee, the studies and the researches in the field of the protection of children's rights and he also have advisory tasks.

As long as the international level is concerned, Italy holds an active role in the Program of the Council of Europe "Building a Europe for and with children" since its origin in 2006, especially through the activities carries out by the Observatory for the Fight against Paedophilia and Child Pornography, set up within the Department for Equal Opportunities. In particular, the activity of the Observatory within the COE Program has also included the negotiation of the Convention of the Council of Europe on the protection of children from sexual abuse and exploitation, came into force the 1st of July 2010 for the Countries which have ratified it.

Italy, through the actions of the Observatory for the Fight against Paedophilia and Child Pornography, took also part to the activities provided by the "Stockholm Strategy 2009 – 2011", including the Council of Europe Campaign to stop sexual violence against children, called "*One in Five*" which has been launched in Rome the 29th and 30th of November 2010, hosted by the Minister for Equal Opportunities. Moreover, the Department for Equal Opportunities, through the Observatory, supports the activities carried out by the National Focal Point on children's rights and elimination of violence against children for the Council of Europe. It holds a network role of institutional connection at a national level as an interface between the Council of Europe and the institutional authorities and other different stakeholders for the protection of children at national and local levels, as well as to coordinate the preparation of national responses to issues regarding the relevant world of "childhood".

As future initiatives are concerned, the Department, through the Observatory, has recently given its contribution to the draft of the new Council of Europe Strategy on the Rights of the Child for the 2012-2015, which was launched during the high level Conference on children's rights, held in Monaco on 20-21 November 2011.

Other actions

Italy is also committed to the fight against early and forced marriages, a worldwide problem with inescapable implications on gender equality, sexual health and reproductive rights, education, and violence. This commitment led to our undertaking a national survey so as to draw up a reliable estimate of the number of women and girls who are victims in our country.¹⁸

As a consequence of the entry into force of Law No 62 of 21 April 2011, starting from 1 January 2014, the Penitentiary Administration shall open low-security penal establishments (so-called “*Istituti a custodia attenuata*”) for accused persons who need to be held in custody and finally sentenced persons of both genders having children up to 6 years of age. Such facilities shall have structural characteristics different from traditional prisons and inspired to normal houses; in those structures, one specific homely regime will be established, focusing on raising the inmates’ responsibility as for their parental duties. The law is inspired to the need of ensuring an adequate protection of parenthood and of children during the execution of detention sentences, while ensuring that children grow up harmoniously and without shocks. The above-mentioned Law No 62/2011 also provides for the possibility that the parents imprisoned in low-security penal establishments keep their children with them up to the age of 10, waiting to access home detention under articles 47-c and 47-e of the Penitentiary Act.

In Italy policies are addressed both to family and children, without distinction related to sex. In particular, the Department for family policies works through two national bodies: the Observatory on Childhood and Adolescence and the Observatory on Family. The Observatories are joint bodies, composed of representatives of different levels of government, civil society and national trade union representatives. It is a place to discuss and exchange points of views, in order to provide to the policy makers all the necessary information to take more responsive decisions to the on-going social demand. In addition to these important cognitive tasks, the members are called to draw up the national plans and programs of action, in particular: the Action Plan for Children and Adolescents and the Action Plan for the family. These two documents grant to the institutions the general strategic and operating direction to give practical effect to the actions provided.

The National Observatory on Childhood and Adolescence coordinates the activities of central administration, regions, local authorities, associations, professional organizations and NGOs focusing on children.

Together with the Parliamentary Committee on Childhood and Adolescence, the National Observatory was set up by Law No 451/1997. It is now regulated by Presidential Decree No. 103 of 14 May 2007, which establishes that the Observatory is chaired jointly by the Minister of Labour and Social Policy and by the Minister with responsibility for Family Policies.

The members of the Observatory are representatives of national and local administrations, institutions and associations, voluntary and third sector organizations, experts in childhood and adolescence. The activities of the Observatory are organized in plenary sessions and in working groups focusing on specific topics.

The National Observatory has the task of drawing up official documents concerning childhood and adolescence.

- The National Action Plan for the protection of the rights and development of children and adolescents, which is elaborated every two years with the aim of establishing the priorities of programmes concerning minors and of strengthening cooperation for the welfare of children around the world. After hearing the mandatory opinion of the Parliamentary Committee on Childhood and Adolescence, the National Plan is approved by the Council of Ministers, adopted through a Decree of the President of the Republic and published on the Official Journal. Last plan refers to the years 2010-2011. The Plan includes the strategic

¹⁸ http://www.pariopportunita.gov.it/images/ricerca_mf_2014.pdf

lines that the Government follows to develop a suitable policy for children and adolescents and the concrete undertakings to be fulfilled, described in the form of actions. Actions are described aimed at improving rights and the living conditions of all children and adolescents in all areas.

- The Two-Year Report on the condition of children in Italy and on the implementation of their rights.
- The Draft report of the Italian Government to the UN on the implementation of the international Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 at the deadlines established by art. 44 of the Convention.

The National Observatory on family carries out studies, research, documentation, promotion and policy family advices. The Centre also acts as support to the Department for Family Policies for the preparation of the National Plan for the family.

In carrying out its tasks, the Centre:

- ensures the development of analysis and study functions of family problems and conditions, through the creation of a biennial report on the condition of the family in Italy aimed at updating knowledge on demographic, sociological, economic areas and family policy ;
- promotes initiatives and seminars to raise awareness of researches results and the dissemination of good practice through the exchange of experiences;
- coordinates its research and documentation activities with those of the National Observatory for Children and Adolescents with regard to the National Action Plan for the protection of the rights and development of children and adolescents. In 2012, the first National Plan for the Family was approved: for the first time our country has a tool that gives guidelines homogeneous in terms of family policies, overcoming the logic of fragmented interventions adopted earlier. The Plan identifies some areas needing interventions with the greatest urgency: families with children, in particular numerous families; families with disabled or not self-sufficient elderly people, families with disadvantage occurring, both in the couple and in the parent-child relationship, moving from some basic principles, such as: focused policies on family unit, considered as a whole; support of relations and internal solidarity, subsidiarity and development of human and social capital. The Plan areas are structured in interventions and operative actions.

In order to contribute to the expenses for the support of new born or adopted children from families living in low income conditions, a Fund for the new born is established for the year 2014 at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. By decree of the President of the Council of Ministers, in collaboration with the Minister of Economy, criteria for the allocation of funds in limits of availability of the Fund, the indicator of the equivalent economic situation (ISEE), the reference mode of organization and operation of the Fund are set. The fund amounts to 40 million euros in 2014, increased by 20 million euros for each of the years 2015 and 2016.

The Council of Europe Convention on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, also known as “the Lanzarote Convention”, is the first instrument to establish the various forms of sexual abuse of children as criminal offences, including abuse committed in the home or family, with the use of force, coercion or threats. Italy has ratified the Convention on the 3 January 2013.

Moreover the National Centre for the prevention and control of diseases (CCM) also conducted the Project Sensitization of teachers in schools of any level and degree on the question of violence and abuse on children whose scope was to raise the awareness of teachers on the question of sexual

abuse on girls and the correct management of children who are suspected to be victims of sexual abuse. The pamphlet Sexual abuse on children – Information for teachers was also published for teachers of Crèches, Nursery Schools and Primary Schools, in order to provide field of comparison for social-health care Services and School Institutions, with the scope of activating efficient help and children protection processes¹⁹.

¹⁹ <http://www.salute.gov.it/saluteBambini/homeSaluteBambini.jsp>

Section Three

Data and Statistics

The present Section has been drawn up by the National Statistics Institute (ISTAT).

a) Has a core set of national indicators for monitoring progress in gender equality been established? If so, please provide the indicators in an annex.

A core set of national indicators for monitoring progress in gender equality hasn't been formally established. But National Statistical Institute produces a wide number of indicators (many not available in other countries) on gender equality and supports equal opportunity department in monitoring the situation.

Where is responsibility for collecting the data located?

The responsibility for the collection of data is located at the National Statistical Institute.

If national indicators have not been established, what are the reasons?

Italy has not established formally a set of national indicators for monitoring progress in gender equality, because we have a lot of important information produced by National Statistical Institute, there has always been a great attention to the gender perspective and thematic set of indicators useful for monitoring gender equality have been developed. For this same reason, surveys on gender-sensitive topics have been carried out, not only on traditional topics but also on stereotypes, discrimination, male fertility, image of gender roles, gender differences in migrant people, violence against migrant women, disabled women. The interest in the continuous improving of the knowledge of the gender topics has proved also by the fact that Italy has chaired the UNECE Task Force on Indicators of Gender Equality that has concluded its work recently and is member of the Friends of the Chair Group on Violence against women responsible for the definition and promotion of the guidelines for surveys on violence against women. Italy has been actively involved in the CES Steering Group on Gender Statistics and in UN Interagency expert group on gender statistics. Italy is involved in all expert group at international level for the advanced experience in gender statistics.

b) Has data collection and compilation on the Minimum Set of Gender Indicators begun, which was agreed by the UN Statistical Commission in 2013? (The link to the list of indicators is provided in Part 111.)

Data collection and compilation on the Minimum Set of Gender Indicators, as agreed by the UN Statistical Commission, has begun since many years.

Italy, as a member of the Interagency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics since its creation in 2006, has provided a very important contribution to the compilation of the list of indicators chosen for the Minimum Set, as well as to all other activities and initiatives promoted within the IAEG GS that has a key role in re-launch at international level the importance of gender statistics.

If so, what is the status of data collection and compilation? Please describe plans to improve gender-related data collection and compilation at the national level that have been developed.

According to the Minimum Set of Gender Indicators agreed by the UN Statistical commission in 2013, Italy collects and compiles all the indicators except for n° 50 (Prevalence of female genital mutilation/cutting).

The system of social and economic surveys that produce data used for the gender-related indicators is fully operational for several years.

A particular effort has been done by Italy in defining new indicators to measure intra-households gender differences in the context of TUS.

c) Has data collection and compilation on the nine indicators on violence against women, as agreed by the UN Statistical Commission in 2013, begun? (The list of indicators is provided in Part 111).

Data collection and compilation on the nine indicators on violence against women, as agreed by the UN Statistical Commission, has already begun. Italy was part of the Friends of the chair group who proposed the list of indicators.

If so, what is the status of data collection and compilation? Please describe plans that have been developed to produce these indicators at the national level.

Italy collects and compiles all the indicators except for n° 9 (Total and age specific rate of women subjected to female genital mutilation).

d) What processes have been undertaken to collect data on the situation of particular groups of women, such as rural women, older women, women with disabilities, indigenous women, women living with HIV and AIDS, or other groups? Please describe briefly.

With regard to rural women Italy provides very rich information from sample surveys and census data. We integrated information from census data, labour force survey, multipurpose survey to analyse the quality of life of rural women.

In relation to women with disabilities ISTAT disseminates a large amount of data through the Information System on Disability. We measure all aspects of quality of life of disabled women. The ISS (Istituto Superiore di Sanità) provides estimates on women with HIV and AIDS.

The survey on discrimination conducted by ISTAT in 2011 allow the dissemination of data on lesbian women, analyzing problems with their parents, relatives, friends, unknown people .

The ISTAT survey on social integration of foreigners and the Labour Force Survey have highlighted different aspects of women migrants' lives, such as labor, future wishes, quality of life, fertility, job and reproductive history.

Each year the ISTAT Report on the Italian situation includes in-depth analyses on the status of women in the labour market with a focus on the most disadvantaged group.

Finally, ISTAT began to detect and disseminate data on homeless women and women prisoners with particular reference to prisons and the conditions under imprisonment.

Section Four

Emerging Priorities

In view of the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the expiration of the UN Millennium Development Goals in 2015 and considering all the above mentioned measures taken by the Italian Government to promote and achieve gender equality from 1995, Italy has identified three main areas which currently represent the most urgent emerging priorities for the near future. Of course, in consideration of the many setbacks encountered by Italy in the achievement of full gender equality over the years, the short list of areas described below is far from being exhaustive.

Women's employment

Italy's economic recovery and success depend on women being able to reach their full potential and, as already mentioned in Section I and II, women are not integrated in the labour market as equally as men. Furthermore, it is evident that in a situation of economic stagnation, women are not only the most vulnerable category in the labour market, but can and must become the catalysts for economic change, innovation and growth for the future. Therefore, over the next years, Italy will necessarily commit to developing and implementing new strategies and policies to create new employment opportunities at all levels of the labour market, combating all the structural and cultural barriers preventing women from accessing, staying and re-entering employment, overcoming vertical and horizontal segregation through measures able to match women's skills and competences and work opportunities. Considering the rapidly changing world we live in and labour market women need to work in, the big future challenge for Italy will be to devise strategies and tools able to adapt to the international and national future economic needs. Taking into account the complexity of factors hindering the equal participation of women and men in employment, Italy's policies for the next years will have to include actions to:

- Promote women's self-employment;
- Strengthen childcare facilities;
- Support equal pay initiatives in the workplace;
- Encourage women to enter non-traditional professions, i.e. the green and innovative sectors, science, technology and research and combat gender stereotypes in these fields;
- improve reconciliation measures and strengthen the role of men in the promotion of women's employment;
- promote the equal participation of women and men in decision-making.

Elimination of violence against women and girls

Gender-based violence is a form of discrimination that seriously violates the enjoyment by women and girls of all human rights. The fight against this phenomenon, which is unfortunately alarmingly widespread in Italy, also means promoting women's empowerment. The Italian Government is therefore firmly convinced that only through the elimination of gender-based violence at the global level, it will be possible to pave the way also for the creation of a favourable environment for women's political and economic empowerment.

Italy will continue to be at the forefront of this fight by implementing the abovementioned Extraordinary Action Plan against Sexual and Gender-Based Violence and by continuing to consider this fight as a priority not only for the Italian Government, but also for the private sector and the civil society organizations which could play a leading role over the next years. In particular, Italy will need to increase its efforts to eliminate domestic violence against women and girls, develop long-term, gender-sensitive and sustainable policies for the social inclusion and empowerment of women victims of violence, remove all hurdles affecting their employment, and particularly focus on understanding the linkage between migration and gender-based violence, also considering that Italy has always been a country of transit and destination for a high number of migrants coming from different countries with different cultures.

Gender equality in the Post-2015 Development Agenda

Gender concerns the relationships between women and men, and girls and boys. Transforming gender relationships is the result of resource intensive inputs and sustained political and cultural initiatives which require multilevel actions, from the local level to the national and international context, with the participation of different stakeholders.

On the basis of these principles and taking stock of its experience, Italy supports the option that the post-2015 Agenda both directly addresses the challenge of gender inequality in itself, as well as the need to advance gender equality across all relevant dimensions of the agenda. An approach based on a “transformative standalone goal”, rooted in the promotion of women’s agency and a human rights dimension, the freedom from gender-based violence, the empowerment of women in nutrition, food security and social protection, seems the most likely to foster the necessary political will, resources and national ownership to create a sustainable and effective development.

Italy will therefore renew its commitment to gender equality in the post-2015 development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals dialogue that can be captured through a “transformative stand-alone goal” which addresses the structural drivers of gender inequality and the discriminatory social norms and institutions that underpin these inequalities.

Italy believes that any new framework for the Post-2015 Agenda should build on these commitments and have at its core a strong focus on achieving their *de facto* implementation in an open, inclusive governance system which holds states accountable to citizens.